

Autumn Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
BRECON

Brecon is one of Wales's most interesting and attractive county towns, best known today as the Gateway to the Brecon Beacons National Park and for its festivals, notably the Brecon Jazz Festival and Brecon Baroque.

A strategically located Norman foundation, it still retains the key features of a 'castle borough', with substantial parts of the castle surviving within one of the town's hotels, the remains of its Dominican friary at Brecon College (where we will have a private guided tour by the College archivist) and of course the former priory of St John the Evangelist, which became the cathedral church for the new diocese of Swansea and Brecon in 1923. The cathedral and close fully merit a morning's exploration with a number of speakers.

The medieval town developed on the eastern side of the Afon Honddu at its confluence with the Usk and although its street plan reveals its medieval origins, its constraining walls and gates were swept away in later 18<sup>th</sup> century improvement. The prosperity of the town was due to its proximity to the burgeoning industrial south Wales valleys and many of its fine town houses and civic buildings are from this Georgian era. Saved from dereliction, the basin of the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal is now used by leisure craft but its railway, appearing late in 1863 succumbed to closure in 1962. We shall explore the town's plan and buildings on a succession of short perambulations.

The recently completed new development of a conjoined Museum, Art Gallery and Library – Y Gaer – will be explored with the help of staff and a member of the Brecknock Art Trust. Brecon was – and is – a 'garrison town', its 1804 Barracks housed the South Wales Borderers from 1873 and we plan to visit the Royal Welsh Regimental Museum housed in the Barracks.

We hope to be accompanied in parts of our programme by members of the Brecknock Society.

With our Summer Meeting for 2023 being held in France, the Presidential Inauguration and Lecture will take place at the Brecon meeting in September with Dr Elizabeth Walker handing over to President-elect Professor Alasdair Whittle.

Our final morning will also involve prehistory with Dr Toby Driver leading a guided walk around Pen-y-Crug hillfort close to the town. Other options are available. We hope that those members joining us who are familiar with Brecon will find much that is new in this Programme and, for those unfamiliar with the town, the weekend will be full of exciting discoveries.

## PROGRAMME AND ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS (REVISED 10/7/23)

In order to keep costs down we do not plan to hire any transport. Brecon can be reached by bus from Cardiff, Hereford and Abergavenny, where there are train stations, and also Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Neath, Llandrindod Wells and Newtown. Within the town assistance can be provided by members who will be travelling by car. Moderate levels of walking are involved. Our day costs therefore involve hire of a sound system for the walks and talks, entry charges to the museums and donations, together with some speakers' costs. The registration fee will be £30 with an additional £35 to cover the day costs. Meals must be pre-booked with the organiser. These comprise lunch at the Cathedral (£10) and dinners at The Clarence Inn, Watton, £30 per night.

Members will need to make their own accommodation arrangements; a list of hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs can be supplied on request from Heather James and early booking is recommended.

### **A booking form can be found at the end of this programme**

#### *Friday 22nd September*

12.00-2.00 Registration at The Guildhall Brecon, and confirm booking choice for Sunday morning's visits.

2.00-2.30 Short walk and talk to Christ College.

2.30-4.30 Guided Tour of Christ College by Mrs Felicity Kilpatrick, College Archivist followed by tea at the College.

4.30-5.30 Walk and talk returning to the Guildhall.

5.30 Lecture in the Theatre, Brecon Guildhall by Nigel Clubb, President of the Brecknock Society and Museum Friends: 'An Overview of the Development of Brecon, its Buildings and Monuments'.

7.00 Dinner at the Clarence Inn

#### *Saturday 23rd September*

9.00 Assemble at The Guildhall.

9.00-10.00 Walk and talk from the Guildhall to the Cathedral.

10.00 Assemble at the Cathedral car park (those not wishing to walk to the Cathedral can drive and park there).

10.00-12.30 Guided tour of the Cathedral by Dr Mike Williams, Chapter Clerk, Brecon Cathedral, followed by an examination of the monuments and ledger slabs with Professor Emerita Maddy Gray and of the nineteenth-century funerary monuments in the north transept by the Welsh sculptor John Evan Thomas FSA (1810-1873), with William Gibbs, Chair of the Brecknock Art Trust.

12.30-1.30 Lunch (pre-booked only) at the Tithe Barn, Cathedral Close.

1.30-2.00 Walk and Talk from the Cathedral to Y Gaer.

2.00-4.00 Assemble at Y Gaer (Museum and Gallery) – Welcome and Introductory talk by John Gibbs, former Chair of the Brecknock Society and Museum Friends, and by William Gibbs on the art in Y Gaer, including the current major exhibition of the work of the Welsh artist and poet, David Jones (1895-1974), who had strong associations with the Capel-y-ffin group of artists in the 1920s, followed by visit to the museum and art gallery – self guided.

4.00-5.00 Free time for tea OR guided Walk and Talk on the Watton area in Brecon.

5.00 Assemble at the Guildhall.

5.00-5.30 Reception and Presidential Inauguration.

5.30-6.30 Presidential Lecture by Professor Alasdair Whittle: 'West Side Story: the early Neolithic in Western Britain and Ireland'.

7.00 Dinner (pre-booked) at the Clarence Inn.

*Sunday 24th September*

*Choice of activities:*

9.30 Guided walk around Pen-y-Crug hillfort by Dr Toby Driver, RCAHMW. The hillfort is close to the town – transport by private cars, but lifts can be arranged, although it is a fairly steep climb up to the top of the monument. This will also feature as an event in the Cambrians Walks 2023.

*OR*

9.30 Short walk and guided tour of Brecon Canal Basin, speaker Sue Ware.

11.00-12.00 Private visit to The Royal Welsh Regimental Museum, The Barracks, Brecon.

Meeting concludes around midday.

## BOOKING FORM

Autumn Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### BRECON

I/we wish to register for the Autumn weekend in Brecon

Name(s) .....

Address.....

Phone and email .....

Members should make their own arrangements for accommodation. A list of hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs can be supplied on request from Heather James ([h.james443@gmail.com](mailto:h.james443@gmail.com)). There is a range of centrally located accommodation in Brecon but early booking is advised. Evening lectures on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> & Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> (Presidential Inauguration) will be held in the Theatre at Brecon Guildhall. The Guildhall vestibule will be our registration and assembly point on Friday and Saturday.

**Please notify Heather James of your accommodation arrangements.**

Evening meals on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> will be at the Clarence Inn, 25 Watton, Brecon (dinner £30). Meals must be pre-booked using the list below, and menus will be circulated in advance for your choices. Lunch has been arranged for the group at the Tithe Barn, Brecon Cathedral Close at £10. (We will now be visiting the Cathedral on Saturday morning).

Lunch (23 <sup>rd</sup> )	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening Meal (22 <sup>nd</sup> )	£30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening Meal (23 <sup>rd</sup> )	£30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration Fee	£30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day Costs	£35	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return this Booking Form and payment for the Registration Fee, Day Costs, lunch and evening meal charges (total £135)

- by **cheque** made out to CAA Meetings Account (Brecon)
- or by **bank transfer** (*Account No 07920725 Sort Code 51-81-27 Account name CAMB A A ADD MEE, using your surname as identifier*)

to Heather James, Braemar, Llangunnor Road, Carmarthen SA31 2 PB.

([h.james443@gmail.com](mailto:h.james443@gmail.com))