



Image courtesy of Brecknock Museum

Business Sector: Heritage
Organisation: Brecknock Museum
Location: Wales

01: Our Client

Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery used to be known as one of the finest small museums in Wales, attracting over 20,000 visitors a year, before it closed for refurbishment. The museum was co-located with the Town Library through the addition of a new adjacent building, with multi-function spaces, including meeting and event rooms as well as areas dedicated to poetry, music, reading, art and learning. After receiving funding from the Heritage Lottery the refurbished museum and art gallery in the iconic former Brecknock Shire Hall recently reopened as part of the Cultural Hub Brecon. It houses nationally-important artefacts such as the medieval log boat from Llangors Lake and an art collection of work by many well-known local artists. Brecknock Museum is managed by Powys County Council.

02: The Challenge:

When the museum closed its doors to the public, they hired us to pack and put their collection into storage while the building underwent a significant extension and restoration. The artefacts, which we stored in custom built specialist storage cases, needed to be moved to the site and installed in their new display areas while the space was being finished.

Early Christian monuments, (ECMs) are large, heavy pillars, mostly made of stone, dating from the fifth and sixth centuries and marked with at least one inscription. They offer great insight into a period from which very little other

Case Study

evidence survives and are significant for their influences on early Welsh history.

One of the early Christian monuments we moved had originally stood on the west side of the road from between Brecon and Bwlch and has Latin wording inscribed vertically down the stone. This translates as '[The stone] of Namnius, son of Victorinus'.

03: Our Solution:

The planning process for this move had to be extremely thorough. We completed site inspections before meeting with the construction contractors and assessing the load bearings of the floors. We carefully planned the routes we would take to ensure the safety of the stones and of everyone working on the project. The flooring along the optimum route had to be strengthened using 18mm plywood boards to spread the weight. The lobby on the second floor had to have a completely new floor installed as the existing timber would not support the combined weight of the stone as well as our move team, which came to 2,000kg.

As the size and weight of the stones meant that we could not move them in the existing lift, we proposed using the emptied lift prior to the installation of the new one, to give us

more flexibility.

We designed a lifting beam with a capacity of 3,000kg and installed it into the top of the lift shaft. We then fitted bespoke beam trollies on to it and chain blocks to the beam trollies and secured the stones for lifting. The heaviest ECM weighed over 1500kgs, without its packaging, and took over four people to move at any one time.

Our brief from the museum involved finding a way of safely displaying the ECMs in their new locations. To enable this solution we designed bespoke steel cradles for each stone so that they could be securely placed in a free standing position, similar to how they would have been originally. The stones' securing mechanism was engineered by us and included a combination of adjustable bolts and plates that hold the base in place but without damaging or affecting the surface of the pillar.

Our deadline to complete the project and move all our equipment out was limited to one week as we had to work around the construction schedule. We were able to keep to the deadline and allow the museum to proceed to the rest of their works.

04: The Outcome:

Our expert teams managed to move the all three pillars successfully into place, using their custom equipment and specially built cradles, where they will safely stay for visitors to admire. The project was completed on time and on budget, despite the ongoing construction work within the museum building, allowing it to continue with its renovations and open to the public on time. The culturally significant pillars can now be enjoyed in their new permanent locations.



Image courtesy of Brecknock Museum

"Restore Harrow Green provided a great service, were extremely careful with our objects and had all the technical knowledge we required to complete a very challenging lift and move."

Nigel Blackmore, Senior Curator
 Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery



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WHAT WE DID:

- 2000kg stones required four people to move at any one time
- Specialist beams were installed to move each stone
- Custom bases were built to house them