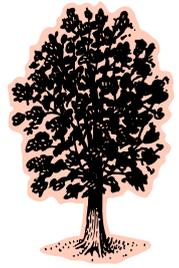




Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

JANUARY - NO MEETING
13TH FEBRUARY AT SEVENOAKS
Old Sevenoaks - The Pavement Plaque People
IAN WALKER

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY DECEMBER - NO MEETING

18th January - Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Fleet Air
Arm crests - their origins & history

TIMOTHY STOPFORD

DARTFORD 4th January - Baby Farming

LADY MARY TEVIOT

1ST February - Kent Fire Brigade

JOHN MEAKINS

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, TN13 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 IS 'DO THESE STAIRS GO UP?' by Phil Tucker.

Phil has been entertaining people since the age of 7 and we are sure to be entertained this evening. From hairdresser to Senior Cruise Director & with 30 years cruising behind him we can look forward to a fascinating talk.

NEWS ITEMS

The Bedfordshire added to Manorial Documents Register -

The Bedfordshire section of the Manorial Documents Register (MDR) is now available online, enabling enthusiasts worldwide to search for records by manor, parish, and type of record or by date. The MDR flags up the location of records surviving for over 291 manors in Bedfordshire alone, wherever they are held.

Manorial records provide a wealth of information about our forebears, rich and poor. Many sets of records cover a number of centuries and can help provide additional information about individuals as well as filling the gaps that may afflict other sources such as parish registers. Visit the following link <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr/>

Findmypast - New Parish Records

Findmypast have published some new parish records of your ancestors from the north, south and in between. These include Northumberland & Durham marriages: 28,163 records, Devon baptisms: 11,735 records, Devon burials: 2,387 records, Thames & Medway baptisms: 2,080 records, Thames & Medway marriages: 260 records and Thames & Medway burials: 1,652 records. Visit their website www.findmypast.co.uk

Old Maps Online -

Historical maps are key sources of information in this quest. A helpful overview can be found at the Old Maps Online website, whose search engine indexes over 100,000 online digital maps from collections at libraries and other institutions across the world. Links from the site take readers to digital images held on the websites of the organisations associated with the OMO project. You can search either by typing in a place name or by picking a location on a zoomable world map and you can restrict your query to a particular date range. A list of all relevant maps then appears and you click on those of interest in order to travel to the relevant websites. There is no charge for visiting Old Maps Online, which points the way to detailed maps of areas within a wide variety of countries. Any arrangements there may be to purchase copies can be found on the website of the institution that submitted the map. Visit their website at www.old-maps.co.uk

Events

26th November to 5th January - Christmas Past 2013 - Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, London, E2 8EA

400 Years of Seasonal Traditions In English Homes - This exhibition provides an insight into how this holiday has been celebrated in English middle class homes over the past four centuries. The museums period rooms are dressed for the season and you will discover the origins and meanings of some of the rich and vibrant traditions of Christmas past, from feasting, dancing and kissing under the mistletoe to playing parlour games, hanging up stockings, sending cards, decorating the tree and throwing cocktail parties.

Admission free - Call 020 7739 9893 or visit www.geffrye-museum.org.uk

29th December - City in the Blitz (Walk) - LMA: Meet outside St Paul's Tube Station (by Caffé Nero)

On 29th December 1940 the City suffered its worst night of bombing of the Second World War. There'll be stories of the danger, destruction and sadness the City faced during the Blitz and that night. Guide: Chris Everett.

Book by phone on 020 7001 9844 - or visit their website at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk





Did you know?

The Gospels do not mention the date of Jesus' birth. It was not until the 4th century AD that Pope Julius I set 25th December as the date for Christmas. This was an attempt to Christianise the Pagan celebrations that already took place at this time of year. By 529, 25th December had become a civil holiday and by 567 the twelve days from 25th December to the Epiphany were public holidays.

Holly is one of the symbols most associated with Christmas. Its religious significance pre-dates Christianity. It was previously associated with the Sun God and was important in Pagan customs. Some ancient religions used holly for protection. They decorated doors and windows with it in the belief it would ward off evil spirits.

Before Christianity came to the British Isles the Winter Solstice was held on the shortest day of the year (21st December). The Druids (Celtic priests) would cut the mistletoe that grew on the oak tree and give it as a blessing. Oaks were seen as sacred and the winter fruit of the mistletoe was a symbol of life in the dark winter months.

Judaism was the main religion of Israel at the time of Jesus' birth. The Jewish midwinter festival of Hanukkah marks an important part of Jewish history. It is eight days long and on each day a candle is lit. It is a time of remembrance, celebration of light, a time to give gifts and have fun.

Many Pagan traditions had been brought to Britain by the invading Roman soldiers. These included covering houses in greenery and bawdy partying that had its roots in the unruly festival of Saturnalia, an ancient Roman festival in honour of the deity Saturn.

During the Medieval Period the Church attempted to curb

Pagan practices and popular customs were given Christian meaning. Carols that had started as Pagan songs for celebrations such as midsummer and harvest were taken up by the Church. By the late medieval period the singing of Christmas carols had become a tradition.

From the middle of the 17th century until the early 18th century the Christian Puritans suppressed Christmas celebrations in Europe and America. They believed in strict moral codes, plenty of prayer and close following of New Testament scripture. As the date of Christ's birth is not in the Gospels the Puritans thought that Christmas was too strongly linked to the Pagan Roman festival and were opposed to all celebration of it. In 1644 all Christmas activities were banned in England. This included decorating houses with evergreens and eating mince pies.

The tradition of crib making dates back to at least 400 AD when Pope Sixtus III had one built in Rome. In many parts of Europe in the 18th century crib making was an important craft form. This was not the case in England until much later, suggesting that British Christmases were less Christian than those in other parts of Europe. The tradition of Nativity plays began in churches where they were used to illustrate the Christmas story as told in the Bible.

Christmas trees were a German tradition, brought to Britain and popularised by the royal family. Prince Albert first introduced the Christmas tree into the royal household in Britain in 1834. He was given a tree as a gift by the Queen of Norway which was displayed in Trafalgar Square.

An important part of today's Christmas is the myth of Father Christmas. His origins are in Christian and European tradition. But the visual image of Father Christmas that we have today is the one popularised by American card-makers in the Victorian era.

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/christmas_1.shtml 10.12.13



ON THIS DAY – 12TH DECEMBER

DECEMBER 12TH is the 346th day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, 19 days remain until the end of the year.

- 1098** Massacre of Ma'arrat al-Numan – Crusaders breach the town's walls & massacre 20,000 inhabitants. After finding themselves with insufficient food, they resort to cannibalism
- 1781** American Revolutionary War: Second Battle of Ushant – A British fleet led by HMS Victory defeats a French fleet
- 1862** USS Cairo sinks on the Yazoo River, becoming the first armored ship to be sunk by an electrically detonated mine
- 1881** Harry Warner, Polish-American businessman, co-founded Warner Bros. is born (d. 1958)
- 1911** Delhi replaces Calcutta as the capital of India
- 1913** Two years after it was stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris, Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece The Mona Lisa is recovered inside Italian waiter Vincenzo Peruggia's hotel room in Florence
- 1917** More than 500 French soldiers are killed when their train derails in Modane, France. They were returning from fighting WWI in Italy
- 1975** A six-day siege ends peacefully in London after four IRA gunmen free their two hostages and give themselves up to police
- 1988** The Clapham Junction rail crash kills thirty-five and injures hundreds after two collisions of three commuter trains
- 1992** Princess Anne remarries and becomes Mrs Timothy Laurence after a small family wedding in Scotland

Tracing your Family History and Nonconformists –

If you cannot find your ancestors in parish records it might be because they were Nonconformists. The first step is working out which of the many denominations they belonged to, this however may not be straight forward. Herewith just some of the more widely followed Nonconformist groups and the period when founded. 1532 Anabaptists, 1560 Presbyterians, 1582 Congregationalists, 1612 Baptists, 1640 Unitarians, 1650 Society of Friends (Quakers), 1729 Methodists, 1827 Plymouth Brethren and 1837 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Your Nonconformist ancestors may have worshipped in a chapel or meeting house, rather than the parish church. Most congregations kept registers of births, marriages and, after 1691, burials. You may also find minutes of meetings and lists of members. Many of these registers are likely to be found at The National Archives (TNA). Followers would be formally admitted to a congregation and if marriage or work necessitated a move they were 'dismissed' from the congregation. Registers were kept by individual chapels or by ministers on circuit who travelled around to several chapels. A list of chapels arranged by country is available at the TNA. There is also a list that groups chapels by denomination and then by country, which is useful if you cannot find your ancestors in one register and want to see what other chapels or meeting houses were in the vicinity.

The Sevenoaks Branch Committee members would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, and we look forward to seeing you in February 2014 –

Merry Christmas

The Sevenoaks Committee
Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters
Committee Members
 Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson
 Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett
 Geoff Webb, Bernie Wilkins