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Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY - www.nwkfhs.org.uk

Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch

Our meetings take place at Otford Memorial Hall, 28A High Street, Otford, TN14 5PQ

Doors open at 10.45 am, meeting starts at 11am - Parking: Up to 2 hours: £0.50 - Up to 3 hours: £1.00

We warmly welcome visitors and new members and aim to provide all the advice and support you may need in your family history journey.

Guests: We kindly ask for a £4 donation to support the Society's funds. **Members:** £2 contribution per meeting.

Hand sanitiser and masks are available at the venue. Chairs are arranged with considerate spacing for those who may still be cautious about COVID. We are also pleased to announce that we now have a hearing assistance system in place to improve the audio experience for attendees who may benefit from enhanced sound clarity.

TODAYS TALK: Adam Taylor on Islands of the Medway Estuary

Using animation, sound and images, this PowerPoint presentation draws on many sources; census records, photos, Victorian technical plans, personal experience and several trips to the National Archives - to bring to life the people who lived on these islands, unlock the secret of how the twin forts of Hoo and Darnet were built, the story of the pub which stood on an island in the middle of the estuary, how a WW1 German submarine ended up where it is now and the story of the infamous Deadmans island.

The presentation also takes a close look at some of the flora and fauna of this huge, beautiful wilderness that is the Medway estuary. Adam is a keen canoeist with fifteen years' experience of paddling a fourteen-foot, Canadian (open) canoe. He has canoed in many places including the dramatic wilds of Ontario, pristine lakes of Finland, stunning rivers of Sweden and beautiful places here in the UK, but it is the islands and salt marshes of the Medway estuary where his heart is.

NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING 14TH February - Ed Thompson: Shops of Otford 1960-2000

The talk looks at the buildings and scenes of Sevenoaks that are lost to time but were captured in over 80 evocative photographs. Edwin was brought up in Otford and from an early age developed an interest in railways, spending much time watching steam trains at the local station. He began to collect railway memorabilia as much of the railway was being modernised in the 1960s but it wasn't until 1980s when the canopy at Otford Station was being taken down that he felt the need to preserve the memory of the old station for future generations. At that time, he only possessed one old photograph of the building, but over time his collection grew to over 200 pictures. Next, he started amassing pictures of Otford Village and then of Sevenoaks and the surrounding villages, eventually widening out to cover West Kent and East Sussex.

His collection continues to grow and many of his photographs have been used in local history books.

DARTFORD BRANCH MEETING 7TH February -

Family History Research at the Metropolitan Police Museum with Clare Smith

The Metropolitan Police Museum is in Sidcup and holds archives, books, photographs, equipment, uniforms and other artefacts relating to the history of the Metropolitan Police since its inception in 1829. If you have a police officer on your family tree the Museum has Police Orders (day-to-day updates) on joiners and leavers, promotions and dismissals and rewards and punishments.

<https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/about-us/about-the-met/met-museums-archives/>

The Curator and Archivist, Clare Smith, will explain how the museum collection can be used in your research.

Please visit our website for details of more workshops and updates and don't forget to sign up for our free twice monthly Society eNewsletter.



UP AND COMING LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

DNA and General Family History Discussion Group with Pam Goddard

11 February 10:30

Library Writing Group with Pauline Heathcote

25 February 10:30

ZOOM DISCUSSION GROUPS, TALKS AND WORKSHOP

ZOOM Have you found an interesting property that your family has lived in? Have you researched the property? with Ann Clarke

4 February 10:30

ZOOM WORKSHOP Breaking Down Ancestral Brick Walls with David Cufley

25 February 19:30

(Please submit your Brick Wall by 11 February to David Cufley via <https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/?location=1#Contact>)

ZOOM Let's talk about family history with Laura Lincoln

11 February 10:30

ZOOM DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln

18 February 10:30

ZOOM Sin, Sex and Probate with Colin Chapman

12 February 19:30

Dr Chapman returns to talk about the Church Courts. Sin, Sex and Probate. a fascinating and accessible guide to the workings of England's ecclesiastical courts. Until the mid-19th Century in Britain, the Church Courts locally and nationally granted permission to marry, proved wills and testaments, and issued licences to curates, schoolteachers, midwives, physicians and surgeons. These courts additionally dealt with law and order, including sexual misdemeanours of laity and clergy. In this revealing lecture Dr Chapman explains how the courts operated and where their records, valuable to all family historians, may be located today.

He is a retired engineer and scientist who began family history research at the age of seven, encouraged by his grandparents. He went on to found or co-found six county-based family history societies, three of which he is currently their President and of a fourth is their Patron.

He originated the three-letter code for county names, forming the basis for the British and International Standard ISO-3166. He has written fourteen genealogically related books, including, *Sin, Sex and Probate: Ecclesiastical Courts, Officials & Records*. He is a Vice President of both the Family History Federation and of the Society of Genealogists.

This Talk will not be recorded.

Please log in 15 minutes before each online event and enjoy chatting amongst participants before it starts.

As this event is on Zoom, don't forget to bring your own coffee and biscuits! ☕️ 🍪 😊

All events are for members only. For further details and fees please visit our website.

Workshop leaders freely give their time, but a donation via the web shop is appreciated:

<https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/shop/nwkfhs-shop/services/society-donation>



Participating in a North West Kent Family History workshop or discussion offers numerous benefits. It provides valuable skills for research, enhances your understanding of historical contexts, and fosters a sense of connection with your ancestry. We warmly welcome both familiar faces and new friends.

Calling all volunteers with fresh ideas! If you have a new topic of interest you'd like to see covered in our workshops, or you wish to be involved with our workshops, we want to hear from you. Contact us through bookings and enquiries by e-mail workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk

Bring Your Own Mug (BYOM)



Let's make our meetings a little eco-friendly! Please where possible BYOM to help us to save a little cost, reduce waste and make a positive impact on the environment. If this is difficult or you forget don't worry, we do have a small supply of mugs to ensure you can enjoy a drink.

We thank you for your cooperation.



28 January – Library Access Update

The library will be open for members to carry out their own research on this day. However, please note that access to the books and some maps and document collections will be restricted until the Society Committee meeting has concluded. We plan on finishing committee business by 1.00pm but sometimes overrun.

We apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

An Invitation from the Editor

As a member of our esteemed Family History Society, we invite you to contribute to our upcoming journals in the next few months. At NWKFHS, we value the rich tapestry of family narratives and historical insights that our members bring to the table. Your unique perspective and expertise would undoubtedly enrich our journal.

Whether you have a captivating family story, compelling research, or an enlightening exploration of historical records, we warmly welcome your submissions. This is a terrific opportunity to share your knowledge and passion with fellow members.

If you are interested in contributing, please feel free to reach out to us with your proposed topic or submission. Our editor Pauline will be delighted to hear from you and will respond to every proposal. Please email theeditor@nwkfhs.org.uk - word files or simply text in the body of an email is fine. We await your proposals.

Help Needed



Many hands make light work. That is certainly true when it comes to sharing the tasks that keep our Society operating smoothly. Please see our website for monthly updates for these volunteer opportunities. Below are a few tasks where help is much needed at our Sevenoaks Branch.

Chair – Sevenoaks Branch Meetings

Barbara Phillips is currently acting Chair but would like to relinquish this post as she is also programme secretary for the branch and has other responsibilities within the Society. The chair does not have as many responsibilities as previously, as others have taken on some of the tasks. If the Branch Chair is away for a meeting, this can be managed. The job is not onerous but needs commitment.

Transporter - Sevenoaks & Dartford Branch Meetings

Sevenoaks & Dartford need someone to bring the Bought -in-Books to the meetings. When not required they can be housed in the Society's lock-up off of Thames Road, Dartford. One does not need a big car boot. Any monies involved are the responsibility of the individual branch and do not concern the person who brings them. The job is not onerous but does need commitment.

Raffle and Refreshment Volunteers

We're looking for volunteers to help with refreshments and the raffle at our meetings. The tasks are simple and straightforward, and full guidance will be given, so there's no need to worry if you haven't done it before. All we ask is a bit of commitment and reliability to help things run smoothly for everyone.

If you're able to help out, even occasionally, please speak to a committee member at the next meeting or get in touch via the website.

We would greatly appreciate any raffle prize donations as well. Thank you – your support makes a big difference!

ON THIS DAY

January 10th is the 10th day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 355 days remain to the end of the year.

49 BC Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon, singling the start of civil war

9 The Western Han dynasty ends when Wang Mang claims that the divine Mandate of Heaven called for the end of the dynasty and the beginning of his own, the Xin dynasty.

1072 Robert Guiscard conquers Palermo in Sicily for the Normans

1645 Archbishop William Laud is beheaded for treason at the Tower of London

1776 American Revolution: Thomas Paine publishes his pamphlet Common Sense

1863 The Metropolitan Railway, the world's oldest underground railway, opens between Paddington and Farringdon, marking the beginning of the London Underground

1920 The Treaty of Versailles takes effect, officially ending World War I for all combatant nations except the United States

1927 Fritz Lang's futuristic film Metropolis is released in Germany

1945 Rod Stewart, British singer-songwriter is born

2025 Sam Moore dies American soul singer-songwriter (born 1935)

Old Occupations:

- ❖ OUT CRIER An auctioneer
- ❖ OUTWORKER A worker who carried on their occupation at home, e.g., cotton or woollen weavers but it applies to many occupations. Also refers to a casual female worker on a farm, thinning turnips, planting potatoes, haymaking, who lived in immediate neighbourhood.
- ❖ OVERLOOKER A superintendent or overseer, especially in the textile mills (sometimes referred to as 'looker')
- ❖ OVERMAN An official below Undermanager but above Deputy in mining who checked the miners work and the quality of the mined coal
- ❖ OWLER A sheep or wool smuggler
- ❖ OYSTER DREDGER A member of the crew on board an oyster fishing boat

Ancestry Podcasts Worth a Listen?

If you enjoy uncovering the stories behind the records, *Ancestry* has produced several podcasts that bring family history and archival research vividly to life. These series show how documents, newspapers and genealogy tools can be used not just to build trees, but to recover forgotten lives and place families back into their historical context.

Behind the Headlines of History

This engaging podcast explores real news stories from the past, using historical newspapers and genealogical records to uncover the people behind the headlines. From everyday individuals to extraordinary circumstances, each episode demonstrates how family history research can add depth and humanity to historical events.

Why it's worth a listen:

Perfect for family historians who enjoy social history, this series shows how records we use every day can transform a brief newspaper item into a full and compelling life story.

Unclaimed

A powerful documentary-style series, *Unclaimed* follows genealogists as they work to identify thousands of unclaimed cremated remains discovered at a former hospital in the United States. Using archival sources, DNA and family history research, the series reconnects lost identities with living descendants.

Why it's worth a listen:

This podcast highlights the real-world impact of genealogy — showing how research can restore names, dignity and family connections long thought lost.

Why podcasts matter for family historians

Listening to genealogy-focused podcasts can:

- Offer fresh perspectives on using records and newspapers
- Provide inspiration for breaking through research "brick walls"
- Show how individual lives fit into wider historical events

Both of these *Ancestry* podcasts are available on major podcast platforms and can be enjoyed whether you're actively researching or simply looking for history-rich listening.

The Sevenoaks Committee: Branch Chair – Vacant



Members: Barbara Phillips, Bernie Wilkins, Janet Rose, Barbara Attwaters, Maureen Berry, Jon Henderson, Christine Hills