



11 JULY 2013

ISSUE NUMBER 11

Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

NO AUGUST MEETING
12TH SEPTEMBER AT SEVENOAKS
Pipe Makers - Brian Boyden

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

20TH JULY - The history of smuggling in Kent and Sussex
GEOFF HUTCHINSON

17TH AUGUST - Watermen & Lightermen
ROB COTTRELL

DARTFORD

3RD AUGUST - The burial grounds of Southwark
Stephen Humphrey

7TH September - The London Fire Brigade - its history and records of its workers
T.B.A

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.

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 'A PLACE IN THE SUN - SUN FIRE INSURANCE RECORDS'

Isobel Watson is an established researcher and writer of Local History. She notably initiated a volunteer indexing project of Sun Fire Insurance records, which she informatively speaks to us on this evening.

News Items

British Library's new resource for newspapers and other media invite family historians to take part in a focus group to shape its development - At the start of 2014, a new Reading Room will open at the British Library building in St Pancras offering a range of current and historical news content in multi-media formats (e.g. UK and Irish newspapers from the 18th century, news content from 15 UK TV channels, 10,000 radio news items, web archive of news sites etc.), plus various value-added services for researchers and others. The British Library has commissioned IRN Research, an independent research agency, to run a series of focus groups in the w/c 22nd July in Holborn, Central London, where potential users can offer their views and comments, and find out more about the new resource. They are particularly interested in obtaining the views of family historians whether they are current British Library users or not. Each group will run for 1.5 hours and there will be a payment of £30 for each group participant and IRN Research will also donate £1 for each participant to its charity 'Save the Children'. Anyone interested should email dmort@irn-research.com including their telephone number, or call David Mort on 07905 239599, and IRN Research will then contact them with more information.

The Royal Arsenal, Woolwich - information to become available - Ray Fordham worked for the Woolwich Arsenal for many years as an electrician. His working life ended in retirement when the Arsenal closed. During this time many tons of paperwork was being destroyed and Ray retained some that he thought were worthwhile keeping. The information relating to part of this material is as follows.

- A list of 1st World War (1914-18) disabled who were employed at the Arsenal during the period 1936 to 1945. This database includes name, date of birth, clock & centre number, date of birth, date employed and nature of disability. There are over 800 names.
- A list of air raid casualties during the 2nd World War (1941-1945). This database gives name, address, hospital they were taken to, and injury. There are over 500 names.
- The Arsenal had its own doctor's surgery and medical staff were able to do operations on site. The data base is for 1906 and has over 500 names. The information includes name, age, case number, department they worked in and 'concern'. Typical were ruptures, hernias, splinters, appendicitis etc. The doctor would also come out to the home if the employee lived within 3 miles of the arsenal.
- Roy also retrieved some 40 photographs of children's parties held in the arsenal during the 1950s. No one is identified.

The information is in the process of 'tidying' and Ray would like to make the above information readily available to all but before he does so would welcome enquiries to give him an idea of its precision. He would like enquiries to go in the first instance to Barbara Phillips on ra@nwkhfs.org.uk who will pass them on.

Events

3rd August - Researching Publican & Brewery Ancestors - SOG, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd, EC1M 7BA

Until fairly recently the public house in its various guises was a centre of the community and innkeepers were often respected figures locally. In addition most towns and villages had a brewery or two providing beer to slake the throats of everybody from princes to paupers. This course will discuss the major sources you will need to use if you have a publican or brewer on your family tree. It will also look at the changing nature of the tavern from the simple beer house to gaudy gin palace.

Lecturer Simon Fowler - Time 1030-1300 - Cost: £17.50 pre-book, by email: events@sog.org.uk Contact no. 020 7553 3290

27 August, 3, 10, 17 & 24 September, 1, 8, & 15 October - Maidstone's historic past - Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery, St Faith's St, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1LH

Discover Maidstone's historic past. Meet at the Museum's Bentlif Library at 11.30 on Tuesdays for refreshment and an engaging talk, followed by a town walk led by a qualified guide. Booking essential at reception or call 01622 602838. Cost Adults £5.00

Historical Figure – Charles Dickens



Charles Dickens is much loved for his great contribution to classic English literature. He was the quintessential Victorian author. His epic stories, vivid characters and exhaustive depiction of contemporary life are unforgettable. His own story is one of rags to riches. Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on 7 February 1812, at Landport in Portsea, the second of eight children to John Dickens (1785-1851) and Elizabeth Dickens (née Barrow 1789-1863). His father was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office and was temporarily on duty in the district. Soon after Charles' birth the family moved to Norfolk Street, Bloomsbury, and then, when he was four, to Chatham, Kent, where he spent his formative years until the age of 11. His early years seem to have been idyllic; Charles spent time outdoors, but also read voraciously, especially the picaresque novels of Tobias Smollett and Henry Fielding. He retained poignant memories of childhood, helped by a near-photographic memory of people and events, which he used in his writing. His father's brief period as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office gave him a few years of private education, first at a dame-school, and then at a school run by William Giles, a dissenter, in Chatham.

The good fortune of being sent to school at the age of nine was short-lived as his father, inspiration for the character of Mr Micawber in 'David Copperfield', was imprisoned for bad debt. The entire family, apart from Charles, were sent to Marshalsea along with their patriarch. Charles was sent to work in Warren's blacking factory and endured appalling conditions as well as loneliness and despair. After three years he was returned to school, but the experience was never forgotten and became fictionalised in two of his better-known novels 'David Copperfield' and 'Great Expectations'.

Like many others, he began his literary career as a journalist. Charles began with the journals 'The Mirror of Parliament' and 'The True Sun', and in 1833 he became a Parliamentary journalist for 'The Morning Chronicle'. With

new contacts in the press he was able to publish a series of sketches under the pseudonym 'Boz'. In April 1836, he married Catherine Hogarth, daughter of George Hogarth who edited 'Sketches by Boz'. Within the same month came the publication of the highly successful 'Pickwick Papers' and from that point on there was no looking back for Dickens.

As well as a huge list of novels he published autobiography, edited weekly periodicals including 'Household Words' and 'All Year Round', wrote travel books and administered charitable organisations. He was also a theatre enthusiast, wrote plays and performed before Queen Victoria in 1851. His energy was inexhaustible and he spent much time abroad - for example lecturing against slavery in the United States and touring Italy with companions Augustus Egg and Wilkie Collins, a contemporary writer.

Dickens's novels were, among other things, works of social commentary. He was a fierce critic of the poverty and social stratification of Victorian society. At a time when Britain was the major economic and political power of the world, Dickens highlighted the life of the forgotten poor and disadvantaged within society. Through his journalism he campaigned on specific issues, such as sanitation and the workhouse. His fiction probably demonstrated its greatest prowess in changing public opinion in regard to class inequalities. He often depicted the exploitation and oppression of the poor and condemned the public officials and institutions that not only allowed such abuses to exist, but flourished as a result. In a New York address, he expressed his belief that, "Virtue shows quite as well in rags and patches as she does in purple and fine linen". Dickens's second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1839), shocked readers with its images of poverty and crime: it destroyed middle class polemics about criminals, making any pretence to ignorance about what poverty entailed impossible.

He was estranged from his wife in 1858 after the birth of their ten children, but maintained relations until his death with his mistress, actress Ellen Ternan, 27 years his junior. His sister in law Georgina Howgarth had joined the Dickens household in 1842. She was his housekeeper, organiser, adviser and friend and remained with him until his death at Gads Hill Place, Kent. He died of a stroke from which he never regained consciousness on 9 June 1870, having worked all day on his unfinished novel 'Edwin Drood'. He is buried at Westminster Abbey, in 'Poets Corner'. This was however contrary to his wish to be buried at Rochester Cathedral "in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner".

Sources

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/dickens_charles.shtml
08.07.13

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens - 08.07.2013

ON THIS DAY – 11TH JULY

July 11 is the 192nd day of the year (193rd in leap years) in the Gregorian calendar; 173 days remain until the end of the year.

1405 Chinese fleet commander Zheng He sets sail to explore the world for the first time

1576 Martin Frobisher, English seaman, sights Greenland

1533 Pope Clement VII excommunicated England's King Henry VIII

1690 Battle of Drogheda Boyne (Willem III (Neth-Engl) beat Jacobus II (Ire))

1776 Captain James Cook begins his third voyage

1848 London's Waterloo Station opens

1979 Skylab tumbles back to earth scattering debris across the Southern Indian Ocean and the sparsely populated Australian desert

1991 Labour MP Terry Fields is sentenced to 60 days in prison for refusing to pay his poll tax

HELP US COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY OF THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR 1 -

A reminder: The society would like to remember our ancestors who were part of the Great War, by putting together an exhibit at our November 2014 meeting and we would love you to be involved. Do you have a story to tell of a relative's experience during the war – maybe a soldier in the battlefields or in a prisoner of war camp, or a fighter pilot defending our shores? Or perhaps a female relative who volunteered in a VAD hospital or the Red Cross? Not forgetting those who worked in the ammunition factories

and on the land. We would be delighted if you could help us to remember the many courageous men and women of WW1. We would like any stories, photos, or items of interest no later than July 2014. For further information please speak to Barbara or one of the Committee Members.

The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

Committee members

Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson

Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett, Geoff Webb, Bernie Wilkins