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ISSUE NUMBER 33

Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

12TH NOVEMBER

Private Horace Brooks of Halstead

KYLE GREENFIELD

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

17TH OCTOBER - A Hundred Years of Toys & Play

Speaker HELEN ALLINSON

DARTFORD

7TH NOVEMBER - Edith Cavell (1865-1915)

Speaker TONI MOUNT

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 - "The Parish Chest" by Celia Heritage

The Parish Chest can be a rich source of documentation of the poor and so a valuable research opportunity. Celia is an experienced Family Historian and this is sure to be a very interesting, informative and enjoyable talk.

NEWS ITEMS

TheGenealogist - Norfolk Parish Records - TheGenealogist and the Norfolk Record Office have signed an agreement to make Norfolk parish and other historical records available online for the first time. The registers of baptisms, marriages, burials and bans of marriage feature the majority of the parishes in Norfolk. On release the searchable transcripts will be linked to original images of baptism, marriage and burial records from the parish registers of this East Anglian county. Some of the surviving records are from the early 1500s. These vital records will allow family history researchers from all over the world to search for their Norfolk ancestors online for the first time.

Rootsireland.ie - New Records Online for Tipperary North - Tipperary North Genealogy Centre has added the Roman Catholic parish of Thurles from 1795-1900 to its database at www.tipperarynorth.rootsireland.ie. The full list of available sources for the North Tipperary Genealogy Centre can be viewed at www.tipperarynorth.rootsireland.ie

Findmypast - Irish Newspapers - 6 brand new titles and over 724,000 new articles are now available to search in their collection of historic Irish Newspapers. These latest additions include titles from several countries as well as a national publication - The Evening Freeman. New articles have also been added to existing titles including substantial updates to the Belfast Commercial Chronicle, Clare Journal, Ennis Advertiser and The Pilot. The entire collection now contains more than 10.5 million article point, all of which are fully searchable. The archive covers over 230 years of Ireland's history (1719-1950) and currently includes 88 titles.

EVENTS

21st October - Insurance Policies and their Linkage to the Records of 18th Century London Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd. EC1M 7BA

A major challenge is linking records from a wide range of sources, such as land tax, insurance, apprenticeships, victuallers and manorial records. The records available for this period will be outlined, to include an online demonstration of the index to the Sun Insurance policies (1816-1825), which names many 18th-century citizens.

Time 2pm - Cost £8.00 (£6.40 members) Contact 020 7553 3290 or book a place on line at www.sog.org.uk

22nd October Pigeons, prisoners and panic: Records of espionage in First World War Britain The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU

In this talk will examine the surveillance, arrest, trial and execution of German spies, the panic and fear of the general public relating to enemy espionage, and the role of the humble pigeon as friend and potential foe in wartime Britain.

Free Event - Time: 14:00 to 15:00 - Contact Tel: 020 8876 3444 - website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Until 29th October - Victorian London in Photographs; Exhibition - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB

The arrival of photography in London in 1839 would change the way people saw their city, and each other, forever and the collections at LMA contain an extraordinary range of images, recording the capital and its people in stunning detail. This exhibition presents some of the most striking images of London and Londoners from the era, from the first known photograph of the capital to the opening of Blackwall Tunnel, taking in the Crystal Palace, the first Tube line and life on the city's streets.

Free Event - open during normal opening hours - Contact by phone 020 7332 3851 - Website www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

28th November - Wills and How to Read Them - IHGS, 79-82 Northgate, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1BA

Wills are a wonderful source for genealogists- they can give you not only family relationships but also an idea of how our ancestors lived and even who they liked or disliked. The course will show you how wills can help you research your family, how to find them and their associated documents and practical advice on how to interpret the handwriting. Reading exercises will be included to give you hands on experience to reading wills.

The price for the course is £40.00 or £35.00 for IHGS Members and correspondence course students. Buffet lunch is included.

Booking essential - Contact by phone 01227 768664 - Website www.ihgs.ac.uk

Local Kent Events

Saturday 10th October - 10am - 1pm - Bromley Central Library 1WW Drop-in Session at High Street, Bromley, BR1 1EX

Saturday 24th October - 10am - 1pm - Bexley Local Studies - WWI Drop-in session at Townley Rd Library, Bexleyheath, DA6 7HJ

Saturday 14th November - 10am - 1pm - Erith Library - WWI Drop-in session at 100 Erith High Street, Erith, DA8 1SL

Siegfried Sassoon CBE, MC



An English war poet, Sassoon was also known for his fictionalised autobiographies, praised for their evocation of English country life.

Siegfried Sassoon was born on 8 September 1886 and grew up in the neo-gothic mansion named "Weirleigh" (after its builder, Harrison Weir), in Matfield, Kent. His father was part of a Jewish merchant family, originally from Iran and India, and his mother part of the artistic Thorneycroft family. There was no German ancestry in Siegfried's family; his mother named him Siegfried because of her love of Wagner's operas. His middle name, Loraine, was the surname of a clergyman with whom she was friendly. Siegfried was the first of three sons, the others being Michael and Hamo. When he was four years old his parents separated. During his father's weekly visits to the boys, Theresa locked herself in the drawing-room. In 1895 Alfred Sassoon died of tuberculosis. Sassoon was educated at the New Beacon School, Sevenoaks, Kent; at Marlborough College, Marlborough, Wiltshire, and at Clare College, Cambridge, where from 1905 to 1907 he read history, but left without a degree. He then lived the life of a country gentleman, hunting and playing cricket while also publishing small volumes of poetry.

In May 1915, Sassoon was commissioned into the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and went to France. He impressed many with his bravery in the front line and was given the nickname 'Mad Jack' for his near-suicidal exploits. He was decorated twice. His brother Hamo was killed in November 1915 at Gallipoli.

In the summer of 1916, Sassoon was sent to England to recover from fever. He went back to the front, but was wounded in April 1917 and returned home. Meetings with several prominent pacifists, including Bertrand Russell, had reinforced his growing disillusionment with the war and in June 1917 he wrote a letter that was published in the Times in which he said that the war was being deliberately and unnecessarily prolonged by the government. As a decorated war hero and published poet, this

caused public outrage. It was only his friend and fellow poet, Robert Graves, who prevented him from being court-martialled by convincing the authorities that Sassoon had shell-shock. He was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh for treatment. Here he met, and greatly influenced, Wilfred Owen. Both men returned to the front where Owen was killed in 1918. Sassoon was posted to Palestine and then returned to France, where he was again wounded, spending the remainder of the war in England. Many of his war poems were published in 'The Old Huntsman' (1917) and 'Counter-Attack' (1918).

After the war Sassoon dabbled briefly in the politics of the Labour movement, and in 1919 took up a post as literary editor of the socialist Daily Herald. He lived at 54 Tufton Street, Westminster from 1919 to 1925; the house is no longer standing, but the location of his former home is marked by a memorial plaque. He spent some time in the United States, travelling the length and breadth of the country on a speaking tour. He then started writing the near-autobiographical novel 'Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man' (1928). It was an immediate success, and was followed by others including 'Memoirs of an Infantry Officer' (1930) and 'Sherston's Progress' (1936).

Sassoon had a number of male lovers but in 1933 surprised many of his friends by marrying Hester Gatty. Hester was many years his junior and the marriage led to the birth of a child, something which he had long craved. This only child George (1936–2006), became a scientist, linguist and author, and was adored by Siegfried, who wrote several poems addressed to him. Sadly, the marriage broke down after the World War Two, Sassoon apparently unable to find a compromise between the solitude he enjoyed and the companionship he craved.

Sassoon continued to write both prose and poetry and in 1957 he was received into the Catholic Church. He died on 1 September 1967, one week before his 81st birthday, of stomach cancer and is buried at St Andrew's Church, in Mells, Somerset.

Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siegfried_Sassoon
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/sassoon_siegfried.shtml

04/10/2015

New Society Calendar -

Don't forget to buy your 2016 Society wall calendar. The calendar has a page for each month, plus cover & society information page. Each month is illustrated with a colour photograph of a historic landmark in west Kent, taken by a Society member. The Branch meeting dates are highlighted & included are the previous & next month views. Each calendar is supplied in an envelope, ideal for posting e.g. as a Christmas present. It can be purchased at Branch Meetings, the Society Library and other Society events for £4.50.

Prisoner of war interview reports 1914-1918 - information and advice from The National Archives

These records, in series WO 161 at the TNA, are reports on over 3,000 British and Commonwealth prisoners of war captured during the First World War. The reports were made by the Committee on the Treatment of British Prisoners of War before the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918. The Committee appointed examiners who conducted interviews with repatriated, escaped or interned prisoners of war to ask about how they had been treated. The examiners then wrote up the reports.

The reports include officers, medical officers, other ranks, merchant seamen and civilians (in a minority of cases).

Although the reports contain valuable information, they represent only a tiny percentage of the estimated 192,000 British and Commonwealth captives. They do not include the many prisoners of war who were liberated after the Armistice.

You can search the records in Discovery, The TNA catalogue, by filling in a form on line. Details needed First name, Last name, Corps, Regimental number, other people mentioned. You don't need to complete every field to find a record. The final two fields allow you to search by other people or organisations mentioned within the reports, such as an embassy. Searching is free, but there may be a charge to download documents. You can also access these records via Findmypast (subscription site).

Most reports can include details of unit, home address, events in no man's land, when and where captured, wounds suffered, transfer between camps, comments on treatment and conditions in camps and escape attempts. A few early reports contain straightforward answers to specific questions. Not all standard questions were filled in on the form. Standard questions from the hospital enquiry sheet include name, rank and regiment, rank, home address, place and date of capture and treatment details. Unlike many other records, the reports often describe what happened after the battle in which the prisoner was captured.

ON THIS DAY

OCTOBER 8TH is the 281ST day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 84 days remain until the end of the year.

1492 Columbus' fleet is about 400 sea miles from Puerto Rico

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

1600 San Marino adopts constitution

1754 Death of Henry Fielding; English author and playwright (b. 1707)

1769 Captain James Cook lands in New Zealand (Poverty Bay)

1818 Two English boxers are first to use padded gloves

1835 Charles Darwin reaches James Island, Galapagos archipelago, on HMS Beagle

1928 Bill Maynard, British actor is born (birth name Walter Frederick George Williams)

1960 3rd Rugby League World Cup: Great Britain beats Australia 10-3

1965 The Post Office Tower opens in London, becoming the tallest building in England until 1980

1993 Viscount Linley (32) marries Serena Stanhope (24)

The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

Committee Members

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