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ISSUE NUMBER 109

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 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.

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

We are pleased to inform you that we now have a hearing system at this event to enhance the audio experience for attendees who may need it.

TODAYS TALK:

Otford's Little Known Isolation Hospital Wickham Field

Today's speaker, Alan, lives locally with his wife and children near to Otford and is a Lecturer.

Isolation hospitals in the early 1900s were specialized medical facilities designed to quarantine and treat patients with highly contagious diseases, such as tuberculosis, smallpox, scarlet fever, and diphtheria. These hospitals were often situated on the outskirts of cities or in rural areas to prevent the spread of infections to the general population. They were a crucial, if grim, part of public health efforts to control the spread of infectious diseases during a time when vaccines and antibiotics were limited or non-existent.

Speaker Alan Williams

NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING

12TH October - 80 Years of Desert Island Discs

Today's speaker, Delia has been a speaker for over 15 years, and we welcome her back to the society today.

Desert Island Discs is the longest continuous programme on the BBC. Over 3000 people have been castaway on a Desert Island since Roy Plomley thought up the programme in 1941. During its run of 80 years some of the most famous people in the world have picked their favourite 8 records, books and luxury items they would like to take with them.

Delia will reveal to us the strange items that have been chosen, the most requested music and provide snippets of the most entertaining interviews over the years.

Speaker Delia Taylor

Talk will be preceded by the Branch Annual Meeting.

DARTFORD BRANCH MEETING

5th October - Journals of Victorian Kentish Lady

Helen, a retired teacher, is an accomplished speaker who is a regular visitor at Dartford. She has written several books including one based upon the journals of Louisa Thomas.

Journals, along with letters, form a unique type of historical source but were often vetted by a parent or governess. This was not so in the case of Louisa Thomas who lived to be a hundred and kept a journal for most of her life. We see her as a spinster in Brighton, married and on the Grand Tour, establishing a household in Kent and socialising with the county families.

Using the journals, Helen will give us an insight into the daily life of a Victorian lady.

Speaker Helen Allinson

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 Jacki Ellis and Pam Goddard 9 October 10:30
Booking essential - please email workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk to reserve your place.

MONTHLY ZOOM DISCUSSION GROUPS

ZOOM Have you uncovered secrets in your family's past? with Ann Clarke 2 October 10:30

ZOOM DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln 16 October 10:30

ZOOM WORKSHOP

Breaking Down Ancestral Brick Walls with David Cufley 9 October 19:30

(Please submit your Brick Wall by 25 September to David Cufley via <https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/?location=1#Contact>)

A discussion workshop to help you overcome research hurdles. Even if you don't have a research problem you wish to bring to the group, you may find it interesting to participate and hear how such problems can be tackled.

'Punters' Choice with David Cufley 23 October 14:30

This workshop is a miscellany of family history sources, facts, stories and methods.

Writing up family history, inclusion of pictures and charts with David Cufley 30 October 19:30

Putting pictures, photographs, tables and graphs into the Microsoft program WORD to illustrate family history documents.

This includes positioning, re-sizing, compressing and changing their format, i.e. bold lettering, grids and lines or colour infill.

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!



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. 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>

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.

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 look forward to hearing from you.

ON THIS DAY

September 14th is the 258th day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 108 days remain to the end of the year.

September the ninth month of the year, was the seventh month of the Roman calendar and its name is derived from the Latin *septem*, seven.

AD 81 Domitian became Emperor of the Roman Empire upon the death of his brother Titus.

1402 Battle of Homildon Hill results in an English victory over Scotland

1682 Bishop Gore School, one of the oldest schools in Wales, is founded

1752 The British Empire adopts the Gregorian calendar, skipping eleven days (the previous day was September 2)

1814 Battle of Baltimore: The poem Defence of Fort McHenry is written by Francis Scott Key. The poem is later used as the lyrics of The Star-Spangled Banner.

1901 U.S. President William McKinley dies after being mortally wounded on September 6 by anarchist Leon Czolgosz and is succeeded by Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.

1917 The Russian Empire is formally replaced by the Russian Republic.

1944 World War II: Maastricht becomes the first Dutch city to be liberated by allied forces.

1975 The first American saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton, is canonized by Pope Paul VI.

1982 Grace Kelly, American-Monegasque actress; Princess of Monaco died (b. 1929)

1983 Amy Winehouse, English singer-songwriter born (d. 2011)

1984 Joe Kittinger becomes the first person to fly a gas balloon alone across the Atlantic Ocean.

2007 Financial crisis of 2007–2008: The Northern Rock bank experiences the first bank run in the UK in 150 years.

2022 Death of Queen Elizabeth II: The Queen's coffin is taken from Buckingham Palace, placed on a gun carriage of The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery and moved in a procession to Westminster Hall for her lying in state over the next four days with the queue of mourners stretching for miles along the River Thames

Old Occupations:

- ❖ CARNIFEX Public executioner
 - ❖ CARRY-IN-BOY Took finished bottled (products) to the tempering oven
 - ❖ CARTER Carries or conveys goods in a cart
 - ❖ CARTOMANCER Fortune teller who used cards (USA)
 - ❖ CASEMAN Amongst printers one who works at the case or sets up type. A compositor.
 - ❖ CAULKER or CALKER Filled up cracks (in ships or windows) or seams to make them watertight
 - ❖ CHAFFERER Negotiator
 - ❖ CHAIR BODGER Traveling chair repairman
 - ❖ CHAISE MAKER Made or assembled carts and carriages
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Other People's Family History Trees:

Using other people's family history trees as sources in genealogical research can be problematic for several reasons:

- **Accuracy and Reliability:** Many family trees available online are user-generated and may contain errors or assumptions. These mistakes can be due to incorrect information, misunderstandings, or the desire to connect to a specific lineage without sufficient evidence.
- **Lack of Documentation:** Often, these trees do not provide adequate sources or citations for the information they present. Without proper documentation, it's difficult to verify the accuracy of the data.
- **Propagation of Errors:** When an incorrect or speculative connection is made in one family tree, it can easily be copied by others. This leads to the spread of inaccurate information across multiple trees.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Using someone else's family tree without permission can also raise privacy issues, particularly if the tree contains information about living individuals or sensitive family details.
- **Misleading Connections:** Some trees might include speculative or wishful connections, especially to famous or noble ancestors, which can lead researchers down incorrect paths.
- **Inconsistent Standards:** Different genealogists may use varying standards of proof and research methodology. What one person considers a credible connection; another might view as insufficiently supported.

While family history trees can be useful as clues or starting points, it's crucial to independently verify all information with primary sources, such as birth, marriage, death records, and census data, before considering it reliable.

Source: www.createroots.family/blog/50-family-history-facts

Disaster at Sevenoaks: The Tragic Train Wreck of 1927.

The Sevenoaks railway accident occurred on 24 August 1927 and is one of the most infamous rail disasters in British history, primarily because it exposed serious design flaws in a new type of locomotive.

The accident involved a "River" class steam locomotive, No. 800 River Cray, pulling a passenger train from London Charing Cross to Deal and Ramsgate. The River class was a 4-6-4T locomotive designed by the Southern Railway to handle heavy suburban traffic. However, these locomotives were known for their instability due to a design flaw in their leading bogie (the front wheels under the locomotive).

At around 3:43 PM, as the train was descending a gradient at 60 mph (97 km/h) near the village of Dunton Green, just north of Sevenoaks, the locomotive derailed on a curve. The train was traveling much too fast for the track, given the flawed design of the locomotive. The front bogie wheels left the rails first, causing the entire train to derail. Several coaches were thrown down an embankment, and the engine and some carriages were overturned.

The accident was catastrophic, tragically 13 people were killed, and 20 others were seriously injured. The immediate aftermath saw extensive rescue efforts, with local people and emergency services working together to assist the victims.

The victims included both passengers and railway staff, the majority of which were passengers on the train. Among them were several women, a few men, and a child who tragically lost their lives due to the derailment. At least one railway staff member, the train's guard, was among the deceased. The driver and fireman of the train survived but were injured.

Despite the significant impact of the accident, specific names of all the victims are not often listed in historical accounts. Typically, these would be preserved in local records, such as death registers or contemporary newspaper reports from the time but might not be widely circulated in general histories of the incident.

Passengers who survived the Sevenoaks railway accident provided harrowing accounts of the event, describing the moments leading up to the derailment and the chaos that followed. These reports were crucial in understanding the nature of the accident and the experiences of those on board.

Accounts of the Incident:

- Some passengers reported feeling an unusual swaying or lurching motion of the train shortly before the accident. This sensation was unsettling, and it seemed to worsen as the train approached the curve near Dunton Green where the derailment occurred.
- Many survivors described a sudden, violent jolt as the train derailed. The impact was so intense that it threw passengers from their seats and caused the carriages to tilt and crash into each other. Windows shattered, and luggage and other items were flung around the compartments.
- Several passengers recalled how their carriages were violently overturned, with some tumbling down an embankment. Those inside were trapped in the wreckage, and some had to be rescued by fellow passengers or local residents who rushed to the scene.
- The immediate aftermath of the derailment was marked by panic and confusion. Passengers who were able to escape the wreckage described a scene of chaos, with injured and dazed individuals stumbling away from the wrecked train, some of them calling out for help or searching for loved ones.
- Despite the confusion, there were reports of bravery among the passengers and locals. Some passengers helped rescue others who were trapped or injured, and local residents quickly arrived at the scene to assist before emergency services could arrive.

The broader impact of the disaster, including the loss of life, was a driving force behind the subsequent investigation and changes to railway safety protocols. The victims' firsthand accounts played a key role, and helped authorities piece together what had happened. The inquiry revealed that the accident was directly caused by the design flaw in the River class locomotive. The instability of the leading bogie at speed, especially on curves, was found to be a critical issue. As a result, the entire class of locomotives was withdrawn from service, and the Southern Railway replaced them with more stable locomotive designs. The tragedy highlighted the importance of rigorous testing and design evaluation for new locomotive classes and led to more conservative approaches in the design of passenger trains. Also, improvements were made in railway safety measures specifically stricter speed regulations for trains on curves and gradients.

The accident had a devastating impact on victims and the local community, leaving families in shock and mourning. Locals were deeply affected by the tragedy as they assisted in rescue efforts, witnessed the aftermath, and dealt with the emotional toll of such a catastrophic event in their town. Yet, their spirit of resilience and the safety advancements that followed ensured a lasting legacy of progress from the tragedy.

The Sevenoaks Committee: Branch Chair – Vacant,

Members: Norma Holmden, Bernie Wilkins, Sandra Marchant, Barbara Attwaters, Barbara Phillips, Christine Hills, Maureen Berry, Jon Henderson