



I visited the new Biggin Hill Memorial Museum on opening day, Wednesday 30 January. It is a family historian's dream with lots of historic photos of people who served there and some of their life history. It is much more about the personal history of the people than the battle. Therefore it's worth a visit even if you don't enjoy 'war stuff'.

I took lots of photos and show one here of (left to right) WAAFs Elizabeth 'Joan' MORTIMER, Elspeth HENDERSON and Helen TURNER. The Women's Auxiliary Air Force was mobilised for duty in 1939 and Biggin Hill's WAAFs were marked out for special courage. There are some more photos at the foot of this email.

<https://bhmm.org.uk/>

Welcome to the mid February 2019 emailinfo service, the NWKFHS fortnightly information service, comprising the latest information about the Society and its events, and other items of interest for family historians.

I (Stella Eames) would welcome photos of people or places (specially historical or family history) in the North West Kent area with a story about them as I want to start each newsletter with a photo and story. Please email me at emailinfo@nwkfhs.org.uk, with your contributions. Any photos must be your own copyright. If I don't receive any I will have to use my own which may not be as interesting.

The latest branch newsletters and back issues of this e-newsletter can be found [HERE](#) You will be taken to a screen where you can then click on the newsletter you want to read.

Click on our other links [Blog](#) [Facebook](#) [Flickr](#)

What's On - A reminder of NWKFHS Events during the next few weeks

[\(Click here to see the entire Talks, Workshops and Events programme so you can book your diaries well ahead\)](#)

Our meetings are interesting mix of speakers and workshops. The Branch meetings with speakers are held at venues in Bromley, Dartford and Sevenoaks and the workshops are in the Society Library in Joyden's Wood, which we have sole use of on Wednesdays.

Branch meetings are free to NWKFHS members and no booking is required. Guests are welcome but we appreciate a donation of eg £1 - £2 to the Society's funds to help cover the costs of hall hire and the speaker. Please join the Society if you want to come to more than one meeting - only £10 a year or £12 total for two members at the same address <https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/about/our-membership>

The 2-hour workshops are limited to 10 members and have proved very popular. Several are full already - however don't let that stop you booking them as reserve lists are kept and a second workshop on the same topic is arranged if there is demand. Sometimes reserves are invited to join the workshop at short notice. Please note that **booking is essential for workshops** and we invite a donation eg £5 towards the costs of maintaining the library.

Go to the Society website and you can see all the workshops for the next 12 months. Just hover your cursor over the event entry for further info. Workshops do fill up quickly and are only open to members. Not joined yet? - don't [dine in for £10](#) - join the Society for a [whole year for £10](#) instead.

<https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/community/events>

To join NWKFHS and come to the library, all our meetings, house groups and workshops please just click [here](#) or email Membership Secretary Mrs Christina Barnett, on membership@nwkfhs.org.uk. **Membership is only £10 per year or £12 for two people at the same address. Value of family history news and help you can receive priceless.**

Membership benefits: members get access to all our meetings with speakers PLUS a quarterly journal packed full of articles and useful information, monthly workshops on topics requested by members and the benefits of our library and research centre, open Wednesdays. The website has a members - only area with back journals and other data.

The Library at 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joyden's Wood, Bexley DA5 2EE is open to members and visitors every Wednesday from 10am to 4pm. Our volunteers can help you with your research and you can use the library computers with free Find My Past and Ancestry access.

If you are already a member and have not renewed, please help our volunteer membership and renewal secretaries and renew now. Membership renewal was due on 1 January. You can pay by standing order; or by cash or cheque at one of our meetings; or by post - and a renewal form was in the centre of the December Journal (yellow pages). If you pay basic rate UK income tax please gift aid. This costs you nothing and boosts the value of your membership by 25% to the Society.

If the renewal form is not to hand (or you are abroad and find it easier to pay online), you can renew online here <https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/shop/nwkfhs-shop/membership/individual-membership-renewal>

February 13 - Wednesday 10.30am - 12.30 Workshop at the Library
Self help computer group

Please note change of date for this new group. The second Wednesday in the month has proved to be more convenient going forward.

A regular monthly group to discuss computer problems and other IT matters of mutual interest. It will continue on the second Wednesday every month. Book to join this exciting group.

Self help with input from library 'experts'

Booking essential due to space limitations - please contact Victor on workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk

£5 donation requested towards library running costs.
At the Library, 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley DA5 2EE
Park in nearby side roads. Doors open 10am.

February 14 - Thursday 8pm - Speaker at Sevenoaks
'The Bodyguard' - life as a Royal Protection Officer

Guest Speaker Richard Griffin

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF SPEAKER. Richard Griffin was previously due to speak to us in March

(The February speaker, Geoff Beer, will now speak at the 14 March meeting)

Richard started his police career at the age of 16 when he joined Gwent Constabulary.

In 1970, aged 19 he left Wales and joined the Metropolitan Police Force.

Richard was promoted to inspector in 1981 when he joined the six police officers sent in to reorganise security procedures at the Palace. This was the start of 32 years of further promotions in service to various members of the Royal Family, finishing up as "The Queen's Police Officer".

Richard comes to us highly recommended as an engaging and amusing speaker.

Typing this up reminded me of a newspaper article I had read which stuck in my mind because it was so amusing:-

Mr Griffin recalled a time when the monarch was approached by a group of American tourists while on a walk near the Balmoral Estate in Aberdeenshire, according to The Times.

The group asked the Queen, who was wearing a headscarf and tweed coat, if she lived in the area, to which she responded simply by saying she had a house close-by.

"Have you ever met the Queen?" they asked.

"No," she apparently replied, before pointing at the policeman and adding: "But he has." The group were still none the wiser and left without realising whose company they had just shared.

Free to all NWKFHS members. No booking - just turn up. Guests are welcome but we appreciate a £2.00 donation to the Society's funds. More info from sevenoaks@nwkfhs.org.uk

Venue: Sevenoaks Community Centre, Cramptons Road, off Otford Road, Sevenoaks TN14 5DN
Doors open 7.15pm, meeting starts 8pm. Finishes by 9.30pm. There is a large free car park.

February 15 - Friday 2.00pm - 4.00pm New DNA shared-help Group at the Library

This DNA Group is intended to continue on the 3rd Friday of each month.

Booking essential due to space limitations - please contact Victor on workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk

£5 donation requested towards library running costs.
At the Library, 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley DA5 2EE
Park in nearby side roads.

February 16 Saturday 10.30am - Speaker at Bromley on Spitalfields through the ages
Guest speaker John Halligan

John Halligan, an accredited City of London Guide, will take us on a fascinating journey through the ever-changing culture of the area, from Roman times to the present day.

Many of the Huguenots (French Protestants) who left France in 1685 were weavers - over the years 25,000 settled in Spitalfields. They brought their skills, new techniques, new ideas and the incomparable French style. The master weavers lived in large, elegant houses whilst the journeymen weavers lived in small houses north of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green.

Doors open 9.45am, meeting starts 10.30am. The venue, Bromley Methodist Church, College Road, Bromley BR1 3NS has a free car park (although this can fill up) and is close to Bromley North Station and is on or near many bus routes.

Free to all NWKFHS members. No booking - just turn up. Guests are welcome but we appreciate a £1.00 donation to the Society's funds.

More info from bromley@nwkfhs.org.uk

February 20 - Wednesday 10.30am - 12.30pm Workshop at the Library
Beginning your family history research led by Fran Rogers

Especially aimed at new members, Fran will assist you with your early stages of family history research. She will cover birth, marriage and death certificates, censuses, parish registers, wills, directories and websites.

If this workshop fills up, Fran will run a second group in the afternoon.

If you are currently a non member who joins between now and February 20 this workshop is included in your £10 membership fee.

Booking essential due to space limitations - please contact Victor on workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk
When you book, Victor will advise whether you are on the morning or afternoon one.

At the Library, 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley DA5 2EE
Park in nearby side roads. Doors open 10am.

February 27 - Wednesday 10.30am - 12.30pm
Quarterly Writing Group at the Library
Led by Pauline Heathcote

Booking essential due to space limitations - please contact Victor on workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk

£5 donation requested towards library running costs.
At the Library, 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley DA5 2EE
Park in nearby side roads. Doors open 10am.

March 2 - Saturday 10.30am - Speaker at Dartford
The Siren Sea - Nations depend on it
Guest Speaker Imogen Corrigan

The ship is one of the most common images found in medieval churches and manuscripts and not just on the coast, but often far inland as well. Nations depend on the sea for nourishment, safety and wealth but, all too often, it brings ruin and death. It was ever thus.

In this talk the life of the medieval mariner will be brought to life with his hopes, fears and superstitions. We'll also look at some spectacular ship-wrecks, some of which changed the course of history, and see how they fought to save their ships and cargo. We'll learn how they built ships and think about how they navigated: extraordinary journeys were made in a time when no one was completely confident that they wouldn't simply sail off the edge of the world or into the mouths of dragons. No wonder those returning to safe harbour were so full of tall tales.

Free to all NWKFHS members. No booking - just turn up. Guests are welcome but we appreciate a donation to the Society's funds. More info if needed from dartford@nwkfhs.org.uk

Doors open 9.45am, meeting starts 10.30am. The venue, Dartford Science and Technology College, Heath Lane, Dartford DA1 2LY, has a large, free car park via the Heath Lane entrance.

Dartford Science and Technology College asks: due to having a pupil with a severe allergic reaction to nuts and aerosols, we have had to ban these two items to ensure the pupil's safety. Please do not bring any products that are aerosol based, or foods which may contain nuts, onto site. I do hope that you all will understand the importance of this request, and we thank you for your understanding.

Monday 4 March 2.15pm DNA Talk by Geoff Swinfield - one place left
The session, including discussion time, will last approximately 2 hours
read about Geoff here:

<http://ggq2013.blogspot.com/2013/08/geoff-swinfield-how-dna-ruined-my.html>

The Monday afternoon DNA housegroup, which meets in my home on the first Monday each month, has once space left for anyone interested to come to a talk on DNA illustrated with powerpoint slides by Geoff Swinfield. £5 per person. The maximum is 10 for space reasons and we have 9 booked. I live in BR6 on the Chelsfield edge of Orpington and 2 miles from J4 M25. Easy parking in my cul de sac and close to Chelsfield Station and an R1 bus stop. Arrive from 2pm for tea and coffee. Please contact me, Stella on emailinfoservice@nwkfhs.org.uk

March 13 - Wednesday 10.30am - 12.30 Workshop at the Library
Self help computer group

A regular monthly group to discuss computer problems and other IT matters of mutual interest. It will continue on the second Wednesday every month. Book to join this exciting group.

Self help with input from library 'experts'

Booking essential due to space limitations - please contact Victor on workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk

£5 donation requested towards library running costs.

At the Library, 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley DA5 2EE
Park in nearby side roads. Doors open 10am.

March 14 - Thursday 8pm - Speaker at Sevenoaks preceded by Sevenoaks Branch Annual Meeting

Underground Britain from factories to military transport

Note - change of speaker from that previously publicised

Guest speaker Geoff Beer is now retired after a very interesting work history which has included Toll Road management in the UK, South Africa, and the Republic of Ireland, Information Technology implementation, and various Directorships.

Geoff will explore interesting things beneath the ground from war time factories to Cold War bunkers, mines, underground pipelines of all sorts, geology, catacombs and crypts, dumping, and of course pavement markings. His talk is illustrated with text, pictures and videos.

Free to all NWKFHS members. No booking - just turn up. Guests are welcome but we appreciate a £1.00 donation to the Society's funds. More info from sevenoaks@nwkfhs.org.uk

March 16 Saturday 10.30am - Speaker at Bromley on Powers behind the Thrones

Speaker preceded by Branch Annual Meeting

Guest speaker Imogen Corrigan

Many think that it was only in the twentieth century that women came into their own, even though there are still arguments about whether or not women should be bishops and generals, or if there should be a higher proportion in the board room.

The truth is that our Anglo-Saxon sisters had a surprising freedom in law; they could own land, sue and be sued. A quarter of all wills that survive from before the Conquest were written by women. Whilst Anglo-Saxon England led the way in the first millennium, other countries were not far behind.

In this talk we discover the influential woman of the first thousand years AD. Whilst we will meet saintly and worthy women who led with a firm, guiding hand, perhaps the more interesting ones are those who go down in history for their cruelty and monstrous behaviour, although it is also one or two of these who helped to spread Christianity. What is plain is that these women had a voice, sometimes ruling those who ruled with surprising authority: down-trodden and marriage chattels they were not!

Doors open 9.45am, meeting starts 10.30am. The venue, Bromley Methodist Church, College Road, Bromley BR1 3NS has a free car park (although this can fill up) and is close to Bromley North Station and is on or near many bus routes.

Free to all NWKFHS members. No booking - just turn up. Guests are welcome but we appreciate a £1- £2 donation to the Society's funds. More info from bromley@nwkfhs.org.uk

Tuesday 2 April - advance information about a guided history walk organised by Hilary Waters.

On Tuesday 2 April Chris Bull will entertain us around Dartford.

Commencing at about 11am he will point out places of interest which could be easily overlooked in the historic town centre.

After a break for lunch we will be able to go behind the scenes in the Library. Originally built with the aid of a grant from the philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, it has served the town since 1916.

If you would be interested in joining the walk please email Hilary Waters at dartford@nwkfhs.org.uk & please enter Dartford Walk 2019 in the subject box. I will then add you to my list so I can give you more details.

Hilary Waters

For events further ahead just look at the website. The monthly Branch talks are listed till at least March 2019 and in many cases beyond, and workshops are booking even further ahead.

Anyone can attend a talk at the locations in Bromley, Dartford and Sevenoaks; but if you are a non member a donation is requested towards the cost of the hall and speaker. £1- £2 suggested. Non members asked to join if attending more than one meeting.

As most workshops are oversubscribed they are intended for members only and seen as a benefit of paid-up membership.

The exception is beginners' workshops - eg the one to be led by Fran Rogers on 20 February. These are aimed at new members and, if not full, free spaces are made available to non members joining on the day or before.

NWKFHS Membership is just £10 and lasts till 31 December 2019 and includes a free space (if not already full) at the beginners' workshop.

<https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/community/events>

2020 NWKFHS calendar

Remember to take your smartphones or cameras with you when you are out and about in the NWK area.

The competition for photos for the 2020 calendar ends on 30 June. This cut off date is necessary so that the winning photographs can be chosen and the calendars printed in time for us to get them on sale in early autumn before buyers have bought their calendars elsewhere.

This year we are again asking for sponsorship to cover the printing so that all the sales are profit for the Society's funds. Those who sponsor will have the privilege of seeing their names listed as sponsors (amounts will not be stated).

Please send photos by email to Tony Codling chairman@nwkfhs.org.uk and donations to Pat Gooding, Treasurer marked 'calendar sponsorship' - using the library address on the inside cover of the Journal.

Remember the closing date for photos and to be listed as a sponsor is 30 June 2019.

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Important Notice - AGM and Family History day on 11 April 2019

The 2019 AGM Booking form sent with the December Journal is incorrect.

If you have not already responded to book lunch please use the correct form https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/images/AGM_2019/BOOKING-FORM-2019.pdf



Fred and John Swan
Images from the Spitfire collection

[More photos from Biggin Hill Memorial](#)

Museum

Twin brothers John and Fred SWAN aged 18 joined 611 squadron as ground crew engineers.

They worked on early Spitfires and the training aircraft Mars Masters.



Felicity PEAKE (nee HANBURY) was only 26 when she served at Biggin Hill as Section Officer, in charge of 250 WAAFs. Later, age 32, she was made Director of the WAAF.



Frederick Stanley MOCKFORD was the first Wireless Officer at Biggin Hill.

In 1913 aged 15 he worked as a Morse code telegrapher.

After the outbreak of war he lied about his age and volunteered as a RAF wireless operator.

Editor's note: I often get asked to publicise family history fairs, new books on genealogy and small genealogy businesses. I use my discretion in including ones which are local to our area or which I think may interest readers. It does not mean that I or NWKFHS has any personal knowledge, or makes any recommendation, about the event or business.

If there is anything else I should be aware of, to give you maximum benefit from this email service, please let me know. I do receive many suggestions and requests for external events to be included, but there is only room for so much and I am conscious that the longer this email is, the less likely it is to be read. Some external events I publish on our Facebook page instead. But I'd welcome your opinions on the length and content and whether there is anything additional you'd like included.

Please mention it to others and encourage them to sign up so that we can keep society members and anyone interested in family history informed of NWKFHS activities.

PS I am a volunteer creating this e-newsletter in my 'spare time' but, if you do notice any errors, please tell me, so that they are not carried forward to the next emailinfo.

Stella Eames, Editor

emailinfo@nwkfhs.org.uk

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