



SussexLink



December 2005

A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

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Happy Christmas

Sussex
Christmas Eve 2005

Dear Santa

As Christmas is a time when families often get together I wonder if I could ask for some special tools to help me with my family history research. I think that my elderly cousin is coming and she always has such wonderful stories about her mother and what her mother has told her about her brother, my father, but I can never remember them when Christmas is over and I try to record some of what she has told me. So I would really like a high fidelity recording kit, and a speech recognition programme for my computer, which can cope with my cousin's funny accent, and produce a fully edited and accurate transcript!

Talking of computer programs what I would really like is something that finds all this data that I seem to be missing, like my grandfather in the 1881 Census and my great-grandfather's baptism and his parents' marriage. Surely there is something that can just check through all that information that people have kindly put on the Internet and find just what I am looking for. And I really can't be doing with all this palaeography Milwaukee - surely by now you've got a program that can read all this old handwriting stuff.

I have to tell you that the crowbar that you gave me last year for demolishing brickwalls was not very effective. Perhaps we should try dynamite in future.

And one or two books that I would like. *A Social History of England in 3½ Hours* by I Conyu and Billy V Nothing, *Filling in the Gaps* by Iver Pedigree and *A Family Historian's Guide to the Genome* by D N Aaa.

On second thoughts I'll settle for a couple of ounces of that old DreamWorks® pipe tobacco.

Yours expectantly

Gene E Alogist



Oxford Researchers are after New Year Resolutions your Blood!

Volunteers from Sussex are being asked to donate a small blood sample to help unlock the secrets of their ancestors. This is for '**People of the British Isles**' a pioneering project by Oxford University and the Wellcome Trust.

'**People of the British Isles**' wants to find the tell-tale fragments of genetic material, or DNA, that reveal the biological influences of successive waves of colonisers - Celts, Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Vikings, and Normans - in various parts of Britain. And Channel 4 is going to be following this research every step of the way.

This project is being led by the eminent scientist Sir Walter Bodmer. Bodmer and his team have been working to gather samples of DNA from rural populations and TV Producers are now joining them in their quest.

'**People of the British Isles**' is currently seeking around 150 men and women aged over 18 years old to donate their DNA by giving a small sample of their blood. Each of the volunteers must come from Sussex or the Sussex borders and their parents and all of their grandparents should also have been born in the same area.

Sir Walter Bodmer said: "Collecting samples in this way will allow us to build a picture of the genetic heritage of our present day UK population. It will also help us enormously in our studies of the inherited susceptibility to a wide variety of common diseases such as cancer, and heart and Alzheimer's disease."

Nick Godwin, Executive Producer for Wag TV, which is making the programme for Channel 4, said: "This will be a landmark documentary series. Cutting edge science will bring Britain's ancient past to life and you will see an emerging genetic map of our islands".

"To make it a success we are relying on members of the public to volunteer. If anyone from Sussex fits the criteria I very much hope they will join forces with us and donate their DNA."

Potential volunteers can obtain more information from the website: www.peopleofthebritishisles.org/ or can sign up for the project by calling 01865 228 627 or emailing

susan.tonks@clinpharm.ox.ac.uk or
bruce.winney@clinpharm.ox.ac.uk

Many people make New Year Resolutions, full of good intent to change for the better. No doubt there are plenty of opportunities for such resolutions in our family history research, about keeping accurate records of where we find information, about replying promptly to people who contact us and about not being defeated when we can't find the information that we are looking for.

However I would like to draw attention to another opportunity this New Year, an opportunity for you to get more involved in the work of the Group, whether in our projects, in our meeting centres and library or in the administration of the Group itself. Every organisation needs to bring in new people year by year if it is to be really responsive and to grow. There are many different ways in which you could help, so why not contact our Volunteers Co-ordinator, Rosie Ansell (volunteers@sfhg.org.uk) and tell her what you are good at and what you would like to do.

One area that I particularly want to emphasise is the need to bring new people on to the Executive Committee at the next AGM. Our new constitution requires that we have between 5 and 8 elected members on the Executive. Please do think about it, and talk to me or another member of the Executive if you are at all interested.

Brian Cutler

Civil Registration - An update

This time last year the proposed changes to Civil Registration were thrown out by Parliamentary Committees. Having consulted with stakeholders, the GRO has reviewed those aspects of the modernisation programme which could still be taken forward, and has developed proposals for the delivery of the local registration service, which are now subject to consultation. The consultation paper 'Registration Modernisation' also sets out how many other changes proposed in the 2002 White Paper 'Civil Registration: Vital Change' are to be progressed. Full details are available on the GRO web site www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/aboutus/lookingahead/Latest_news.asp

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