

## Acting Chairman's Report for Year 2018

This year has been one of many changes, starting with the election of a new chairman at last year's A.G.M. Andrew Britter was, of course, that chairman. He took charge of his first monthly meeting, here at Galleywood, in October in his usual calm, unflustered manner. The December meeting was to be the last that he chaired as ill health prevented him attending any more. Due to his deteriorating health he resigned as our Chairman in March this year, although he hoped to return to our meetings when his health improved. Sadly this was not to be and in May, in the early hours of the day of our meeting in Galleywood (19<sup>th</sup> May 2018), he passed away. That day the society lost a great man, member and friend.

During the year the society has also lost three other people who served with distinction over the years in various parts of the society. The first of these was Jim Lambourn, who was for many years Treasurer of the South East Essex Branch. Next we lost Stan Sutherland who was a key figure in the formation of the North West Essex Branch. He was involved with the branch from then until his death this year. He was also a regular at our Chelmsford meetings in the days when we met at Christchurch United Reformed Church in New London Road. Most recently we lost Don Hewer, who passed away in August. Don was Secretary of the Computer Group for a great many years from its inception. We owe them all a debt of gratitude for the hard work they put into the Society over the years.

In May the new General Data Protection Regulations came into force bringing with them many changes to the way personal data is handled. As an organisation we, of course, had to ensure that everything we were doing was in compliance with the new rules. As part of these changes we had to appoint a Data Controller and I am pleased to announce that John Young has taken on this important role within our Society.

Earlier this year the editorial team decided to look for a new company to do the printing of the Historian as we had been having problems with the existing supplier. A potential new printer, a firm called Joshua Horgan, was identified and a meeting between them, the editorial team and the Society Officers (Ron Knights, Meryl Rawlings & Myself) was arranged. We were all very impressed by what Joshua Horgan could offer us. After due consideration it was decided to use them from the August edition onwards. I am very pleased to say that not only do we have a really first class looking journal but we have also saved money in the process, in fact about £1,000 on just the August edition! I would like to thank Colleen Devenish and Ian Fulcher for all the hard work they put into preparing the Historian and for saving the Society so much money.

Meetings here at Galleywood have continued to be well attended with a good variety of interesting speakers on a wide range of subjects. My thanks go to Meryl for organising our programme of talks.

As well as our meetings here in Galleywood we also have meetings at branches around the county. The Colchester, Harlow and Southend branches have continued to hold monthly meetings with a varied programme of speakers and talks at each branch. Our Saffron Walden branch continues to meet every 3 months and is focusing on transcription work.

Our programme of recording the Monumental Inscriptions in the Churches, Churchyards, Graveyards and Cemeteries around the county, continues steadily and this is thanks to the hard work of our recording teams.

During the year we had a trip to Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome and a coach trip to the National Archives at Kew. My thanks go to those involved with the organising of these trips.

This year we awarded the Essex Society for Family History Award, which is awarded to a post graduate student at the University of Essex, to Caroline Wallace. Caroline is doing an MA dissertation entitled "The Use and Value of a Scrapbook to Historians". We have also, once again, made a donation to support the Victoria County History of Essex.

Ann Church continues to ably represent the Society at the Federation of Family History meetings and Elizabeth Cox and Janice Sharpe, equally ably, have continued to represent the Society at the East Anglian Group Meetings. I would like to thank all three of them for this.

Our website continues to evolve with more and more records being added to our Genealogy Database. In fact we have almost completed transcribing the burials for all the Church of England churches in Essex. This is a fantastic achievement which would not have been possible without the dedication of John Shelley and his team of volunteers. So, a big thank you to all of them.

A lot of hard work, much of which is unseen by the membership, goes into maintaining our website. I would like to take this opportunity to record my thanks to our Webmaster, Colin Smith, and our Programmer, John Lodge, for all their hard work.

Volunteers are vital to the running of the Society and its continued success. In March this year we held an event, here at Galleywood, so we could meet as many of our Volunteers as possible and say thank you to them. I am pleased to say that the event was well attended. It was really good to be able to meet so many people who do such much for our Society.

Finally I would like to thank Lord Petre for Chairing this Annual General Meeting.

Paul Stirland  
(on behalf of the Trustees)