



12 MARCH 2015

ISSUE NUMBER 27

# Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY, SEVENOAKS, KENT  
[www.nwkhfs.org.uk](http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk)



## NEXT BRANCH MEETING

9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL AT SEVENOAKS

Kentish Valour

GLEN JONES

## OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

### BROMLEY

21<sup>st</sup> March - A Sweet Tooth: Sweet Making in London's East  
End & Branch Annual Meeting

JEF PAGE

### DARTFORD

11<sup>TH</sup> April - The roles and lives of regal and talented women

HELEN ALLINSON

Plus Annual Branch Meeting

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.

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**THIS EVENING'S TALK - Kevin Bacon Family History Laboratory**  
- An interactive exploration of "Six degrees of separation" by our esteemed president David Cufley. This is sure to be an interesting talk, the theory that everyone and everything is six or fewer steps away, by way of introduction, from any other person in the world. Be prepared to be astonished.

## NEWS ITEMS -

**The National Library of Ireland** has announced plans to make its entire collection of Catholic parish register microfilms available online by summer 2015 - free of charge. A total of 1,091 parishes are involved, with registers dating from the 1740s to the 1880s. The records are mainly of baptisms and marriages, with the names of godparents and witnesses frequently mentioned. This information is all vitally important, not least because the earliest surviving full census of Ireland (which is already available online) is as recent as 1901. The Catholic registers project includes converting the existing reels of microfilm into about 390,000 separate digital images. It will be searchable by parish location only, so the indexes and transcripts that are held by the network of family history centres in Ireland should continue to be of help. (This is provided by The Federation of Family History Societies.)

**TheGenealogist** have new Tithe Maps online. The maps for Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex and Surrey are now live with the rest of the country being released in the coming months. See their website [www.thegenalogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenalogist.co.uk)

## **NWKFHS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION FOR THE 2016 CALENDAR**

We are running a photographic competition for our first calendar for 2016. Full details are in the March journal (circulated to members in early March) also see our notice board. Your entries must be loosely connected with Family History and the areas covered by the NWKFHS. Here are some of the details:

- Must be your own work
- Digital image preferred, minimum 300 dpi
- Colour or black and white prints should be 8 by 5 inches
- Closing date for entries will be 30th June 2015

## Events

### **27th March - Visit St Pancras Old Church - SOG, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd. EC1M 7BA**

St Pancras Old Church has been a site of Christian worship since the 4th century. Fragments of Roman material can still be seen here and there in the fabric of the current building. The monuments and reuse of stone chart the history of the church's development since Fulcherius in the late 12th century. Until 150 years ago, people were still being buried in the churchyard. Notable burials over time include Mary Wollstonecraft and Sir John Soane. When the Victorians built a railway through the churchyard many bodies had to be exhumed and moved. The original tombstones were re-erected around the base of a nearby tree at the direction of author Thomas Hardy, who was then a surveyor.

This tour will include both the interior of the church and the churchyard. Cost £10.00 Time 1100 - 1200.

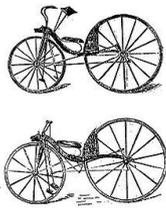
Contact by phone 020 7553 3290 or email [events@sog.org.uk](mailto:events@sog.org.uk) or book a place on line at [www.sog.org.uk](http://www.sog.org.uk)

### **19th April - Crossness Pumping Station Steaming Days - The Old Works, Abbey Wood, SE2 9AQ**

Crossness Pumping Station is an impressive building and the engines and pumps they contain remain a monument to Bazalgette's brilliance in solving London's sewage problems. Open 10.30am-4.00pm. Admission £6.00, 5-15 years of age £2.00, Under 5s free. For further details visit [www.crossness.org.uk](http://www.crossness.org.uk) or call 020 8311 3711.

### **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 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 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.



## Kirkpatrick Macmillan

Macmillan was a Scottish blacksmith who is credited with the invention of the pedal bicycle. He was the fifth son of Robert Macmillan, blacksmith at Courthill Smithy, in Dumfriesshire, and he was baptised on 18 September 1812.

Macmillan would have had insight into metal-working and mechanical devices through helping his father at the forge. He held variety of jobs before deciding on being a blacksmith. He became an assistant at 22 years to the blacksmith of Walter Scott, 5th Duke of Buccleuth, at Drumlanrig, and worked there for some time before returning to Courthill to work with his father.

During this period hobby-horses were in use, two-wheeled early bikes which had to be propelled along by pushing one's feet on the ground. After making one for himself, Macmillan realised what a radical improvement it would be if he could propel it without putting his feet on the ground. Working at his smithy, he completed his new machine in around 1839.

This first pedal bicycle was propelled by a horizontal reciprocating movement of the rider's feet on the pedals. This movement was transmitted to cranks on the rear wheel by connecting rods; the machine was extremely heavy at about 25 kilos (55 lbs) and the physical effort required to ride it must have been considerable.

Macmillan quickly mastered the art of riding it on the rough country roads, and was soon accustomed to making the fourteen-mile journey to Dumfries in less than an hour. His next accomplishment was to ride the 68 miles into Glasgow in June 1842 to visit his two school teacher brothers. The trip took him two days during which he had the misfortune to run down a little girl who had run into his path while riding through the massed crowds in the Gorbals, Glasgow. Reputedly there was a large crowd gathered excitedly to see what was described as this 'Devil on wheels' and no doubt the unfortunate affair could be attributed to the press

of the crowd. He was fined five Scottish shillings for speeding at 8mph, however the magistrate was so impressed by the invention that legend has it he asked for a demonstration and paid for the fine. On his way back home, he raced the stage coach.

He never thought of patenting his invention or trying to make any money out of it, but others who saw it were not slow to realise its potential, and soon copies began to appear for sale. Gavin Dalzell of Lesmahagow copied his machine in 1846 and passed on the details to so many people that for more than 50 years he was generally regarded as the inventor of the bicycle.

Macmillan was quite unconcerned with the fuss his invention had prompted, preferring to settle down to the quiet homely country life to which he was accustomed. He was nicknamed *Daft Pate* by his local villagers; again this did not bother Macmillan, who was a keen churchgoer and local character. He pulled teeth for both horses and humans, and he was a popular fiddle player at weddings.

Shortly after his father's death, in 1854 he married Elizabeth Goldie, they had two surviving children. He died in Courthill, on 26 January 1878 and was buried in the Kirk Yard at Keir. A plaque on his smithy home reads 'He buildd Better than He Knew'.

In Macmillan's hometown of Coathill, the one hundredth anniversary since the creation of his velocipede was celebrated in September 1946 after an eight-year delay caused by WWII. More recently, the Kirkpatrick Macmillan Festival was held in Drumlanrig Castle, near Dumfries. Now, in the 21st Century, there are over 800 million bicycles worldwide, of which more than 300 million are in China, and globally, bicycles outnumber cars by three to one. Macmillan's early bike can be seen in the Glasgow Transport Museum.

Sources: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/macmillan\\_kirkpatrick.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/macmillan_kirkpatrick.shtml)  
<http://www.scotland.org.uk/scottish-inventors/kirkpatrick-macmillan>  
<http://iainthepict.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/kirkpatrick-macmillan.html> 11.03.15

## ON THIS DAY – 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

**MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup> is the 71<sup>st</sup> day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, 294 days remain until the end of the year.**

- 1563** John Bull, composer of British national anthem (God Save The King), dies
- 1689** The Willamite War in Ireland begins
- 1894** Coca-Cola is bottled and sold for the first time in Vicksburg, Mississippi, by local soda fountain operator Joseph Biedenharn
- 1904** First main line electric train in UK (Liverpool to Southport)
- 1912** The Girl Guides (later renamed the Girl Scouts of the USA) are founded in the United States
- 1945** Anne Frank diarist (Diary of Anne Frank), killed in Belsen Camp aged 15
- 1951** The first Dennis the Menace comic strip appears
- 1969** Paul McCartney marries Linda Louise Eastman in London
- 1984** British ice dancing team, Torvill & Dean, become 1st skaters to receive 9 perfect 6.0s in world championships
- 1994** The Church of England ordains its first female priests

**On the grave of Ezekial Aikle in East Dalhousie Cemetery, Nova Scotia:  
'Here lies Ezekial Aikle, Age 102, The Good Die Young'**

**A lawyer's epitaph in England:  
'Sir John Strange Here lies an honest lawyer, And that is Strange'**



*The Sevenoaks Committee would like to wish you a happy, peaceful, and fun Easter filled with,  
chocolate eggs and jelly beans!*

**More news:** GRO information on Births, Marriages and Deaths doesn't have to be on expensive certificates. 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. Details at [bit.ly/nwfkhs14](http://bit.ly/nwfkhs14)

### The Sevenoaks Committee

**Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters**

**Committee Members**

**Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson Norma Holmden,  
Robert Barnett Geoff Webb, Bernie Wilkins, Barbara Stead**