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ISSUE NUMBER 7

Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

11TH APRIL AT SEVENOAKS

What's on the cards - The history of playing cards

ALAN PAYNE

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

16TH MARCH - Pilgrimage and Travel in the Middle Ages
IMOGEN CORRIGAN

DARTFORD

6TH APRIL - Women Wartime Workers in the Munitions Industry
and Annual Meeting
DR ANN KNEIF

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 'BRICK WALLS AND LOST ANCESTORS' BY DAVE ANNAL

Dave Annal is a very experienced genealogist and I have no doubt we are all sure to learn something this evening to help us with our own family history research.

News Items

"Start Here" at The National Archives - If you are new to The National Archives (TNA) and you need some help getting started with your research, you might find it useful to head for the "Start Here" section that has recently been added to its website. This provides answers to basic questions, such as "What we have", "What's online" and "How to use archives". Also helpful is advice about what is not available online. A useful link can take users direct to guidance on reading old documents. This new resource is still being developed and the TNA welcomes feedback about how useful the new section is, what may be missing and how it could be improved. So, even if you are a regular TNA user, they would like you to visit "Start Here" and leave any comments or suggestions that you wish to add. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/start-here.htm>

NWKFHS - Don't forget the 35th AGM of the North West Kent Family History Society which is being held at the Dartford Science and Technology College. Speakers are Ian Waller with one of his new talks "All the B's" - and Tim Cox, "Soldier, Soldier, will you marry me?: Soldiers' wives 1660-1900". Stalls include CabSearch, Alfred King's second hand books and ephemera, Jean & Derek Garrod's old postcard collection and The Society Bookstall and Publications.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 -

Are you one of the global Irish Diaspora of 70 million people? 2013 is the year of The Gathering, a year of events celebrating Irish family history and culture, which include festivals and gatherings all over Ireland ranging from music and sports to family reunions and much more. You can download a free guide 'Tracing your Ancestors in Ireland' from the website as well as finding further information and links to other websites. www.thegatheringireland.com/About/Tracing-your-roots.aspx. Part of The Gathering celebration is the Ireland Reaching Out project <http://www.irelandxo.com/about>. This is an Irish Government sponsored programme which aims to find people of Irish ancestry around the world and connect them to the local Irish communities from where their people first emigrated in Ireland. The programme enables people of Irish heritage to return to Ireland to see the homes their ancestors once lived in, the land they may have farmed, family gravestones, and possibly, to meet living relatives in Ireland. There are currently over 500 parishes with volunteers assisting in answering questions & queries.

Origins - Origins.net have recently added data to their collection, over 169,000 burial indexes from 1560-1909 and 140,000 baptism indexes from 1538-1882, covering Middlesex and London. Visit their website www.britishorigins.com.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission - The CWGC commemorates the men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the two world wars. The Register records details of Commonwealth war dead so that graves or names on memorials can be located. The website has a free searchable database. As part of the preparations for the centenary of the start of World War 1, the CWGC is installing visitor information panels at some of the significant WW1 sites. Through the use of QR Code technology, CWGC are using the panels to tell the human stories behind the history and they would like your help. The CWGC are looking for the personal stories of those buried at Etreux British Cemetery, Guards Grave, Vailly British Cemetery and Houplines Communal Cemetery Extension, France. If you are aware of a personal story relating to any of these four sites, please email the CWGC. Newsletter@cwgc.org

Events

Wednesday 27th March - Focus on Family History - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 0HB

This is a workshop aimed at the beginner, an opportunity to learn how to get the most out of digitised family history sources, including our records on Ancestry.co.uk. This is a **Free** course from 2 pm - 3 pm, however, booking is required in advance. Book by phone on 020 7332 3851 - You can also book by email, to do so visit their website www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma.

Current Exhibition until Thursday 25th April - Frozen London - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 0HB

This exhibition at The London Metropolitan Archives, explores the impact some of the most severe winters ever recorded in London had on its residents, from 1683 until 1895. It takes a look at the different Frost Fairs that took place on the River Thames and its many sites and attractions. It also shows a few of the problems caused to life in the capital. The exhibition is **Free** during normal opening hours 0930-1645. Contact by phone 020 7332 3851 or visit www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

Historical Figure – Samuel Johnson



Johnson, often referred to as Dr Johnson, was an English writer and critic, and one of the most famous literary figures of the 18th century. His best-known work is his 'Dictionary of the English Language'.

Samuel Johnson was born in Lichfield, Staffordshire, on 18 Sept. 1709. His father, Michael Johnson, was a bookseller, his mother was Sarah Ford. Both families came from money; however an unknown change of fortune meant they had many debts and they led a life of relative poverty. Samuel was educated at Lichfield Grammar School and spent a brief period at Pembroke College, Oxford, but was forced to leave due to lack of money. In 1735, he married Elizabeth Porter, his friend Harry Porter's widow, more than 20 years his senior.

In 1737, Johnson moved to London, unable to find teaching work he drifted into a writing career. He began to write for The Gentleman's Magazine. He struggled to support himself through journalism, writing on a huge variety of subjects. His early works include the biography The Life of Richard Savage, the poems "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes", and the play Irene.

He gradually acquired a literary reputation and in 1747 a syndicate of printers commissioned him to compile his 'Dictionary of the English Language'. The task took eight years, and Johnson employed six assistants, all working in his house off Fleet Street. The dictionary was published on 15 April 1755. It was not the first such dictionary, but was certainly the most important at that time. In Johnson's lifetime five further editions were published, and a sixth came out when he died.

Johnson's wife had died in 1752 and shortly afterwards Francis Barber, a former slave from Jamaica, joined Johnson's household as a servant. He lived with Johnson for more than 30 years, as did his wife and children, and became Johnson's heir.

Johnson was continually short of money, despite the success of his dictionary. In 1762, his financial situation was alleviated when he was awarded a government pension.

In 1763, he met James Boswell, a young Scottish lawyer, whose 'Life of Johnson' (published in 1791) did much to spread Johnson's name. In 1773, Johnson and Boswell set out on a three-month tour of the Scottish Highlands and the Hebrides. Both wrote accounts of their travels. Johnson spent considerable time in Edinburgh in the 1770s.

Johnson was by now the leader of the London literary world, and a friend of notable artists and writers such as Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith and David Garrick. Another important friendship for Johnson was with Henry Thrale, a wealthy brewer and Member of Parliament, and his wife Hester. Johnson became part of their family, treating their London houses as second homes.

Johnson had a tall and robust figure. His odd gestures and tics were confusing to some on their first encounter with him. Biographers documented Johnson's behaviour and mannerisms in such detail that they have informed the posthumous diagnosis of Tourette syndrome, a condition not defined or diagnosed in the 18th century. After a series of illnesses he died on the evening of 13 December 1784, and is buried at Westminster Abbey.

Sources-
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/johnson_samuel.shtml
12.03.13
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Johnson
12.03.13

ON THIS DAY - 14TH MARCH

- 1489** The Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro, sells her kingdom to Venice
- 1558** Ferdinand I appointed Holy Roman Emperor
- 1689** Scotland dismisses Willem III & Mary Stuart as king and queen
- 1734** Prince Willem KHF van Orange marries George II's daughter Mary Anne
- 1836** HMS Beagle / Charles Darwin leaves Australia
- 1854** Paul Ehrlich is born, German chemist and 1908 Nobel Prize winner for medicine, inventor of chemotherapy
- 1879** Albert Einstein is born in Ulm, Germany, the son of a Jewish electrical engineer
- 1883** Karl Marx died, German Revolutionary, Philosopher, Economist and Historian
- 1958** Prince Albert of Monaco born - A celebratory 101-gun salute was fired in Monaco
- 1984** Sinn Fein leader shot in street attack gunmen shoot & injure the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, in an attack in central Belfast.
- 1990** The Congress of People's Deputies elects General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev as the new president of the Soviet Union.

This month's tip to tracing your Family History - GRO Indexes and BMD Certificates

Births, marriages & deaths have been registered in England & Wales since 1 July 1837. Certificates of events from this date can be obtained from local Register Offices or the Registrar General – see their website: www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages. General Register Office (GRO) indexes to these registrations can be sought at some local libraries and record offices who have copies in microform. Some commercial companies offer online digitised images of the index page for free or for a fee. An ongoing volunteer project to transcribe the index can be found online at www.freebmd.org.uk, which contains details for the period 1837-1983. Also take a look at www.ukbmd.org.uk.

A birth certificate contains the date and place of birth, the name, residence & maiden name of the mother and the name & occupation of the father (where given). With both parents' full names, you can search the indexes for a reference to their marriage. A marriage certificate normally includes occupations, abode and date & place of marriage, additionally names & occupations of the father of both bride & groom. Simple steps like these can take your line notably back into the 19th century. The GRO produce a useful booklet, go to www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg.digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_186584.pdf

NWKFHS Family History Workshops

Held at the Library, Joydens Wood, Bexley, Kent, DA5 2EE

20th March - Early Census (Pre 1841 Census) & Census-like Lists - Jean Stirk

17th April - Home Children, British child immigration into Canada (1870-1957) - Walter Eves

15th May - Mapping family distributions and movements - David Cufley

Each workshop lasts for two hours. 10 members per workshop. Cost £5.00 donation, including refreshments.

Book by sending an email to workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk to request a form, or by contacting Janet Rose on 01322 384836

Sevenoaks Library have a volunteer at the Library every Thursday from 4.30 - 7.00pm to help you trace your ancestors online - Sevenoaks Local Studies Library - Contact number 08458 247200

Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1LQ - Telephone number - 01732 453118 / 452384

Open Hours - Mon-Wed and Fri 9.30-5.30, Thu 9.30-7.00, Sat 9.30-5.00

Appointment required for microfilm and fiche readers.

Parking, refreshments and toilets nearby. Suitable for disabled (lift access)

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