



# Newsletter 6

November 2011 and Christmas Issue



**The Committee wishes you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and we look forward to corresponding with and meeting more of our Members in 2012.**

Welcome to our sixth Newsletter. We invite you to contribute articles, tips, questions and answers for others to share. Feedback is always welcome.

## November Meeting Review

Subject: "How to research the history of your house". Professor Geoff Williams gave an informative illustrated talk based on the work he has carried out on the history of his own house on the Ffawyddog, above Llangattock. He outlined some of the resources available for research in Brecknock (these will be shown on our Society website or in paper version on request).

Geoff stressed the importance and fascination of not only identifying the people who have lived in a house, but also discovering the stories behind the facts. For example, the occupation of the residents, why the house was built in a particular location, how nearby roads and tracks have changed over time and what happened to the families before and after living in a property.

All of this made for a lively and memorable talk about a small 'one-up-one-down' cottage on the mountain-top overlooking Crickhowell and left many of those present feeling inspired to start work on researching the history of their own homes.

## Getting to know the Management Committee

This edition of the Newsletter includes an insight into the working of your Society. What do we do and how do we achieve our goals?

Firstly, there follow brief pen portraits of the current members of the Management Committee, all of whom were founder members of the Society. Although we are from diverse backgrounds, we are united in our work for the Society.

- **Dr Owen Forester (President)** – I am a retired chartered engineer, having worked on research and development in the aircraft industry. I am also very keen on local history. My family connections are in Brecon, Cheshire and Yorkshire. I attend every management and working group meeting of the Society and contribute whenever I can.
- **Hilary Williams (Chairperson)** – I also prepare the monthly newsletter, carry out research for members, and help with any projects with which the Society is involved, as well as being the main contact for the Society. I am Breconshire born and bred and my profession is secondary school teacher. Married to Owen and with a son at University, I am a housewife following ten years of caring for my very sick late parents. My interests lie in general, local, and family history, and watching Rugby. My ancestors were mainly from Breconshire, in particular, both Abergwesyns, Llanafan Fawr, Llanwrtyd Wells, Llanwrthwl, Battle, Llandefaelog Fach, Maesmynis, Brecon and Llanfihangel Tal y llyn.
- **Alison Noble (Secretary)** – Having worked as an adviser to charities for most of my professional life, I help out with governance matters. I am also co-Project Leader, with Rob Eckley, on the Shops' Project. I was born in Abergavenny and lived there until I was 17, before moving to Yorkshire. I moved around to a few other places before settling in Sussex for over 30 years. I was a member of the Beeding & Bramber Local History Society for about 28 years and served on the Committee for most of them! My husband and I returned to Wales in 2007

and live in Brecon town. My main interest is in local history but I have been researching my family history in Hampshire and Suffolk for some years. I am now starting on my husband's family – the Jones's in Cardigan!

- **Eirwen Jones (Treasurer)** – I keep my eye firmly on the accounting. I run my family business with my husband and have grown-up children and children of school age. My interest in family history is longstanding and I have particular knowledge of the Crickadarn, Llandefalle and Gwenddwr areas. I also enjoy the practical side of family history such as recording monumental inscriptions and meeting people at open days.
- **Susan Snook (Membership Secretary)** – I am retired, having previously worked as a Genetics Nurse/Counsellor in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. I live in Defynnog and was brought up in Sennybridge. My interests lie in all of Breconshire but especially in West Breconshire.
- **Robert Eckley (Photography and Publicity)** – I am a retired farmer and my main interests are photography, local and family history, my grandchildren, and watching rugby. I am particularly keen to obtain old photographs of an area and retake them from the same viewpoint to show the changes that have taken place in the intervening years. In 2007, I acquired many old photos taken in and around Talgarth, re-photographed the sites and produced *Talgarth, Past and Present*, a small book containing 48 pairs of photographs. I am doing a similar task for our Society's Shops and Business project.
- **John Ball (Joint Webmaster & Vice Chair)** – I was born in Birmingham but have lived in Wales for almost 40 years and in Brecon for nearly four years. I have a son and daughter and two grand-children. Although I have no Welsh ancestry, I have acquired a deep love for Wales, its people and its culture. My interest in my own family history (from Warwickshire and the Isle of Man) began thirty years ago. On taking early retirement in 1995, I developed my own website through which I have been able to share my interests in history, genealogy, and photography (particularly of Welsh churches and chapels). I administer RootsWeb's genealogy mailing list covering Powys, and maintain the Breconshire pages on the GENUKI website. My own website is at [www.jlb2011.co.uk/](http://www.jlb2011.co.uk/)
- **Jennie Williams (Joint Webmaster)** – I have lived in Powys all my life and most of my ancestors also lived in Powys, both Breconshire and Radnorshire. I am particularly interested in the Llanafanfawr area and my Breconshire surname interests include Williams, Jones, Lewis and Hughes.
- **Sally Wheller (Archivist)** – I work at Brecon Library and have been there for 10 years. I had previously worked in a local primary school and prior to that in archives (Cornwall and King's College). I joined the Society as I am interested in family/local history and as a representative for the library. I have lived in the area for 26 years but am originally from Beckenham, Kent. My interests include art, history, my animals (3 dogs and 3 cats) and reading historical crime fiction. I have been tracing my family history for 25 years in the counties of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Essex, Kent, Middlesex and not forgetting the City itself. My research has taken me to a wide variety of Local Studies Libraries, Archives and Record Offices during those years. I now enjoy tracing my ancestors online.

The founding members of the Society were determined to establish a Society which provides its members with access to as much information as possible. They were also keen to encourage members to become involved with the Society in every possible way and were determined that distance should not be a barrier to participation in the business of the Society.

The Committee holds two meetings per month:

1. A formally structured **Management Committee Meeting**, where minutes are diligently kept and the business of the Society is decided. Topics include:
  - Devising a programme of project work: e.g. recording of monumental inscriptions
  - Arranging monthly meetings at Brecon Library
  - Providing Society representatives to attend Family History open days and other events
  - Setting and monitoring the Society's finances
  - Encouraging active membership
  - Determining the development policy for the Society Website
  - Communicating with the membership, e.g. through Newsletters and the website

2. A **Working Group Meeting**. This meeting is more relaxed: no formal minutes are kept, but items from the Management Committee Meeting that require detailed examination and planning are worked on here and referred back to the Management Committee for ratification. Topics include:
  - Webpage planning
  - Detailed project work

The membership of the present committee, which originally formed the steering group that founded the BLFHS, was approved at the inaugural meeting in June 2011. Consequently, its membership was not elected, but in 2012 the make-up of the committee will be determined by election at the AGM in June (see Society constitution [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wlsblfhs/constitution.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wlsblfhs/constitution.htm)). New nominations for the committee will be most welcome.

The present committee members form a cohesive and happy group who enjoy working together for the benefit of all Society members. No one feels pressurised. Indeed, the committee members regard each other as friends. Committee meetings are usually held at Bishops Meadow Restaurant; and it is common for several of the members stay for lunch afterwards.

### **Society Insurance**

The Society is covered by an insurance policy arranged through the Society's membership of The British Association for Local History. The present cover expires on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011, but will be renewed for 2012.

For the purpose of insurance, volunteers are counted as employees (who just happen not to be paid!) and are therefore covered up to a limit of £10 million, including "*legal liability of the Society for any amounts they become liable to pay as damages for bodily injury caused by an accident during the period of insurance, including all legal defence costs arising from such a claim*". All the Society's property is also covered but if left in a vehicle, the items must be in the boot and not be visible from outside the vehicle. The car must be locked for the policy to be valid.

### **NEXT MEETING**

**There is no BLFHS meeting in December.** Our next meeting is in January, details as follows:

Date and time: Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 2:00 pm.  
Venue: Brecon Library, Ship Street, Brecon  
Subject: Searching Censuses: How to get the most out of Census Returns for local and family history research" with John Ball and Hilary Williams

**Our next newsletter will be published in January 2012.**

**BLFHS WEBSITE** <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wlsblfhs/>

Googling **WLSBLFHS** will also find the public page. You then need to add your password to the address to enter the Members' pages.

**Note:** We will be launching a new, more versatile and easier to access website in January. A new password will be required for entering the members' pages on the new website. Further details will be posted on our present website as and when they are confirmed. The existing website will remain active until the end of January 2012.

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Existing BLFGS memberships expire at the end of December, so members should renew their membership by the beginning of January 2012. The renewal form is already available on our present website (the renewal fee is £8.00 for 2012). The 2012 password for entry to the members' webpages will be issued to members when they renew their membership.

### **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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