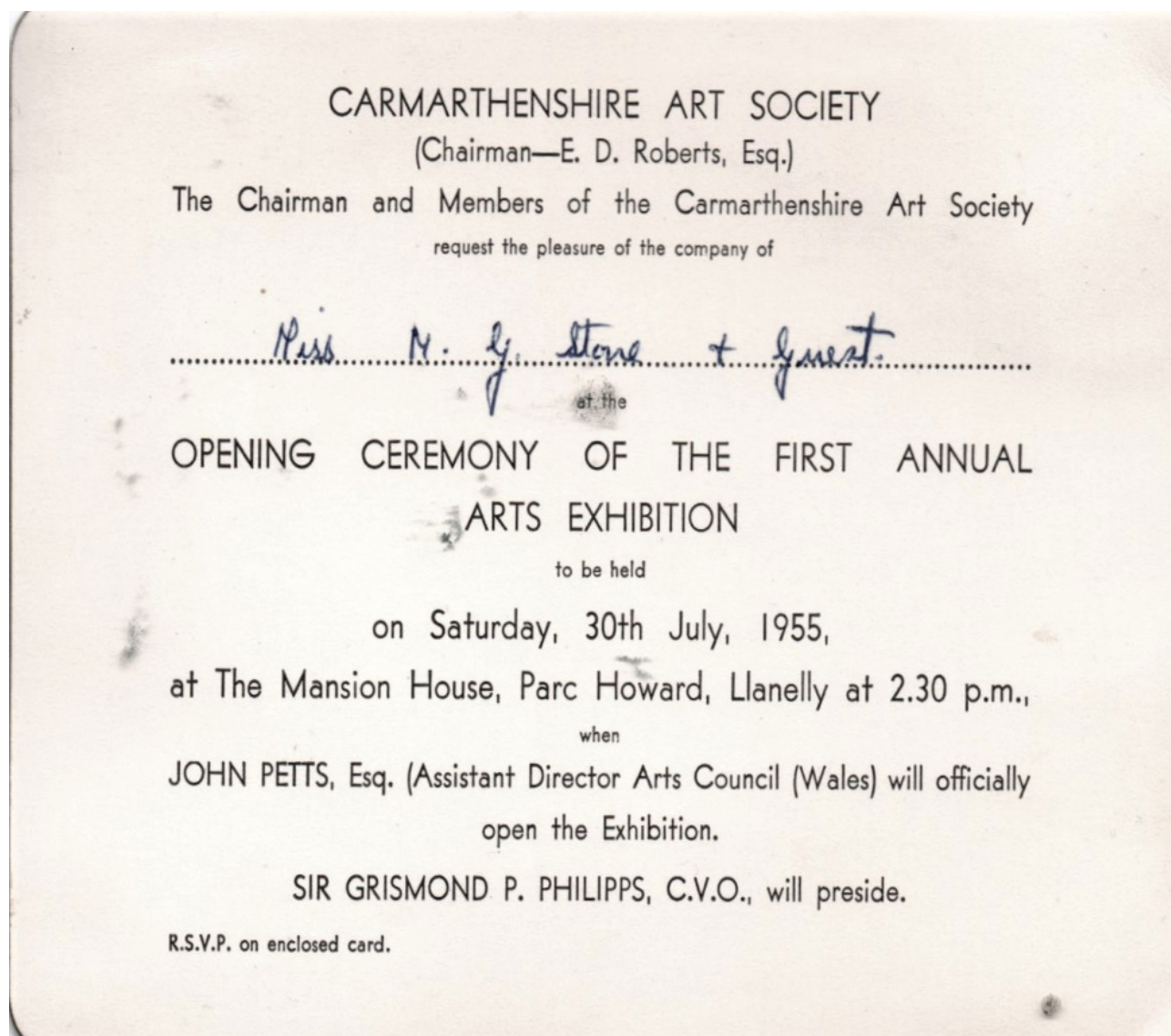


The Three Towns Exhibition by Colin Robins (written in 2021)

The idea for a three towns' exhibition was first suggested in 1954 by the Chief Constable of Carmarthenshire, the late Mr Hubert Lewis. The first-ever exhibition featuring the three towns of Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford took place the following year in Llanelli at the Mansion House, Parc Howard. It opened on Saturday, 30 July, and the guest speaker was the renowned artist and painter John Petts, Assistant Director of Arts Council (Wales)

The umbrella organisation in charge was the Carmarthenshire Art Society, which had worked closely with Llanelli Art Society, Carmarthen Sketch Club, and the Amman Valley Art group to organise the show featuring artwork from these three associations. Dyfed Rural Council gave the Carmarthen Art Society both clerical support, financial support, and even stewarding assistance.

This all ended in 1984 when all funding for the Arts in the County was suspended. Carmarthenshire Art Society was dissolved, but it was decided that it should continue under a new name - The Three Towns Art Society, and it was passed that The Three Towns Exhibition / Arddangosfa'r Tair Tref would be held annually at one of the three towns and that the art societies of Llanelli, Carmarthen, and Ammanford should, in turn, organise and pay for the event.



The annual change over between towns is celebrated with the handing over of the minutes' book and visitors' book which was donated by Dr John Crane who was made president of the new society in 1984. Dr Crane, from Meidrim, was chair of Carmarthen Sketch Club from 1984-1994. He had a fine art collection and was a fan of surrealist paintings. The best painting in the Three Towns Exhibition is awarded the Ken Etheridge Memorial Trophy. In remembrance, the well-known former artist, poet and playwright, lived in Ammanford and was head of Art at Carmarthen Boys' Grammar School. He was also a keen member of Llanelli Art Society.



CARMARTHENSHIRE ARTS SOCIETY'S first annual exhibition was opened at Parc Howard, Llanelli, on Saturday by Mr. John Petts, assistant director of the Arts Council for Wales, Mr. Petts is discussing one of the paintings with the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Davies) and, just behind, the Lord-lieutenant of Carmarthenshire (Col. Sir Grismond P. Philipps). Also in the photograph are his Honour Judge G. Clark Williams and the society's secretary, Mr. Elwyn Samuel.