
Welcome to the 1 September 2023 enews and our programme of talks and workshops over the next several weeks.

Talks and workshops have been planned until the end of the year

see <http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings> to book your diary ahead of time.

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Next Dartford Branch Talk: *Conserving Your Family Archive* with Sue Gibbons

Saturday 2 September: Doors Open 9.45am meeting starts 10.30am and will end by 12.30pm

Dartford Science and Technology College, Heath Lane, Dartford Kent DA1 2LY

Sue Gibbons is a Fellow of The Society of Genealogists and was Librarian there for almost 20 years.

During this time she was responsible for managing a major Lottery funded project to convert the massive old card catalogue into computer form and make it available on the Internet.

She is the author of several family history guides and an experienced lecturer. Sue will advise us on conserving our family archives from paper and photographs to domestic objects and digital media.

The talks venue has a large, free car park but it is shared with other users and can be busy at times.

No booking, just turn up.

Free to members. A donation towards hall hire and speaker fee is appreciated from visitors.

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Next Sevenoaks Branch Talk: *A Heroine of Dunkirk: The Paddle Steamer Medway Queen* with Pam and Mark Bathurst

Saturday 9 September Doors open 10.45am meeting starts 11am

Otford Village Memorial Hall 28A High Street, Otford, Kent TN14 5PQ

The Medway Queen was ordered in 1923 and entered service on the Strood-Chatham-Southend-Herne Bay route the following year. With occasional excursions elsewhere she served on the same route until the beginning of the Second World War. Chatham Navy week was an annual highlight and in 1937 the ship ran an excursion at the Coronation Naval Review at Spithead.

Medway Queen was requisitioned for the Royal Navy in 1939 and converted for mine-sweeping. In 1940 HMS Medway Queen joined the 10th Mine-sweeping Flotilla based in Dover. HMS Medway Queen remained an active minesweeper until late 1943 when she became an accommodation ship for a few months. In April 1944 she was recommissioned and attached to the mine-sweeping training base at Granton.

The 10th Flotilla played a key part in 'Operation Dynamo' in May-June 1940. Medway Queen and her crew made seven return trips across the channel to bring the men home. The ship's crew estimated that they evacuated 7,000 men while shooting down three Axis aircraft.

In 1946/7 she was refitted and returned to civilian use. The famous Invicta motif was placed on the ship's funnel and in 1954 there was the addition of a bracket on the funnel for navigation lights. In the early 1960s paddle steamers were struggling to compete with newer-type vessels and the Medway Queen made her last voyage to Southend on 9th September 1963.

In 1953 Medway Queen was included in the Coronation Naval Review at Spithead. She carried a load of pre-booked passengers and was part of the formal fleet review.

After several attempts at preservation had failed, the ship was purchased by three businessmen, Alan Ridett, Colin Ridett and Robert Trapp in August 1965. She was towed by the tug Dhulia to the Isle of Wight and became a restaurant & nightclub. The Medway Queen Club was popular for wedding receptions and the on-board restaurant was a favourite with locals and holidaymakers alike. In the evenings it became a night club with disco and live music.

Following the closure of the Medway Queen Club, the ship suffered hull damage and became semi-submerged in the river Medina. In 1984 she was moved back to the River Medway on a pontoon. The current Medway Queen Preservation Society was formed in 1985 to support this endeavour and later became owners of this historic vessel.

After many years of frustration and hard work the society secured the backing of the Heritage Lottery Fund and, later, the European Regional Development Fund to rebuild the ship's hull and establish a base and workshop at Gillingham Pier. The hull rebuild was undertaken in Bristol and completed in late 2013. Medway Queen was towed back home and is now moored at Gillingham Pier where she can be visited.

No booking, just turn up. Free to members. A donation towards hall hire and speaker fee is appreciated from visitors.

There is a large public car park (payment required) adjacent to the hall but it can be busy.

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Next Zoom Talk Wednesday 11 October 7.30pm

A talk on the 19th century profession of Ratcatchers with David Cufley

No booking necessary and this talk is open to Society members and non members alike.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87130743218?pwd=VjRlRjQ0VjVWndQcHRaa1BselVmNUJzUT09>

Meeting ID: 871 3074 3218 Passcode: 144824

David describes how his ancestors played a part in the trade and the sporting rat matches held in the pubs around London.

Information also taken from Henry Mayhew's book '*London Labour, London Poor*', but also other trade research sources that add to the understanding of the business and the Rat Matches.

Some references are to Ratcatchers in Manchester and Essex among the sources included in the Bibliography available.

Please log in from 7.15pm and enjoy chat amongst participants before the talk starts. Talk will be over by 9.15pm.

North West Kent FHS is a charity and membership fees and donations are an important part of our income. So, if you are not a North West Kent FHS member, please consider making a donation via our [web shop](#) towards the cost of our Zoom licence.

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Workshops, Special Interest and Discussion Groups

Workshops (including Discussion Groups and Writing Groups) whether in person or via Zoom have a maximum number to allow all participants to be involved, **and are restricted to paid up North West Kent FHS members only.** They generally last for about 2 hours.

Please note that booking is essential.

If any Society members missed a workshop which they would have liked to attend, or it filled up, see here for videos of some past workshops: <https://nwkfhs.org.uk/events/workshops/past-zoom-workshop-videos>

Note the above link will only work for Society members logged into the website.

If you have a topic or subject you feel would interest other members and or / help with their research and is suitable material for a workshop, please do contact workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk who would very much like to hear from you. The workshops are all led by volunteers and very much depend on volunteers coming forward. Thank you

<https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings>

Workshops have been planned for the whole of 2023 and can be read about on the above link. Those during the next few weeks are listed below.

6 September 10.30am Zoom Family History Discussion Group with Ann Clarke
Come and enjoy lively discussions on different aspects of Family History

[Zoom Family History Discussion Group with Ann Clarke-Zoom Discussion Group \(nwkfhs.org.uk\)](#)

6 September 10.30am Library Scottish Interests Discussion group with Pam Goddard:

In this session, the group will look at valuation rolls and wills on Scotlands

People <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/> as well as the free data on Scotlands

Places <https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/>

[Library Scottish Interests Discussion Group with Pam Goddard -Library Discussion Group \(nwkfhs.org.uk\)](#)

13 September 10.30am Library General Family History and DNA Discussion Group hosted by Jacki Ellis and Pam Goddard

[Library DNA Discussion Group for those who are either new to DNA or want to discuss particular aspects of DNA-Library Discussion Group \(nwkfhs.org.uk\)](#)

20 September 10.30am Zoom DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln.

We aim to help you learn about the wonders of DNA and to get the most from your DNA test

[Zoom DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln-Zoom Discussion Group \(nwkfhs.org.uk\)](#)

27 September 2.30pm Zoom Discussion Group: Let's talk about family history with David Cufley

[Zoom Discussion Group: Let's Talk About Family History with David Cufley-Zoom Discussion Group](#)

[nwkhfs.org.uk](http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk)

4 October 10.30am Zoom Family History Discussion Group with Ann Clarke
Come and enjoy lively discussions on different aspects of Family History

<http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/zoom-discussion-group/zoom-discussion-group-with-ann-clarke-7>

11 October 10.30am Library General Family History and DNA Discussion Group hosted by Jacki Ellis and Pam Goddard

<http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/discussion-group/library-general-family-history-and-dna-discussion-group-hosted-by-jacki-ellis-and-pam-goddard-2>

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For Zoom workshops, please log in from 15 minutes before the start time and enjoy chat amongst participants before the workshop starts.

For library workshops please arrive any time after the library opens at 10.am

Numbers are restricted to enable all participants to ask questions, share knowledge and engage with other members therefore booking is essential.

Please reserve a place with workshop.booking@nwkhfs.org.uk including the event, title and date together with your name and membership number.

Workshop leaders freely give their time, but a donation either at the library for in person workshops or via the web shop is appreciated. <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/shop/nwkhfs-shop/services/society-donation>

Many, many thanks to our volunteer workshop coordinator for arranging our exciting programme of workshops, and to the workshop leaders who all give their time freely.

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Your Society Needs You

North West Kent FHS is run entirely by volunteers and more are always needed.

This has now become critical as, after many years of service, some of our post holders have retired or are not standing for re-election at the AGM in November. Vacancies in these posts affects the running of the Society.

In particular, and to comply with our Constitution, we urgently need a Secretary and Chair, these posts being currently vacant. In addition, the position of Vice Chair will become vacant in November. These officers would also be Trustees of the Society.

Any member who might be interested and would like to know more please contact Mike Weeks on publicity@nwkhfs.org.uk or approach any of the trustees. Training would then be given.

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Society Library: The Society Library has long been back to pre Covid opening arrangements, open every Wednesday from 10am to 4pm for members to do their own research, socialise, participate in library based workshops and discussion groups and receive help from the library volunteers.

There's no need to book just to use the library resources, but booking to attend workshops and other groups is essential for space reasons.

You can use the library's PCs to access Ancestry - and FindMyPast which currently includes access to the 1921 census. We suggest joining Kent Libraries as you can then access these websites from your own device whilst in the library which eases pressure on the library PCs.

Non members, on Wednesdays you can join the Society at the library.

80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley Kent DA5 2EE Free parking in nearby side roads.

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Items for the mid September enews should please reach me as soon as possible, and by 11 September latest.

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<https://blog.animap.us/lost-family-connections?fbclid=IwAR31hbp2V2sDWhd5MRpxvPlaKn4opfaqU465ay1PvHmoIFL4eYOzhVJ-PC0>

I just discovered a new website called Animap. Most useful to those who are searching for ancestors in the USA.

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I (Stella Eames) welcome photos of people or places (specially historical or family history) in the North West Kent area with a story about them as I like to start each newsletter with a photo and story. Please email me at enews@nwkfhs.org.uk with your contributions. Any photos must be your own copyright.

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Click on our other links <https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/blog> [Facebook](#) [Flickr](#) <https://twitter.com/nwkfhs>

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I am a volunteer creating this e-news in my 'spare time' but, if you do notice any errors, please tell me, so that they are not carried forward to the next edition.

Please email me if there's anything you want to say about enews.

Please mention it to others and encourage them to sign up so that we can keep society members and anyone interested in family history informed of NWKFHS activities.

Stella Eames, Editor

enews@nwkfhs.org.uk

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