



## **The Hampshire Genealogical Society Vice-Chairman's Report 2026 Annual General Meeting**

Since our AGM last year, HGS has enjoyed many successes, but we have also been tested! The main challenge has been working without a Chairman in place. In my role as Vice Chairman, I have stepped in to cover the main responsibilities of a Chairman, such as chairing meetings, writing reports for our quarterly journal, "The Hampshire Family Historian", which you all regularly receive, and picking up any correspondence that has come into the Chairman's inbox. A Chairman in situ would necessarily have accomplished a good deal more but our Executive Committee members have ensured that the Society has continued to be managed efficiently and with an eye to improvement, progression and growth.

A second challenge was faced by our newly elected Treasurer, Debbie Painter, whose main objective was to update our financial software to an online accounting package (Xero) as well as improving and documenting our financial guidelines and processes. All this has resulted in a more streamlined and less time-consuming system which, I believe, has turned out to be a huge success.

A third challenge is the decline we continue to see in membership numbers but, in that, we are not alone. However, that must not stop us from encouraging new members to join us in our joint passion for family history research.

On a more positive note, and although it is often considered improper to 'sing one's own praises', it is my opinion that we should be proud of our achievements this last year. We have continued to provide an excellent service to you, our Members, and to the wider public through Group meetings (in person and online), free family history help sessions in local libraries and at our Help Desk in Hampshire Archives, Winchester, as well as posting regular hints and tips on our Facebook page. Our journal has had a facelift, more datasets and indexes have been added to the

Members' Area of our website and the merchandise available to purchase from our online shop has been greatly increased.

Our Bookstall Manager and her Assistant like to get out and about to meet you, hopefully attract new members and network with other societies. It has been most pleasing that many of you came along to see them at the family history shows they attended, especially those who helped them out on the day. We also participated in virtual family history shows, collaborated with the Society of Genealogists to deliver an online presentation, and took part in radio shows and podcasts. We were also extremely pleased to see so many of you, and other guests, at our Conference Day in Wickham last September. All agreed it had been a great day!

I have enjoyed my time as Vice Chairman and a Trustee of HGS and, as I step away from my role, I have every confidence that the new Executive Committee will continue to maintain HGS's high standards and ongoing development. I thank them for their support during my tenure and wish them, and the Society as a whole, more success to come.

Kay Lovell

HGS Vice-Chairman 2023-2026