



11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024

ISSUE NUMBER 105

# 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

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

Doors open at 10:45 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.

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

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## TODAYS TALK:

### The Epic Story of the First Flight Across the Atlantic

David has been a keen local historian for many years and has been involved with several Lottery funded projects concerning Crayford. Alcock and Brown was a three-year project culminating in many events in the centenary year (2019) of their flight. The talk will tell the story of their meeting and the part Vickers Crayford played in the historic and remarkable achievement.

Speaker **DAVE GILLHAM**

## NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING

### 8<sup>th</sup> June - Postman's Park: The Army Postal Service in WW1

Postman's Park. On the eve of war, the Post Office not only handled a yearly total 5.9 billion items of post but was responsible for the nation's telegraph and telephone systems, as well as providing savings bank and other municipal facilities at thousands of branch post offices. Many of these services changed because of the First World War and the Post Office was crucial to both Britain's communications and war effort during this great conflict.

When war was declared in 1914 an outbreak of national fervour saw huge numbers of men clamour to enlist with the armed forces, including 11,000 Post Office staff. By the end of the war the Post Office had released 75,000 staff for war services.

The Army Postal Service (APS) was set up responsible for army mails in all theatres of war, the APS not only handled mails between Britain and the forces abroad but coordinated communications between units at the front. With the onset of trench warfare, all mails bound for troops on the Western Front were sorted at the London Home Depot by the end of 1914. Covering five acres of Regents Park, this was said to be the largest wooden structure in the world employing over 2,500 mostly female staff by 1918. During the war the Home Depot handled a staggering 2 billion letters and 114 million parcels.

Speaker **JOHN PRICE**

## DARTFORD BRANCH MEETING

### 1st June - How to Write Your Life Story

Jo is an experienced speaker who lives locally and has been giving talks in Kent and SE London for the last 15 years.

As family historians we are so busy researching our ancestors that we often forget to record our own lives. Jo will give practical advice on ways to record your life. Some ideas to pursue include books, music, places to visit and people to talk to, as well as how to produce your book when it is written.

Speaker **JO LIVINGSTON**

29<sup>TH</sup> May 10:30 – 12:30

Library: Writing Group with Pauline Heathcote

**For Society members only:** Booking essential - please email [workshop.booking@nwkhfs.org.uk](mailto:workshop.booking@nwkhfs.org.uk) to reserve your place.

Numbers are restricted to enable all participants to ask questions, share knowledge and engage with other members.

Workshop leaders freely give their time, but a donation towards the Society's contribution to the library running costs is appreciated. A donation box will be available on the day.

This is a face-to-face event at the library, which the Society has sole use of on Wednesdays.

Kent County Library, 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley, Kent, DA5 2EE

## UP AND COMING LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

**DNA and General Family History Discussion Group with Jacki Ellis and Pam Goddard** 12 June 10:30

The group will discuss topics relating to family history as well as aspects relating to DNA.

Booking essential - please email [workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk) to reserve your place.

## MONTHLY ZOOM DISCUSSION GROUPS

**ZOOM FAMILY HISTORY SOFTWARE WITH ANN CLARKE** 5 June 10:30

**ZOOM LET'S TALK FAMILY HISTORY WITH DAVID CUFLEY** 12 June 14:30

**ZOOM DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln** 19 June 10:30

## ZOOM WORKSHOP

**Using archives – our library, County Record Offices and National Archives with David Cufley** 26 June 19:30

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



As its on zoom you will need to bring your own coffee and biscuits!



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## How to get the Zoom Link

### Booking is no longer required for individual Zoom Workshops and Discussion Groups.

For 2024 a Zoom Register has been created to cover all attendance to any of the zoom groups. Any society member who would like to be added to the register needs to submit their name, email address and membership number to [workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk). You only need to register once.

Once a month the zoom links for the discussion groups and workshops will be sent by email to those members on the register. Members who have registered can then attend as many of the Zoom groups as they wish with no need to make a specific booking for each one.

### All Zoom Workshops and Discussion Groups are members only-events.

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>

*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.*

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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](mailto:workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk)

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## 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](mailto:theeditor@nwkfhs.org.uk) – word files or simply text in the body of an email is fine. We look forward to hearing from you.



## **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.

**Apologies:** I would like to apologise for an error in last month's newsletter, **ON THIS DAY** was mistakenly the dates for the 13<sup>th</sup> of May instead of the 13<sup>th</sup> of April. I seem to have inadvertently mixed up the months.

### ON THIS DAY

**May 11<sup>th</sup> is the 132<sup>nd</sup> day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 234 days remain to the end of the year.**

May probably takes its name from Maia, a Roman Goddess of growth. She was worshipped on 1 May and 15 May and in Roman mythology, she was also known as a nurturing mother figure.

An Alternative explanation: the word May is derived from Maiores, which referred to the senate in the original constitution of ancient Rome.

- 330** Constantine the Great dedicates the much-expanded and rebuilt city of Byzantium, changing its name to New Rome and declaring it the new capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.
- 868** A copy of the Diamond Sūtra is published, making it the earliest dated and printed book known
- 973** In the first coronation ceremony ever held for an English monarch, Edgar the Peaceful is crowned King of England, having ruled since 959 AD. His wife, Ælfthryth, is crowned queen, the first recorded coronation for a Queen of England
- 1068** Matilda of Flanders, wife of William the Conqueror, is crowned Queen of England
- 1310** Fifty-four members of the Knights Templar are burned at the stake in France for being heretics.
- 1749** British parliament accepts Consolidation Act, to reorganise the Royal Navy
- 1778** William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham dies, English politician, Prime Minister of Great Britain (b. 1708)
- 1811** Chang and Eng Bunker are born, Siamese-American showmen, the original conjoined twins (d. 1874).
- 1812** Prime Minister Spencer Perceval is assassinated by John Bellingham in the lobby of the British House of Commons. Ironically, descendants of both later stand for the same seat in Parliament at the same time but neither win.
- 1812** Waltz introduced into English ballrooms; some observers consider it disgusting and immoral.
- 1820** Launch of HMS Beagle, the ship that would later take a young Charles Darwin on his famous scientific voyage.
- 1857** Indian Rebellion of 1857: Indian rebels seize Delhi from the British.
- 1867** Treaty of London drawn, granting Luxembourg full independence and neutrality.
- 1880** British Queen Victoria issues charter granting city status to the Borough of Liverpool.
- 1893** Henri Desgrange establishes world's 1st bicycle world record, travelling 35.325 km (21.95 miles) an hour.
- 1904** Andrew Carnegie donates \$1.5m to build the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands, an international law administrative building and home for the Permanent Court of Arbitration.
- 1924** Antony Hewish is born, English astronomer and academic, Nobel Prize laureate (d. 2021)
- 1927** England's football team beat Belgium 9-1
- 1956** Elvis Presley's 1st entry on UK charts with "Heartbreak Hotel"
- 1963** Natasha Richardson is born, English actress (d. 2009)
- 1967** Great Britain, Ireland & Denmark apply for membership of the EEC.
- 1985** Chester Gould dies, American cartoonist, created Dick Tracy (b. 1900)
- 1989** 217th & final episode of TV soap opera "Dynasty" is aired.
- 2020** World Health Organization warns "extreme vigilance" needed as many countries begin easing lockdowns.

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### **Sevenoaks - a past to treasure - A talk by Local Historian, Ed Thompson**

Thursday 23rd May at 2.30pm at Sevenoaks Library: Tickets £4 per person.

Please email or visit Sevenoaks library for more information, [Sevenoaks.library@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Sevenoaks.library@kent.gov.uk) or telephone 03000 41 31 31

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### **Did you know?**

Many surnames in France originate from patronymic names, which are based on the father's given name. For example, "Pierre" + "son of" = "Peterson."

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### **Old Occupations:**

- ❖ BREWSTER Female brewer
- ❖ BRIGHTSMITH A person who works with bright metals such as copper, tin or brass

- ❖ BROOM SQUIRF Broom maker
  - ❖ BROOM-DASHER Dealer in brooms
  - ❖ BROTHERER or BROWDERER or BRODERER or BROIDERER Embroiderer
  - ❖ BROW GIRL Female employed at the pit head.
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## The Highland Clearances

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the eviction of crofters in northern Scotland was a tragic chapter in the region's history, marked by economic upheaval, social injustice, and human suffering.

Crofting, a traditional form of small-scale farming, was the primary livelihood for many Highland families. However, changes in land ownership, agricultural practices, and economic pressures led to widespread eviction campaigns by landlords seeking to maximize profits from sheep farming and land consolidation.

Firsthand accounts from crofters paint a poignant picture of the eviction experience. Mary MacLeod, a crofter's wife from the Isle of Skye, described the eviction process as "heart-wrenching and brutal." She recounted how families were given short notice to vacate their homes, often facing harsh weather conditions and inadequate shelter. Many were forced to leave behind their crops, livestock, and possessions, with nowhere to go but to overcrowded towns or distant colonies. John Campbell, a crofter from the Highlands, remembered the anguish of seeing his family's home demolished by landlords' agents. He spoke of the sense of betrayal and loss as generations of heritage were torn apart in the name of progress and profit. "We were treated like trespassers on our own land," he lamented, echoing the sentiments of many displaced crofters.

The eviction of crofters also had profound social and cultural consequences. Entire communities were uprooted, leading to a loss of traditional Gaelic culture and way of life. The scars of this displacement are still felt today, as descendants of evicted crofters continue to grapple with issues of land ownership and cultural identity. Despite the passage of time, the eviction of crofters in northern Scotland remains a poignant reminder of the enduring struggle for land rights, economic justice, and human dignity. It serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of unchecked power and the importance of protecting the rights of marginalized communities.

### Resources / websites for further research and reading:

**The Highland Clearances** - John Prebble's 1963 book (Penguin) remains a landmark and balanced study of the Clearances.

[www.theclearances.org](http://www.theclearances.org) - This website is packed with information about the Clearances, including first-hand accounts, articles and details of passengers who emigrated and the journeys they made.

[www.ambaile.org.uk](http://www.ambaile.org.uk) - The Highland Council's lavish website exploring the history and culture of the Highlands and islands.

[www.strathnavermuseum.org.uk/genealogy/](http://www.strathnavermuseum.org.uk/genealogy/) - Museum in Donald Macleod's hometown, exploring the Clearances and other aspects of local history.

<http://archive.scorsman.com> - To understand the dramatic changes in many Highland parishes caused by the Clearance, you can consult the Statistical Accounts of Scotland.

<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng> - Many of those who were evicted found new lives in Canada, and the main national archive in the country, Library and Archives Canada's website hosts many records such as censuses and early land petitions.

[www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au) - The National Archives of Australia hosts various resources if your Highland ancestors migrated to Australia.

[www.thegenealogist.co.uk/featuredarticles/discover-your-ancestors/bookazine/2/the-highland-clearances-7141/](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/featuredarticles/discover-your-ancestors/bookazine/2/the-highland-clearances-7141/) - An exploration of the famous evictions of crofters in northern Scotland through first-hand accounts

<https://familysearch.org>

[www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

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**Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here. –  
Sue Monk Kidd**

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**The Sevenoaks Committee: Branch Chair – Vacant  
Committee Members: Norma Holmden, Bernie Wilkins, Sandra Marchant,  
Barbara Attwaters, Maureen Berry, Jon Henderson**