



14 APRIL 2016

ISSUE NUMBER 38

Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

12TH MAY

Rudyard Kipling's Life & Verse (in costume)

Speaker: KEN HUTCHINSON

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

16TH APRIL Bromley & Sheppards College

Speaker CHRIS BOULTON

7TH MAY - Curiosities & random events in The City of London

Speaker STUART ROBINSON

Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch. In addition to the talks, we have a number of interesting tables for you to browse. These include a bookstall, old magazines and journals, exchange journals and a reference book library. Plus don't forget to take a look at our notice board.

The books from our library may be borrowed at no charge and the magazines are a snip at 20 pence each. You might just find the publication or book you are looking for.

Do visit our computer help desk where Karina will make every effort to assist with your family history brick wall.

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road Sevenoaks, TN14 5DN. Doors open at 7.15pm, meeting starts at 8pm. There is free car parking - and refreshments are available.

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

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

THIS EVENING'S TALK - "Edith Cavell" by Melanie Gibson-Barton. The story of a nurse in WW1 shot as a spy. Melanie is a popular previous speaker at our meetings, this is sure to be a very interesting talk.

NEWS ITEMS

FFHS NEWS - Irish ancestry research can be challenging, due to the loss of many records during a 20th Century fire at the Public Records Office. Last summer there was a major step forward for family historians with Roman Catholic Irish ancestry when the National Library of Ireland gave free access to digitised registers from across Ireland. These records include millions of names from the baptism, marriage and death registrations taken since 1655. While this initiative was welcomed, the project's scope was just to scan the registers and researchers could only then search by parish. Family historians therefore needed to know the parish, once located they could browse the images. In a major development, those of us with Irish ancestry can now search Roman Catholic parish registers by ancestor name, year and place online and link to the images. Both Ancestry and FindMyPast have partnered with NLI and are now offering the search facility. (Emma Waltham, FFHS, Marketing Manager)

EVENTS

23rd April 2016 - East Surrey Family History Society Open Day - Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1UF
Speakers: Myko Clelland - Findmypast; *Using 20th Century Source, including electoral registers and the 1939 Register* Geoff Swinfield; *Tracing Living Relatives and Missing People*. Abby Matthews, (Project Officer); *The Past on Glass: Digitising the Knights-Whittome Photography Collection at Sutton Archives*. See notice board for more information or visit website: <http://www.eastsurreyffhs.org.uk>
Free event doors open 10am

7th May - Records of the Poor - Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd. EC1M 7BA

This session will provide you with a detailed knowledge in relation to locating and analysing records of poverty and the Poor Laws (mainly in England and Wales in the 19th century). Starting with how to find the records, you will be guided through the records available and their use in your ancestral research, with case studies to illustrate how the records can be drawn together to develop 'the bigger picture' either on an individual, familial or community level; speaker Kirsty Gray.

Cost £20.00 (Must be pre-booked) Time: 1400 - 1700 - Website: www.sog.org.uk

Kent Events

20th April - Deaths & Funerals of Medieval Monarchs - Kent Family History Society, The Birchington Village Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington, Kent CT7 9EG - Speaker by John Reuther - Time 7.30 pm

20th April - The Commonwealth War Graves Commission - Otford and District Historical Society, Otford Village Memorial Hall, High Street, TN14 5PQ - Speaker Martin Stoneham - Time 8 pm - Visitors £3.00

26th April - A Wealdon Women's war - Tunbridge Wells Family History Society, Groombridge Village Hall, Station Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9QX - by Penny Harris. Time 7.30pm for 8pm start.

28th April - Kent in the 19th Century - Kent Family History Society, Frindsbury Parish Hall, Church Green, Frindsbury ME2 4HY. - Speaker Bob Ogley - Time 2.30 - 4.30

29th April - Cobham, an Armchair Guide - Kemsing Heritage Centre, St Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing, Kent TN15 6NA
Speaker Christoph Bull - Time 7.30pm, non-members £2.50

3rd May - The History of Parkwood - Swanley Historical Society, White Oak Indoor Bowls Club, Garrolds Close, off Hilda May Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BF. Speaker historian Esme Hodge - Time 7.30 pm, non-members £2.00

3rd May - A Child's life in the Middle Ages - Crowborough & District Historical Society, Pine Grove, Crowborough TN6 1FE
- Where are the children in Medieval art? Although so often missing we know they were hardworking and cherished, loving toys and games but sadly often doomed to an early grave. Speaker Imogen Corrigan - Time 7.30pm for 8pm start, non-members £4.00

11th May - Wandering the Somme (1916) - Kent Family History Society, St. Paul's Church Hall, Boxley Road, Maidstone ME14 2AN - Speaker Melanie Gibson-Barton - Time 7.30 pm



TITANIC AND SURVIVORS

There are few who do not know the tragic story of Titanic. 104 years ago today this magnificent vessel, an industrial marvel, unsinkable, the biggest, fastest and most luxurious liner of its age, a floating city, was fatally damaged after a collision with an iceberg on its maiden voyage.

In its 5th day, Titanic was making swift progress across the Atlantic, captained by Edward Smith. On the night of Sunday 14 April 1912, the sea was flat calm, the sky clear and moonless, and the temperature was dropping towards freezing. In such conditions, sea ice is very hard to spot. At 11.40pm the lookout sounded the alarm and telephoned the bridge saying "Iceberg, right ahead." The warning came too late to avoid the iceberg and Titanic struck it less than 40 seconds later, tearing a series of holes along the side of the hull. Upon inspecting the damage, Titanic's chief naval architect Thomas Andrews said to Captain Smith that the ship would certainly sink. Six of the watertight compartments at the front of the ship's hull were breached, five of them flooding within the hour. Titanic was designed to stay afloat with only four compartments flooded. Less than three hours later Titanic lay at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, nearly four kilometres down. The sinking of Titanic claimed more than 1,500 lives.

The story of Titanic captured the public imagination across the world as it does today and much has been written about it since. On board was a collection of passengers comprising of millionaires, silent movie stars, school teachers and emigrants, many in search of a better life in the United States. Here are the brief stories of two remarkable women survivors:

Elsie Edith Bowerman was born in Tunbridge wells Kent on the 18 Dec 1889, the daughter of William Bowerman and his wife Edith Martha Barber. Her father died when she was 5 years old. She went to Wycombe Abbey at the age of 11 in 1901 where she came under the influence of Frances Dove, whose biography she later wrote. She left in 1907 spending time in Paris before going to Girton College Cambridge. She and her mother became active, militant members of Emmeline Pankhurst's Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) which campaigned vigorously for women's rights and the right for women to vote.

On 10 April 1912 Elsie Bowerman and her mother Edith boarded RMS Titanic at Southampton as first class passengers in cabin 33 on deck E, ticket number 113505 costing £55, for a trip to America and Canada to see her late father's relations in North America. They were both rescued on lifeboat 6 with about 22 others including Frederick Fleet, the lookout who had first spotted the iceberg. After the Titanic disaster, they reached America and carried on with their plans to visit British Columbia, Klondyke and Alaska.

During World War I Bowerman worked with a Scottish women's hospital unit in Romania, which served Serbian and Russian armies in Rumania. In March 1917 they had to retreat to St Petersburg where she witnessed the Russian Revolution at first hand. She kept a diary in which she recorded the momentous events. Back in England in 1917 she carried on with her suffragist work and supported the Pankhurst's in organising mass meetings to encourage men to join the Forces and women to volunteer for war work.

After the war, Bowerman became a secretary of the Women's Guild of Empire and studied law in which she gained an MA, and was admitted to the Bar in 1924. She was the first woman barrister at the Old Bailey when she won a libel action brought by the National Union of Seamen against a communist. This was perhaps ironic, given her anti-union beliefs; she practised law until 1938.

During World War II she worked for two years with Women's Voluntary Services, and after a time at the Ministry of Information spent three years in the USA as a liaison officer with the Overseas Services of the BBC. She resigned around 1943-45 and became Chief of General Services to the London office, responsible for conferences. In 1946 she went back to the USA to help set up the United Nations Commission on the Status of

Women. Elsie was the representative of the Secretary-General, and was Acting Chief of the Section on the Status of Women. Her name is listed on the D.A.W. website, the Division for the Advancement of Women.

On her return she lived near her mother at St Leonards-on-Sea, and then moved to a country house near Hailsham where she died after a stroke on 18 Oct 1973, aged 83. She was buried in the family grave with her parents in Hastings cemetery.

Margaret Tobin was born on 18 July 1867 to Irish immigrants John and Johanna and attended a grammar school run by her aunt Mary O'Leary. Tobin attended school until she was 13 years old and then went to work in a tobacco factory to help with the family expenses. When she was 19, she moved to Leadville, Colorado and lived with her brother Daniel, where she got a job at a dry goods store, sewing carpets and drapes. She soon met James Joseph Brown, a mining engineer. They married and had two children.

While her children were young, Margaret was involved in the early feminist movement in Leadville and the establishment of the Colorado Chapter of the National American Women's Suffrage Association. She also worked in soup kitchens to assist families of Leadville miners. When the Sherman Silver Act was repealed in 1893, Leadville was thrust into a deep depression and the unemployment rate was at 90 percent. J.J. Brown, who had become superintendent of all the Ibez mining properties, had an idea. Convinced that the Little Jonny Mine might become a producer of gold rather than silver, he devised a timber-and-hay bale method to hold back the dolomite sand that had prevented them from reaching the gold at the lower depths of the mine. By October 29, 1893, the Little Jonny Mine was shipping 135 tons of ore per day, and Brown was awarded 12,500 shares of stock and a seat on the board. Over the years he became one of the most successful mining men in the country.

On April 6, 1894, the Browns purchased a home on Pennsylvania Street in Denver and built a summer home, Avoca Lodge, in the foothills. Margaret became a founding member of the Denver Woman's Club, part of a network of clubs which advocated literacy, education, suffrage, and human rights in Colorado and throughout the United States. She raised funds to build the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception as well as St. Joseph's Hospital, and worked with Judge Ben Lindsey to help destitute children and establish the first Juvenile Court in the country, which eventually became the basis for today's U.S. juvenile court system. She also attended the Carnegie Institute in New York, where she studied literature, language, and drama. In addition to raising two children of her own, she raised the three daughters of her brother Daniel: Grace, Florence, and Helen Tobin, whose mother had died when they were young in White Pine, Colorado. In 1909, Margaret and her husband separated, but they never divorced.

Margaret Tobin Brown was one of the first women in the United States to run for political office, and ran for the Senate eight years before women even had the right to vote. On July 25, 1914, with Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, she organized an international women's rights conference at Marble House in Newport, Rhode Island, which was attended by human rights activists from around the world. A lifelong advocate of human rights, Margaret was also a prominent figure following the Ludlow Massacre in Trinidad, Colorado, in April 1914, a significant landmark in the history of labour rights in the United States.

Margaret Brown had been vacationing in Europe with her daughter Helen when she was informed that her grandchild was ill. She decided to New York while her daughter stayed behind in London, meaning hardly anyone knew Brown was aboard Titanic. She boarded in Cherbourg, as a first class passenger in cabin B4, with ticket number 17613, costing £27 14s 5d.

Margaret was one of the lucky ones who survived and like Elsie was also in lifeboat 6. When lifeboat 6 finally launched it contained only around 24 people out of a possible 65. Brown was helping to load others into lifeboats when she claimed she was ultimately forced to board lifeboat six. Quartermaster Robert Hitchens was placed in charge of the craft, along with the lookout Frederick Fleet. Yet while it was being lowered, Robert Hitchens is said to have called out "I cannot manage this boat with only one

seaman", which led Major Arthur Godfrey Peuchen, of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, to be allowed to shimmy down the ropes into the lifeboat at the last minute, considered seaman enough.

Relations on board were strained throughout the night. As the lifeboat pulled away from the stricken Titanic, Brown and others aboard, urged Hitchens to turn the lifeboat around to rescue those stranded in the icy water. She was demanding, unrelenting against Hitchens's increasing anger towards her - but Brown was no stranger to fighting her cause. It is unknown whether lifeboat six did turn back but, according to reports, Brown helped rescue a drowning sailor and several other victims.

As the cries of those in the water died out, Brown asked Hitchens to let the women row to keep them warm. Ignoring his complaints, she began to hand out oars anyway. He swore at her, protesting, and at one point moving to physically restrain her. She told him to stay put or she would throw him overboard. Taking an oar, Brown organised the women in shifts, two to an oar. She is said to have regaled the anxious survivors in the freezing cold with stories of her life in the Old West to lift their spirits, and distributed her furs and other clothing to the freezing passengers.

When they were rescued by the Carpathia, she worked tirelessly, helping the other survivors by handing out food, drinks and blankets. As the ship arrived in New York, Margaret found herself in the spotlight, as everyone had already heard about her bravery and good deeds. By the time the Carpathia reached New York, she had established the Survivor's Committee, been elected the chair and raised almost \$10,000 for those who had lost

everything. In a letter to her daughter, Brown wrote:

"After being brined, salted, and pickled in mid ocean I am now high and dry ... I have had flowers, letters, telegrams - people until I am befuddled. They are petitioning Congress to give me a medal... If I must call a specialist to examine my head it is due to the title of Heroine of the Titanic."

Margaret used her fame to promote women's rights, becoming active in politics and, in 1914; she became the first woman to run for the US Congress. She also helped erect the Titanic memorial in Washington and continued to serve on the Survivors Committee but was annoyed that as a woman she wasn't allowed to participate in the Titanic hearings.

When World War I broke out, Margaret travelled to France and helped establish a relief station for the soldiers. She was awarded the French Legion of Honour in 1932 for her work for Titanic survivors, her organisation of the Alliance Francais and her relief efforts during the war.

In 1932, the "unsinkable Molly Brown" died from a brain tumour and was buried next to her husband, in the cemetery of the Holy Rood, North Hempstead, New York.

Brown was never known as Molly or as Unsinkable in her lifetime as this was a Hollywood invention, first started by Denver Post reporter Gene Fowler and author Carolyn Bancroft in the 1930s.

Sources: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/titanic>
<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/molly-brown.html>
<http://www.hastingspress.co.uk/history/bowerman.html>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsie_Bowerman
<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/elsie-edith-bowerman.html>
<http://www.history.co.uk/biographies/molly-brown>

12.04.2016

ON THIS DAY

APRIL 14TH is the 105th day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 261 days remain until the end of the year.

1471 The Yorkist's under Edward IV defeat the Lancastrian's under the Earl of Warwick at the Battle of Barnet; the Earl is killed and Edward IV resumes the throne

1536 English King Henry VIII expropriates minor monasteries

1611 The word "telescope" is 1st used (Prince Federico Cesi)

1816 Bussa, a slave in British-ruled Barbados leads a slave rebellion and is killed. He is remembered as the first national hero of Barbados

1865 U.S. President Abraham Lincoln is shot in Ford's Theatre by John Wilkes Booth, (died April 15th)

1894 1st public showing of Thomas Edison's kinoscope (moving pictures)

1903 Dr Harry Plotz discovers vaccine against typhoid (NYC)

1912 The British passenger liner RMS Titanic hits an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 23:40 (sinks morning of April 15th)

1927 The first Volvo car premieres in Gothenburg Sweden

1931 Spain becomes republic with overthrow of King Alfonso XIII

1986 The heaviest hailstones ever recorded (1 kilogram (2.2 lb)) fall on the Gopalganj district of Bangladesh, killing 92

Reminder - New Photographic Competition with a Difference!

Photographic Competition for the 2017 NWKFHS Calendar Entries needed from you for the second NWKFHS calendar (2017). Whilst full details are in the March journal you might like to start thinking about your entries, which must be loosely connected with Family History and the areas covered by the NWKFHS. (See our notice board for more information)

Details: *It should be your own work, a digital image (preferred) minimum 300 dpi, and colour or black and white prints should be 8 by 5 inches. Closing date for entries will be 30th June 2016. (Copyright statement in March Journal)*

Please note: *Regrettably some of the links to our website may be unavailable or not fully up-to-date. Please use the provided email links to raise any questions. Full list of Society email addresses on inside back cover of every Journal.*

NWKFHS WORKSHOPS

The two hour workshops are limited to 10 people, but are repeated if there is demand. Let us know if there is one you missed and would like it repeated. Workshops are held at the Library, Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley Contact Janet Rose (01322-384836). Bookings and enquiries please email workshops@nwkfhs.org. Also see our notice board or please ask a member at one of our meetings.

Details of forthcoming workshops:

20 April 2016 - An Investigation into the Records Available to Research the Lives of 19th Century Soldiers - Leader Brian Langridge

27 April 2016 - An Introduction to Family Historian - A Genealogy and Family Tree Software Computer Program; aimed at beginners. Leader Brian Kirk

18 May 2016 - The 1939 Register - Leader Christine Hills.

25 May 2016 - Your Society Needs YOU! - Transcribing, checking and editing of Society publications; a workshop for volunteers interested in becoming transcribers, checkers and editors. Additional volunteers are needed to help with the production of new publications from original documents. Join this workshop to find out how you can help.

More information from workshop leader Barbara Phillips:

Email publications@nwkfhs.org.uk or Bookings to workshops@nwkfhs.org.

The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

Committee Members

**Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson,
Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett, Bernie
Wilkins, Barbara Stead, Sandra Marchant**