



Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

14TH NOVEMBER AT SEVENOAKS

The Foundling Museum

JANE KING

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

19TH October - Women's employment options in Victorian & Edwardian London

IAN PORTER

DARTFORD

2ND November - The lives of Medieval Children

IMOGEN CORRIGAN

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 'INTRIGUE, AMBITION &

RESPECTABILITY' by Historian Pat Mortlock. She is going to speak to us about the owners of Ightham Mote, a moated medieval manor house dating from 1320, it's sure to be fascinating.

NEWS ITEMS

Society news – NWKFHS is on Flickr. Its early days, yet some 160 photographs and news items etc relating to WWI and 18th-19th Century Kent have been added. Please take a look at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wk/sets/>. If you have old photos of interest that you are willing to have copied and displayed please contact Walter Eves at chairman@nwkhfs.org.uk

The Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918

Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 is the official site for information on how Wales will mark the centenary of the First World War in Wales. It provides a focal point for information on the latest news, projects, events and signposting services for the programme of commemoration which will take place in Wales from 2014 to 2018. Visit their website www.walesremembers.org

The Genealogist – Militia Muster records – The Genealogist have added Militia Muster records for England and Wales to their Diamond subscription. Only records for 1781-82 survive which are now uniquely available at The Genealogist. Visit their website www.thegenealogist.co.uk

Findmypast – findmypast.co.uk have announced the launch of their Irish Newspaper collection. Digitised in partnership with the British Library, Irish newspapers are a rich resource for genealogists in search of their Irish roots. The collection features almost 2 million articles from 6 newspaper titles (both national and local) with dates covered by each title ranging from pre-Famine era right up until post-Irish independence in 1926. For family historians, the newspapers contain hugely valuable articles like advertisements, obituaries and letters to the editor which help to paint a picture of the Irish lives of our ancestors. They have also added new papers to our British collection from Dundee to Kent too. Visit their website at www.findmypast.co.uk.



Events

14th October until 13th February 2014 – The Parish - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 0HB

The archives of London's parish churches contain a wealth of material on the lives of Londoners and their local communities. Through registers, documents, photos, maps and other sources, this exhibition will tell the story of the parish from its earliest records to the present day. This exhibition at The London Metropolitan Archives is **Free**.

For more information visit their website at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma or phone on 020 7332 3851

Note: LMA closes for stocktaking at 7.30 pm on Thursday 31 October and reopens on Monday 18 November at 9.30 am.

26th October – West Surrey Family History Fair – Woking Leisure Centre, Kingfield Rd, Woking, GU22 9BA

There is a lot going on at the WSFHS open day and Family History Fair. The society will have their Reference Library available and various Help Desks, so take your research along. There are a number of free talks and many organisations have reserved tables. For further information take a look at our notice board or visit their website at <http://www.wsfhs.org>
Open 1000-1630 – Admission Free - Refreshments are available.

2nd November – Immigration & Adoption courses – SOG, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd, London EC1M 7BA

Two half day courses –

- Tying Down your Immigrant Ancestor - 1030-1300 Speaker Michael Gandy Price £17.50
- Adoption: Tracing your Birth Relatives - 1400-1700 Speaker Jeanette King Price £17.50

These two courses deal with tricky subjects finding an ancestor who first settled in the country and one who was adopted, especially before it became a legal requirement in 1927.

Visit their website - <http://www.sog.org.uk/> - Pre-book: by email: events@sog.org.uk. Contact no. 020 7553 3290



The History of Halloween



Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts who lived 2,000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31 they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and direction during the long, dark winter.

To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes. When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help protect them during the coming winter.

By 43 A.D. the Roman Empire had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. In the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain. The first was Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honour Pomona, the

Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the tradition of "bobbing" for apples that is practiced today on Halloween.

On May 13, 609 A.D. Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon in Rome in honour of all Christian martyrs, and the Catholic feast of All Martyrs Day was established in the Western church. Pope Gregory III (731-741) later expanded the festival to include all saints as well as all martyrs, and moved the observance from May 13 to November 1. By the 9th century the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands, where it gradually blended with and displaced the older Celtic rites. In 1000 A.D. the church would make November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honour the dead. It is widely believed today that the church was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, but church-sanctioned holiday. All Souls Day was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels and devils. The All Saints Day celebration was also called All-hallows or All-hallowmas (from Middle English Alholowmesse meaning All Saints' Day) and the night before it, the traditional night of Samhain in the Celtic religion, began to be called All-hallows Eve and, eventually, Halloween.

The American Halloween tradition of "trick-or-treating" probably dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England. During the festivities, poor citizens would beg for food and families would give them pastries called "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's dead relatives. The distribution of soul cakes was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits. The practice, which was referred to as "going a-souling" was eventually taken up by children who would visit the houses in their neighbourhood and be given ale, food, and money.

The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter. *Happy Halloween*

Source: <http://www.history.com/topics/halloween>

09.10.2013

ON THIS DAY – 10TH OCTOBER

October 10TH is the 283rd day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, 82 days remain until the end of the year.



19 AD Roman general Germanicus suddenly dies in Antioch under mysterious circumstances. Roman historian Tacitus records that Germanicus was poisoned by Syrian Governor Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso under orders from Roman emperor Tiberius

1580 After a three-day siege, the English Army beheads over 600 Papal soldiers and civilians at Dún an Óir, Ireland

1582 Because of the implementation of the Gregorian calendar this day does not exist in this year in Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain

1780 The Great Hurricane of 1780 kills 20,000-30,000 in the Caribbean

1846 Triton, the largest moon of the planet Neptune, is discovered by English astronomer William Lassell

1911 The Wuchang Uprising leads to the demise of Qing Dynasty, the last Imperial court in China, and the founding of the Republic of China

1975 Liz Taylor & Richard Burton remarry in Africa only 16 months after getting divorced

1999 Thousands assembled to watch the Millennium Wheel move into position as the new landmark on the London skyline.

This Month's Tip - What if my ancestor died prior to 1858, how do I go about finding out if a will exists?

Before 1858 there was no national probate registry and research is more complicated as a result. Church Courts administered the system from the 14th century until 1858. A considerable number of Indexes are online and available from commercial organisations enabling you to obtain copies of the documents from appropriate record offices. During the Commonwealth period in the 17th century practically all were proved in London and are now held at the National Archives (TNA). These wills and those proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury are available to download for a fee on www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline.



Image courtesy of halloweencilpart.com