

# NEWSFLASH



No 74 April 2006

## The Federation's AGM & General Meeting – Gwent 2006

### A personal view by Marian French

I had planned my visit to Gwent with the same consideration given to any journey driving to where a foreign language is spoken. Somewhat fearful of being lost in an area where I was not able to pronounce the names of my destination, I took the precaution of printing out my route. I also managed to research some local history of an area that I was visiting for the first time. Taking in the view as I crossed the Severn Bridge gave me a taste of the beautiful location where the Annual General Meeting was to be held in. I had discovered that Cwmbran is Welsh for Valley of the Crow and that Croesyceiliog is Welsh for Cross of the Cockerel. I hoped these were not omens of what was to come.

A warm welcome was given by the hosts, Gwent Family History Society. The morning began with coffee, followed by the opening of the event by the President of Gwent FHS, Len Hough, who then introduced the lecture to be given by the FFHS President, Lady Teviot. This was held in the cavernous main hall, overlooked by a gallery, where later we were served with an excellent buffet lunch.

At 1.30pm the AGM was opened by Lady Teviot who invited those present to stand in silence in respect for the loss of Marjorie Moore. It was an extremely moving time for all present who had known this wonderful lady.

The meeting then proceeded with the usual items concerning apologies, minutes, finance, reports, and auditors. The President then thanked the FFHS for their invitation to serve as President for a second term, which she was willing to accept. In the previous five years she had visited 60 different venues worldwide in connection with her own business, and had used these opportunities to promote the Federation. She hoped to continue this during the next five years.

The election then took place for Chairman, and Geoff Riggs was elected unopposed.

Two further Executive Committee Members were proposed, Marian French and Roger Lewry, and both were accepted.

The President thanked Alec Tritton for his hard work, and then declared the AGM closed.

After a short break the new Chairman opened the General



Outgoing Chairman, Alec Tritton and the incoming Chairman, Geoff Riggs, with the President Lady Teviot

Meeting. It was announced that Alec Tritton would now take his place as Managing Director of FFHS Publications.

The Chairman said that he would hold the position of Chairman for two years during which time he perceived himself to be a torch carrier for the Federation.

Following the usual formalities, there was a debate on the planned evolution of *News and Digest*. It was announced that Tom Wood will stand down from his position as Editor in September. He was warmly thanked and congratulated for his past work. After much debate over the viability of continuing *N&D* in its present form it was agreed that it should be replaced along the lines outlined by Alec Tritton in the recently issued document entitled *News and Digest: the way forward*.

Unfortunately due to the length of the debate we missed the 'cutting' of the anniversary cake, but managed to take part in Gwent FHS's 25th Anniversary celebration by having tea and cake with them.

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Your Federation Executive members do many things informally, such as attending various shows and fairs representing and promoting the interests of you our members. During 2006, members of your Federation Executive and the Publications Company will be spending 35 days attending on your behalf such events which will attract 150,000 visitors: raising your profile especially at non-family-history events - meeting all those people who are tracing their family history but who are not members of a family history society and don't even know that societies exist.

Below is the list of events we are attending during the remainder of 2006. At previous events we have been helped by The Association of Family History Societies of Wales; Sussex Family History Group; Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry; and Rugby Family History Group. We would like to thank all concerned. Devon Family History Society has already agreed to help at Hobbycrafts in Exeter. If you have a high level of general family history knowledge and enjoy giving help and advice, and would like to come to help us at any of these events please contact Maggie Loughran (contact details page 8) for more information. Attending one of these non-family-history events is an experience not to be missed as this is a largely untapped 'market'.

A full list of known Family History Fairs, events and activities can be found on the online calendar of GENEVA (GENealogical Events and Activities) <<http://geneva.weald.org.uk/>>. This is a free service where you are encouraged to put your events online to reach all those people who are not members of your society.

| EVENT DATE     | EVENT  | EVENT DESCRIPTION                          | ATTENDANCE |
|----------------|--|--|------------|
| 29 Apr         | SoG Show (London)  | Family History Show                        | 2,000      |
| 29 Apr - 1 May | Weald of Kent Craft Show<br>Penshurst Place<br>(Hobbycrafts Event) | Tented Craft Show                          | 20,000     |
| 24 Jun         | Yorkshire Fair<br>(York racecourse)                                | Family History Show                        | 1,500      |
| 20 - 23 July   | Papercraft Expo (London)   | Paper Crafts show                          | 16,000     |
| 12 - 13 Aug    | Festival of Living History<br>Kelmarsh Hall, Northants             | English Heritage's<br>Living History event | 15,000     |
| 1 - 5 Sep      | Beds & Northants FHS<br>Conference & FFHS GM                       | Time Village<br>Family History Fair        | 1,500      |
| 9 Sep          | The National Family History<br>Fair, Gateshead                     | Family History Show                        | 2,200      |
| 21 - 24 Sep    | Hobbycrafts (Exeter)   | Hobbycrafts Event                          | 12,000     |
| 9 - 12 Nov     | Hobbycrafts NEC<br>(Birmingham)                                    | Hobbycrafts Event                          | 45,500     |
| 17 - 19 Nov    | Hobbycrafts (Cardiff)  | Hobbycrafts Event                          | 9,500      |



Why not take a few moments to place YOUR event on to this site?

## Burial law and policy in the 21st century

The results of the Burial law and policy in the 21st century consultation of 2004 were released on 7 April 2006. The following points were highlighted:

"There is widespread public support for reforming and modernising the burial system," state responses published today to a Government consultation.

Nearly 400 responses were received to the consultation paper *Burial law and policy in the 21st century: the need for a sensitive and sustainable approach*, published in January 2004.

A new guide for burial ground managers aimed at improving standards for the bereaved and the wider public and community, was also published by Constitutional Affairs Minister Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP.

The consultation responses showed support for:

- \* The re-use of old graves, although with mixed reaction from practitioners and the public;
- \* Consistent law relating to burial practice and procedures to ensure that there was better understanding of the requirements and improved compliance with the regulations;
- \* Local authorities keeping local needs under review and ensuring adequate and diverse facilities are available where possible; and
- \* An independent burial inspectorate that would undertake limited and specific burial ground inspections.

The Government will work with the burial industry to bring forward practical and affordable proposals to modernise the way in which burial grounds are provided, regulated, and maintained and how burials and exhumations should be conducted.

Ms Harman said:

"The responses indicated general support for modernisation of our burial laws, including a more consistent approach, the need for adequate burial facilities and the ability to make best use of old burial grounds.

"I will consider the case for enabling the re-use of old burial grounds, seeking a balance between the interests of relatives and descendants and the wider needs of the local community."

The *Burial Ground Managers' Guide*, which has been produced with the assistance of professional and representative burial organisations, draws together general but relevant advice and will help raise standards, stimulate

improved levels of service and promote more consistent practice across the different sectors.

The Guide will not replace existing sector-specific guidance, but will help to draw attention to sources of further information and training opportunities.

Specifically, the Guide aims to:

- \* ensure that burial managers are familiar with burial law;
  - \* develop consistent services and standards for the bereaved and the community, for example in the way records are kept and relevant information is provided ; and
  - \* promote appreciation of the burial grounds as a place for commemoration, and as a historical and cultural heritage site with links to local groups.
- The Guide also advises burial managers to give consideration to providing areas for people of a common faith to be buried if there is a need, and asks them to proactively seek the requirements of local faith communities to gauge demand.

Ms Harman added:

"The Guide brings together best practice that already exists in various different forms. It enables burial ground managers to have a standardised way of dealing with burials and bereaved families.

"It also enables families to know what services they should get from their local cemetery and how to make a complaint if something goes wrong."

**For more information:**

1. *Burial law and policy in the 21st century: the need for a sensitive and sustainable approach* can be found at <http://www.dca.gov.uk/consult/2006.htm>
2. The *Burial Ground Managers' Guide* can be found at <http://www.dca.gov.uk/corbur/buriafr.htm>
3. Background on the consultation and FFHS response can be found at <http://www.ffhs.org.uk/Societies/Liaison/BurialLaw.htm>

**The consultation responses showed support for: the re-use of old graves, although with mixed reaction from practitioners and the public**

### Articles for Newsflash

Does your Society have an article which would help other Societies to reduce their costs?

Please send to either the Administrator at [admin@ffhs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ffhs.org.uk)

or the Editor at [newsflash@ffhs.org.uk](mailto:newsflash@ffhs.org.uk)

Deadline dates:

For June edition 2006 May 31 2006

For August edition 2006 July 31 2006

## The FFHS Finance Working Group

### Gordon Adshead, FFHS Finance Director

Without doubt, life for the treasurers of family history societies is getting tougher. We are not just faced with constantly changing and conflicting government legislation, but the Internet has made a major impact on the role and economics of our societies. There is much we can share and learn from each other to better understand these trends. Following the Think Tank and a call at the last General Meeting, the Finance Working Group was set up in October with six members.

The principal objectives were to identify concerns, to quantify trends, and to establish mechanisms to share solutions and methods to help our member societies.

I thank the group for helping to set up what proved to be a very successful Finance Seminar and to set in motion a basis for quantifying trends and establishing a written set of notes on the Federation website that will be of great use to all societies.

## FFHS Finance Seminar - Saturday 4 March 2006

### David Williams, FFHS Finance Officer

For the Finance Seminar in London 53 members signed up, representing 35 member societies. Apart from society treasurers there were 15 chairmen or trustees and three invited expert speakers. Attendees had come from all parts of the country.

The day was chaired by the Federation's Finance Director, Gordon Adshead, in a calm and authoritative manner. He introduced the work of the Finance Working Group and the scope of family history societies' activities and reminded attendees that although there were clear threats and challenges, these also gave us opportunities.

Morning presentations were given by Cliff Kemball, treasurer of the Guild of One Name Studies on the Charities Bill and SORP 2005 ('Statement of Recommended Practice') on Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and by John Barnes of Baker Tilley on VAT for Charities.

Although both these sessions were nominally directed at charities, there were important things for all member societies to consider, not least to rehearse the arguments for or against registering as a charity or for VAT.

Because the Charities Bill is still to go through Parliament (it is expected to become an Act later this year) when the Act is passed it will probably provide a subject for further discussion at a future seminar. It is clear that the Charities Commission will be tightening up the monitoring of the activities of its registered charities and that member societies who are charities will have to be in a position to demonstrate the achievement of their stated objectives in education and public benefit. Cliff finished the first part of his talk by reprising the benefits of registering as a charity, in particular the ability of societies to recover tax paid by its members through Gift Aid.

In the second part of his presentation, Cliff went through the new requirements of the SORP, illustrating the changes to the Trustees' Report and the presentation of the Accounts. Although specific to charities, the requirements represent examples of best practice for any non-profit making bodies and so could be adopted by many of our member societies.

All member societies, whether or not registered for VAT, have to be aware of the VAT regulations and benefits affecting non-profit organisations and these were clearly set out by John Barnes. John explained the requirements for registration and the way to register, the effect on subscription income, the rules for exemption or partial exemption and how to treat fund-raising. He distributed a matrix illustrating the different tax liabilities which might fall on the income of a charity.

Both presentations in the morning provoked lively and searching questions and comments from the attendees, which had to be cut short as time was running out.

After an informal buffet lunch, which provided the opportunity to continue questions and discussions, Mike Powell of Sayer Powell & Co Ltd, the Federation's insurance brokers, assisted by his colleague John Lowe, gave a summary of some of the issues and concerns surrounding the subject of insurance for our member societies. He emphasised the need for communication between his firm, the Federation and the member societies and gave reassurance on some issues, such as the level of public liability insurance, participation in special events and the

position of members over 75 years of age, all of which are prominent amongst matters raised by societies. He also gave advice on how to treat helpers and employees for insurance purposes.

David Williams, the Finance Officer of the Federation, then gave two short presentations covering the results of the Members Finance Questionnaire and the progress so far on the Treasurers' Handbook. These projects are described below.

Gordon Adshead concluded the day by thanking the speakers for their presentations and Maggie Loughran for the faultless administration of the day. He reiterated the challenges facing the Federation and the member societies, in particular the potential squeeze on subscriptions in the future.

The seminar appears to have been very well received by the attendees many of whom had contributed greatly to the discussion. The returned appraisal forms showed a very high level of approval for all the presentations.

## The Treasurers' Questionnaire

David Williams summarised the results of the short questionnaire for treasurers which had been sent out with the 2006 subscription and insurance renewal papers. The objective was to obtain quantification and to enable the Federation to better understand the structures of its member societies and to get an indication of their perceptions of future trends. There had been a high response, almost 60%, and it was representative of the whole membership. The results indicated that over half of our members are registered as charities and about one in seven, all large ones, have voluntarily registered for VAT. Looking to the future, perceptions of trends varied widely but, in general, larger societies were pessimistic about future sales of publications and books and, especially, membership numbers, while the smaller societies remained relatively optimistic about both. A summary of the results, broken down by size of Society is available on the FFHS website.

## The Treasurers' Handbook

David's second presentation was to review progress on the updating of the Treasurers' Handbook. He explained that the old one, last issued in 1997, was now largely outdated. He explained that the working group was recommending that the new handbook should reflect the experience and expertise of all the member societies, that it should be web based, on the Federation website, addressed to all treasurers and include examples and pro formas.

A number of draft chapters had been issued to attendees in advance. David highlighted some of the more important or controversial features of these and there was a useful discussion which provided some excellent suggestions for other chapter headings. There was a general consensus that the working group's recommendations were the way to progress and a clear mandate was given to go ahead on those lines.

Feedback on the readability of the initial chapters has been very favourable. Any comments or suggestions for improvement together with suggestions for other topics of concern will be most welcomed by David Williams ([finance.officer@ffhs.org.uk](mailto:finance.officer@ffhs.org.uk)). Equally it is stressed that this is very much a joint project and any offers to write a chapter will be warmly welcomed.

## FFHS Finance Downloads

All the presentations from the Finance Seminar were immediately mounted on the Federation's website:-  
[www.ffhs.org.uk/Societies/Guidance/finance.htm](http://www.ffhs.org.uk/Societies/Guidance/finance.htm)

Much additional finance material is also available via this URL, covering the bulletins and background insurance information from our brokers Sayer Powell, the results of the finance questionnaire and the various chapters of the Treasurers' Handbook.

## Royal Mail To Change The Way It Charges For Postage

Postage costs are all too often the last thing on an editor's mind when pulling together a publication, which is a shame as, with a little thought and consultation, great savings can be made. I'll talk about these savings a little later but everyone should be aware that Royal Mail charges for postage will change on August 21 this year.

Basically, from August 2006 the way postage is priced will take into account size as well as weight. These changes will fundamentally affect the costs incurred in sending out your correspondence or newsletters and it is important to consider what these changes will mean to you since small changes now could prevent significant price increases from this date.

As an example:

Currently the 2nd class price to send out a 60g C4 envelope is 23p; but from August this will change to 37p whereas, if the mailing can be altered to fit into a 240 x 165mm envelope, the price would remain at 23p.

In brief, the changes can be summarised as follows:

Most letters, bills, postcards and some catalogues and brochures will be classed as "letters", the maximum size of which will be 240mm x 165mm x 5mm thick. The maximum weight of a "letter" will be 100grams. So a typical family history magazine of 64 pages with a four-page cover and perhaps a 20-page news section currently costing 62p for 2nd class postage would cost 55p from August.

A "large letter" will generally cover unfolded letters, magazines and documents and CDs / DVDs. The maximum size for "large letters" is 353mm x 250mm and 25mm thick. The maximum weight of a "large letter" will be 750 grams.

Anything larger than a "large letter" will be classed as a "packet".

These examples are purely for illustration, but what I am trying to emphasise here is that it would be advisable to consider what these changes are going to mean to the costs involved in distributing your publication and possibly altering the size of your publication. In our case our costs will actually fall but for many others there may be significant rises.

Some time ago I recognised the fact that I was spending far too much time and energy in enclosing and sending out our publication (*The Berkshire Family Historian*). A friend suggested that we use the services of a mailing agency and, following their advice, we contacted a company called SOLO Mailing Services in Reading to see if they would be able to help us. Not only were they able to do the enclosing and mailing but they also managed to save us over half the postage costs.

'These changes will fundamentally affect the costs incurred in sending out your Journal'

Currently we pay Royal Mail approximately 30p per item for our 296 x 210mm 161grams publication to be sent 2nd class as opposed to the normal rate of 61p. We expect to pay from August, using the Royal Mail Presstream Service, around 27p per item.

Presstream is a service which offers publishers significant savings for presenting their mail in a pre-defined order according to a potential 1400-way split. The sorting should be done at the address printing stage which is usually best handled by a mailing agency.

Many of you may already hold a Royal Mail contract such as Mailsort (sorting by postcode) or less likely Presstream. We use Presstream, registering as a publisher, which gives us

the lowest possible pricing. You may even use the services of a mailing agency, but for those of you who do not, may I suggest that you consider this as a viable and cost-saving possibility? Mailing agencies are experts in their field and can advise you on the best possible despatch method for your mailing. If your mailings are similar to those of *The Berkshire Family Historian* then it is highly

likely that you would qualify for a Royal Mail Presstream Account which would allow you access to the sort of postal discounts that we enjoy. There is, of course, a trade off: in return for the generously discounted postal rate the mailing has to be sorted into a pre-defined order before submission to Royal Mail. The level of sorting is beyond our capability which is where our mailing agency stepped in. A charge is obviously made for their services but this is offset by the postage savings and the fact that we do not have to enclose the mailing ourselves!

The variants are too great to be covered here as the situation changes according to the weight and size of the mail piece. So, what is correct for an item weighing 60grams may not be correct for an item weighing 100grams. The situation was further complicated by the fact that in April of this year Royal Mail prices once again changed, putting an even greater burden on small family history societies. It is for this reason that I suggest contacting a mailing agency as I once did.

Details of the mailing agency that we use can be found at [www.solo-uk.com](http://www.solo-uk.com) and I have found them to be friendly, scrupulously honest and very, very helpful."

John Gurnett,

former editor of *The Berkshire Family Historian*

## "FOOTSTEPS TO THE FUTURE" UPDATE SEMINAR

Saturday 25 November 2006 10:30 -16:30

Hughes Parry Hall, University of London, Cartwright Gardens, WC1H 9EF

Following the highly successful "Footsteps to the Future" Weekend Conference in June 2005, it was agreed that the FFHS would hold a follow-up Seminar. This was to update the attendees on the progress made to date in implementing the Conference's recommendations and to present the Federation's further plans for the future based on those recommendations.

All the original attendees at that Conference, together with representatives from any other regional groups that may not have been able to attend in June 2005, are to be invited back to attend this follow-up Seminar, which is being arranged at the above venue.

Further details will be published at a later date but, in the meantime, please reserve this date in your diary now, if applicable.



*Bedfordshire & Northamptonshire Family History Societies  
in association with the Federation of Family History Societies*

## ***Putting Flesh on the Bones***

International Conference

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> to Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

University of Northampton

Bookings for the Conference are going really well so don't leave it too late if you want to join us for all or part of the event. If you would like further details about the talks and speakers then do have a look at our website which is continually being updated with more information.

And don't forget the Time Village and Fair on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Again, space is filling up fast so please book as soon as possible if your Society wishes to attend. As well as local and family history societies and trade stands, the National Archives and Family Records Centre, Ancestry.com and our local Record Offices are also attending.

The Time Village will bring history to life with living history demonstrations and re-enactments. We've got Tudor Cookery, Servants in a Tudor house, Medieval Pottery, Musicians, Spinners, Weavers and Dyers, Lacemakers, the English Civil War Society and much more.

Visit our website for more details.

[www.conference2006.org.uk](http://www.conference2006.org.uk)

### **Channel 4 Television series - THE FACE OF BRITAIN**

Imagine if a simple DNA test could show that you're descended from a Viking warrior, a Saxon farmer or Norman invader. This is what a pioneering project by Oxford University and the Wellcome Foundation plans to do for the whole of the UK; and Channel 4 is going to follow the entire process.

This new Channel 4 series is called THE FACE OF BRITAIN and the programme production company Wag TV is currently seeking families who know a lot about their family history but would like to delve even deeper and have their DNA tested

to reveal their ancient roots.

To qualify, you and at least two generations of your family must come from one of the following regions: Cornwall, Devon, Pembrokeshire, Oxfordshire, Kent, Sussex, Northumbria, Cumbria, Orkney.

If you would be happy to have a simple DNA test and have your family history delved into on television, then please contact Wag TV as soon as possible. Email [dnauk@wagtv.com](mailto:dnauk@wagtv.com) or call Sorrel on 0207 688 2166.

### **NEW FROM FFHS PUBLICATIONS**

**9105** - *My Family Tree Book*, a children's activity book which has sold remarkably well at the NEC Hobbycraft Fair, which we hope will introduce the next generation of family historians to our addictive pastime.

*The Family Tree Maker* software badged with the "Who Do You Think You Are" logo. This includes the basic software at £9.99 and the Deluxe version which has a full printed User Manual to using the software, three UK Data CDs covering English Parish Records, Scottish Parish Records and a Sampler of the 1851 UK Census as well as family tree printouts and video clips of the 10 celebrities featured in the first series. We are selling this at a special price of £24.99, with 15% discount to FFHSs.

We have also just received **2042C** - *Tracing your Irish Ancestors* - 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by John Grenham which updates and improves the material already included,

while adding new sources which have emerged since publication of the second edition in 1998.

#### **Further new titles include:-**

**8060** - *Easy Family History* - David Annal from TNA, the stress-free guide to family history. A leading family history expert takes you through the information sources: family documents, official records, websites and much more.

**8059** - *Tracing your Second World War Ancestors* - Simon Fowler. Enthusiasm for research into the part played by our ancestors in the Second World War has never been greater.

**Coming soon from The Federation we will have 2046** - *Tracing Prison Ancestors*, two titles in the new Military History Series covering the Crimean and Zulu wars are imminent, and *Introducing Family History* from Stuart Raymond is hoped to be launched at the SOG fair.

**Ron Eyre, FFHS Publications**

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Next edition of  
*Newsflash* -  
June 2006

## PUBLICITY and PROMOTION SEMINAR

Saturday 28 October 2006  
Central Hall Westminster, London  
10:30 – 16:30

Promoting your society successfully is becoming an increasingly important aspect for every committee. There is the ongoing need to contact the general public in order to increase both your membership and the attendance at your meetings, seminars and courses. And there is the need to make the local and national media aware of who you are and what you are doing, and to keep it up to date with every newsworthy happening.

This exciting seminar will look at several essential aspects of publicity and promotion and include time for discussion and analysis of the subjects covered.

Full programme details will be in the next *Newsflash*, but put the date in your diary now.



### Reminder Have you remembered to fill in your Survey?

Please complete your survey and send it to the address given in the survey paper by 1 August 2006.

The survey was sent with *Newsflash* 73

Thank you to all individuals and societies who have replied.

### Are you passionate about tracing your family history?

Are you discovering your ancestral line leads you across the Atlantic?

CHANNEL 4's brand new genealogy documentary is looking for great characters with great stories who would love to track down long lost family from the United States.

If you would like to know more call Alex Lind on 0207 284 2020 or e-mail [Alexlind@TwentyTwenty.tv](mailto:Alexlind@TwentyTwenty.tv) or contact Alex at Twenty Twenty TV, 20 Kentish Town Road, London, NW1 9NX.

## STOP PRESS

Editing and Publishing Seminar  
Nuthall Temple Community Centre,  
Nottingham, NG16 1DP

3 June 2006

The aim of this seminar is to bring together Editors, aspiring Editors and any interested parties of our Member Societies providing a valuable learning opportunity from each other as problems faced and issues presented are discussed under the guidance of the Editor of the Guild of One-Name Studies Journal. It is open to any family historian who wishes to know more or improve their skills in the subject.

There is a small charge of £10 to cover lunch & refreshments.

Please see enclosed Booking Form with this issue

### BBC Timewatch: The Influenza Epidemic of 1918

Timewatch is the BBC's flagship history series - we are currently making a programme looking at the 1918 Influenza epidemic.

If you know that your family was significantly affected by influenza in 1918, then we'd like to hear from you. It might be that you have parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles who died or were orphaned as a result of it - or that you've discovered family archive or an interesting family story about it. We would also like to hear from anyone who has a family member who might remember the influenza outbreak. If you'd like to get in touch, please contact Emma Parkins, BBC Timewatch on 020 8752 6179, or by email - [emma.parkins@bbc.co.uk](mailto:emma.parkins@bbc.co.uk). The programme is at the early research stage at the moment and all conversations are in complete confidence.

Editors of Member Societies are welcome to use copy from this *Newsflash*