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ISSUE NUMBER 122

# Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY - [www.nwkhfs.org.uk](http://www.nwkhfs.org.uk)



**Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch**

Our meetings take place at Otford Memorial Hall, 28A High Street, Otford, TN14 5PQ

**Doors open at 10.45 am, meeting starts at 11am - Parking: Up to 2 hours: £0.50 - Up to 3 hours: £1.00**

**We warmly welcome visitors and new members and aim to provide all the advice and support you may need in your family history journey.**

**Guests: We kindly ask for a £4 donation to support the Society's funds. Members: £2 contribution per meeting.**

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**Hand sanitiser and masks are available at the venue. Chairs are arranged with considerate spacing for those who may still be cautious about COVID. We are also pleased to announce that we now have a hearing assistance system in place to improve the audio experience for attendees who may benefit from enhanced sound clarity.**

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## **TODAYS TALK: A Spy for Love with Melanie Gibson-Barton** **This talk will be preceded by the Branch Annual Meeting**

We're delighted to welcome back Melanie, a long-time favourite at our Sevenoaks meetings. A highly engaging and entertaining presenter, Melanie is known for delivering well-researched, professional, and captivating talks, always enhanced with vivid PowerPoint visuals. This time, she returns with a fascinating presentation titled **"A Spy for Love"** the story of an honourable man who turned to espionage in a bold attempt to win the heart of the woman he loved. Discover how his actions changed his life and left a surprising impact that still resonates today. Join us for what promises to be an informative and thoroughly enjoyable session.

## **NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING 8<sup>TH</sup> November**

### **The life of Helen Thomas and Otford in the 1920s with Alan Williams**

Helen Thomas (1877–1967) was the widow of renowned poet and prose writer Edward Thomas, who was killed in action at the Battle of Arras in 1917. Edward, described by former Poet Laureate Ted Hughes as *"the father of us all"*, is widely celebrated for his influence on modern poetry.

Following Edward's death, Helen lived for several years at Forge Cottage on Otford High Street, just a short distance from where NWKFHS now meets. During her time in Otford, she became acquainted with many notable cultural figures, including author D.H. Lawrence and composer Peter Warlock. More than just a widow of a famous poet, Helen was also a mother of three, a writer in her own right, and a passionate advocate for her husband's literary legacy. In this illustrated talk, Alan Williams explores Helen's life both before and during her years in Otford, placing her story within the broader context of village life in the 1920s.

Alan Williams is a local resident, living near Otford with his wife and children. A lecturer by profession, Alan is also a passionate member of the Otford 1940s Society, and many of his talks reflect his deep interest in 20th-century history. Alan is a familiar and well-regarded speaker at our Sevenoaks branch, and we look forward to welcoming him back once again.

## **Last Month's Talk: Women Who Dared to Become Doctors**

We recently enjoyed a wonderful talk by our returning speaker Toni Mount on the women who dared to become doctors in the 1800s. It was engaging and well-presented, with plenty of fascinating stories. The surprising twists and little-known details made their journeys even more inspiring and really brought their history to life. A big thank you to Toni for such an enlightening and enjoyable talk!

We look forward to welcoming you to more of our upcoming talks and events.

**Please visit our website for details of more workshops and updates and don't forget to sign up for our free twice monthly Society eNewsletter.**

## DARTFORD BRANCH MEETING 1<sup>st</sup> November

### Annual General Meeting and Family History Day at Dartford Branch Venue

The AGM combined Notice, programme and booking form was enclosed in the June Journal. If you are coming please book so we know how many chairs to put out. If you want lunch, booking is essential. Please either hand the booking form in at Dartford or Sevenoaks Branch meetings, or post to the address on the form, by 18 October latest.

#### Programme:

9.45 Registration, tea/coffee, buy raffle tickets

10.15 Welcome

10.30 AGM

11.15 Comfort Break

**11.30 Talk by Ian Waller on 'Sold, Separated and Divorced'.**

Ian is a retired professional genealogist and highly respected teacher of family history. He is a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists and has written several books in their "My Ancestor" series.

Most of our ancestors were married only once, until death, but we all have discovered individuals whose lives did not fit that pattern. At a time when relationships outside marriage were unacceptable, what did they do when their marriages broke down, and divorce was not an option? Ian will explain that there are records recording desertion, wife sales, separation and even divorce which needed an Act of Parliament.

12.30 Comfort break, look at books for sale, raffle prizes

13.00 Buffet lunch if booked (you are welcome to bring your own lunch)

**14.15 Talk by David Annal on 'Lying Bastards'; exploring the impact of illegitimacy on family history research.**

Our second speaker of the day is the well known David Annal, an experienced lecturer and author who has been involved in family history for over 40 years and was the principal family history specialist at The National Archives. He is a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists and runs a research business and has a YouTube channel.

David will examine the social stigma that has been associated with illegitimacy until fairly recently and reveal how these unfortunate children and their parents went about concealing it in official documents, or just being economical with the truth, forcing us to take their information with a pinch of salt.

15.30 End of AGM Day

#### Event Information:

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

There is a large free car park at the College, but it is shared with other users and can be busy at times.

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#### UP AND COMING LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

DNA and General Family History Discussion Group with Pam Goddard	12 November 10:30
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Library Writing Group with Pauline Heathcote	26 November 10:30
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#### ZOOM DISCUSSION GROUPS, TALKS AND WORKSHOP

<b>ZOOM</b> Did you have unusual occupations in your family? with Ann Clarke	5 November 10:30
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<b>ZOOM</b> DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln	19 November 10:30
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<b>ZOOM TALK</b> Migration Throughout the UK with speaker Debbie Bradley	12 November 10:30
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<b>ZOOM TALK</b> Artificial Intelligence and Family History with speaker Andrew Redfern	13 November 19:30
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<b>ZOOM WORKSHOP</b> Breaking Down Ancestral Brick Walls with David Cufley	26 November 19:30
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(Please submit your Brick Wall by 12 November to David Cufley via <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/?location=1#Contact>)

Please log in 15 minutes before each online event and enjoy chatting amongst participants before it starts.

***As this event is on Zoom, don't forget to bring your own coffee and biscuits!*** ☕ 🍪 😊

All events are for members only. For further details and fees please visit our website.

Workshop leaders freely give their time, but a donation via the web shop is appreciated:

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/shop/nwkhfs-shop/services/society-donation>



Participating in a North West Kent Family History workshop or discussion offers numerous benefits. It provides valuable skills for research, enhances your understanding of historical contexts, and fosters a sense of connection with your ancestry. We warmly welcome both familiar faces and new friends.

***Calling all volunteers with fresh ideas!*** If you have a new topic of interest you'd like to see covered in our workshops, or you wish to be involved with our workshops, we want to hear from you. Contact us through bookings and enquiries by e-mail [workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk)

### **Bring Your Own Mug (BYOM)**



Let's make our meetings a little eco-friendly! Please where possible BYOM to help us to save a little cost, reduce waste and make a positive impact on the environment. If this is difficult or you forget don't worry, we do have a small supply of mugs to ensure you can enjoy a drink. We thank you for your cooperation.



### **An Invitation from the Editor**

As a member of our esteemed Family History Society, we invite you to contribute to our upcoming journals in the next few months. At NWKFHS, we value the rich tapestry of family narratives and historical insights that our members bring to the table. Your unique perspective and expertise would undoubtedly enrich our journal.

Whether you have a captivating family story, compelling research, or an enlightening exploration of historical records, we warmly welcome your submissions. This is a terrific opportunity to share your knowledge and passion with fellow members.

If you are interested in contributing, please feel free to reach out to us with your proposed topic or submission. Our editor Pauline will be delighted to hear from you and will respond to every proposal. Please email [theeditor@nwkfhs.org.uk](mailto:theeditor@nwkfhs.org.uk) - word files or simply text in the body of an email is fine. We look forward to hearing from you.



### **26 November – Library Access Update**

The library will be open for members to carry out their own research on this day. However, please note that access to the books and some maps and document collections will be restricted until the Society Committee meeting has concluded. We apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

### **Help Needed**



**Many hands make light work. That is certainly true when it comes to sharing the tasks that keep our Society operating smoothly. Please see our website for monthly updates for these volunteer opportunities. Below are a few tasks where help is much needed at our Sevenoaks Branch.**

#### **Chair – Sevenoaks Branch Meetings**

Barbara Phillips is currently acting Chair but would like to relinquish this post as she is also programme secretary for the branch and has other responsibilities within the Society. The chair does not have as many responsibilities as previously, as others have taken on some of the tasks. If the Branch Chair is away for a meeting, this can be managed. The job is not onerous but needs commitment.

#### **Transporter - Sevenoaks & Dartford Branch Meetings**

Sevenoaks & Dartford need someone to bring the Bought -in-Books to the meetings. When not required they can be housed in the Society's lock-up off of Thames Road, Dartford. One does not need a big car boot. Any monies involved are the responsibility of the individual branch and do not concern the person who brings them. The job is not onerous but does need commitment.

#### **Raffle and Refreshment Volunteers**

We're looking for volunteers to help with refreshments and the raffle at our meetings. The tasks are simple and straightforward, and full guidance will be given, so there's no need to worry if you haven't done it before. All we ask is a bit of commitment and reliability to help things run smoothly for everyone.

If you're able to help out, even occasionally, please speak to a committee member at the next meeting or get in touch via the website.

We would greatly appreciate any raffle prize donations as well. Thank you – your support makes a big difference!

## ON THIS DAY

**October 11<sup>th</sup> is the 284<sup>th</sup> day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 81 days remain to the end of the year.**

**October** the tenth month of the year, was the eighth month in the old calendar of Romulus c 750 BC.

October retained its name from Latin and Greek *ôctō* meaning "eight".

**1138** A massive earthquake strikes Aleppo; it is one of the most destructive earthquakes ever

**1649** Cromwell's New Model Army sacks Wexford, killing over 2,000 Irish Confederate troops and 1,500 civilians

**1776** American Revolution: A fleet of American boats on Lake Champlain is defeated by the Royal Navy, but delays the British advance until 1777

**1910** Piloted by Arch Hoxsey, Theodore Roosevelt becomes the first U.S. president to fly in an airplane.

**1937** The Duke and Duchess of Windsor tour Nazi Germany for 12 days and meet Adolf Hitler on 22 October

**1968** NASA launches Apollo 7, the first successful crewed Apollo mission

**1984** Aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger, astronaut Kathryn D. Sullivan becomes the first American woman to perform a space walk

**2013** A migrant boat sinks in the Channel of Sicily, with at least 359 people drowning

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### **Old Occupations:**

- ❖ MANCIPLE A steward or purchaser of provisions, as for a monastery or college, or inn or court
  - ❖ MEALMAN A dealer in meal or flour
  - ❖ MELDER A corn miller
  - ❖ MERCER A cloth seller
  - ❖ METALMAN A man employed to service the tunnels and rails in the haulage system of the mine
  - ❖ MOULD BOY One who held the mould for glassblower, also weighed the bottles
  - ❖ MOUNTEBANK A hawker of quack medicines who attracts customers with stories, jokes, or tricks. A quack doctor. A charlatan
  - ❖ MULE MINDER A minder of the spinning mules in the cotton mills
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### **Genealogy Quiz – Test Your Family History Knowledge!**



Put your skills to the test with this little genealogy-themed quiz - Answers below – no peeking!

**1. The first UK census to record individuals by name was in:**

- A) 1801
- B) 1821
- C) 1841
- D) 1861

**2. Civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths in England & Wales began in:**

- A) 1800
- B) 1827
- C) 1837
- D) 1850

**3. In Scottish genealogy, OPR stands for:**

- A) Official Parish Record
- B) Old Parish Registers
- C) Original Probate Records
- D) Ordained Parish Records

**4. The Domesday Book of 1085 was commissioned by:**

- A) Henry I
- B) Edward the Confessor
- C) William the Conqueror
- D) Richard I

**5. An heir apparent differs from an heir presumptive because:**

- A) An heir apparent cannot be displaced
- B) An heir presumptive cannot be displaced
- C) Both are the same
- D) Both only apply to daughters

**6. The Latin phrase meaning 'of sound mind' often used in wills is:**

- A) In situ
- B) Compos mentis
- C) Ad hoc
- D) Ipso facto

**7. In old parish registers, the abbreviation 'illeg.' usually means:**

- A) Illegible
- B) Illegitimate
- C) Illegal
- D) Illiterate

**8. A pedigree chart differs from a family group sheet because:**

- A) Pedigree = one nuclear family; Family sheet = multiple generations
- B) Pedigree = direct line chart; Family sheet = one nuclear family unit
- C) Pedigree = shows siblings only; Family sheet = shows parents only
- D) They are the same

**9. The first commercial genetic genealogy test was launched in:**

- A) 1985
- B) 1995
- C) 2000
- D) 2010

**10. Which US census was largely destroyed by fire in 1921?**

- A) 1880
- B) 1890
- C) 1900
- D) 1910

**11. The 1922 Four Courts Fire in Dublin destroyed:**

- A) Civil registration indexes
- B) Irish census records
- C) Parish registers
- D) Probate calendars

**12. Y-DNA testing traces ancestry through:**

- A) Maternal line only
- B) Paternal line only
- C) Both maternal and paternal
- D) Random recombination

**13. In genetic genealogy, endogamy refers to:**

- A) DNA from different continents
- B) Adoption records
- C) Repeated intermarriage within a community
- D) Testing in ancient remains

**14. To die intestate means:**

- A) To die without heirs
- B) To die without leaving a will
- C) To die abroad
- D) To die in poverty

**Answers:**

1C, 2C, 3B, 4C, 5A, 6B, 7B, 8B, 9C, 10B, 11B, 12B, 13C, 14B



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**The Sevenoaks Committee: Branch Chair – Vacant**  
**Members: Barbara Phillips, Norma Holmden, Bernie Wilkins, Sandra Marchant, Janet Rose,**  
**Barbara Attwaters, Maureen Berry, Jon Henderson, Christine Hills**