



11 FEBRUARY 2023

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Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY, SEVENOAKS, KENT
www.nwkhfs.org.uk



Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch

Our meetings are held at Otford Memorial Hall, 28A High Street, Otford, TN14 5PQ

Doors open at 1045 am, meeting starts at 11am - Nominal parking fee

We welcome visitors and new members, and we aspire to offer all the helpful advice that you might need.

Guests we appreciate a £1.00 - £2.00 donation to the society's funds.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Sanitiser and masks available and chairs placed at a friendly distance for those concerned about Covid

Today's talk

11 FEBRUARY 2023

DNA for Family Historians

You may consider using a DNA test to learn more about yourself and your family. Whether that's because you're looking for more information about unknown family members, your ethnic background, or to verify family tales, a DNA test can be an option for helping you learn more about your family tree, but where to start and what to consider. What benefits can be achieved by DNA testing for genealogy. Can DNA testing help with brick walls and reunite long lost family members. You may wish to test beyond yourself to find missing fragments of your ancestors that weren't passed onto you which may require testing of siblings, parents, and other relatives. There are so many questions.

Dr Geoff Swinfield has lectured widely on all aspects of genealogy, its sources and research techniques including the use and application of DNA testing to Genetic Genealogy. He graduated from Nottingham University with a PhD in genetics and began training as a professional genealogist in 1979 at the IHGS in Canterbury. Whilst at IHGS, as its director, he headed a team which, in conjunction with hospital research departments, used genealogical research to trace the inheritance of genetic abnormalities to identify those who may be at risk. Geoff is also a past Chair of AGRA's Board of Assessors and a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists, we could not be in better hands to help us understand DNA for our Family History research.

Speaker DR GEOFF SWINFELD

NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING

11 MARCH 2023 – In The Name of God, Amen; Understanding Wills

Wills are an incredibly useful resource when researching your family history. At The turn of the 20th Century only one in ten people left a will on their death, despite this it is a source worth investigating. Wills could be left by people of modest means and many individuals, including servants, could be mentioned in them as executors, beneficiaries, and witnesses. If you are lucky enough to come across one in your research, they can be a rich source of historical material. They may name a spouse, or confirm the deceased didn't marry, list children, even grandchildren; adult daughters may be stated using their married surnames which can help to confirm relationships, addresses may also be given. Older wills may list possessions including tools, a clue as to occupation and to better understand your family's social history.

Join Christine to enhance your understanding of wills and what they can offer your family history exploration.

Speaker Christine Hills

DARTFORD BRANCH MEETING

4 MARCH 2023 - The Great Estates: Hall Place and Foots Cray Place

Oliver, archivist for Bexley borough, tells the fascinating story of the historic houses some of which no longer exist in his book *The Great Estates*. Oliver will talk about **Hall Place, in Bexley**, saying that there has been a house on the site for centuries, but the history of the present house only begins with the purchase of the estate by Sir John Champneys from the Shelley Family in 1537. **Foots Cray Place, in Sidcup**, had an equally fascinating history. But whereas Hall Place flourished into the 21st century, Foots Cray is mainly known now for its meadows; with most visitors unaware of the fine house which once stood there and its famous occupiers. The ancient Manor of Foots Cray is recorded in the Domesday Book. Inhabitant Sir Francis Walsingham was the man who set up an intelligence network, which uncovered the Babington plot, preserving Elizabeth I on her throne and bringing about the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Tragically, a fire broke out on October 18, 1949, and the building was so badly damaged, it had to be demolished.

Speaker OLIVER WOOLLER

23 FEBRUARY - ZOOM TALK – UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS - FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO THE AMERICAN DREAM WITH JACKIE DEPELLE

This story takes us from Norfolk to New York with an upwardly mobile gentleman.

However, whether he spends his life upstairs or downstairs you will have to listen to Jackie's talk to find out.

About the Speaker

From film and fiche to the virtual world, Jackie teaches Family History and presents at major international events including RootsTech, The Genealogy Show and The Family History Show. Thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to meet people from across the country via zoom as well as listening and learning from colleagues at online shows and tutorials. Jackie also keeps in touch with volunteers through membership of the Guild of One Name Studies, British Association for Local History, various Family History Societies across the UK and Historians Collaborate.

North West Kent FHS is a charity and membership fees and donations are an important part of our income. If you are not a NWKFHS member, please consider making a donation via our web shop towards the cost of our Zoom licence & speaker's fee

Link to meeting to be advised, check our website for updates: www.nwkhfs.org.uk

Time 19:00 for 19:30 start - Capacity 100

Please visit our website for details of further workshops and updates and sign up for our free twice monthly Society eNewsletter

The Society Library is open on Wednesdays from 10am to 4pm, there is no need for booking. Address: 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Kent DA5 2EE (On the corner of Summerhouse Drive & Eden Rd.) Parking in Eden Rd. or other nearby roads.

NWKFHS members who missed a ZOOM talk: some speakers have allowed their talks to be recorded and recorded talks are saved here - <https://nwkhfs.org.uk/resources/all-other/zoom-talk-videos> note this link only works for paid up members logged into the website. Sometimes speakers have given permission for their talks only to be recorded for a specified amount of time, so members please do check the link.

RootsTech by FamilySearch 2023 Online Event from March 2nd to 4th

RootsTech Genealogy Conference is a global online event that is provided FREE for all people. This experience will include:

- Facility to connect with people from around the world through the chat feature.
- Choose from 200 online classes from experts in the field.
- Explore the Expo Hall online and connect with features to help you in your genealogy journey.
- Watch keynote speakers on the virtual main stage.

Links for registration and further information:

www.familysearch.org/en/blog/rootstech-2023-registration

www.familysearch.org/rootstech/

ON THIS DAY: February 11 is the 42ND day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 323 days left until the end of the year.

February takes its name from the Latin *februa*, a feast of penance and purification held at this time in ancient Rome.

660 BC Traditional date for the foundation of Japan by Emperor Jimmu

55 The death under mysterious circumstances of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Britannicus, heir to the Roman empire, on the eve of his coming of age clears the way for Nero to become Emperor

1503 Elizabeth of York, Queen consort to King Henry VII died (Born 11 February 1466)

1534 Henry VIII of England is recognised as supreme head of the Church of England

1586 Sir Francis Drake with an English force captures and occupies the Spanish colonial port of Cartagena de Indias for two months, obtaining a ransom and booty

1794 First session of United States Senate opens to the public

1826 University College London is founded as University of London

1847 Thomas Edison born, American engineer and businessman, developed the light bulb and phonograph (d. 1931)

1934 Mary Quant born, British fashion designer.

1938 BBC Television produces the world's first ever science fiction television programme

1970 Japan launches Ohsumi, becoming the fourth nation to put an object into orbit using its own booster

1990 Nelson Mandela is released from Victor Verster Prison outside Cape Town, SA after 27 years as a political prisoner

1997 Space Shuttle Discovery is launched on a mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope

2012 Whitney Houston died, American singer-songwriter, producer, and actress (b. 1963)



Death of a Climbing Boy, 29 March 1813 *The Parliamentary Committee on Climbing Boys*

From evidence presented to the Parliamentary Committee on climbing boys or 'chimney sweeps':

"On Monday morning, 29 March 1813, a chimney sweeper of the name of Griggs attended to sweep a small chimney in the brewhouse of Messrs Calvert and Co. in Upper Thames Street; he was accompanied by one of his boys, a lad of about eight years of age, of the name of Thomas Pitt.

Chimney Sweep Circa 1850

"The fire had been lighted as early as 2 o'clock the same morning and was burning on the arrival of Griggs and his little boy at eight. The fireplace was small, and an iron pipe projected from the grate some little way into the flue. This the master was acquainted with (having swept the chimneys in the brewhouse for some years), and therefore had a tile or two broken from the roof, in order that the boy might descend the chimney. He had no sooner extinguished the fire than he suffered the lad to go down; and the consequence, as might be expected, was his almost immediate death, in a state, no doubt, of inexpressible agony. "The flue was of the narrowest description, and must have retained heat sufficient to have prevented the child's return to the top, even supposing he had not approached the pipe belonging to the grate, which must have been nearly red hot; this however was not clearly ascertained on the inquest, though the appearance of the body would induce an opinion that he had been unavoidably pressed against the pipe. "Soon after his descent, the master, who remained on the top, was apprehensive that something had happened, and therefore desired him to come up; the answer of the boy was, 'I cannot come up, master, I must die here.' An alarm was given in the brewhouse immediately that he had stuck in the chimney, and a bricklayer who was at work near the spot attended, and after knocking down part of the brickwork of the chimney, just above the fireplace, made a hole sufficiently large to draw him through.

A surgeon attended, but all attempts to restore life were ineffectual. "On inspecting the body, various burns appeared; the fleshy part of the legs and a great part of the feet more particularly were injured; those parts too by which climbing boys most effectually ascend or descend chimneys, viz. the elbows and knees, seemed burnt to the bone; from which it must be evident that the unhappy sufferer made some attempts to return as soon as the horrors of his situation became apparent."

Despite the findings of the Committee, it was not until 1875 that the use of climbing boys was essentially forbidden.

Source: Book – The Autobiography by Jon E. Lewis – page 196

Valentine's Day Superstitions & Traditions

Traditionally, spring begins on St Valentine's Day, the day on which birds chose their mates. In parts of Sussex Valentine's Day was called 'the Birds' Wedding Day'.

There are many traditions and superstitions linked with Valentine's Day, including:

- It was believed that the first bird you see on Valentine's Day determines the nature of your future spouse. Spotting a robin signified marriage to a sailor while catching a glimpse of a sparrow hinted a wedding with a poor guy. A goldfinch, on the other hand, meant marrying a millionaire! You would want to look for a dove so you can marry a kind man but avoid spotting an owl or you would forever be single.
- Women would twist the stem of an apple while reciting the names of potential husbands-to-be. Whichever name they were saying when the stem snapped would be their future spouse. Some would cut the apple in half to count the seeds to know how many children they would have.
- One of the rituals celebrating Valentine's Day that dates back to the Middle Ages included writing names of single ladies on strips of paper and drop them into a bowl or hat like the modern-day raffle. An eligible bachelor would then pick out a name and have her as his valentine. The gentleman would wear the name on his sleeve for a week and hence the saying 'wearing one's heart on one's sleeves'.
- Tradition has it that girls, who had the courage, would visit a graveyard at midnight on the Eve of Valentine's Day and sing a certain chant while running around the church 12 times, just to conjure a vision of their future spouse.
- You would not want to spot a squirrel on Valentine's Day because cute as it might be, a squirrel is synonymous with marrying a cheapskate



The Sevenoaks Committee: Branch Chair - Bill Chopping

Committee Members – Karina Jackson, Norma Holmden, Bernie Wilkins, Sandra Marchant, Barbara Attwaters