



# SussexLink



February 2006

A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

Vol 4 No 1

## Genes and Genealogy

As many readers will be aware a new approach to family history is opening up as more and more people are able to access information about their genealogy from their genes. The completion of the Genome Project, and more importantly the technology that underlies it, has made possible the linking of families that from other evidence appear to be unrelated, and, conversely, of demonstrating that the dubious linkage that we have assumed for many years really is just the figment of our imagination!

Genetic studies of value to family historians fall into two categories. Y Chromosome studies track the male line, whilst mitochondrial tests assist in following the female line. The Y Chromosome test is more specific and to date has proved to be of greater value to family historians than the mitochondrial test, although the latter is very useful in research about populations, demonstrating for instance that the Celtic British gene survived the Anglo Saxon, Viking and Norman invasions, even if the Celtic British nation did not. I featured another such study at Oxford in the last issue of SussexLink.

Using DNA is not a panacea for solving blockages in our research. There are limitations as to what can be achieved and what the evidence may show. Genetic studies are obviously dependent on having willing relevant volunteers to undertake the tests, and it is worth mentioning that the techniques used for genealogy are different from those used in clinical genetics, where a wider range of tests is employed in tracking down the basis of a genetic disorder. But it may be that this unexplored avenue will provide an answer.

If you would like to learn more why not visit Chris Pomery's DNA Portal at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~allpoms/genetics.html>, where some of the jargon used above is explained more fully. And if you are successful, or have already been successful, why not write it up for the journal!

Brian Cutler

## Fairs, Fairs, Fairs

The Sussex and South London Family History Fair on Sunday February 12th will be at the new K2 venue in Crawley this year. The same weekend the Federation of Family History Societies will be flying the genealogy flag at the International Craft and Hobbies Fair at the Brighton Centre. This is deliberate policy by the Federation to go to this sort of event to raise the profile of Family History. Also on Saturday 11th the BBC Southern Counties

Radio will be at the East Sussex Record Office in connection with the second "Who Do You Think You are?" series of programmes.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to Philip and Margaret Lucas who celebrated their Diamond Wedding at the beginning of February. Now that's real family history!

## Where should SFHG be in 2010

In my Chairman's Letter for the March issue of the Sussex Family Historian I have written about the challenge of commercialism and what members might be looking for from the Group in the future. When you have seen your copy do write to me and tell me what you think SFHG should be doing in 2010.

## Your Family Tree

2006 started with one of those pressing Emails that you know you must respond to but wish would rather go away. On 3rd January Andrew Chapman of Your Family Tree Magazine wrote to say that they were planning to do a feature about SFHG in a forthcoming edition and could I just answer a few questions and supply a few photographs. The questions were reasonably straightforward, and with a little help from one or two other officers I was able to put forward a response that hopefully will be creatively turned onto a suitable article. But there was a problem in finding recent photographs, only solved by my taking my digital camera to two meetings on successive evenings the day before the deadline for going to press. Look in the March issue (out mid February) to see if our efforts were worthwhile. All would have been so much simpler if we had had a publicity officer!

## Annual Conference

If you haven't already booked for the conference - why not? Saturday March 18th, Clair Hall Haywards Heath, Nick Barrett, Ed King, Peter Higginbotham and Martin Hayes. Places are going quickly, particularly for the lunchtime seminars for which for which space is limited. Get your application forms and cheques to Clem Frank as soon as possible.

## Volunteering

By now every member who lives in Sussex will have received a letter from me asking them to consider joining the Executive or helping the Group by taking a lead in either Publicity or Education. Currently we have 1,495 members who live in Sussex and it must be possible to find a full quota of elected members for the Executive and to fill these important posts. Please give it serious thought, and get in touch with me or the secretary if you need further information.

There are always other opportunities as well as those mentioned above. I am looking to recruit members living reasonably close to either Lewes or Chichester to help with the Baptism Index. Although much of the work that we have done to date has been from transcripts, and there are still plenty of these to use, much of the index will need to be inputted from original data, as the registers have never been transcribed. If you live close by, or go to the record offices regularly I would be glad to hear from you.

## Library

The number of people making use of our Library in Lewes varies enormously and I have given up trying to predict how many members will appear when I am on duty. Being able to use the Library at all, however, is entirely dependent upon having a band of volunteers willing to go to Lewes, unlock, set up, answer queries and put everything away at the end of the session. The number of volunteers available to act as Library Helpers has reduced recently, so if you can help please get in touch with the Library Secretary, Rosemary Appleton ([library@sfhg.org.uk](mailto:library@sfhg.org.uk)).

The Library subcommittee would also like to find someone to take over from Rosemary as Library Secretary so that Rosemary herself can become Assistant Librarian and give more help to Phil Lucas.