



Newsletter 39 – January 2015

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

Happy New Year

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.

January Meeting Review: “*Breconshire Churches and Chapels (part 2)*” by John Ball.

An enthusiastic audience of nearly thirty Society members and friends filled the meeting room at Brecon Library for the first meeting of 2015. After welcoming the audience, and making a few announcements, Chairperson Hilary Williams handed over to John Ball for the rest of the afternoon.

John began by giving an update on recent developments on the BLFHS website (see below). He then moved on to the main talk in which he presented “*Another Dozen of the Best Churches and Chapels in Breconshire*”. Employing a similar format to the one he used in February 2014, John showed photographs and pointed out interesting aspects of the history and architecture of each of his twelve chosen places of worship.

This month on our Website

Since our last Newsletter (published 1 December 2014) we have added/updated the following:

- **Parish Pages:** added *Llanafanfechan/Llanfechan* (twenty-two parishes now available):
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes/index.htm>
- **Minutes:** added minutes of the management committee meetings held on 13 November:
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/minutes.htm>
- **Monthly Meeting Report:** added report and slide show of the January 2015 meeting:
<http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/meetings/index.htm>
- **Public News Pages:** updated 14 January <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm>
- **Members’ News Pages:** updated 14 January <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/news.htm>

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

Help needed! Because of Christmas, only one new Parish Page has been added to our website since the last newsletter. The next parishes to be tackled are: Llanwrtyd, Llanbedr Ystrad Yw, and Llanddew.

If you can contribute any photographs or textual material, email John at john@jlb2011.co.uk

Please report any problems with the website to our webmaster, John Ball, at john@jlb2011.co.uk

New Year traditions in Wales: *Calennig* and *Hen Galan*

“For many children in rural Wales the gifts of *Calennig* were far more important than Christmas.

From dawn until dusk on 1 January small parties of boys would pass from house to house in the village or town, carrying twigs of evergreen plants and cups or jugs of water. They would use the twigs to splash water at people and, in return, would receive the *calennig* - gifts of small copper coins.

On 13 January people in the Gwaun valley of Pembrokeshire still celebrate *Hen Galan*, the old New Year as marked by the Julian calendar which held sway throughout Britain until the Gregorian calendar was introduced in 1752.

Hen Galan was once regarded as more important than Christmas for Gwaun Valley residents, with special food and drink prepared well in advance.

On 13 January men would enjoy a chance to go shooting, while at farmhouses in the area the women busily organized the food, such as a lunch of cooked goose and plum pudding.

For the children, *Hen Galan* was often spent travelling from house to house singing traditional rhymes to 'let in' the coming year and to wish the occupants health and happiness.” (BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-20828698>

This BBC website has a lovely archive film of the traditional celebrations that took place in Wales on 1st January and on 13th January (Hen Galan). Watch and enjoy!

First World War: Newspaper Snippets month by month

This snippet was sent to me by members Mr and Mrs S Roderick, for which I am grateful.

Brecon & Radnor Express, 1915

28th January: Belgian Relief Fund. The Hon. Treasurer begs to acknowledge receipt of the following sums since 23rd December 2014, with grateful thanks:

- Cray Council Schoolchildren's Concert, per Mr John Roberts, £0.10s.5d

Accessing Wills after 1858

In December the UK Government announced that post-1858 Wills could now be searched on its website <https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate> and that a digital copy could be purchased for £10.

Ancestry.co.uk already gives its subscriber access to the Probate Calendar and the Ancestry search procedure seems more user friendly than the Government website, which requires a name and year of death, whereas Ancestry can be searched by name only. The Probate Calendar can be accessed on both websites, but the Ancestry images are far clearer. Of course, you can see the full details of a Will only by purchasing a copy, an option offered only by the UK Government site. If you have access to Ancestry, either personally or at a library, I recommend you use both websites in tandem to find the Will you are seeking.

A Useful Website:

The Long, Long Trail: The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918: <http://www.1914-1918.net/>
This website, designed, built and written by Chris Baker, offers extensive information for researchers of WW1. It also provides a helpful forum called "Great War Forum".

Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Centre – also known as the Mountain Centre, Libanus.

The Society has been asked to conduct research into the history of the site now occupied by the Mountain Centre, Libanus. We have been given the names of a dozen people who have lived in or have close links with the area, so the proposal is to hold a tea party at the Mountain Centre in late February to gather their memories and stories.

We are arranging this in partnership with The Oral History Group of The Brecknock Society who will be arranging to carry out voice recording either at the tea or later dates.

The BLFHS will be carrying out the paper research part of this project – census, parish registers, wills, etc.

This project has the full support of the Brecon Beacons National Park. We do not have a time-frame for this work but it would be good to have some information for display at the Centre for summer visitors.

At the moment the project is being co-ordinated by the BLFHS Committee but if you would like to take part or ideally to be the co-ordinator, please contact Hilary Williams.

NEXT MEETING

Date and time: Wednesday, 4th February 2015 at 2:00 pm

Venue: Brecon Library

Subject: "*WW1 Communications from the Front*"

Hilary Williams will give an illustrated talk on the value of WW1 postcards and letters to your research. She will use examples from collections loaned to her.

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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