



SussexLink



April 2003

A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

Vol 1 No 2

Annual Conference

This year's Annual Conference at Hassocks was another great success and a fitting end to Murray Hayes 15 years as our Conference Organiser. The event attracted around 150 members, more than in recent years, who were entertained to a sparkling series of lectures covering the delights of Sussex Inns and Pubs, the evolution of the English home, and the value of Manorial Records to Family Historians.

It was probably a little early in the morning for members to really work up a thirst and enjoy any of the Sussex pubs that Janet Pennington described in her account of the history of local Inns and their architecture, a study that has recently gained for her a PhD. Janet's Sussex tour of public hospitality was complemented by John Vigar's account of the private hospitality that was afforded by some of the more substantial houses in England from the beginning of the 17th century onwards, reflected in their architecture and the role of their bedrooms, ballrooms and banqueting rooms.

After lunch Professor Paul Harvey from Durham University opened our eyes to the wealth of material that is available at a local level from Manorial Records, particularly the record of copyhold property, which can take the researcher back to mediaeval times. No doubt many who heard him will be enthused to try this avenue of research for themselves.

But conferences are not just about listening to lectures. They are about meeting people, catching up with old friends and making new, discussing family history, and conferring. And there was plenty of that going on as well.

Next year we will try a change of venue - Clair Hall in Haywards Heath on Saturday March 20th. And we may also try a slightly different format. But for now thanks to everyone for making the conference this year such a huge success, and a particular thank you to Murray and Doreen Hayes for all the hard work that they put in to this and all the previous conferences that they have organised.

Sussex Marriage Index

No, I'm sorry I am not announcing when the Marriage Index will be ready for publication; instead an apology I'm afraid. I had hoped that we would at least have a Beta version available by the time of the Conference, but alas it was not to be. I still expect that we will publish later in the year, and although it has been a long wait I am sure that it will be worth it in the end. Family History is a patient game!

Your Executive for 2003/4

Brian Cutler	Chairman
Joan Goddard	Vice Chairman
Margaret Bysh	Secretary
David Steel	Treasurer
Wyn Burgess	
Trevor Hanson	
Mick Henry	
Mary Teviot	

AGMs

There are many AGMs in the Group and this year I visited all of them! They seem to have one or two things in common. They are usually conducted quickly (and yes I do know which was the fastest this year), they report a successful year, and many familiar faces are re-elected for the coming twelve months. The Group AGM was no exception. It also was quite speedy; we have had another successful year; the Group is in good shape; and all of the retiring members of the Executive were elected for another term. But there is one very welcome addition. Margaret Bysh is joining the Executive as Group Secretary.

None of the officers, however, see themselves as permanent fixtures. Both Margaret as Secretary and David Steel as Treasurer are clear that they have stepped in to help out while we find suitable people for these posts for the future. Joan Goddard is equally clear that she wishes to step down from the Executive in the not too distant future, although I am delighted that she is continuing as Vice Chairman for another year. Equally I believe that the office of Chairman should not be held by one person for too long, and it is my intention to serve between three and five years.

So the message is clear. We can go on conducting our AGMs quickly and reporting continuing success, but we cannot go on electing the same people year in year out. We have to find new blood.

Library News

There will be no Open Day at Lewes this year. The Library will be open, however, every Saturday afternoon (2 pm - 5.30 pm), all day Saturday (10 am - 5.30 pm) on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in the month, and on the 1st and 3rd Thursday evenings (6.30 pm - 9.30 pm). If you would like to suggest alternative times do let Phil Lucas, or Rosemay Appleton know. We cannot promise that we will be able to help, but it is good to know what members would like. Of course if you were able to help look after the Library Phil and Rosemary would be delighted to hear from you. (library@sfhg.org.uk)

Family History On Line

We family historians crave data. It is our life blood. Without data we can't do anything. And there are many commercial organisations getting into the market place to sell us data. Like other family history societies, Sussex Family History Group is committed to making accurate genealogical data available as widely as possible. Transcriptions and Indexes prepared by family history societies are usually more accurate and reliable than those produced by commercial or governmental services - the 1901 Census for instance. But this quality work is in danger of being drowned out by the big commercial organisations, and it is for this reason that the Federation of Family History Societies has launched its new pay per view service, FamilyHistoryOnLine. We will be joining this venture and making our own resources available in this way, starting with our Census Indexes. I believe that this is very good news not only for our members, but also for everyone with an interest in Sussex families. Over time, however, we are likely to see quite a change in the pattern of our publications.

Situations Vacant

Conference Organizer

Publicity Officer

Please contact Brian Cutler if you are interested in either of the above jobs (chairman@sfhg.org.uk).