



# SussexLink



October 2003

A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

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## Annual Conference 2004

### New Venue

### New Style

### New Venture

The programme for our Annual Conference for 2004 is now taking shape. The conference, on Saturday March 20<sup>th</sup>, will be held at a new venue, Clair Hall, Haywards Heath. But there will be other differences as well as the venue. There will be more time to meet people and chat. There will be stalls from some of our neighbouring family history societies. And there will also be a workshop over the extended lunch period for a more practical demonstration of one particular type of source relevant to family history. However, the main form of the conference will be much the same as before, concluding with our AGM.

### The Programme

The first talk will be about Stanmer House and the Pelham family. Dr. Sue Berry will look at the development and management of this Georgian country house and estate just outside Brighton from 1720 to 1820. Sue Berry will be followed by Geoff Riggs, the Vice Chairman of the Federation of Family History Societies, who will expose the weakest links in our modern search methods for genealogical data, particularly on the Internet.

Over the lunch break Caroline Adams and Susan Millard from the West Sussex Record Office will illustrate the use of Tithe Maps in family and local history in a workshop that will be run twice in the two hour period. And in the afternoon Dr. Simon Pauley from Leicester will talk about Settlement and Poor Law, and how they affected our ancestors, an illustration of the importance for family historians of understanding what was going on in the wider community for our understanding of our own families.

### The Venue

Running workshops and inviting other societies to join us for the day is only possible because we have moved to Clair Hall in Haywards Heath, where there is a lot more room. Clair Hall also has its own car park and the railway station is very close, so access will be even easier than before.

### Booking

The conference will cost a little more than last year, probably £7.50, plus £6.50 for lunch. We will also be promoting the conference to non members, so put the date in the diary NOW, and book early - the workshops will have to be on a first come first served basis. Full details and a booking form will be in the December edition of the Sussex Family Historian.

### Wanted - Volunteers for the Library

To keep the Group Library functioning we need a full team of volunteers, particularly members able to set up and put away the furniture and the equipment. (Contact Rosemary Appleton, [library@sfhg.org.uk](mailto:library@sfhg.org.uk)) if you are able to help.

## Brighton History Centre

For anyone living in Brighton, or who has a family or local history interest in the area, the curtailment of the local studies services over the last year has been very frustrating. But the long wait is over and the Brighton History Centre has now opened as an integral part of the Museum and Art Gallery. Of course the room itself is very familiar, being the old reference library, and the old oak bookcases and book lift, with its notice "Silence Please", are all still there. But in other respects it is totally refurbished, with bright décor, comfortable furniture and modern equipment including the ability to scan a microfilm image and Email it to your home computer!

The centre will clearly be the first port of call for anyone researching family history in Brighton and an alternative both to the local record offices and our own library at Lewes. It houses an impressive series of indexes, starting with the General Register Office Index for births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales up to the year 2000, and including military records, census returns, parish registers, street directories and voters lists. But it also has Brighton and Sussex newspapers and periodicals from 1749 to date, over 20,000 books and pamphlets on Brighton and Sussex, nearly 50,000 photographs, maps, ephemera, oral histories and archive films, all of which make it a fascinating place in which to browse.

However one consequence of the history centre becoming part of the museum service rather than the library is that the local reference collection is now separated from the main reference library, which is still part of the library service and which will not be relocated back to the centre of Brighton until the new central library is completed later next year or 2005. Despite this slight downside, the Brighton History Centre is a welcome addition to the range of resources available to family historians in Sussex. It is open Tuesday to Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, with late opening Tuesday evening until 7 pm. The Centre is fully accessible and has facilities for the visually and hearing impaired. Well worth a visit. ([www.citylibraries.info/localhistory](http://www.citylibraries.info/localhistory))

### ***Situations Vacant***

**Conference Organizer**

**Publicity Officer**

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

## Resources Update

Some news of other resources for family historians.

East Sussex Record Office is currently experiencing some development difficulties. It is in the process of moving a large quantity of archives out of Pelham House in Lewes to a store in Newhaven. Consequently it has had to suspend its document production service in the search room, and it is unlikely that it will be possible to restore this until the New Year.

Family History Online now includes SFHG material, over 420,000 entries including nearly 158,000 census records, over 175,000 burial records and nearly 87,000 baptism records. Well done to Mick Henry, Christine Payne, Don Burgess, John Lea and Alan Stoner who have made it all possible. ([www.familyhistoryonline.net/](http://www.familyhistoryonline.net/))

Some other Internet resources.

The GRO is now offering an online certificate ordering service at [www.col.statistics.gov.uk/](http://www.col.statistics.gov.uk/), complementing the search facility offered by Family Research Link ([www.1837online.com](http://www.1837online.com)).

The National Archivist ([www.nationalarchivist.com](http://www.nationalarchivist.com)) is a new commercial pay per view site independent of the National Archives, that currently has three data sets, Index to Death Duty Registers 1796 to 1903, Index to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes 1858 to 1903 and Births, Marriages and Deaths at Sea 1854 to 1890, with more to come.

An interesting development from the National Archives itself is Documents Online ([www.DocumentsOnline.pro.gov.uk](http://www.DocumentsOnline.pro.gov.uk)) that now has all PCC wills for the period 1384-1858 available to peruse and download. Another site for those interested in the wider aspects of historical research is British History Online from the Institute of Historical Research and the History of Parliament Trust ([www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)).