



14TH DECEMBER 2017

ISSUE NUMBER 55

Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY, SEVENOAKS, KENT

www.nwkhfs.org.uk



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

NO JANUARY MEETING AT SEVENOAKS

8TH FEBRUARY

World War One poets;
Explanations and recitations

BOB & FERN OGLE

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

NO DECEMBER MEETING AT BROMLEY

20TH JANUARY - Behind The Scenes of Television's Golden
Years - Speaker WILF LOWER

DARTFORD

6TH JANUARY - Our Thames: Dartford to the Grain
Speaker CHRISTOPH BULL

3RD FEBRUARY - The Story of the Metropolitan Police the early
days - Speaker KEN CHAMBERLAIN

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.



14TH DECEMBER

THIS EVENING'S SEASONAL TALK-

'A Celebration of Christmas'

Speaker Anne Carter; Anne will take us back in time and explain how Christmas was spent through the years

Welcome to our Christmas talk & nibbles this evening



NEWS ITEMS

New LMA records available online on Ancestry - Ancestry has added more collections from LMA. Already reported are the London Stock Exchange membership records, 1802-1924, TS Exmouth Training Ship records, 1876-1918 and Gamekeepers' Licences, 1727-1839 added earlier in the year. These three collections added over 270,000 records. Ancestry has now added new London school records including admissions and discharges, 1912-1918, and Poor Law School District Registers, 1852-1918. The former record pupils entering and leaving mainstream schools during the First World War, the second is an entirely new database of pauper children's registers, shedding light on the lives of marginalised children. There are also additional records online for 844 London parishes and non-conformist churches

Findmypast - A two-year programme of intensive digitisation of over 12 million pages from the archives of Trinity Mirror and Local World are to be published online for the first time, nearly doubling the newspaper holdings on Findmypast and the British Newspaper Archive. Trinity Mirror is the largest national and regional news publisher in the UK. Founded in 1903 as *The Daily Mirror* (now a UK tabloid) it slowly transitioned into a publishing company now known as Trinity Mirror plc. The publications will be available online for the first time in the newspaper section on Findmypast website and their sister site, the British Newspaper Archive, giving you the opportunity to search and explore a wide range of historical UK publications previously inaccessible to the public. Digitisation is underway with up to 100,000 pages being scanned each week. New material from the Trinity Mirror titles is now available to search, including a variety of publications covering Birmingham and the Midlands as well as additional issues of *The Daily Herald*. This programme has already resulted in the digitisation and online publication of upwards of 160 Trinity Mirror titles. These titles include significant coverage of both World Wars and the first publications of *The Daily Mirror* and *The Daily Herald*. Visit www.findmypast.co.uk

EVENTS

16th & 17th December - A Churchill Family History at Chartwell, Mapleton Road, Westerham, Kent TN16 1PS (National Trust)

Visit the family home of Sir Winston Churchill, decorated as it might have been that first Christmas after the war. See four rooms of the house decorated for the festive season; the hall, Lady Churchill's sitting room, the dining room and the kitchen. A roaring fire will welcome you into the house where vintage style Christmas cards hang across the walls and the Christmas trees are bright with lights. Open 1100 to 15.00 - Normal admission charges apply

29th December - The City in the Blitz - London Metropolitan Archives Walk - Meet: St Paul's underground station, street level; exit to cathedral (Central Line)

On 29 December 1940 the City of London was subjected to one of the most intense bombing raids of the Second World War. This walk retraces the sequence and focal points of the raids, and the personal stories and heroism of the people involved. Led by Chris Everett Time 1100-1300 - Cost £10.00, booking essential. Visit <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk> - Or call 020 7332 3851

Kent Events

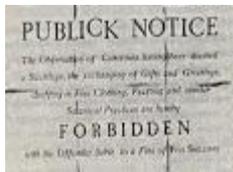
2nd January - "Up The Junc" - A photographic tour of old Swanley - Swanley Historical Society, White Oak Indoor Bowls Club, Garrolds Close, off Hilda May Avenue, Swanley, BR8 7BF. Speaker Keith Whitmore - Doors open 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm, non-members £2.00

10th January - 'Kent Surnames' - Kent Family History Society, Saint Pauls Church Hall, Boxley Road, Maidstone, ME14 2AN - Speaker Dr Paul Cullen - Doors open 7pm- for 7.30 pm start - Visitors £2.00

17th January - Bat and Ball - Sevenoaks' first Railway Station- Otford and District Historical Society, Otford Village Memorial Hall, High Street, TN14 5PQ - Speaker ED Thompson - Time 8 pm - Visitors £3.00

26th January - Kemsing V.A.D. Hospital - Kemsing Heritage Centre, St Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing, Kent TN15 6NA - Speaker Janet Eaton - Time 7.30pm, non-members £2.50





A Restoration Christmas

'More mischief is that time committed than in all the year besides ... What dicing and carding, what eating and drinking, what banqueting and feasting is then used ... to the great dishonour of God and the impoverishing of the realm.'

So wrote the strict protestant, Philip Stubbes, in the late 16th century, expressing the Puritan view that Christmas was a dangerous excuse for excessive drinking, eating, gambling and generally bad behaviour.

This view was made law in 1644, when an Act of Parliament banned Christmas celebrations. Viewed by the Puritans as superfluous, not to mention threatening, to core Christian beliefs, all activities to do with Christmas, both domestic and religious, including attending church, were forbidden. The ban, however, was unpopular and many people continued to celebrate privately, albeit in a far more restrained manner than in Elizabethan times.

As well as disliking the waste and debauchery that went along with the celebration of Christmas, the Puritans viewed the festival (Christ's mass) as an unwanted remnant of the Roman Catholic Church and, therefore, a tool of encouragement for the dissenting community that remained in both England and Wales. They argued that nowhere in the Bible had God called upon his people to celebrate the nativity in this manner. They proposed a stricter observance of Sundays, the Lord's Day, along with banning the immoral celebration of Christmas - as well as Easter, Whitsun and saints' days. Preferring to call the period Christ-tide, and thus removing the Catholic 'mass' element, the Puritans reasoned that it should remain only as a day of fasting and prayer.

All shops and markets were to stay open throughout the 25th December and anyone caught holding or attending a special Christmas church service would suffer a penalty. In the city of London things were even stricter as soldiers were ordered to patrol the streets, seizing any food they discovered was being prepared for a Christmas celebration.

Despite imposing such rigid measures on the common people, it appears that Cromwell himself didn't quite live up to his preaching. He liked music, playing bowls and hunting and, after becoming Lord Protectorate, soon took to the high life. For his daughter's

wedding he even permitted a lavish feast and entertainment fit for royalty.

In 1656 legislation was passed to ensure that Sundays were more stringently observed as the Lord's Day and, thus, a day of rest. The regular monthly fast day had always been hugely unpopular and impossible to enforce and was subsequently dissolved. Despite the threat of fines and punishment many people continued to celebrate Christmas clandestinely. In the late 1640s Cromwell tried to put a stop to these public celebrations and force businesses to stay open. As a result, violent encounters took place between supporters and opponents of Christmas in many towns, including London, Canterbury and Norwich.

A more openly festive, if slightly subdued, spirit returned following the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660; and all legislation banning Christmas enforced from 1642 to 1660 was dropped and the common people were allowed to mark the Twelve Days of Christmas. Old customs were revived, and Christmas as both a religious and social festival was celebrated throughout society.

The writings of Samuel Pepys provide a fascinating insight into Christmas in London during the decade following the Restoration. A civil servant best known today for his diaries, Pepys' observations about Christmas give us a feeling for what the season was like for Londoners at the time. In common with his contemporaries, Pepys worked on Christmas Eve, and often for part of Christmas Day itself. He attended church without fail on Christmas Day and, in 1660 and 1664, he went to both morning and evening services.

The Christmas meal was also an important part of the day. Pepys noted with pleasure, or otherwise, what he ate each Christmas. In 1662, he made do with 'a mess of brave plum porridge and a roasted pullet', a rather frugal meal owing to his wife's illness. This was supplemented by a bought, rather than home-made, mince pie.

In other years he enjoyed richer food, including a 'shoulder of mutton', and in 1666 'some good ribs of beef roasted and mince pies ... and plenty of good wine'. For entertainment, Pepys attended theatrical productions when possible, and read and played music at home. Visiting with friends and family was frequently mentioned.

Sources: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/ten_ages_gallery_03.shtml 09.12.2017
<http://www.timetravel-britain.com/articles/christmas/ban.shtml> 09.12.2017



ON THIS DAY - DEC. 14TH is the 349th day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 17 days remain until the end of the year

- 557 Constantinople is severely damaged by an earthquake
- 1287 St. Lucia's flood: The Zuiderzee sea wall in the Netherlands collapses, killing over 50,000 people
- 1542 James V of Scotland dies (born. 1512)
- 1542 Princess Mary Stuart becomes Mary, Queen of Scots
- 1582 Zeeland, Brabant Netherlands adopt Gregorian calendar
- 1782 The Montgolfier brother's first test fly a hot air balloon in France; it floats nearly 2 km (1.2 mi)
- 1799 First US President George Washington dies at Mount Vernon (born 1732)
- 1812 The French invasion of Russia comes to an end as the remnants of the Grande Armée are expelled from Russia
- 1894 Day One 1st Test Cricket Aus v Eng Aust 5-346 (Giffen 161, Gregory 85) - Joe Darling, Ernie Jones, Archie MacLaren debut
- 1896 The Glasgow Underground Railway is opened by the Glasgow District Subway Company
- 1901 1st table tennis tournament is held (London Royal Aquarium)
- 1903 The Wright brothers make their first attempt to fly with the *Wright Flyer* at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina
- 1911 Norwegian Roald Amundsen's expedition is the 1st to reach the South Pole
- 1955 16 countries join the United Nations, including Austria, Finland, Italy, and Spain
- 1967 DNA created in a test tube
- 2013 Peter O'Toole, British-Irish actor dies (born. 1932)
- 2016 University of Toronto scientists present findings of the world's oldest water - 2 billion years old from a mine in Canada

Note: Our volunteers will take a break over Christmas so the library will not be open on 27 December

Tip – Missing ancestors: If you are having difficulties locating an individual ancestor on the census, try doing a search for someone

else who you think should be living in the same household as them at that time.

The Sevenoaks Branch Committee members would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

We look forward to seeing you in February 2018 -

Merry Christmas

The Sevenoaks Committee
Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters
Committee Members
Christina Barnett, Karina Jackson, Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett, Bernie Wilkins, Barbara Stead, Sandra Marchant, Bill Chopping

