



# SussexLink



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A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

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## Tracing your ancestors on Ebay!!

### *Mick Henry tells of his experiences in bidding for a bit of his past*

Well, this might well seem a crazy idea.....but you can in fact add much to your pile of information about your ancestor by watching for items on Ebay. For example, I have had great success with postcards of the small villages in which my ancestors seemed to gather... particularly Much Hadham in Hertfordshire. I've bought ordinary street scenes for as little as a pound that would often be hard, if not impossible, to find elsewhere.

As some of you are aware, I have a distant uncle, the painter Thomas Webster, R.A., and I have had some wonderful successes in finding copies of his work. I recently found out that Webster's picture *The Swing* was printed by one of the early pioneers of affordable prints, Abraham Le Blond, who set up business in Richmond in 1845 using the George Baxter process of colour printing. He had great success with his "ovals" which are widely collected. I wished to buy four of them, and thanks to Ebay, I now have copies of all of these prints.

While hunting for them, I purchased a book on Le Blond issued by the New Baxter Society. This book mentions that one of the ovals, *The 5th November*, depicts a guy (built for Guy Fawkes night) that looks very much like the one in an illustration by Thomas Webster that appeared in the *Illustrated London News* of 5th November 1853. Patience is a virtue, and after four months of looking on Ebay, I finally managed to buy a copy of this paper!

On Ebay I have also purchased WWI cap badges for the regiments that my great uncle Reginald Ralph Henry served in, the East Yorkshire and the Berkshire Yeomanry. The latter was a wonderful badge in the shape of the "White Horse," shipped all the way from Australia.

I've also turned to Ebay for books about the places in which my ancestors lived. Recently I found one on Hockerell and its roadways, and a while back I discovered one about Easton Royal in Wiltshire. I've never done it myself, but I know that other genealogists have also found family bibles relating to their own ancestors on Ebay.

Before buying on Ebay, it's a good idea to check the seller's feedback rating and to pay close attention to the description of items that you want to buy. You can always ask the seller a question before bidding.

Please do give this a try and let me know what you find!

Mick Henry

## Group Secretary

I am pleased to report that we now have a volunteer, Val Orr, a regular attendee with her husband Tony at the Crawley Meeting Centre, to work alongside Margaret Bysh with a view to taking over from her at the next AGM.

Brian Cutler

## **Crawley Computer Group**

Starting in September the Crawley Computer Group, under its new chairman Ken Toll, will be adopting a new format for its regular meeting. The evening will consist of two distinct sessions, with presentations on both the technical aspects of computing and the use of computers in Family History. It is hoped to also include an opportunity for a question and answer sessions, not limited to the subjects of the presentations.

If you can get to Crawley, come and join in, on the next to last Wednesday of the month (except August & December) at Hazelwick School, starting at 7.30 p.m.

## **Where does the Federation of Family History Societies Grow from here?**

Just over thirty years ago the Sussex Family History Group along with twelve other like minded groups established the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS). Like the SFHG the Federation has grown over the last thirty years, and in June it undertook one of those periodic reviews that all organisations need to do from time to time. The weekend, to which I was invited, produced plenty of ideas which the Federation Executive are now working through to ensure that the Federation remains relevant to family history societies and family historians in the 21st century.

## **"Spinster" & "Bachelor" consigned to history!**

The Registrar General has announced changes to the way marriage registers and certificates will be completed. A newly married person previously described as a "spinster" or a "bachelor" will be described instead as "single". Widows, widowers, and divorcees will continue to be described as such. This change will be effective from December 5th when the new Civil Partnership Act comes into effect, as part of plans to modernise marriage law.

## **Access to Archives**

The success of A2A appears to have prompted other bodies to explore ways of further improving the speed and ease with which we can find information, particularly on line.

### **One-stop-shop for access to archives**

A new scheme, *aUK: connecting archives*, aims to create a powerful new search engine to provide a single-point of access to hundreds of archive catalogues, and enable the many thousands of searchers to find information, wherever it may be, in the United Kingdom.

aUK is headed by a partnership between The National Archives in Kew, The National Archives of Scotland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the National Library of Wales, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the National Council on Archives. Included in its remit will be the promotion of the digitisation of new archival content, and the setting of technological standards for on line access.

### **The National Maritime Museum**

The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, is undertaking an important project to enhance access to its research collections. The collections contain over 2 million items and complement the holdings of the National Archive by supporting journeys of discovery across a range of subjects, from the big histories of exploration and empire to the personal histories of ordinary people whose lives were touched by the sea.

The Museum would like to hear the thoughts of family historians on how they can develop access to their archival collections to meet our needs. They are interested to hear from both people who have used their facilities before, and those who have not.