



Registered Charity No.282627

# DARTBOARD

DECEMBER 2022

ISSUE 329

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DARTFORD BRANCH OF  
THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

## MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS & GROUPS

### ZOOM MYSTERY WORK-SHOP

And I know nothing more than this, it is a mystery after all

7.30 pm start

Leader - David Cufley

7th  
December

### SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING

The Goose is Getting Fat

11.00am start

Speaker - Imogen Corrigan

10th  
December

### ZOOM WORKSHOP

Heralds' Visitation

2.30pm start

Leader - David Cufley

14th  
December

**And that is it for the rest of the year.  
2023's meetings, events, talks &  
workshops commence with January's  
Dartford meeting.**

A reminder to all. The time shown here for Zoom workshops & talks etc. is the start time. Please login in before this time. If you haven't logged in by the start time you may not then be able to. Also a financial donation is asked for to support the Society.

**JANET & THE DARTFORD  
BRANCH COMMITTEE AND  
MYSELF WOULD LIKE TO WISH  
EVERYONE A HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY  
AND PROSPEROUS 2023**

DARTFORD BRANCH MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE DARTFORD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE, HEATH LANE, DARTFORD ON THE 1ST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH. DOORS OPEN AT 09.45 & MEETING COMMENCES AT 10.30.

### OUR TALK TODAY, THE 3rd DECEMBER 2022 CHRISTMAS ON THE HOME FRONT, 1939 - 1945

Mike Brown

The outbreak of war in 1939 saw the disappearance of many traditional British celebrations. Guy Fawkes' Night went immediately, gunpowder production was needed for the war effort, & bonfires contravened the blackout. Summer holidays became a thing of the past & Easter all but disappeared as chocolate went 'on the ration'. In spite of this, the nation remained determined to celebrate Christmas as a time of family & community; a time when war could be set aside, if only for a day.

### LIBRARY CLOSURES

**THE SOCIETY LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSED ON WEDNESDAY THE  
28TH DECEMBER.**

Advanced warning: the library will be closed on the morning of the 25th January 2023. It will reopen to members & visitors at 1pm.

Unless advised otherwise on all other dates the library will be open as normal.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Once again Maureen Griffiths, the Branch Finance Officer, is collecting Membership renewals here today. She will also be here at January' & February's meetings but please do not leave it any longer than you have to.

Cash & cheques welcome. At only £10 per year or £12 for a couple it is exceedingly good value for money.

Please also consider giving a donation the Society at the same time. Membership subscriptions barely cover the cost of the quarterly journals let alone all the other things like hall hire, speaker fees & the costs of running the library. If you pay by standing order you can add a donation on to this.

### CHRISTMAS UPDATES - LAST CALL

Christmas Card Charity. Poor health has had a big impact in recent months on the Branch Committee & it has decided to make it easy & chose 'K9 Partners' as this years charity to support. We supported this charity a few years ago but Janet has a local contact in the charity making it easy to administer. The charity trains & supports both aid dogs & their handlers making life easier for the disabled & elderly. Please donate generously.

## MEETINGS

Meetings are either held at Dartford or Sevenoaks or on Zoom. They are open to all, but a donation towards the cost of the speaker is welcome from non-members.

## WORKSHOPS & GROUPS

Workshops & Discussion Groups, currently held on Zoom, are for members only. Prior booking is essential as numbers are limited. To book a place please email: [workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk)

There is limited space here to include everything so it is important to regularly view the Society's website,

**[nwkfhs.org.uk](http://nwkfhs.org.uk)**

Any information you may need about the society can be found here including contact details of post holders.

<b>Master of Ceremonies</b>	Janet Rose
<b>Branch Secretary</b>	Sheila Elisak
<b>Branch Finance Officer</b>	Maureen Griffiths
<b>Logistics Manager</b>	Lorraine King
<b>Programme Secretary</b>	Christine Hills
<b>Pastoral Care</b>	Janet Rose
<b>Sound Technicians</b>	Ian West Tony Lathey
<b>Light refreshments</b>	Sandra & Bob Shepherd
<b>Raffle</b>	Pat Cornelius
<b>Reception</b>	Sheila Elisak Pauline Heathcote
<b>Ephemera</b>	Judith French
<b>Notice board</b>	Sylvia Hammond
<b>Computer help desk</b>	Allan Stapleton
<b>Bookstall</b>	Gillian Seager Tim Jacobs
<b>Exchange Journals</b>	Hilary Waters
<b>Trips &amp; outings</b>	Hilary Waters
<b>Dartboard editor</b>	Hilary Waters
<b>You can email the editor at: <a href="mailto:newsletters@nwkfhs.org.uk">newsletters@nwkfhs.org.uk</a></b>	

## A FESTIVE FAVOURITE

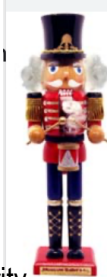
A Christmas family favourite is the ballet, The Nutcracker Suite, but what are its origins? One popular story is that in the late 17th century, in the town of Stiffen, Saxony, south of Dresden & close to the border with Chechnya, formerly the Czech Republic, a craftsman created the 1st 'Nutcracker', literally a pair of nutcrackers in the form of a toy soldier. They quickly grew in popularity in the local area & later far beyond to neighbouring countries. As demand grew so did production with Friedrich W Fuchtnier (1844 - 1923), commonly known in Germany as 'the father of the nutcracker', beginning the first mass production of the design at his workshop in Stiffen in 1872.

These decorative nutcrackers started to be popular outside of Europe after the 2nd World War especially when American soldiers took them back to the USA as souvenirs.

So what about the ballet? But before that E T A Hoffmann (1776 - 1822), a German author of fantasy & Gothic horror amongst other things, wrote a story, The Nutcracker and the Mouse King, published in 1892. This featured a toy soldier nutcracker which comes alive after defeating the evil Mouse King in battle. & who then whisks away the heroine, Maria (often changed to Clara) Stahlbaum, to a magical Kingdom populated by dolls. It isn't a Christmas story but it is set on Christmas Eve which is where its association with Christmas comes from.

It is this story that Tchaikovsky based his music on with the original choreography by Marius Petipa. It was commissioned by the director of Moscow's Imperial Theatres, Ivan Vsevolozhsky, in 1891, & premiered a week before Christmas 1892. Since premiering in western countries in the 1940s, this ballet has become perhaps the most popular to be performed around Christmas time. The first performance of the Christmas ballet was held as a double premiere together with Tchaikovsky's last opera, Iolanta, around the Christmas holiday season in December 1892, at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia. The Christmas ballet was first performed outside Russia in England in 1934. Its first United States performance was in 1944 by the San Francisco Ballet, staged by its artistic director and Balanchine student William Christensen. The now well known Christmas story has been published in many book versions including colourful children-friendly ones.

And to finish here are just a few facts about a hand crafted Nutcracker doll: They can take up to 60 individual pieces to complete. They traditionally resemble toy soldiers & painted in bright colours. Some early 19th century ones were dressed as miners, policemen or soldiers from different armies even Royalty & pop icons have been depicted.



## ELTHAM PALACE

On selected dates from now until Christmas Eltham Palace & gardens are hosting ENCHANTED ELTHAM, a magical world of illumination, sound & colour. Warm up with a glass of mulled wine, toast a marshmallow under the night sky or hop on a traditional fairground ride. A shop will be open for you to stock up on a range of Christmas gifts, from traditional toys to award-winning food & drink. Go to English Heritage's website for further information about this local event, including dates, times, parking & ticket availability & booking. Suitable for all the family.