



SussexLink



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A Newsletter for the Sussex Family History Group

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Federation — What Federation?

For many members I guess that the Federation of Family History Societies is not something that they feel drawn to. Indeed I am sometimes asked why Sussex Family History Group belongs, and I get the impression that it is seen as an unnecessary tier within the family history world that is irrelevant and could be removed! An extreme view perhaps, but one that reflects a more widespread misunderstanding about what the Federation is all about.

Sussex was one of the 13 founder members of the Federation just over 31 years ago. At that time it was seen as a means whereby member societies might be able to help each other and an opportunity to promote the study of family history nationally. There was also a need for a mechanism to resolve the occasional boundary dispute that arose from time to time between different societies claiming allegiance from the same group of family historians!

Over the last thirty years both interest in family history and the Federation itself have grown at an amazing rate so that now the Federation is a worldwide organisation with over 200 member societies, an important genealogical publishing house and a provider of a powerful research tool in Family History Online. As it has grown the Federation has developed an important influence on the providers of genealogical data within the UK and thus on the pursuit of family history.

So why is the Federation important to Sussex? I suspect that the misunderstanding about the Federation comes about because it has been seen in the past as simply a provider of administrative advice and favourable corporate insurance. The value of the Federation to the Group and other family history societies is much more than this.

To me the most important rôle of the Federation is an effective voice at the national level, with government, parliament and archivists. The climb down by the government earlier this year over civil registration is a good example of what can be achieved. The Federation also provides an effective means whereby family history societies can work together to promote family history and publish data, most notably through Family History Online and the National Burial Index. And the Federation, with the help of a host society, can put on very good international conferences, such as "A Flight of Yesterdays" in 2004.

At present we do not have a Federation Rep for the Group, someone willing to get involved in the national and regional meetings and represent our interests. If anyone is interested in taking on this rôle, please let me know.

The next general meeting will be the AGM, which will be part of the conference organised by Gwent FHS on Saturday 1st April 2006 at County Hall, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran .

The next major international conference will be hosted by Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire FHSs at University College, Northampton from 1st to 5th September 2006 entitled "Putting Flesh on the Bones - A Study of the Common Man".

Family History and the Media

The Line Up for the 2006 Annual Conference

The Annual Conference in 2006 will be broadly based around the theme of Family History and the Media. We will be welcoming the popular television personality, Nick Barratt, talking about family history and the present day media, particularly in the light of the second series of "Who do you think you are?" programmes. Following this the Head of Newspaper Collections at the British Library, Ed King, will be talking about the current newspaper digitisation project at the Library, and the benefits that this will bring to family historians.

During the lunch period there will be two seminars given by West Sussex Local Studies Librarian, Martin Hayes, who will illustrate how family historians can best use local Sussex newspaper sources.

At first sight our final session, local historian Peter Higginbotham talking about Victorian Workhouses, would appear to have little to do with the media, but I am sure that local newspapers and periodicals will turn up in his sources!

The Conference will take place on Saturday 18th March at Clair Hall, Haywards Heath. Full information and booking forms will be included in the December issue of The Sussex Family Historian, but make a date in your diary now!

TNA News

Chief Executive

Natalie Ceeney has been appointed the new Chief Executive of The National Archives, and will take over from Sarah Tyacke on 17th October.

Ms Ceeney is currently director of operations and services at the British Library, where she manages all of the British Library's services, including both its famous reading rooms and its remote delivery services.

GenesReunited buys 1901 Census Contract

The National Archives have advised that QinetiQ (operators of the 1901 census service) have sold the contract to FriendsReunited, which operates the popular genealogical website, GenesReunited. The National Archives sought and obtained assurances about the standard of customer service FriendsReunited will offer and it is unlikely that researchers will notice any difference in the way the service operates.

Lewes Library

The new Lewes Library, including the Sussex Room, the local studies centre, is now open. Situated in Styles Field, Friars Walk, Lewes, the library houses a specialist music collection in addition to the local studies resources.

The centre has an important collection of material relating to the parishes of Barcombe, Chailey, Ditchling, East Chiltington, Firle, Glynde and Beddingham, Hamsey, Iford, Kingston, Laughton, Newick, Plumpton, Ringmer, Rodmell, St Anne Without, St John Without, Southease, Streat, Westmeston and Wivelsfield amongst others. So if these areas interest you pay Lewes a visit.

Visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries/find/lewes/default.htm for more information.

Contributions for SussexLink

Would you like to write for SussexLink? SussexLink is primarily a "house" newsletter, i.e. more about what SFHG is up to and how it works for members rather than about family history. Please Email your contributions to me.

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