



14TH NOVEMBER 2019

ISSUE NUMBER 73

# Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY, SEVENOAKS, KENT  
[www.nwkhfs.org.uk](http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk)



**Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch and to our new venue.**

**Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Otford Memorial Hall, High Street, Otford, TN14 5PQ. Doors open at 7.15pm, meeting starts at 8pm. There is free car parking after 6.30 pm - and refreshments are available. We welcome visitors and new members, and we aspire to offer all the helpful advice that you might need, we hope you enjoy your visit. Guests we appreciate a £2.00 donation to the society's funds.**

## NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING

**12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

**"Christmas. A Celebratory History"**

In an uplifting presentation, Andy uncovers the fascinating background to the festive season. From the ancient ceremonies of light in the darkness, to the marking of the birth of a messiah, mid-December has long been a time for rejoicing. Yet Christmas traditions have splintered into many guises and seasonal celebration was even banned in Puritan times. Andy shows why, for all the modern commercialisation, Christmas has survived and still has meaning for us today. ?

**Speaker - Andy Thomas**

## OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

**BROMLEY - 16th NOVEMBER - "The History of the Royal Variety Performance" - Speaker - Dean Caston**

Dean will talk to us about the first Royal Command performance in 1912 through to the current day.

**DARTFORD - 7th DECEMBER - "Christmas on the Home Front 1935-45" - Speaker - Mike Brown**

Drawing upon personal recollections, newspaper articles, advertisements, & photographs, Mike looks at wartime Christmas on the British Home Front, from 1939 to 1944. He explores how people celebrated Christmas despite shortages, rationing, the blackout, Luftwaffe raids and the absence of family members.

## **14TH NOVEMBER THIS EVENING'S TALK**

**"FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE - CREATING THE WELFARE STATE IN FORTIES BRITAIN"**

Before WW2, Britain's welfare was extensively provided by private charity & voluntary organisations. After the war Britain was determined to move forward. The Labour Party envisaged a society in which the populace would be free from the fear of poverty and ill health. A comprehensive welfare system was provided to support everyone in their time of need and it remains largely in place today. So, how was it founded? In this talk Alan will explore the background to the creation of the welfare state and why the war acted as an agent of such significant policy change.

**Speaker - Alan Williams**

## **KENT EVENTS**

**20th NOVEMBER - SIR EDWIN LANDSEER LUTYENS, MASTER ARCHITECT.**

**OTFORD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, OTFORD MEMORIAL HALL, HIGH STREET, OTFORD, TN14 5PQ**

Speaker: Martin Lutyens. Open 7.30 pm start 8pm. Visitors £3.00 (there is no charge for students).

**21st NOVEMBER - THE CAMBRIDGE SPIES.**

**LEIGH AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH, NR TONBRIDGE, KENT TN11 8RL**

Speaker: Edward Towne. 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Non-members are welcome, for a small charge of £3.00

**22ND NOVEMBER - "RICH LEGACY" World War One words and wit**

**KEMSING HERITAGE CENTRE, ST EDITH HALL, KEMSING, KENT, TN15 6NA**

Speaker: Ian Walker. Time 7.30pm, Visitors £2.50

**28th NOVEMBER – 'WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR IN PERSPECTIVE'**

**SEVENOAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, SEVENOAKS, TN13 1JA**

Speaker Prof. David Bates – Time 8pm – Non-Members £3.00

**29th NOVEMBER - 'OVER-PAID, OVER-SEXED AND OVER-HERE'. THE AMERICAN INVASION OF BRITAIN 1942-1945 .**

**1940S SOCIETY OTFORD MEMORIAL HALL, HIGH STREET, OTFORD, TN14 5PQ**

Between 1942 and 1945 American service personnel flooded into Britain in what George Orwell called 'the invasion of Britain'. Alan will explore this 'invasion' and show the 1943 War Office film 'A Welcome to Britain' which explained to American servicemen and women how strange life in Britain was, from 'funny money' and driving on the wrong side of the road to warm beer. Prepare to be amused and perhaps shocked in equal measure.

Speaker: Alan Williams - Time 8pm - Admission £3.00

**5th DECEMBER – WHAT IS IT? Chris Baker brings some objects from Dartford museum for us to identify**

**SWANLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ALEXANDRA SUITE ST MARY'S ROAD SWANLEY BR8 7BU**

Speaker: Mike Bundock. Time 7.30 PM, (Doors open 7pm). Non- Members £2.00 (**Note this is a new venue**)

## The Real Story of the Christmas Truce - WWI

The Christmas Truce has become one of the most famous and mythologised events of the First World War. But what was the real story behind the truce? Why did it happen and did British and German soldiers really play football in no-man's land?



Late on Christmas Eve 1914, men of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) heard German troops in the trenches opposite them singing carols and patriotic songs and saw lanterns and small fir trees along their trenches. Messages began to be shouted between the trenches. The following day, British and German soldiers met in no man's land and exchanged gifts, took photographs and some played impromptu games of football. They also buried casualties and repaired trenches and dugouts. After Boxing Day, meetings in no man's land dwindled out.

The truce was not observed everywhere along the Western Front. Elsewhere the fighting continued and casualties did occur on Christmas Day. Some officers were unhappy at the truce and worried that it would undermine fighting spirit. After 1914, the High Commands on both sides tried to prevent any truces on a similar scale happening again. Despite this, there were some isolated incidents of soldiers holding brief truces later in the war, and not only at Christmas.

In what was known as the 'Live and Let Live' system, in quiet sectors of the front line, brief pauses in the hostilities were sometimes tacitly agreed, allowing both sides to repair their trenches or gather their dead.

Visit: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-real-story-of-the-christmas-truce> for more on this story and other voices of the first World War.

Source: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-real-story-of-the-christmas-truce> - Article by Amada Mason - 11.11.19

**AGM and Family History Day 2020 Announced** - Thursday 9 April 2020 - Add it to your diary now...

**Venue:** West Heath School, Ashgrove Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1SR (same venue as 2017) more details will follow.

### Member's research Displays.

The Library Committee are proposing the idea that any member of the Society could display the results of their family history research at the Library Window. The plan is that they show pictures maps and documents that refer to their research and tell the story of an ancestor. The Society will pay for the pictures to be laminated and give assistance with mounting the display on the backboards. The method of attachment uses Velcro tape. Any member who wants to take up this challenge can ask for help from some of the Library experts. If a member would prefer to prepare a display on a subject rather than their family, this can be done. A suggested subject would be the work and tools of a trade or occupation, such as a 'Tailor' or 'Coachman'. Contact [Library@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:Library@nwkfhs.org.uk).

### An appealed from Pauline for more articles for the 2020 Journals.

The talk *The Real Downton Abbey* at Dartford Branch was about being in service in the early 1900s and drew vivid contrast between the liberties that authors of TV series had to take with the reality and drudgery of staff at large houses and estates. So I was delighted when, at the end of the meeting, a member offered to write about members of their family who had been *in service*. To produce the Journal each quarter we need a stream of varied articles, long and short. If you would like to chat about making a contribution please contact the Editor, Pauline, on [editor@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@nwkfhs.org.uk). Any other suggestions (actions) for reaching out to potential authors welcome... e.g. Facebook?

### ON THIS DAY: Nov. 14th is the 318th day of 2019 in the Gregorian calendar; 47 days left until the end of the year

**1532** King Henry VIII of England secretly marries Anne Boleyn (officially married January 25, 1533)

**1650** William III of England, Prince of Orange, King of England, Scotland and Ireland is born (d. 1702)

**1687** Nell Gwyn, English mistress of Charles II of England dies (b.1650)

**1770** James Bruce, a Scottish traveller and travel writer, discovers what he believes to be the source of the Nile

**1851** Moby-Dick, a novel by Herman Melville, is published in the USA

**1903** Friedrich Soenneken first developed the hole puncher, a type of office tool capable of punching small holes in paper!

**1908** Albert Einstein presents his quantum theory of light

**1922** The British Broadcasting Company begins radio service in the United Kingdom

**1940** WW2: Coventry is heavily bombed by German Luftwaffe bombers. Coventry Cathedral is almost completely destroyed

**1952** The first regular UK Singles Chart published by the New Musical Express

**1973** Princess Anne marries Captain Mark Phillips, in Westminster Abbey



*Don't forget to bring a small plate  
of food next month for our  
Christmas party -*

**The Sevenoaks Committee**  
**Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters**  
**Committee Members**  
**Karina Jackson, Norma Holmden,**  
**Bernie Wilkins, Barbara Stead,**  
**Sandra Marchant, Bill Chopping**