



12 SEPTEMBER 2013

ISSUE NUMBER 12

Sevenoaks Newsletter

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



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

10TH OCTOBER AT SEVENOAKS

**Intrigue, Ambition & Respectability -
The Owners of Ightham Mote**

PAT MORTLOCK

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY

21st September - Overview of Kent Archives

MARK BATESON

DARTFORD

5th October - An interactive experiment to explore links
between members - Serendipity & Kismet!

DAVID CUFLEY

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 'PIPE MAKERS'
by Brian Boyden who has done some extensive
research in this area**

News Items

Irish Resources - Limerick City Archives has just launched a searchable database of over 70,000 people buried at Mount St Laurence, the city's main place of burial since the 1840s. The cemetery is one of the largest in Ireland. The burial registers transcribed cover the 1855-2008 period, and they make available details of name, age, address, marriage status if known and often the cause of death. They further provide the position of the grave and dates of death of all those buried in the cemetery. An online map of the burial plots is also under development. This **Free** information makes them an invaluable resource for those conducting genealogical research on the Limerick area. Visit their website <http://www.limerickcity.ie/Archives/NewAdditions.html>

Queensland BMDs now Online

Queensland historical birth (1829-1914), marriage (1829-1938) and death (1829-1983) indexes can now be searched online at www.bdm.qld.gov.au/IndexSearch/BirIndexQry.m. It is free to search but if you find an entry this can be downloaded for a fee and you can also order printed copies

The Genealogist - Apprenticeship Records - The Genealogist have added over one million apprenticeship records to their Diamond subscription. You can find these under their Occupational Records section. Visit their website www.thegenealogist.co.uk

Ancestry - Ancestry.co.uk has added records of almost 900,000 clandestine marriages from the 17th and 18th centuries. The records cover weddings held at London's Fleet prison and officiated by rogue clergy or lay people. These usually took place away from the home parish of one or both of the spouses, often due to some impediment to the marriage, such as family disapproval. Records from King's Bench Prison, The Mint and the May Fair Chapel are also included in the collection, as well as some baptism records. Other data recently added includes records from Oxford's Brasenose College from 1509-1909 and Calendar of the Sessions books from Middlesex, 1690-1709. Visit their website at www.ancestry.co.uk.

Events

14th September - Essex Record Office Open Day - Wharf Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 6YT

Essex Record Office are celebrating 75 years of preserving their county's past with an open day. You can see the treasures of the Record Office and archive films, go on a behind-the-scenes tour, ask a question at the research helpdesk, listen to speaker Pete May talk on 'The Joy of Essex: A County of Contrasts' and (for the first 75 lucky visitors) enjoy a free slice of anniversary cake. Sandwiches, snacks and hot and cold drinks will also be available to purchase. Open 1000-1600
For more information visit their website at <http://www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk/ero75/> or call tel. no. 01245 244 614

21st September - Marriage and Genealogy - SOG, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London EC1M 7BA

Do you suspect that your ancestors weren't really married? Might their marriage have been bigamous or within the prohibited degrees or otherwise invalid because of non-compliance with certain formal requirements? Or have you found a marriage in a parish to which your ancestors had no known connections and which you think may have been clandestine? This talk will explain the circumstances in which a marriage would not be lawful and the consequences for those involved. It will also look at the extent of bigamy and invalidity in past centuries in order to assist family historians in interpreting their findings. This is a Half-day course from 2-5 pm with Else Churchill and Rebecca Probert. Cost: £17.50/£14.00 SoG members. Pre-book online at www.sog.org.uk or call 020 7553 3290

29th September - Ninfield Local History Group Exhibition - Ninfield Memorial Hall, Bexhill Rd, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9EE

If you have Sussex roots, you may be interested to know that the village of Ninfield started a local history group 18 months ago. They are holding an Exhibition at Ninfield Memorial Hall to which anyone can attend. There will be book sellers and History groups. Refreshments are also available.
Open 1000-1700 - Cost: Free - For more information visit their website <http://www.ninfieldhistorygroup.org/>

Historical Event – Great Fire of London



Fires in London were common, even inevitable, given the capital's largely timber construction. For years there had been warnings of London's total destruction by fire. In 1559 Daniel Baker had predicted London's destruction by 'a consuming fire'. In April 1665, Charles II had warned the Lord Mayor of London of the danger caused by the narrow streets and overhanging timber houses. Also, a long, hot summer had left London dry and drought had depleted water reserves.

Yet the greatest fear among Londoners was not fire. Plague had killed over 68,000 people in the previous two years and London remained unsafe, death carts were still commonplace. What worried inhabitants most was the strong east wind. This combined with the dry, dusty air, was known to be particularly effective in carrying plague. It would prove as equally efficient as fire in taking lives.

Consequently by September 1666, all that was required was a spark. This was provided at the house of Thomas Farynor, the king's baker in Pudding Lane, near London Bridge. At 2 am on Sunday 2nd September his workman smelled smoke and woke the household. The family fled across the nearby roofs, leaving only a maid, too scared to run, who soon became the first of the four listed casualties of the fire.

With only narrow streets dividing wooden buildings, the fire took hold rapidly, and within an hour the Mayor, Sir Thomas Bloodworth, had been woken with the news. He was blasé however, declaring that 'A woman might piss it out'. Yet by dawn London Bridge was burning. An open space on the bridge, separating two groups of buildings, had acted as a firebreak in 1632. It did so again as only a third of the bridge was burned, saving Southwark from destruction and confining the fire to the City of London, on the north bank.

Samuel Pepys lived nearby and on Sunday morning walked to the Tower of London. There he saw the fire heading west, fanned by the wind, and described 'pigeons hovering about the windows and balconies till they burned their wings and fell down'. With Bloodworth dithering, Pepys went to Whitehall, informing the King and his brother James, Duke of York, of the situation. Although Charles II immediately ordered Bloodworth to destroy as many houses as necessary to contain the fire, early efforts to create firebreaks were overcome by the strength of the wind, which enabled the fire to jump gaps of even twenty houses. By the end of Sunday the fire had begun to travel against the wind, towards the Tower; Pepys had begun to pack.

By the following dawn, the fire was raging north and west, and panic reigned. The Duke of York took control of efforts to stop the fire, with militias summoned from neighbouring counties to help the fight, and stop looting. But the flames continued relentlessly, devouring Gracechurch Street, Lombard Street, the Royal Exchange, and heading towards the wealthy area of Cheapside. By mid afternoon the smoke could be seen from Oxford, and Londoners had begun to flee to the open spaces of Moorfields and Finsbury Hill.

By nightfall the streets were jammed with the carts of fleeing Londoners, and the fire was heading down Watling Lane, towards St Paul's Cathedral. The next day saw the greatest

destruction. Both the King and the Duke of York were immersed in the battle against the fire, which was contained until late afternoon, when it jumped over the break at Mercers' Hall and began to consume Cheapside, London's widest and wealthiest street. While Pepys was busy evacuating his house - digging a pit in which he buried 'a parmazan cheese as well as my wine and some other things' - he had an inspiration. 'Blowing up houses stopped the fire when it was done, bringing down the houses in the same places they stood, and then it was easy to quench what little fire was in it'.

Although demolition began to take effect in the east, in the west the fire had destroyed Newgate and Ludgate prisons, and was travelling along Fleet Street towards Chancery Lane. Embers were falling on Kensington, and flames surrounded St Paul's Cathedral, covered in scaffolding. This caught fire and within a few hours the Cathedral was a ruin.

This marked the height of the inferno. On Wednesday morning the fire reached a brick wall, literally, at Middle Temple and at Fetter Lane. Workers took the opportunity to pull down more buildings and widen the break. At the same time, the wind slackened and changed direction, turning south and blowing the fire onto itself and into the river. In the north, it was being checked at Smithfield and Holborn Bridge, and the Mayor, finally useful, was directing demolition in Cripplegate.

By Thursday the fire was effectively extinguished, having destroyed 373 acres of the City, from the Tower in the East to Fleet Street and Fetter Lane in the West, burning around 13,200 houses, 84 churches and 44 company halls. Officially, only four people died, but John Evelyn referred in his diary to 'the stench that came from some poor creatures' bodies'. The true toll is likely much higher, rising further in the following months.

The fire beaten, London's full attention could turn to the question of blame. Hysteria had raged as fiercely as the flames, as frightened fingers fell on foreigners. On Sunday a schoolboy, William Taswell, had seen 'the ignorant and deluded mob, venting, forth their rage against the Roman Catholics and Frenchmen' and his brother saw 'a Frenchman almost dismembered'. The King's Guard assaulted strangers for speaking poor English, and everywhere there was 'a great alarm of French and Dutch being risen', as Pepys reported. The Spanish Ambassador opened his house to all foreigners in fear of their lives - Protestant Dutch as well as Catholic French - as religious bigotry and xenophobia, born in the Reformation and raised by the Gunpowder Plot, surfaced again.

At the end of September, a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to investigate the fire. During the investigation a French Protestant watchmaker, Robert Hubert, confessed to having deliberately started the fire at the bakery with 23 conspirators. His colleagues claimed he was unbalanced and the details of his confession changed as flaws were continually unearthed. The Earl of Clarendon commented that 'Neither the judges, nor any present at the trial did believe him guilty; but that he was a poor distracted wretch, weary of his life, and chose to part with it'. He was helped by a jury - that included three Farynors - and was hanged at Tyburn.

The Parliamentary committee reported in January 1667 that 'nothing hath yet been found to argue it to have been other than the hand of God upon us, a great wind, and the season so very dry'. Yet with Farynor declaring, as expected, that his ovens had been completely extinguished on the night in question, the cause of the fire became the grassy knoll of late seventeenth century conspiracy theorists.

Source - http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/great_fire_01.shtml-10.09.2013

ON THIS DAY – 12TH SEPTEMBER

September 12TH is the 255TH day of the year (256TH in leap years) in the Gregorian calendar, 110 days remain until the end of the year.

1217 French prince Louis & English king Henry III sign peace treaty

1624 1st submarine tested in London

1609 Henry Hudson, English explorer & navigator begins his exploration of the Hudson River while aboard the Halve Maen (Half Moon)

1759 British soldiers capture the town of Quebec

1878 Cleopatra Needle installed in London

1908 Winston Churchill marries Clementine Hozier

2001 The US declares war on terrorism

2005 England take the Ashes from Australia for the first time since 1987

The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

Committee members

Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson

Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett

Geoff Webb, Bernie Wilkins