



SussexLink



August 2006

A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

Vol 4 No 4

Membership Secretary

For the last eight years Sussex Family History Group has been extremely fortunate to have Wyn Burgess looking after all aspects of our membership. Wyn has been extremely hard working, superbly efficient, always courteous and discreet and willing to see her role expand to take in new technology and the needs of our modern Internet based membership. There is no doubt that over the eight years the workload has grown dramatically, with a constant flow of new members throughout the year. Wyn has now indicated that she feels that it is time to step down from her post so that she has a little more time to do other things and has asked me to look for someone to replace her.

I had thought that I would be appealing here for one or possibly more volunteers to take over from Wyn. However I am very pleased to be able to report that we already have a volunteer offering to take on the job, John Commins. Members in the Crawley area will know John well, as amongst other things he looks after the refreshments at the Crawley meetings. John is one of the three new recruits to the Executive Committee this year. We still have to work out exactly when John will be taking over from Wyn.

Given how the job has grown I had given some thought to the possibility that we may need to split the job into two. This of course may still be necessary, although John is happy to see how it works out in practice. So if there are any potential membership secretary volunteers who were disappointed not to have an opportunity this time round, let me know and we will put you on the reserve list should the need arise!

Annual Conference 2007

Planning for the Annual Conference on Saturday 24th March 2007 at Clair Hall, Haywards Heath is well under way. Although the details have yet to be finalised, we expect the programme to include an item on the history of Winchelsea and two sessions on different aspects of the history of medicine relevant to family history, including a Timespan Historical Presentation.

One difference this year from the last three will be that we will be replacing the lunch time seminars with, we hope, exhibits from local history societies. Put the date in your diary now!

Situations Vacant

We are currently looking for volunteers to fill the following posts:

Publicity Officer

FHOL Co-ordinator

If anyone would like to know more please contact me (chairman at sfhg.org.uk)

The Future of the FRC

In view of the availability of census data on the Internet The National Archives has recently announced its intention of withdrawing from the Family Records Centre at Myddelton Street and concentrating its service to family historians at Kew by the end of 2008. Although the plans of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) are less advanced it is likely that they too will shortly be in a position to make their indexes available online through the Digitisation of Vital Events project (DOVE), and the possibility that they also will withdraw from Myddelton Street.

The Federation of Family History Societies has made strong representations to The National Archives on our behalf. As a result James Strachan, TNA's Director of Public Services & Marketing, has agreed to meet with representatives of family history societies at a special session to be held immediately after the FFHS's half-yearly General Meeting. This is taking place on Saturday 2nd September at the University of Northampton, during the Five-day International Conference being organised by the Bedfordshire FHS & Northamptonshire FHS in association with the FFHS. If anyone would like to go to this meeting and the General Meeting of the Federation that precedes it please contact Val Orr (secretary at sfhg.org.uk).

Civil Registration

Following the collapse of the attempt to introduce new civil registration legislation last December, the Government has announced that it intends to proceed with the modernisation of the local registration service. Local authorities will be able to opt into the new governance arrangements for the local registration service, although it is not expected that this will in any way affect the service provided by registrars to family historians. The announcement makes no direct reference to the future management of historic records, but does say that it does not expect the digitisation of GRO records will have any significant impact on the demands for certificates locally. Neither are there any plans to legislate in the foreseeable future to restrict or remove the local issue of certificates.

The Group Library

The underlying issues affecting the FRC are equally affecting our Group Library in St Michael's Church Hall, Lewes. The use made of the Library last year was particularly poor, although there had been a greater interest this year until the hot weather and the World Cup came along! In view of this change in the way that family historians work the Executive decided earlier in the year to set up a working party to review the Group Library and its future. Two relevant public bodies, the East Sussex Record Office and the West Sussex Library Service have expressed interest in working with us to provide more integrated genealogical services in Sussex.

Before we make a decision as to which of these expressions of interest we should follow up, if either, we need to be clear what sort of facility we should be offering our members locally. As part of this review there will be a questionnaire for members to complete in the next issue of the Sussex Family Historian. It is intended that the report and recommendations will be finalised by the end of the year.

Worthing Computer Group

It is perhaps a sign of the times but the Worthing Computer Group, in the absence of anyone willing to take on the organisation of the meetings, has decided to suspend its activities after the November meeting this year. At least one meeting a year of the Worthing Meeting Centre will be dedicated to a computer orientated topic, and arrangements have been made to promote and arrange transport to the Crawley Computer Group, which has every intention at the present time of continuing. (Next to last Wednesday except August & December, Hazelwick School.) Computer technology is now becoming such an integral part of the majority of members' basic skills that the need for such specialist groups is declining.

© Sussex Family History Group 2006

Edited by Brian Cutler (chairman at sfhg.org.uk)

(The @ in email addresses has been replaced with " at ".)