



EAST SURREY
Family History Society

Registered Charity Number 286659

Trustees' Annual Report

for the year ending 31st December 2025

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Trustees' Annual Report

East Surrey Family History Society is registered with the Charity Commission and governed by the Constitution adopted 28th March 1992, and amended 22nd April 2017, 23rd March 2024, and 5th April 2025. Membership of the Society is entirely voluntary and it is administered by an Executive Committee. Each Trustee / Executive Committee member is elected by the members of the Society at each Annual General Meeting and serves for a maximum of five years.

For the period covered by this report the Trustees were:

Hilary Blanford – Hon. Chairman from April 2021

Monica Polley – Hon. Secretary from April 2025

Tamsin Abbey – Hon Treasurer from May 2021, on committee from April 2021

Marda Dixon – from April 2021

Geoff Fairbairn – from April 2022

June Hayles – from April 2023

Sue Adams – from March 2024

Peter Heather – from April 2025

No remuneration directly or indirectly out of the funds of the charity was paid or is payable to any trustee or person known to be connected to them.

Our Objects as a Charity

- to promote and encourage the public study of family history, genealogy and heraldry, and related subjects such as local history, with particular reference to the ancient County of Surrey
- to promote the preservation, security and accessibility of archival material

Our Powers

- promote and engage in educational activities including the issue of a regular journal and publication and sale of other appropriate material
- to hold lectures and discussions and organise research visits for Society Members and interested members of the general public
- to hold and maintain a library of printed and other works for the use of Society Members and interested members of the general public
- to preserve, index, transcribe, copy or publish original source materials
- to undertake relevant projects of every kind including (without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) the recording, transcribing, copying or indexing of archives, manuscripts, registers, records, photographs, portraits, maps, monumental inscriptions and war memorials
- to pursue collaborative actions with similar established supportive bodies, such as churches, libraries, record offices and educational institutions

How we achieved our aims and who has benefited

The Committee continued to meet online using Zoom. During 2025 the Society membership was 646 (664 in 2024), including 35 overseas members and 36 libraries.

Meetings

Our meetings were advertised widely and were open to our members and the public. Numbers attending the monthly Lingfield meetings remained steady with speakers giving talks in person or using Zoom. The Southwark group undertook visits and guided walks in the borough.

The Society continued to provide online 'Zoom' talks, each of which was live on a morning, and on an evening a replay of a recording of the live session, or vice-versa, or occasional talks when the speaker repeated the talk live. These repetitions made the talks accessible for all members on the internet including those in distant time zones. A total of 917 members and non-members attended 24 Society talks held using Zoom (including the repeats); an average of 38. Some Zoom talks were held jointly with other Societies.

DNA, Special Interest, and National Events

The Society had a presence at virtual fairs and had stalls at six physical events. A virtual family history fair organised by the Society has become an annual event and again was a success in 2025: 26 other Societies hosted breakout rooms and were enthusiastic for us to run another fair early in 2026. Newcomers registering in 2025 included the Australian Society of Genealogists.

Journal, Website, and Online Discussion List

The Society continued to publish editions of the journal quarterly and send a copy of each electronically or by post to every member. Copies were also sent to a wide range of public libraries, archives, and record offices.

The Society's Website provides Society news items, links to Zoom talks, back numbers of the journal, and links to resources. The online discussion list enables members to obtain informed assistance quickly.

Advice & Research Centre

The Advice & Research Centre in Lingfield holds the Society's unpublished research material and library with a team carrying out searches on request. Requests for help have come via the Family History Federation, by email to the Secretary or directly to the team via the email address in the journal. Transcription of memorial inscriptions, Poor Law, and other records of interest to family, social, and local historians continued, to make them available to researchers.

Affiliation and Co-operation with Local and National Organisations and Archives

The Society continued to affiliate to Archives for London, Croydon Local Studies Forum, the Family History Federation, Friends of the National Archives, Surrey Record Society, the Lambeth History Forum, and Merton Historical Society.

We ran an online help desk, using Zoom, as part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival.

We contributed to the Society of Genealogists' project, presenting a two-hour programme alongside the Society's Archivist, Surrey History Centre and the University of Portsmouth (Vision of Britain). The final recording, 'Researching in East Surrey', is available on YouTube.

We offered Southwark Archives a grant of £3,000 to digitise parts of their collection.

Planned future activity to achieve our aims

Although the overall objective is to encourage and provide for the study of family history, the main interest for the Society is the eastern part of the ancient county of Surrey.

We plan to continue to:

- arrange talks on Zoom at varying times to engage with distant members and younger prospective members
- hold monthly local group meetings at Lingfield
- hold bi-monthly meetings, walks, and visits for the Southwark group
- support a Special Interest Group studying DNA as a tool for genealogy
- attend family history events, virtual and in person, to promote the Society and make its resources available to the wider public
- host our virtual family history event with the participation of interested societies and groups
- produce a quarterly journal mailed or emailed to each member
- make data available on the Society's website, accessible to the public and with a members-only section
- promote the members' email discussion group
- maintain the research and interests centre at Lingfield and add transcriptions to the collection of unpublished material
- transcribe data of unavailable publications
- maintain an online shop for the Society's publications via Parish Chest and GenFair
- affiliate and co-operate with local and national organisations and archives
- offer workshops for less experienced family history researchers

and we plan to:

- plan a visit to The Spike in Guildford, open to all members
- work with Surrey History Centre to repeat our presentations to the Society of Genealogists

Statement of Financial Activities

Reserve funds of £18,227 are held in a Virgin Deposit Account with instant access, and an additional sum of £29,214 is held in a Virgin 100 Day Notice Deposit account to gain better return.

The net incoming resources of the Society for the year 2025 resulted in a surplus of £394 (£2,162 in 2024).

Reserves Policy

The Trustees discussed the following factors in arriving at their reserves policy:

- our reserves, which accumulated historically, should provide the Society with adequate financial stability to achieve our objectives for the foreseeable future
- we should maintain at least the equivalent of 50% of our annual expenditure in order to meet commitments in case of unexpected fall in income
- apart from the above, we should utilise reserves for capital expenditure. Our IT equipment has a limited life span due to rapidly advancing technology and reserves would be required to meet a continual updating/replacing programme
- we may consider providing donations/grants towards projects to preserve archives