



Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

12TH MARCH AT SEVENOAKS

Kevin Bacon Family History Laboratory – An interactive exploration of “Six degrees of separation”

DAVID CUFLEY

Also Branch Annual Meeting

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

21st February – World War I Military Records

PAUL BLAKE

DARTFORD

7TH March – a Hundred Years of Toys and Play

HELEN ALLINSON

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 IS 'ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY' by Paul Evans. The Royal Artillery commonly known as the Gunners provides firepower to the British Army.

NEWS ITEMS –

The Society of Genealogists is delighted to announce that the Government has accepted an amendment to the Deregulation Bill currently going before the House of Lords that allows for the publication of information from Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates in England and Wales to be issued otherwise than in the form of a certified copy. This is something the SoG has long campaigned for and is grateful to Baroness Scott of Needham Market, herself an enthusiastic genealogist, who suggested to Government that this deregulation is possible. More information can be found at www.sog.org.uk/news/article/gro-information-on-births-marriages-and-death-doesnt-have-to-on-expensive-c - (with thanks to Malcolm Austen, Oxfordshire FHS)

Modern wills online – Watch out for Pitfalls! Advice from *The Federation of Family History Societies*

The Probate Service has closed the London office where members of the public used to find and order wills proved from 1858 onwards. If you want to find a will that was proved from 1858 to the present day you now have to search online. This facility was already in place for recent wills and is now extended back to 1858. It also includes the records of some soldiers who died on active military service between 1860 and 1982.

Searching for, ordering and receiving copies of wills all take place whenever you like through your own computer. Payments (which are £10 per copy) are by credit or debit card. Visit the site at www.gov.uk/search-will-probate and select “Start now”.

The new system is not perfect. Points to watch out for are:

- There are three tabs. Be sure to choose the right one for the period and type of will you are looking for; it will not tell you if you click on the wrong one but just say there are no records when you choose an invalid year (even if there are relevant records for the year using the correct tab).
- The tab headed “Wills and Probate 1858-1996” does not include those for 1996.
- The year in the index is the year of probate, not of death (as mistakenly stated on the website).

Events

17th February – A Childs War – Sevenoaks Library, Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1LQ

A Childs War: Growing up in Wartime Britain 1939 – 1945. Talk by Mike Brown about childhood in WW2.

Time 2.30 pm. Cost £3.00 – book in advance – contact details: Tel 03000 41 3131 or Email sevenoakslibrary@kent.gov.uk

28th March – Tracing Ancestors & Soldiers in British India – SOG, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd. EC1M 7BA

In this half-day course, Peter Bailey describes the development of the East India Company armies, the Indian Army and the role of the British Army in India over the two hundred years from 1746 to Independence in 1947. He will explain the excellent records describing the thousands of Britons who served in these armies to preserve the ‘Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire’. Cost £20.00 - a discounted price of £16.00 is available for Members of the Society of Genealogists. Contact by phone 020 7553 3290 or email events@sog.org.uk or book a place on line at www.sog.org.uk

21st February – Heraldry - The IHGS, 79-82 Northgate, Canterbury, CT1 1BA

Many genealogists and family historians turn aside from heraldry with the misconception that it is not for them but rather some medieval mystery. This course aims to show that the records of heraldry can be of great use to family historians and is suitable for absolute beginners and those with some experience. Practical guidance will be given on how to understand heraldry and how to identify coats of arms. The price is £40.00 or £35.00 for IHGS Members and correspondence course students. Closing date for bookings is 19th February. Call 01227 768664 or book in line www.ihgs.ac.uk

25th April - 37th AGM & Family History Day – Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Rd, Sevenoaks, TN14 5DN

This year's speakers are Michael Gandy whose talk is entitled: *Records of the 17th and 18th Century*, and David Annal whose talk is on: *The 1911 Census: A Vision of England*. The Society Bookstall and Publications will also be available. It is essential that you book for lunch in advance, using the yellow booking form that came with the December journal. If you are joining us for lunch please return the booking form by 31st March 2015. You are of course welcome to bring your own lunch. Guests of members are welcome and may use the booking form but they will not be entitled to speak or vote during the AGM. Please return the form even if you are only attending for the AGM, as this will enable us to provide the correct amount of seating for the day. See notice board for full details and programme.



Women's Work in Victorian Britain

Many women in Victorian Britain supported their families with wage-paying jobs alongside their already heavy domestic burdens. Because of high

birth rates and improving life expectancy, Victorian families were generally large. The growth of residential domestic service, even low down the social scale, and the prevalence of lodgers, especially in towns, meant that many households were further swollen in size and complex in formation.

Many young people, especially young women, migrated to towns and cities in search of work as the possibilities of agricultural employment declined. Migration was facilitated by family and other connections: communities were recreated in towns and cities through local concentrations of settlement of particular ethnic, religious, regional or familial groups and by the possibility of finding accommodation through lodging or domestic service in the homes of contacts of this kind.

Most households necessarily drew income from a number of sources, with many women and juveniles adding to wage earning even if their employment was usually more intermittent and low-paid than that of adult males. Although the male breadwinner wage was increasingly regarded as the ideal and even the norm, in practice many households were dependent upon female earnings.

As the mid-Victorian boom got underway the demand for female and juvenile labour expanded, particularly where new technologies or patterns of work were resented by skilled men. Cheap female and immigrant labour was often used to undercut male workers. Urbanisation created manifold opportunities for female employment despite the regulation of hours and conditions of work for women and juveniles in certain sectors, and the coming of compulsory education after 1871. Thus most women in Victorian society, in the two thirds of the population below the upper and middle classes, worked for wages.

One of the greatest problems facing the historian of women's work is the absence of reliable information. The census enumerators' books are the most obvious source, especially for the period after 1841 when occupations were included; but in practice such information is vastly more accurate for men than for women for several reasons. Firstly, contradictory and inconsistent instructions were given as to how to classify women's work, particularly where this involved home-working or consisted of helping in a family-run business (such work was sometimes deliberately excluded from the record). Furthermore, women's work was often part-time, casual, and not regarded as important enough to declare.

Sometimes it was illegal (as with prostitution) or performed in unregulated sweatshops (a further reason for failure to record). Women may have also preferred to keep their income-earning a secret from their husband. An occupational description, for whatever reason, meant something very different for men than for

women. With the emphasis primarily upon their role as wives and mothers, women workers did not usually see their occupation as a centrally defining characteristic of their lives, and consequently frequently failed to declare it.

Business records can be used to supplement the census and to give an indication of the gender-specific nature of employment and wage earning in certain firms and regions. But the survival of wage books is generally poor and biased in favour of larger firms in the regulated sector - for example factory textile employment, where wages and employment levels were generally much higher than the norm. Trade directories are another useful source but suffer from the fact that they were published irregularly, and record not employment but the names of business proprietorships. Household budgets have recently been used for research on women's work. They have the advantage that they generally record all incomes, including poor relief and self-provisioning, allowing one to assess the contribution of women and juveniles to the family economy. Their disadvantage is that they have patchy survival over time and region, and they have varying levels of detail, accuracy and comparability because they were compiled for differing purposes.

As in earlier centuries, the bulk of waged work for women appears to have been found in trades associated with female skills or proclivities, particularly where these were also casual and low paid. Domestic service of all kinds was the single largest employer of women (40 % of female occupations stated in the census of 1851 in provincial cities and 50 per cent in London). The textile and clothing sectors came a close second. Women were also found in large numbers in metal-wares and pottery and in a variety of petty trades, especially in towns: confectionery, brewing and other provisioning, seam-stressing, laundry work, cleaning and retailing. Because many sectors which employed large numbers of women were concentrated in certain regions of the country, the statistics of female labour force participation varied across the country.

Widows and spinsters were rarely in a position to rest on their laurels or be ladies of leisure. Many of the former carried on family businesses after the death of their husbands, whilst the significant surplus of spinsters in Victorian society found work as governesses or in trades which were regarded as suitable for women such as millinery and inn-keeping, grocery retailing and other victualling. Both widows and spinsters were prominent in property ownership and in financing businesses as sleeping partners. The typical firm in the 19th century was a small family partnership. Because of this many opportunities existed for wives and daughters to be closely involved. There is evidence of their important roles, especially behind the scenes: in retailing, book keeping, correspondence, dealing with clients, arranging deals.

In areas where many women, including married women, worked full time for wages there may have developed greater sharing of housework between men and women, and a more prominent role for women in local politics. However, there are more examples where working women shouldered the double burden of waged work and the bulk of household responsibilities, and where their role in politics remained marginal.

By Professor Pat Hudson

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/womens_work_01.shtml 09.02.15

ON THIS DAY – 12TH FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 12TH is the 43rd day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, 322 days remain until the end of the year.

1211 Henry VII, Roman Catholic German king is born (d.1235)

1294 Kublai Khan, the conqueror of Asia, dies at the age of 80

1554 A year after claiming the throne of England for nine days, Lady Jane Grey is beheaded for treason.

1689 Parliament declares that the flight to France in 1688 by James II, the last Roman Catholic British monarch, constitutes an abdication

1809 Charles Darwin English geologist and theorist is born (d. 1882)

1809 Abraham Lincoln, American lawyer and politician, 16th President of the United States is born (d. 1865)

1912 China adopts the Gregorian calendar

1921 Winston Churchill becomes British Minister of Colonies

1929 Lillie Langtry, English singer and actress dies (b. 1853)

1994 Four men break into the National Gallery of Norway and steal Edvard Munch's iconic painting *The Scream*

A GENEALOGY GAME TO GET YOU THINKING – HOW FAST CAN YOU NAME THE RELATIONSHIP TO YOU?

1. Father's brother's uncle's sister...
2. Grandmother's nephew's daughter...
3. Aunt's mother's father's wife...
4. Mother's aunt's grandson...
5. Brother's son's sister's mother...
6. Cousin's aunt's daughter's brother's...
7. Sister-in-law's father-in-law's grandson...

8. Sister's father's stepson's mother...
9. Uncle's father's only grandchild...
10. Brother-in-law's wife's grandmother's husband...
11. Uncle's father's mother's husband...
12. Aunt's mother's granddaughter's only sibling...
13. Granddaughter's brother's mother's mother-in-law...
14. Niece's father's only brother...
15. Aunt's husband's sister's daughter...

♥ *Happy Valentines' Day to you!*



Editor Bernadette Wilkins - bmtwilkins@gmail.com Registered Charity No. 282627

The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

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