

## Chairman's Report

I would like to start my report this year by thanking our President, Lord Petre for once again Chairing our Annual General Meeting.

Over the years we have had several Presidents and many Vice Presidents all of whom served with distinction and were deeply respected within the Society. We were therefore saddened earlier this year to learn of the death of not one but two former Vice Presidents. The first of these was David Clough. David and his late wife Muriel were founder members of the Society. The both regularly attended our Chelmsford meetings as well as those of the South East Essex Branch. After Muriel's passing in 2014 David was invited to become a Vice President of our Society, a role his wife had held for many years until her death. David only served for 1 year but we were very honoured to have him even for such a short time. The second was Gwen Rawlingson. Gwen and her late husband Ken were early members of the Society and helped form the South East Essex Branch. Gwen served as a Vice President from 2006 – 2016. Both will be missed by all who knew them.

There are two other people who have passed away over the past year to whom I must give a mention. The first is David Spendlove who passed away in November 2018. He was our Society's very first Membership Secretary and held the post for 7 years. In 1985 he helped set up the North East Essex Branch, which was the very first branch of the Society. David served as the very first Branch Chairman, from 1985-1990. He was a talented Calligrapher and many of the red covers for the Monumental Inscription books the Society has produced over the years were produced by him.

The second is Nuala Cockburn who passed away shortly before Christmas. Although not officially a Research Room Volunteer, Nuala was there almost every Thursday. She was always ready and willing to help anyone with her knowledge and expertise. The Society owes them both a great deal and they will both be sorely missed.

As I stated in my Chairman's Article in the August issue of the Historian, the General Data Protection Regulations (known as GDPR for short) give individuals the right to see all information the Society holds about them as well as the right to have any errors corrected. Individual members are fine as they have individual membership records. However family members have a shared membership record and this is a problem.

After much discussion over several meetings the decision was taken by the Executive Committee to abolish family membership at the end of the current subscription year. This decision was not one that was taken lightly, however when it came to a vote it was approved with only two abstentions.

Existing Family members will be converted at the beginning of December into two individual members, each with their own record and membership number. The first named member on each family membership will retain the original membership number and magazine preference and their subscription renewal for 2020/2021 will be £8 if they have the electronic version of the Historian or £16 if they have a paper copy. The second named member will be given a new 5 digit membership number. The first two digits will be 27 or 28 and the last 3 digits will be the last 3 digits of their old membership number. They will be electronic members and their subscription renewal for 2020/2021 will be £8.

I would like to assure our members that we are not trying to take the Family out of Family History.

In April several of our members helped on our stall at the inaugural Family Tree Live show at Alexandra Palace. I would like to thank all those involved for their help.

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 Sarah Beer who is studying for a Masters by Dissertation in History. Her subject is The Journey to Hospice Care in North East Essex: An oral history of St Helena Hospice. Sarah attended our June meeting to give us a brief presentation on her work. I had great pleasure in presenting her with her ESFH Award Certificate.

Elizabeth Cox & Janice Sharpe continue to represent the Society at meetings of the East Anglian Group and Ann Church continues to represent us at meetings of the Federation. My thanks go to all three for their efforts.

Meetings here at Galleywood have continued to be well attended with a good variety of interesting speakers on a wide range of subjects. In January we held a Family History Workshop during the morning which went very well and will be repeated during the afternoon of our November meeting. My thanks go to Meryl Rawlings for organising our programme of talks.

We also have meetings at our branches around the county. The North East Essex Branch in Colchester, the West Essex Branch in Harlow & the South East Essex Branch in Southend continue to hold monthly meetings with a varied programme of speakers and talks. Meanwhile the North West Essex Branch in Saffron Walden continue to meet every 3 months and are focusing on transcription work.

My thanks go to all those who help the Society in any capacity. From the Research Room Volunteers and the Research Team to all those who help out at any of our meetings around the county and anyone else I have forgotten.

Finally I cannot close without thanking all the Executive Committee for their hard work this past year. In particular I would like to thank Colin Smith who is stepping down after 23 years on the committee. Thank you Colin, you will be missed.