



Registered Charity No 1059537

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**REPORTS**

**2pm Online via Zoom Video Conferencing**

**4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Volunteers:** The main challenge identified in many of the Branch Reports is the difficulty of getting volunteers to step forward to help organise and run branch meetings. Attendance at many of these meetings has not yet returned to pre-pandemic numbers so the knock on effect is that there is a small pool of people available to join the branch committees. There is also a very small team of volunteers who carry out the Society administration and who open the Resource Centre at Aberkenfig twice a month. On a more positive note attendance at our Online Branch sessions has been good. We also have some new faces joining our Executive Team this year.

**Events:** Face to face fairs are starting to recommence and a team attended the Bristol and Avon Fair in September. We also have a stand at the Family History Show's new venue at the Malvern Showground in March and we will be attending the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd in August. Of course as you will know this year we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since the Society started as the 'Heraldic and Genealogical Society of Wales' in 1974 and so there are currently groups of volunteers in the process of organising events to mark this occasion.

I should therefore like to propose a vote of thanks to all our volunteers that give up their time to help run the Society and provide a wide range of events each month.

*Sue Hamer, [chairman@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@glamfhs.org.uk)*

**5. FINANCE TEAM REPORT – see separate document**

**6. MEMBERSHIP**

As mentioned in the Finance Report we increased membership subscriptions this year for the first time in seven years. We receive the majority of standing orders in January each year but unfortunately the majority had not amended their payment to the new amount and so the length of their subscription has been adjusted to 9 months. Some members have now paid the outstanding £5 either via the website or by sending in a cheque but we request that others do so as soon as possible. We have also included a new standing order form in the March journal.

We also still have previous underpayers who are paying various amounts from £7.50

Members	1081
Resigned	10
Deceased	8
Underpaid	37 paid at old Rates e.g. £7.50
Lapsed	122

*Nancy Thomas, Sue Tiller & Marie Baldwin*  
[membership@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@glamfhs.org.uk)

## 7. ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE (ARC) & PROJECTS REPORT

The ARC has slowly been getting back to normal over this last year. The opening times have increased from bookings only to twice monthly openings. Visitor numbers have remained low, although there have been quite a few overseas visitors which have proved interesting to support. The management committee of the Aberkenfig and District Public Memorial and Welfare Association continues to make improvements to the site and buildings. The previous arrangement of joint meetings will continue to review the lease agreement, as the lease is only in place to 2025. Meanwhile the sub group of the ARC team continues to review the function and purpose of the ARC.

Team meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom video conferencing and this is useful to progress work and to maintain contact with the volunteers.

The small working group of volunteers continues to meet to push ahead with some of the initiatives needed to improve the facilities on offer. The library of publications is now completed and proving to be very useful.

GDPR (Data Protection) compliance is completed, although the original plan to review and update the stock every five years is currently on hold due to the volume of work needed and low volunteer numbers.

The publication sales booklet remains on hold until more work is completed in creating downloadable publications from the booklet stock. Work is continuing to offer the publications as downloads, the CD stock is now completed and conversion of the MI stock is nearing completion. The "most sold" publications will be the next focus for conversion.

Considerable work on the fiche holdings has been completed and a reference copy is now available for visitors. Excess fiche stock has been disposed of.

During the year the ARC received another sizable book donation which is being catalogued and will then be assessed to determine how best to utilise this resource. Some books that are either duplicated to what the ARC hold or of poor quality may be offered for sale at fairs.

Face to face fairs are just restarting following the pandemic and the team have provided support for the first of these at Bristol in September 2023.

Projects have continued to be managed mainly by the Branches, although with the slow return of volunteers many Branches have been limited in the work they have been able to complete.

Merthyr Tydfil Branch has continued with the transcribing of the Merthyr Express Obituaries and a second CD/Download (CD2) was launched in the Spring of 2023. These cover the years 1910–1919 as well as WW1 Casualties List. This will complement the CD1: which covered 1900-1909. The team continues to work on the processing of 1920-1929 and a batch of files for 1930-1940 has recently been received for transcribing.

The ARC holds two collections of index cards, compiled many years ago, together they total almost eight thousand. These are now being scanned and it is hoped to provide them as a searchable database on the website when completed. Once again this will take time due to low volunteer numbers.

A new Society wide project is just been launched focusing on a revision of one compiled in 2005. *The Revised Places of Worship Survey for Glamorgan (Rev 2023)* aims to collect information on places of worship before such data is lost. Having a central resource such as this would be a valuable research aid. This is being managed by a Cardiff Branch volunteer.

As mentioned, the ARC continues to open for research help twice a month on a Wednesday 10 am until 2 pm. However, maintaining this is increasingly difficult with such a small pool of volunteers to call on. We would welcome any members who live locally enough to offer help, if only for part of the day, 10-12 or 12–2. Training can be given and there are always two volunteers, so you would not be alone at any time. If you think you could help, contact us.

*ARC Team, arc2@glamfhs.org.uk*

## **8. BRANCH REPORTS**

### **8.1 ABERDARE & CYNON VALLEY**

2023 turned out to be a very busy year for our branch, introducing extra monthly meetings, a branch Facebook page and outings to places relating to family history research. Our bi-monthly research/guest speaker meetings in Cynon Valley Museum have gone well, however attendance seems to be better when we have a guest speaker.

It was decided to re-start our research sessions in the Aberdare library on a trial basis, they were going well until Dec/Jan where no-one other than the research volunteers turned up, we have put this down to the time of year being December being very busy for members, and the weather was particularly cold for our January meeting.

We decided to start branch outings the first was to our resource centre in Aberkenfig a few members went along and they thoroughly enjoyed their visit. Our next outing will be in February to the Glamorgan Archives.

In October we had our AGM a new Committee was voted in for the next twelve months. After the AGM we were treated to an excellent talk on a Historic walk through Old Trecynon by Rob Jones, Rob is becoming a popular regular speaker to our branch.

November we had Jennifer George as our guest speaker her talk was on "What's in a name" Jennifer is another regular speaker to our branch. She is very experienced in engaging members to interact a lively discussion followed.

December we did not have a meeting, a number of members went out for Christmas lunch instead, a very good time was had by all present.

January our guest speaker was Izzy Parker from Gene Park Wales we had an excellent turnout for Izzy who gave us a very informative talk on DNA and how it works in relation to linking DNA to family history research and Ancestry.

Work on Aberdare Obituaries 1951-1960 is progressing slowly we are grateful to the members who give up their time to make these resources available for future researchers.

*Pat Rees, [aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk)*

### **8.2 BRIDGEND**

While this last year has seen life returning to relative normality, the Bridgend branch continues to struggle to regain the number of attendees to meetings it used to draw pre-Covid 19. Along with this there has been difficulty sourcing speakers, many of the "old" favorites are not available, meaning we are having to reach out to speakers from further afield. During this last year we have also been offering the option of joining meeting from home via video meetings. This again has not been taken up on a large scale, but we are seeing a small increase in latter months.

Due to the low numbers of attendee a decision was made in November of 2022 to switch from holding meetings in the Len Evans Hall to meeting in the GFHS Resource Centre. This being a smaller room, not needing to be booked and as such saving the branch around £22 per night in room booking fees. Meetings will continue in the room for the foreseeable future, once the attendee numbers increase, we will revert to the main hall once again.

Meetings have been alternating between research evenings and speakers. These have proved interesting and a programme for the coming year is being developed. Once again, we are asking for your thoughts on topics so we can provide a varied programme.

The branch has been exploring organising visits for members. A start was made in August with a Saturday visit to the Cowbridge museum, which was very interested and although small it has been well organised containing a wealth of history and information, the cells have been equipped to tell the history of various aspects of life in the Cowbridge area. The afternoon of this visit day

was spent visiting the Physic Garden, which is free to visit or have your lunch. We had a guided tour; this again was very interesting and it was quite surprising the range of medicinal uses there are for some of our common household plants. The guide was very informative, it is certainly worth a visit if you are in the Cowbridge area. Future visits are being explored and will be advertised via the Mailchimp emails that are sent out as monthly reminders of both our meetings and events that the wider Society is hosting.

The committee have continued to offer monthly research sessions in local libraries. These have proved popular initially but booking have eased off towards the end of this year. It is proposed to move these sessions into the ARC once a month, still on a Saturday. These will continue to be offered in addition to the ARC opening twice a month on a Wednesday.

Once again, we have circulated the nomination forms widely prior to our meeting and sincerely hope we can entice a treasurer to join our ranks. The post has been shared between three of the committee for some time and a dedicated person for the role would be most welcome.

Election of 2023-24 Committee:

The following nomination forms have been received and following a vote by those present the committee for the coming year were elected as follows:

Chairman: Nancy Thomas

Secretary: Vicky Salmon

Treasurer: Nancy Thomas/Liz Krolzig/Sue Tiller

Programme Co-ordinator: Penny Willimams

Data/Membership: Sue Tiller

Librarian: Liz Krolzig

General Committee Members: Mari Morgan & Paul Jones

*Penny Williams, Sue Tiller & Nancy Thomas, bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk*

### **8.3 CARDIFF & VALE**

Following last year's Society AGM, the Cardiff branch has continued to offer a programme of meetings at the archives. Nick Davey led a meeting on non-conformist records in February, followed by a session on education records in April, and a focus on poor law records in June. In December we had a meeting to look at records relating to Glamorgan's coal mining industry. Further meetings at the archives are scheduled for February, April and June this year. We are grateful to the team at Glamorgan Archives, in particular Rhian Diggins, for helping to facilitate these sessions.

In July there was a visit to the Family Search Centre in Rhiwbina, organised by Karen Prior, which was attended by fourteen branch members.

Since September we have had evening talks in alternate months in the chapel at Cathays Cemetery. Norena Shopland spoke to us about 'Women in Welsh Coal Mining' in September, and Ted Richards gave a talk on 'Roath Virtual War Memorial' in November. Further talks are scheduled for March (Jenni Phillips) and May (Professor Martin Johnes).

Our branch AGM was held online in October, followed by a talk from Morag Peers on the reformatory school movement. A number of committee members stood down for various reasons at the branch AGM. We are also currently without a branch trustee. The current committee is continuing to deliver a programme of events; however, we are limited in what we can offer if other members are not able to volunteer their time to help.

The number of people attending meetings in both formats has been lower than pre-pandemic. We are keen to hear from branch members who have suggestions for what we can offer that might increase attendance and engagement at in-person events. We are hoping to have a presence at some local events this year, including Open Doors events and Heritage Days, however this may depend on whether members are able to provide the branch with the necessary support.

We would like to thank Diane Brook, Ann Konsbruck, Jeremy Konsbruck and Judith Konsbruck for their past contributions to the branch committee, also Sue Hamer and Jane Graves who provided ongoing support over the last year despite having stepped down previously. The current committee consists of Jenni Phillips (chair), Stephen Fairhurst (treasurer), Karen Prior, and Nick Davey (co-opted). As chair, I am very grateful to Stephen, Karen and Nick for their ongoing commitment and support. They are a pleasure to work with, and I can assure anyone interested in joining the committee that they will receive a warm welcome.

Jenni Phillips, [cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk)

#### **8.4 MERTHYR**

The Merthyr Tydfil Branch has proceeded along our usual practice over the last year. All Meetings are in Soar, Pontmorlais, at 2 pm on the second Tuesday of each the month but there is no meeting in August. We are usually there before 1 pm to have a chat and discuss queries. We continued to have an 'historic' walk around the town with a guide in May, a practice we started during the 'covid period', however, we will revert to visiting an archive office this year, nearby Powys Archives which is now in a new building. Several members of the Merthyr Tydfil Family History Branch attended the Gelligaer Historical Society Conference in March and intend to continue to make this an annual event. We were given a table to advertise the Glamorgan Family History Society, and this was repeated in April at the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society Day Conference which was on the theme of WWI. The Merthyr Tydfil Branch announced the completion of another part of the obituary project as the years 1910 to 1919 are now contained on 2 CDs. The newly available CDs are:-

- Merthyr Tydfil Obituaries 1910-1919 CD2 - £10
- Merthyr Tydfil WW1 Casualty Lists 1914-1919 - £8

They also contain records for Aberdare and Gelligaer and are mainly the work of Andrea Heggie and Michael Donovan, but their availability is very much thanks to the kind assistance of Nancy Thomas.

Over the year, we have had some excellent talks delivered by our talented members, Barrie Jones, Carl Llewellyn, Viv Pugh and Steve Brewer. In June six members of our Branch assisted with the day conference on the theme of 'Chartism' held by the Dic Penderyn Society in the Merthyr Tydfil Labour Club. In July we were fortunate in having Mary Owen talking about the shop keepers and middle-class of old Merthyr Tydfil. Our September meeting was altered at short notice as Edwyn Parry was unable to give his talk as arranged, but fortunately Steve Brewer swapped months and gave a well-illustrated informative talk. Barrie Jones, speaking about his own ancestors, 'Crimes and misdemeanours, a family tale' was especially interesting. Carl again delivered our Christmas talk on the popular topic of local shops in past years. 2024 started well with an excellent talk by Merthyr's premier local historian, Huw Williams on unusual facts about the Crawshay family of Cyfarthfa Castle, he talked about their gardens rather than the ironworks.

For many years Michael Donovan has been assisting family history researchers in Merthyr Tydfil Central Library and helping to answer e-mails and correspondence sent there. Merthyr Library has become gradually more and more short staffed with family history and local studies being of low priority. Anyone intending to visit Merthyr Tydfil to look at local history or family history material would be well advised to phone up in advance of a visit to avoid disappointment and the room containing this material being unavailable.

Carolyn Jacob, [merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk)

#### **8.5 PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA**

2023 saw us more or less back to normal, although we still have problems getting speakers, but we have had a few new members. Unfortunately we have lost one of our most popular speakers, Dean Powell of Llantrisant Guildhall. Also later in the year we heard of the sudden death of Brian Davies, former curator of Pontypridd Museum. He had come to speak to us on a number of occasions.

In June we held a belated 25th Anniversary party for the branch which was set up in 1995. We had a birthday cake and sang Happy Birthday to the branch. We had a buffet and a raffle. We ended the evening with a few quizzes, not serious ones though.

At the AGM the majority of the Committee agreed to stay on, except for David Shewring who decided to stand down because of his poor health.

Chairman  
Vice Chairman/Publicity  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Projects/Research

Michael Jones  
Neil Gazzard  
Creighton Sims  
Jane Jones  
Deborah Cooke

*Jane Jones, [rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## **8.6 SWANSEA**

In 2023 we started a new venture. On the 2nd Tuesday of each month (except August) we meet at the West Glamorgan Archives (County Hall) Swansea at 2pm. One of the archivists gives a talk about records which are available to use, but which the general public may be unaware of. This is followed by helping people with research queries they may have or doing our own research. The Swansea Branch is extremely grateful to the staff for suggesting this new venture. The numbers attending have not increased greatly, but at least branch members now have a wider knowledge of records available and can point those doing research in different directions.

Our 2023 AGM on Zoom was short and sweet. We approved the accounts. There was not much more to report. We had invited Elizabeth Belcham to speak, but as there were so few of us at the meeting we decided to have this talk at another time.

The group which has been transcribing records for many years is now depleted. They hope to conclude the transcriptions which have been started.

We are without a Chair, Vice Chair and meetings secretary  
Secretary - Cherry King  
Treasurer - Julie Edmunds  
Rep to Executive - Janet Neilson

*Janet Neilson & Cherry King, [swansea@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:swansea@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## **8.7 ONLINE BRANCH**

Online sessions have been well attended, although numbers did drop in the run up to Christmas. However the January talk from Gill Roberts on Researching Welsh Ancestors (Intermediate) had 75 attendees. The session in December on 'The Welsh Community in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, circa 1860-1914' presented by Dr Gethin Matthews, attracted a wide audience including a number of participants from family and local history organizations in British Columbia.

The Online Branch Planning Group is currently planning a full day Webinar as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

Jane Graves is having to step back from Chairing and administering the online branch events which she has done for three years, since the Society events went online during the Covid epidemic for which we give a huge vote of thanks. Without her organisation, enthusiasm and commitment the Society would be in a very different position today as we have benefited both financially, as regards membership numbers, and from the input of non-local members and non-members via these online sessions.

*Online Branch Team, [arlein@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:arlein@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## 9. JOURNAL REPORT

On the whole it's been a good year for articles with a dip in the Summer months, then a flurry in the Autumn.

The main problem has been that many are very long, so I have always given the authors the choice of cutting them down themselves or leaving it to me, and usually they leave it to me, and then I'm concerned that the important bits (in their eyes) are not emphasised enough.

There are some regular writers with fascinating families who have lived extraordinary lives. The topics asked for don't usually come until after that particular journal has gone to press, which is a bit frustrating, so I get a mixture of anything and everything most months.

This last year we have entries covering all topics - eisteddfodau, boxing booths, politics, religion, fame, missing persons, the services - all sorts, so long may they continue.

What has been especially pleasing is the fact that links have been made - when a reader has read an article and wanted to get in touch with that particular author to add to his story, or to make contact with reminiscences.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society and we are printing (reprinting) stories from those early years as well as asking for current members' own recollections of what family history research was like then - pre-internet, social media etc. The forthcoming eisteddfod will also be an opportunity to publicise the society, and hopefully we can collect some more material from older citizens with good memories.

In the pipeline are some adventurous stories of sailing in the South Seas, more mining stories, a possible slave owner's account of life in Jamaica, Welsh emigrants in the US, and even an enthusiastic religious revival in the Valleys from the early 1900s

Much to look forward to over the next 50 years??

*Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk*

## 10. WEBSITE REPORT

At the present time, things with the Website are reasonably stable. The hosting maintenance contract with Andy Gardner remains in place. Billie McNamara has begun working on technical matters Andy Gardner previously handled, and she will continue to do so. This will eliminate the need to pay for necessary services outside the scope of our maintenance contract.

Debra Ricks, a member from Australia with Website experience, has joined our volunteer team. Anouska Osborne has also volunteered to take on some responsibilities for development. Several members continue to manage specific aspects, such as adding events to the calendar and uploading exchange journals.

We have several plans for this year, but we don't want to begin any changes until after June when the traffic on the site reduces.

The Website's availability as a communication source, and its membership renewal/management platform, require us to take precautions to ensure the site remains live. Unfortunately, our global membership and user locations mean some visitors may experience periods of downtime. We will attempt to minimize downtime during peak UK visitor hours.

Planned projects include the following:

- Review and test converting the platform to Word Press
- Review and add any publications not currently within Master Indexes on the Website
- Investigate adding other resources only currently available at the Resource Centre, eg Glamorgan family group record cards
- Add a Members' Interests Database
- Make card catalogue of ARC holdings more prominent
- Add 'Places of Worship' Database
- Make the remaining journal back issues available.

*Website Development Team, [website@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:website@glamfhs.org.uk)*