



SussexLink



December 2002

A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

Launch Issue

Welcome to SussexLink

SussexLink is a new venture that I am launching for the benefit of Sussex Family History Group. It is a newsletter that will be distributed electronically from time to time, keeping members in touch with what is going on in the Group.

Why do we need a newsletter? Over the past six months since I became Chairman I have become increasingly conscious that although we have six flourishing meeting centres and two computer groups, we have little that involves members across the county as a whole. This relative weakness at the centre reflects the geography of Sussex as much as anything else. Of course we have the journal, our conferences, our library, our website, our mailing list and all of our projects, and these do involve a lot of our members. But there still seems to me to be something missing. Now clearly there is no way that an irregular newsletter can by itself totally fill that gap, but I believe that it may help.

The primary means of accessing SussexLink will be via our Website, in "portable document format". I am hoping that it will be possible for each meeting centre and the group library to have some printed copies available for members in Sussex who would like to read it but do not have easy access to the Web. If you are not regularly in touch with a meeting centre I am afraid that you will have to find a way of accessing our web site, as there are no other plans to distribute the printed version. Fortunately, however, public access to the Internet is becoming more readily available through libraries and Internet Cafes.

Library News

Rumour has it that the new library catalogue is nearing completion, although the number of accessions over the last couple of years has made this a complex task. When completed it is hoped to make this available not just in paper and fiche form but as a searchable database on our website. Watch this space.

It has been agreed that the fee for the Library Look up Service should be abolished, although we will still charge for photocopying. As most of the requests come from abroad

Let me say straight away that SussexLink is not intended to be an alternative to our excellent journal. It will, I hope, carry both news and discussion, but will not attempt to present aspects of Sussex based family history. To be successful SussexLink will need your input, particularly your comment on issues that are raised. (E-mail me at chairman@sfhg.org.uk.) Primarily, however, SussexLink is here so that you get to know what is going on.

Brian Cutler

the mechanics for paying the fee were proving to be a deterrent.

Please note that the Library will be closed in future on the Saturday of our Annual conference.

The development of the new public library at Lewes has been delayed because of funding issues, and we are not sure that the revised project will contain sufficient space for the SFHG Library. Needless to say other options are being considered.

SFHG Think Tank

Developing Policies for a Changing Future

One of the important lessons about the past that we learn through our family history is that it was very different from the present, and one thing we can be certain about the future is that it will be different again. This of course applies to the family history community as much as anywhere else.

There are a number of issues facing the Group that we need to consider carefully and develop clear policies for the future. The development of commercial access to historic data, particularly via the Internet, our involvement in the Federation of Family History Societies alternatives, the extent to which we enter publicly into debate and lobbying about the protection of and access to data, whether at our local record offices or national collections, and civil registration changes that may have significant effect on family history, are but some of the issues that we need to address.

The Executive has asked me to convene a Policy Group to look at these issues and make recommendations to the Executive. We are keen that debate should not be limited to present officers and executive committee members, so if you are at all interested in any of these issues do let me know. Being a policy group making recommendations the membership can be flexible, depending on the need at the time, and any involvement will of course be time limited.

Annual Conference and AGM

The December edition of *Historian* carries all the details of next year's conference at the Adastra Hall, Hassocks on Saturday March 29th. This will be the last Annual Conference that Murray and Doreen Hayes will be organising and it promises to be every bit as good as those in recent years. Do book early. Murray would hate you to be disappointed!

Our 30th AGM will take place after the conference. It is **essential** that we find a Secretary and other members willing to serve on the Executive. I am more than willing to discuss what is involved with anyone interested.

Situations Vacant

Hon. Secretary

This is the key administrative position in the Group, ensuring that we function efficiently, effectively and legally at all times. Challenging and rewarding. Computer literacy essential. Central location in Sussex desirable.

Conference Organizer

Required **now** to start planning our 2004 Conference. Experience of event organisation would clearly be an advantage, but is not essential.

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

Publications

Census Indexes for Storrington (1841-91) and Chichester (1851) are now available.

Look out for the new map of Sussex Parishes, which will be available on the bookstalls shortly, and the new listing of publications, indexed by place names, on the web site.

Finally a Happy Christmas to Everyone

May 2003 see us all as active as John Ellis, whom I recently found in the Cuckfield Burial Registers:

"May 28 1797. John Ellis, 97, who within a few months of his death, walked one day to Lewes, and on the next continued his journey to Seaford."

Brian Cutler