

**Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)**  
**Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog**



## **Newsletter 33 – June 2014**

Welcome to our Newsletter. We invite you to contribute articles, tips, questions and answers for others to share. Feedback is always welcome. Have you missed an edition? Read the archived Newsletters on our website.

### **May Meeting Review:** *“Photographs from the Society’s Collection”*: Robert Eckley.

Rob showed images old and new of the two Brecon streets that were the subject of our Breconshire History Week activity in September 2013 when we researched the histories of the properties in High Street Inferior and the Bulwark. Rob selected old shots of these streets and photographed them from the same viewpoint to show the changes that have taken place over the century. One of old views showed a mock town wall and gateway, erected for the National Eisteddfod held in Brecon in August 1889. Over the gateway were proudly displayed the words *“Croesaw I Frenines Y Gân”* [Welcome to the Queen of Song], a reference to Madam Adelina Patti, the world’s number one opera star of that era, who would be performing at the Eisteddfod. The audience greatly enjoyed the slide show and many of the images stimulated fascinating conversations and reminiscences.

As usual, you can access the audio and visual aspects of the talk on our website. From the members’ main page, highlight the ‘Resources’ button and click on ‘Meetings’ from the drop down menu.

### **June Meeting Review:** the Society AGM, followed by a talk on *“A Brecon Tunneller in World War 1”* by Harley Simpson.

The Society AGM was well attended. I would like to thank those who sent in their voting papers as those members who send them in are counted as being present and could make all the difference as to whether we would have a quorum and their votes were counted on the day. After the Chairperson presented her report, voting took place and the Officers and other members of the Management Committee were re-elected.

During the meeting we presented a bunch of flowers to Helen Whyte to thank her for the series of fifteen-minute genealogy talks she had delivered over the past year. By the way, Helen is now Mrs Ball as she and John Ball, our webmaster, got married in May. We wish them both a long and happy marriage.

An audio recording of the meeting will become available on our website shortly.

Following the AGM, new Society member Harley Simpson gave us a very interesting history of his Brecon grandfather, who saw years of service in the South Wales Borderers. On leaving, he had become a coal miner in South Wales but then decided to join up during WW1, even though he had a family and was in his forties. He was assigned to the Engineers and became a tunneller, tasked with digging tunnels under the enemy lines. This was a very dangerous and secretive task and unfortunately he was killed in action. He left behind a widow and family and Harley explained the poverty which they endured as a result. It was a very moving story. Due to the personal nature of the talk, Harley asked that we did not produce an audio version of his talk.

### **Chairperson’s Report delivered at the AGM on 4 June 2014**

I would like to welcome all members attending the AGM today. I also wish to thank those members who sent in their voting forms because they were unable to attend in person.

This AGM marks the end of our third year as a Society and we continue to make steady progress. I would like to thank our Management Committee members: Secretary, Alison Noble; Treasurer, Eirwen Jones; Membership Secretary, Sue Snook; Photography and Publicity, Rob Eckley; Webmaster, John Ball with the support of Jennie Williams; and Vi Evans, who books our speakers and helps with Welsh translations. Without their dedication, the Society would not survive. Overseeing us all is our President, Dr Owen Forester.

We have enjoyed a full monthly programme over the twelve months since our last AGM, including a well attended visit to Abercamlais House. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the work and expertise that Helen brings to her regular fifteen-minute spot at our monthly meetings. Thank you very much, Helen. The audiovisual record of our monthly meetings, which we upload onto our website, continues to be popular and I wish to acknowledge the generosity of those speakers who give permission for their presentations to be recorded and made available on our website. Our monthly Newsletter seems to be popular as well.

We continue to hold monthly drop-in sessions at Brecon Library (between 11am and midday on the third Saturday of each month). Members and non-members are welcome to these sessions. We continue to have a very warm and productive relationship with both the Library and Brecknock Museum and we get involved where ever we can with their projects.

In August 2013, we held our annual publicity and help session in St Gwendoline's Church, Talgarth at the Black Mountain Festival. In June and September, we attended Gwent and Glamorgan FHS Open Days. At these events we gained several new members as well as raising our public profile.

In association with the Brecknock History Forum, we took part in the first Brecknock History Week in September 2013. Our event, a study of the businesses that had occupied the buildings in High Street Inferior and the Bulwark, in Brecon, was a huge success with both the public and shop keepers. This information is available to the public in Brecon Library. Do look at the High Street Inferior book held downstairs at the moment. If you can add any information about the businesses, please include it in the Book with your contact details.

In April of this year, I sent out an appeal to members for help in transcribing Parish Records. I received an immediate response. To date, Society members Alison Skipper, Jackie Birch, James Hendry, Mair Meek, Mary Zorkoczy, Merry Ibbetson and Sue Ashton have confirmed their willingness to transcribe and Mary Zorkoczy is acting as Group co-ordinator. We are very grateful to this team, but more volunteers are always welcome.

At the end of 2013 the Society had 107 members. At present the 2014 membership stands at 90 persons.

John Ball, with the assistance of Jennie Williams, continues to maintain our Society website and I encourage you to browse it regularly for updates. If you do not have a computer at home, you can use the Library computers to access the website. If you require help with this, contact the Society or Library Staff. During the year, Jennie Williams resigned her position on the Management Committee as a result of work pressures. I would like to thank her for her skill and expertise in setting up the website and for the technical support she continues to give the Society. Thank you, Jennie.

The Committee continues to meet monthly at Bishops Meadow, for our Management Meetings and we also hold periodic Working Meetings where we develop and sort out issues brought up at Management Meetings. I have made a plea for a Minute Secretary to join us on the Committee. This would enable our Secretary, Alison, to have more time to deal with the Local History aspect of our Society, which is very popular and in which she is our guiding force. Any member who volunteers and who lives locally would be welcomed with open arms to our happy and productive monthly meetings!

We hold our monthly talks at Brecon Library, and I wish to thank the library and its staff for their help and support over the past year. We are glad to have a warm working relationship with them.

It remains for me to thank all our members for their loyalty to the Society this year and to offer the Society members my best wishes for 2014/15.

Chairperson: Hilary Williams; 4 June 2014

### **This month on our Website**

In this section I intend to update you with a list of additions to our website during the month and will include direct links to the relevant webpages. If you have difficulty navigating the website, please do ask for help by e-mailing our webmaster, John Ball at [john@jlb2011.co.uk](mailto:john@jlb2011.co.uk).

Since our last Newsletter (published 19 Apr 2014), we have added/updated the following:

- **Parish Pages** for *Cantref* and *Cathedine* (pages are now available for fifteen parishes) <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes/index.htm>
- **Monthly Meeting Reports:** audiovisual records of *April* and *May* meetings <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/meetings/index.htm>
- **Committee Meeting Minutes** for *April* and *May* meetings <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/minutes/index.htm>
- **Help Pages:** updated request for help on *Indian Soldiers Buried in Brecon* <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/help.htm>
- **Noticeboard** (*General Notices* and details of *Forthcoming Events*): Last updated 10 June <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/noticeboard.htm>
- **Members' News Pages:** Last updated 15 June <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/news.htm>

***Check the News Pages every few days and the Noticeboard at least weekly.***

## **NEXT MEETING**

Date and time: Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 at 1:30 for 2.00pm Tour  
Venue: Tretower Court and Castle, Postcode NP8 1RD. Road Signposted in Tretower village, off the A479, 5km/3mls northwest of Crickhowell.  
Subject: An official guided tour of this CADW Property. No booking required. Turn up on the day and pay individually as follows [remember that lower rates apply if you are a member of CADW] Adult – £4.75; Senior citizens – £3.60; Disabled and companion – Free. Ample parking. We suggest you bring your own drinks and refreshments. Picnic tables available. More information at:  
<http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/daysout/tretowercourtandcastle/?lang=en>  
<http://www.castlewales.com/tretwr.html>

**BLFHS WEBSITE:** Our website address: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk>

## **CONTACT DETAILS:**

If you wish to respond to or comment on an item in this newsletter, or contribute to the next newsletter or to our website, please contact our Chairperson:

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