

## The Black Country Society AGM 2021 WEBMASTERS REPORT

Four years ago I took on the task of redesigning the new website for the Black Country Society. The brief had been given to me by James Morgan (Chairman) and I was very pleased to work with James to create a full colour, multi-page, interactive site which not only told the story of how the Society started, but contained information on the history and heritage of the area and at the same time presented up-to-date information on Society News, Talks, Walks and Social Events.

The site is fully searchable and there is an index of magazine 'contents' pages.

Two of the most important areas of the site are the Membership Page and the Gift/Book Shop. These were incorporated with various payment options and although we have had a few glitches, the problems have been resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Over the years the site has changed quite dramatically with an extended MENU bar and drop down reference to pages that facilitate access to everything from BC dialect to 'Potted Histories' of famous BC personalities. The latest addition includes pages of brief biographies on BC Women.

In December 2020 I introduced a number of 'Members Only' pages. These are password protected. The password is published in each issue of the magazine and is sent to all members. The pages initially were populated with quiz, word search and links to BC Poets and other BC creative for entertainment during 'lockdown'.

I anticipate the future content of the Members Only pages should include Society Talks, Walks and Events to separate them for the more general information on the site and encourage online viewers of the site to join the society to view this additional content.

I am currently uploading in pdf format every issue of the Blackcountryman magazine from issue 1 in 1967. This will provide all members with access to view and read a copy of any magazine issue they choose. I anticipate the remaining issues I have that need to be scanned and uploaded will take until the end of 2021 to add to the website pages.

Advertising positions in the form of Banners and Display space is available on all pages across the site. We have a small number of current advertisers but I would suggest that, with a general trend for online purchasing, the society could expand the advertising revenue by encouraging local crafters and businesses to offer their services through the website.

The website was originally designed using templates through the WIX format. This means that there is no computing language to learn and administrators can upload, update and input information with a little practice.

I can see the site will need to be changed during 2022 as the Members Only Pages are given their own priority. There is therefore a need for additional administrators to work on the site to keep it within the society and affordable.

Brian Ridout  
BCS Webmaster