

*Glamorgan Family
History Society*



*Cymdeithas Morgannwg
Hanes Teuluol*

Registered Charity No. 1059537

GLAMORGAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting

6TH MARCH 2021

**SOCIETY OFFICER, BRANCH
AND TRUSTEE REPORTS**

(SEE SEPARATE FINANCE REPORT)

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This past year has been like no other, and we don't want to see the like again. First of all, we had floods in January and then Covid struck causing tremendous upset throughout the world, killing many and putting thousands in hospital.

None of our branches were able to carry on as normal but tried as best they could to keep the Society together.

Membership initially fell, as is shown in our Finance and Membership Reports, but since has increased, no doubt with many taking up researching their Family History, to keep themselves occupied during the various lockdowns. At present it is around 1275. We also have many contacting us via Facebook and Twitter. We are very grateful to all of our volunteers, especially the Membership and Publications Teams, for coping with all the extra work.

Unfortunately, our Resource Centre had to close in March 2020 due to the various restrictions put upon us. However, Sue T checks it regularly. It has been deep cleaned in line with Covid 19 regulations and this will continue on a monthly basis. Ray Hatch, who was responsible for our building and the Welfare Hall, is very ill at present and has unfortunately had to resign as Secretary of the Welfare Association. We send him our best wishes.

We had to cancel our Family History Fair in September 2020 because of the virus and it was also decided not to go ahead with a Fair in 2021 as we have no idea of how the Covid situation will pan out. Hopefully we will have better luck in 2022.

We have had regular Zoom meetings with the Executive Committee and we are very grateful to Sue H for organising these. We would also like to thank Jane Graves and other volunteers who have organised the monthly online 'virtual' meetings for the Society since September 2020. They have proved very informative and interesting. Many members and non-members from all over the world have joined these sessions – recent ones have been sold out with 100 participants.

Nick Davey sadly contracted Covid 19 and was hospitalised. He was in Intensive Care for a while before being transferred to a ward. We are happy to hear that he is now well on the road to recovery.

Looking forwards we can at last hopefully at last see a light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccinations being rolled out across the country. It is early days yet but we will continue to review the situation in our monthly Zoom committee meetings and will advise our members via the monthly Mail Chimp Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter and the quarterly journal of our plans for recommencing our activities as and when this is possible.

*Meic Jones, Chairman
Glamorgan Family History Society*

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR AGM 6TH March 2021

Jane Jones
Secretary
GFHS

6. SEE SEPARATE TREASURER'S/FINANCE REPORT

7. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Membership team have continued to work well together, I would like to thank Nancy, Sue H and Jane Jenkins for their help in this regard.

Despite an initial dip in members renewing their subscriptions towards the end of the financial year (31 August 2020) membership has recovered and overall membership currently stands at 1275 [as of 4th February 2021]. The membership team continues to have a busy time since the launch of the new website we have had over 680 new members, who we hope you are enjoying using the resources. We are also finding that many members are also renewing their membership via the website, this makes the administration so much easier.

However we still have a considerable number who are underpaying, although the new automatic reminders do seem to be helping with some of these. To address those members who have not changed their standing orders for some considerable time we are now restricting the number of journals members received to correspond with the payment made. For example, if a member only paid the old amount of £10 their journals will finish with the December issue and if they have paid less, as quite a few have, their journals will finish in September.

We have been working closely with the web site manager since its launch in November 2017. There is a new automatic system for new and renewals to the membership.

The membership section of the website appears to be working well.

Membership Team
membership@glamfhs.org.uk

8. ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE [ARC] REPORT

The ARC has been greatly disrupted this year due to the effect of Covid19. Since March 2020 the ARC has remained closed to the public and there has only been limited access to volunteers for administration duties.

In line with Covid-19 regulations the ARC has been deep cleaned and a system has been implemented to ensure this continues once opening to the public can be resumed. All necessary PPE has/will be implements to ensure the safety of volunteers and the public.

The work of the ARC volunteers has been severely restricted but some work has continued mostly from volunteers' homes.

Work to develop a database of Fiche holdings has been on hold.

The publication sales stock has been re-priced to reflect current postage rates. Genfair stock has been re-priced. The publications have been re-ordered to make it easier for the sales team. The Publication sales booklet is on hold until re-organisation of the stock and updating items on Genfair has been completed.

The ARC library stock is being checked for GDPR compliance. Once this is complete it is aimed to provide the hard copies of all of the publications for reference only use by visitors.

The ARC holds a stock of index cards that were compiled many years ago. These cards hold interesting and possibly unique information. These cards continue to be scanned and will, at some point be available as a resource in the ARC.

Maps: The stock has grown this year with a sizable donation. This stock is being indexed. The index will be added to the existing ARC stock lists.

The team have been unable to support various open days and Fairs due to Covid19 restrictions.

ARC Team, arc@glamfhs.org.uk

9. PROJECT REPORT

The Society continues to operate without a formal Projects Officer, while this is disappointing it remains a positive fact that projects in the branches and main society are continuing to support activities. Any member interesting in this role should be aware that support and training will be available.

Covid19 has affected the project work with volunteers being unable to meet or work together. A few volunteers have continued working from home where that has been possible. Centrally, work on the publication stock to address GDPR [data protection] requirements continues to be the main focus of activity. Recoding of the stock is nearing completion and should make volunteers work with sales much easier.

The ARC report will outline any other activities that have continued. Branch reports will identify any project activity being continued/ carried out locally.

Nancy Thomas, projects@glamfhs.org.uk

10. EVENTS REPORT

As far as the normal face to face Fairs are concerned there is nothing to report this year as everything was cancelled from April 2020 due to the Covid virus. We also had to cancel our Family History Fair in Merthyr for 2020 and it was decided not to go ahead with a Fair in 2021 as the situation is so uncertain. We hope that we will be lucky in 2022. Time will tell.

However, thanks to Zoom our events moved online from Autumn 2020 and full details of these are included in the Cardiff & Vale Branch report. We thank our Committee Members, volunteers and speakers that have made this possible. It has proved so popular, with many talks being sold out with 100 participants, that it is hoped to continue with such 'virtual' sessions even when we return to holding our regular meetings, since it has enabled non-local and overseas members the chance to get involved in these meetings.

Other Societies have also held online and 'virtual' fairs and we have taken part in two run by The Family History Show Online with thanks to the volunteers who manned our 'stand' and provided help and guidance on these occasions.

More online events are planned for Spring and Summer 2021 including a Virtual Family History Fair run by the Federation, 'The Really Useful Show' on April 10th. Details can be found in our quarterly journal and in our monthly Newsletter.

Jane Jones, event@glamfhs.org.uk

11. JOURNAL/EDITOR'S REPORT

2020, to use an overworked phrase, has been a year like no other that any of us can remember. We have been isolated, segregated and kept apart from our friends and family in ways undreamed of to date in our society, and many of us have suffered illness and loss.

If there has been a bright side, it has shown itself in the ways people have delved into their family history and memory chests, and put together a truly eclectic mix of people places and events that have made fascinating reading.

Our March edition went out before much was known about the pandemic and our contributions came about the sporting stories we asked for, not just about the big events and famous stars, but the small community events and little-known sports that bring people together in difficult times- some intriguing events.

Our June edition was open to any and every theme, as well as an update for the arrangements for meetings if the virus continued to infect, which of course it did. The stories we had included one about the crowdfunding for a Spitfire, which seemed very appropriate for the year 2020, the 75th anniversary of the ending of WW2. There was also a poignant story of a member's father who had walked through the frozen wastes of Poland after being freed from the PoW camp he had been held in.

Barry was the theme for September's issue, no. 139, and there were again some war-related items as well as a famous artist, a clock, and even a ghost! One of our members delved into his family tree and entitled his article 'Lockdown- What did I do?', and it was a typical example of what members were doing under the enforced confinement at home.

For December we thought we could not ignore what was going on in the wider realms of society and throughout the year we have seen civil unrest over the inequalities apparent for Black and Mixed- Race people, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. We therefore thought it appropriate to open the Journal to stories by, from, and about Black and Mixed-Race people in Glamorgan. In response we had a wealth of material about Wales' part in the slave trade, from contemporary official records, personal diaries, and family accounts. There was also an item on the statues, road names, and memorials that have been named after Welsh slave owners notorious for their cruelty, some of which are being torn down or replaced. We were also able to garner a collection of references that we hoped would be followed up by readers wanting to know more.

Therefore an exciting and varied year, despite the pandemic, and it seems that readers have enjoyed what has been published.

2021 for the Journal seems just as promising, starting with a London Welsh edition in March, courtesy of Anna Brueton of the London Branch of the Welsh Family Histories Association. A wide variety of subjects! Thereafter, no particular theme for June as we have a number of articles waiting to be printed- however, suggestions for theme subjects are always welcome.

Once again we must thank all our contributors who have taken the time and made efforts to send in their stories- long may it continue!

Meanwhile, let us look forward to some happier times this year!

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

12. WEBSITE REPORT

Last year's report described the recent additions to the website and the fact that a lack of volunteers had hindered progress. With the coming of the pandemic and the closure of our meeting venues Society members near and far began to rely on online resources. We commenced using Zoom to hold monthly Executive Committee Meetings from April onwards and everyone had to learn a new skill to ensure administration of the Society continued to be undertaken effectively. Mailchimp Newsletter training was also undertaken via Zoom which resulted in it being possible to send out regular Society and Branch newsletters to keep members updated while the Aberkenfig Resource Centre and branches remained closed.

By the autumn as the local and national lockdowns continued we were ready to go further and offer online talks, brickwall and coffee and chat sessions to our wider online community both in Wales, the UK and overseas. This was and continues to be a wonderful opportunity to get all our members involved. We held our first General Meeting online in November, which had 50 participants, more than has attended such a meeting for a long time.

With our thanks to the Cardiff & Vale Branch for getting the monthly online sessions up and running and providing us all with a new way of communicating. It is to be hoped that this will continue to be part of how we interact with our members in the years to come and is one of the very few unforeseen advantages of the 2020 pandemic.

With the current and continuing lack of a Society Treasurer there is further need for volunteer help with the website as Finance administration takes priority. A team approach would be preferable and job descriptions for some of the roles needed to update and service the website have been included in the journal and online including volunteers to:

- Update membership details and payments;
- Upload exchange journals;
- Update journal archive;
- Develop a new facility whereby members can upload and edit their members interests.

Volunteers do not need to be local to South Wales nor based in the UK.

Sue Hamer, website@glamfhs.org.uk

13. BRANCH REPORTS

13.1 ABERDARE & CYNON VALLEY

We hope all our members are keeping safe and well. 2020 certainly turned out to be a very difficult year for everyone.

We had hoped to restart our meetings, but return to lockdown made it impossible. Various dates were looked at to hold our AGM but return to lockdown and the museum being closed made this impossible.

The year started off well, we had a new venue and had some very good guest speakers attended our meetings, unfortunately as for everyone else Covid-19 seen an end to our plans.

As we were unable to hold our AGM the current branch committee agreed to remain in their current positions as follow

Chair- vacant position

Vice chair – Wendy Bennett

Secretary – Pat Rees

Meetings and Social – Haydn Williams

Projects – David Barnard

Treasurer – David Barnard is holding this position on a temporary basis due to the resignation of Margaret Rees.

We are very grateful to David for stepping into this position enabling us to submit our Branch Accounts. Also I represent the branch as a branch trustee on the Executive Committee for the Society.

We are very grateful to our members who continued to work on the Brynngaer Cemetery project last year which is now coming to an end. We have other projects which we are hoping to start this year information on these will be sent out to members once we are allowed to meet up again.

However In the meantime as we are unable to re-commence our meetings if any one requires help with their research please do not hesitate to contact me on the e-mail address below.

We look forward to the time when we can meet up again, in the meantime keep safe everyone, hope to see you soon.

Pat Rees, aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

13.2 BRIDGEND

This has been a very different year for everyone and I hope we find you keeping safe and well. We had a good start and were able to have a few very interesting speakers at our meetings from October to February. The January social event was well attended and very enjoyable for all those who were able to attend. However, since cancelling the March meeting we find we are no closer to reopening and getting back to normal.

We continue to send our monthly Mailchimp emails to update members on events and changes, small as they are. There have been quite a few on-line meetings and events which have been highlighted in the emails, although I am not sure how many of our members have been able to take advantage of these.

The Society Executive Committee meets via video conferencing monthly to maintain Society activities. The Branch Committee has met in this way and we hope to hold our AGM meeting through this medium.

The branch supported the October 2019 Society Fair in Merthyr Tydfil where we had volunteers staffing a research table and the ARC sales tables. This day was well attended and the specialist talks were felt to be most useful.

We still subscribe to a notice in the Seaside News publication which will be used along with the Society website, Mailchimp emails and Facebook to alert members when we are able to re-schedule monthly meetings.

It is with sadness we have to report that we have lost a regular and well-liked member, Wendy Lewis earlier this year, our thoughts are with her family. On a happier note, we were able to send a card to a founding member of the Bridgend Branch, Dilys Morgan who celebrated her 100th Birthday, we hope she has many more ahead.

We look forward to seeing you all as soon as we can reopen and meet again.

The committee was re-elected for the forthcoming year at our online AGM in October 2020:

Chairperson:	Nancy Thomas
Secretary:	Vicky Salmon
Treasurer Team:	Sue Tiller, Liz Krolzig & Nancy Thomas
Programme:	Paul Jones
Library:	Liz Krolzig
Membership:	Sue Tiller
Projects:	Nancy Thomas
Committee Members:	Mari Morgan

Confirming that the EC representative for this coming year is: Sue Tiller.

Nancy Thomas, bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

13.3 CARDIFF AND VALE BRANCH

As I sit and reflect on the past twelve months, I am struggling to remember what life was like before we had to wear a face mask when out shopping, standing 2 metres apart for a conversation and the need to always have hand sanitizer somewhere easily accessible. When the World Health Organisation declared that COVID-19 was a pandemic on 11th March 2020 the focus of the world shifted. We have had lockdowns, fire breaks, an introduction of the Tier system, 'Track and Trace', support bubbles, restrictions in travel, the ongoing sense of loss from not being easily able to see loved family members and our friends. However, now we have hope with the beginnings of a vaccination programme that might just mean at some point in 2021 we might be able to meet again in person. Perhaps you have spent the last year working on your family tree or recording your feelings and observations about the pandemic for your future descendants or sorting through and labelling family photographs.

Why do I mention all this when this is really a review of the branch activities? It is because I want to take this opportunity to thank the Cardiff branch committee members, who, not just coping with the ever-ongoing stresses and strains of life in the 'new norm' still give of their time, knowledge and skills to make the branch and its activities function.

Our last in-person evening branch meeting was held on Tuesday 3rd March in Stable Room 1, Insole Court, Llandaff, Cardiff where we managed to squeeze 35 people in to hear Elizabeth Knight, Assistant Coroner, South Wales Central. The pandemic meant that the speaker programme for April to July was cancelled. However, as a branch committee we decided that that we would restart our monthly Tuesday evening talks online via Zoom. We also introduced two additional opportunities to meet, learn and share knowledge. Firstly, a Saturday 'Brickwall' series in lieu of the monthly free advice sessions at Cardiff Central Library Hub run by Nick Davey. These Saturday sessions are a bit different as we have a specific subject focus and contributions are from number of members. Secondly, our Thursday evening "Coffee and Chat" family history is an opportunity to chat in a small group and as a result many of us have an ever-growing list of new website leads or ideas to follow. The theme of the chat is often a reflection of the Saturday brickwall session topic, however in November we discussed family history software programmes with lots of very helpful input from all the participants who used a wide range of programmes.

As a committee we have decided that we will continue to run our speaker programme online certainly up to July 2021. We are aware that from some of our members they are missing out on the opportunity to participate. For our members further away however, the online meetings have meant they have been able to join in the Society's activities perhaps for the first time ever.

Activities

Our Tuesday evening speaker programme has included: -

- Rachel Knight (Assistant Coroner for South Wales Central) - *'The work of HM Coroner'*.
- Jenni Phillips - *'Scrofula, Scarlet Fever and Sudden Visitations: how did our Victorian ancestors die?'*
- Sue Hamer – *'Online family history opportunities during lockdown including the GFHS website and member resources'*
- Katharine Fairhurst - *'An Insight into Wills and Probate'*
- Jeremy Konsbruck – *'Stars in Battledress'*
- Dean Powell - *'History of the Hilltop' (Llantrisant)*

We now have over 400 followers on the branch Twitter account and you can follow us on @Cardiff_GFHS. The account is used to advertise the meetings and other family history events and resources.

Our planned 2020 visits to the National Library of Wales and the Cardiff Jewish Reform Synagogue were inevitably cancelled. With the ongoing uncertainty it might well be 2022 before we are able to finally make those visits.

Branch AGM

The branch AGM was held via Zoom on 6th October with 23 members attending. Graham Read decided not to re stand for the committee.

The following members were elected to the committee: -

Jane Graves – Branch Chair and Society Branch Trustee

Treasurer – Stephen Fairhurst

Committee members – Diane Brook, Sue Hamer, Ann Konsbruck and Jenni Phillips

Programme co-ordinators - Sandra Robinson, Sian Stenner and Jane Graves.

Co-opted member – Nick Davey

Thanks to Graham Read for his contribution to the committee over many years.

Sully branch

The last meeting held at Sully before the pandemic was a visit to Glamorgan Archives to view the local collection of Valuation Office Survey records (1910-1915). The survey took place as a result of the 1909-1910 Finance Act which provided for the levy and collection of a duty on land in the United Kingdom based on any increased value. The records comprise 'working' office copies of plans and 'fieldbooks' held at local archives and the final copies held at the National Archives Kew when the valuation was completed.

From March 2020 onwards our normal meetings venue at the Old School, Sully was closed and was replaced by the Coffee and Chat sessions held on the third Thursday each month. We continue to review the situation but it is not likely that we shall return to the Old School until at least the Autumn 2021.

Jane Graves, cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk

13.4 MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

We hope that everyone and their families are keeping well in these difficult times.

The Merthyr Tydfil Branch were fortunate in having an excellent meeting on March 10th 2020 when Robert Haines showed his award-winning film, however, in many ways it seemed a harbinger of things to come as Soar allowed us to use the theatre itself and we were more or less social distancing already in the larger space! Afterwards everything closed down. Fortunately, the Cafe in Soar opened when Welsh Government regulations allowed and a few of us met up in Soar in July, or rather on an outside table. We decided to have a meeting in October as most members wanted a meeting and were not interested in zoom. Soar was agreeable, following a deep clean, they had everything necessary in place and Carl Llewellyn, a very popular speaker generously agreed to give a talk. However, there was soon a rapid change of plan due to the rule of 6 and the local lockdown in Merthyr Tydfil.

A meeting seemed unlikely in 2020 but the Merthyr Branch has to come clean and admit to having had an AGM and meeting on the 8th of December. We were only able to do this as we meet in Canolfan Soar, the Welsh Centre in the town centre that includes a theatre, café bar, and flexible meeting and conference facilities. Soar had already successfully hosted meetings after lockdown following very strict rules and procedures. We were not able to advertise our meeting as numbers had to be very limited, members were invited who had expressed a wish to attend a meeting in person. Hand sanitisers were used entering the building and also entering the room, which was twice the normal size as Soar opened the partition walls and placed all chairs well apart. The AGM was remarkably brief, (mask wearing doesn't encourage questions), confirming no change in the committee and circulating an account of healthy branch finances. We were fortunate in having a wonderful, well-illustrated talk by Carl Llewellyn on the Italians in Wales and Merthyr Tydfil in particular. Carl had undertaken a great deal of research and his talk was very popular, one of his very best and he has many excellent talks. When the Berni family were prosecuted in the 1890s for selling ice cream on a Sunday in December the judge dismissed the case laughing that the people of Merthyr were very hardy to eat ice cream on an exceptionally cold

winter day. The two ladies in their nineties greatly enjoyed the talk, even with all windows wide open in December, showing that Merthyr people are still robust and capable of enduring the cold!

Under present circumstances there can be no settled plans to hold another meeting, however, like other societies who hold their meetings in Soar, the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society, the WEA and the Opera Appreciation Society etc., we hope to resume talks after Easter. We are grateful to the staff in Soar for their considerate, thoughtful and professional service.

We are progressing with the Merthyr Tydfil obituaries and checking from 1910 to 1930. Andrea Heggie and Michael Donovan are working hard on this project and other members are equally working hard on research and, hopefully, future talks. We fully expect some really good talks when these are possible again.

Committee Elected December 2020

Secretary: Suzanne Doolan

Chairperson: Carolyn Jacob

Treasurer: Viv Pugh

Programme: Carolyn Jacob

Project Team: Andrea Heggie, Michael Donovan

Carolyn Jacob, merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

13.5 PONTYPRIDD AND RHONDDA BRANCH

This is going to be a totally different report to those of previous years. That is because we only had one meeting in 2020! That was David Maddox in January. He spoke on Pontypridd under Siege in 1910. Just after that meeting, the Pontypridd Museum where we hold our meetings was flooded. The basement in particular was severely damaged, and unfortunately a lot of museum artefacts were lost. Although we lost some of our papers, our books were stored on higher shelves and were saved. A lot of work was needed to be carried out afterwards but unfortunately Covid 19 landed on our doorsteps and repairs had to be halted. Some have now been carried out and at last they have heating, but they do not expect to be up and running until at least April/May. But it all depends of the Covid situation.

Our proposed meetings had to be cancelled and although we had a few other venues recommended, we were unable to take up the offers due to all the restrictions imposed on us because of the virus.

We emailed those branch members who live in the area for our AGM and we had 20 replies confirming their agreement to the committee members who are as follows: -

Chairman	-	Michael Jones
Vice Chairman	-	David Shewring
Treasurer	-	Creighton Sims
Secretary	-	Jane Jones
Projects/Research	-	Deborah Cooke
Librarian	-	Jan Johnson
Publicity	-	Neil Gazzard

Committee Members

Angela Hughes

Eira Morgan

John Phillips

Ryland Williams

Branch Representative to the Executive Committee – Creighton Sims

Jane Jones, pontypridd@glamfhs.org.uk

13.6 SWANSEA BRANCH

Our AGM in 2019 took place on Monday Oct 8th. Eleven members attended. As anticipated, due to personal circumstances Jeff Coleman wished to lesson his duties and as such resigned as Branch Chairman. We are very grateful for his contribution to the running of the branch, and for sharing his knowledge of researching family history and local history with us all. Jeff has agreed to be a Trustee for the branch. No one was prepared to stand for election as Chairman. The rest of the committee agreed to remain in post.

Following the AGM our speaker was Mr Ivor Rees who gave us an Informative and interesting talk, on local men who all had played important roles in Swansea's industrial, political and religious life. The talk, '5 prominent men from Morriston', covered the careers of John Jones Jenkins, William William, Brynmor Jones, Jeremiah Williams and lastly David Matthews.

Our last speaker of the year was one of our members, Janet Neilsen, who continued with the second part of her talk on 'Blue Plaques in Swansea'. Thanks to Janet we no longer have an excuse for passing these plaques by.

In January 2020 Kim Collis, West Glamorgan Archivist, treated us to a tour of Search Room 2 in the downstairs area of the Archives which is not usually seen by the public. This was followed by his talk on the future of the archives.

In February we held a research meeting open to members and the public in Swansea Central Library.

The March meeting was a talk by Dr Leonard Mars on behalf of the Jewish History Association of South Wales. Unfortunately, the interesting talk was missed by many as only 6 members were present. As it happens this was the last branch meeting to be held before Covid restrictions closed both our usual venues; the Discovery Room in the Library and the County Hall Committee Rooms. Both venues will inform us when the rooms become available.

All speakers who had planned to give us talks were informed of the closures. As the Archives were also closed, the work of the transcription team, was also suspended.

Sadly, we have to report the sudden death of one of our committee members, Sheila Matthews. Sheila was one of the first members of the Swansea branch and has been a loyal member ever since. She was amongst the first to record graveyards. Latterly she was a member of the transcription team and a helper at Open days. We will miss her. Our condolences go to her family.

Sadly, all branch activities are still suspended. Our 2020 AGM was unable to take place. Officers of the branch have been consulted to ascertain if they are willing to continue in post.

C King, swansea@glamfhs.org.uk