

North West Kent FHS December 2025 enews

Welcome to this month's edition of our enews. Thank you for reading, and if you are receiving this for the first time - welcome.

This time of year, our thoughts turn gratefully to our members and especially the volunteers who make the Society's success possible. We thank you for all that you do and wish you all the best this Christmas - and a happy and above all healthy and peaceful 2026.



If you are wondering what to get someone for Christmas who doesn't want more 'stuff', why not buy a Gift membership of our Society? Same low price as normal membership.

Memberships bought now last until 31 December 2026.

Give them a year of access to family history related talks and workshops. Many events are on Zoom so they don't need to live near one of our centres to benefit.

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/about/membership/our-membership/#options>

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/about/membership/our-membership/#gift-membership>

If you need help with membership, contact our Membership Secretary via <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/contact>

Members Paying by Standing Order: reminder for anyone who has not changed their standing order bank payee details

Subs of £10 are due on 1 January - and it greatly helps our Membership Secretary if members pay by their £10 by standing order.

However, earlier this year the Society changed which bank account you should pay to. There were notices in the Journal and this enews but just in case anyone did not amend their S/O at the time, here is another reminder.

Requesting Members to Amend their Membership Standing Orders

For many years, the North West Kent Family History Society has been using its Santander Bank account as the recipient of annual membership fees paid by bank standing order.

However, there are some operating issues with that account which make it difficult to run the Society on a day-to-day basis. This can be resolved by having membership fees paid into the Society's Barclays Bank account instead.

Therefore, the Society is now requesting that all members who pay by bank standing order, should please amend their Standing Order Payee Bank Account details to the following:

Name: North West Kent Family History Society

Sort Code: 20-57-76

Account Number: 23339416

This change is to take effect from your renewal in January 2026.

If you have to create a new standing order (rather than amend the existing one), please do not forget to cancel the existing standing order to the Santander account.

The Society Trustees thank you for your help with this change.

Note: I Stella bank with Lloyds and it wasn't possible to change the payee bank details using online banking - I had to actually cancel my standing order to Santander and set up a new one to Barclays. Other banks may have a different process.

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If you are not already a Society member now is a brilliant time to join - because joining now gives you membership until 31 December 2026. It is still only £10 (£12 joint members same address).

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/about/membership/our-membership>

Membership benefits include:

- A quarterly journal (print and online) featuring a wide range of fascinating articles.
- Monthly online events: Zoom workshops, discussion groups, and talks.
- In-person talks at our Dartford and Sevenoaks (Otford) branches.
- Workshops and group sessions held at our Joyden's Wood library.
- Exclusive Wednesday access to the library for personal research.
- An up-to-date events calendar on our website, now covering most of 2026.

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

And you have access to all this for just £10 a year (£12 joint members).

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who arranged and hosted these events. The Zooms are especially welcomed by our members in other parts of the UK and abroad and those who find it harder to travel.

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Dartford Branch Talk 6 December *Cribs, Cards and Christingles* with Mark Lewis

Mark is a freelance artist, designer-silversmith, semi-retired university lecturer and public speaker.

He is a member of the Folklore Society with a particular interest in unusual local customs and rituals and in 2013 he published a book on the folklore and popular customs of the church.

Mark is also passionate about lighthouses and is currently the Education Officer of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers.

His talk explores our colourful Christmas traditions and customs, how they came into being, and how they are celebrated today. Mark will also include some of the lesser-known seasonal folklore including Jesse Trees, Chrismons, Mumming Plays and Wassailing.

Doors open 9.45am. The meeting / talk will start at 10.30am and end by 12.30pm.

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/dartford-branch-meetings/dartford-branch-talk-cribs-cards-and-christingles-with-mark-lewis>

Important Notice about Dartford's January date: The venue will not be open on our usual 'first Saturday' date so January's talk has been postponed to 10 January.

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Sevenoaks Branch Talk 13 December Christmas in the Middle Ages with Toni Mount **Doors open 10.45am meeting starts 11am**

Christmas without turkey, roast potatoes, crackers, cards and Father Christmas!

But for those of you coming to listen to Toni, there will be sausage rolls, mince pies, tea and coffee.

Toni earned her Research Master's degree from the University of Kent in 2009 through study of a medieval medical manuscript held at the Wellcome Library in London.

She is a well-known lecturer, historian and author whose books are based on her research into the lives of ordinary and sometimes extra-ordinary people through history. Toni has spoken to us many times before and it will be a pleasure to hear her again. She lives in Gravesend.

Doors open 10.45am, meeting starts 11am.

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/sevenoaks-branch-meetings/sevenoaks-branch-talk-christmas-in-the-middle-ages-with-toni-mount-2>

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Zoom Talk: 11 December Unlocking Your DNA with speaker Donna Rutherford

Donna will present a guide to maximising your DNA test results through effective grouping, constructing trees and verifying genetic connections.

Writer and speaker Donna Rutherford is a London-based, New Zealand-born, genetic genealogist, with ancestral links to the British Isles, and early settlers in New Zealand.

She is well-known through her talks via the Society of Genealogists and Family Tree Magazine's online programme. Donna's blogs and YouTubes are invaluable guides for understanding DNA research. Donna says *'Making DNA complex topics easy to understand is something I'm very passionate about.'*

Please log in from 7.15pm and enjoy chat with other participants before the talk starts.

Please ensure you use your real name when joining our Zoom events. Participants appearing as 'Zoom User' or similar will not be admitted, as this helps us prevent scammers from joining.

The talk will be recorded for the benefit of members not available that evening or in different time zones and will be available in the Members Only Area of the website for 2 weeks only. You need to log in and

then go to this screen <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/resources/all-other/zoom-talk-videos>
<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/zoom-talks/zoom-talk-unlocking-your-dna-with-speaker-donna-rutherford>

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Workshops, Special Interest and Discussion Groups - for Members Only

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

There are dozens of Workshops and Discussion Groups via Zoom to cater for members who cannot get to our Library - which is the venue, on Wednesdays, for our in person workshops.

The wealth of expertise amongst the Society members who volunteer to lead these groups is amazing. I wonder if other Societies put on this number of training sessions for their members.

Membership of our Society is only £10 a year and if joining now lasts until 31

December 2026. <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/about/membership/our-membership/#options>

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://nwkhfs.org.uk/events/workshops/past-zoom-workshop-videos>

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

Attending Workshops and Discussion Groups

Groups meeting at the Library

These must be booked individually - the website link explains how to reserve your place. This is essential as numbers have to be kept to ten due to space restrictions.

Zoom talks, discussion group and workshops

These do not have to be booked individually, but you do need to register in order to be sent the Zoom links. The website link for each Zoom group explains how you register.

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

December Workshops and Discussion Groups

3 December 10.30am Zoom Discussion Group: *What keeps me going? Should I leave that brick wall alone?* with Ann Clarke

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/zoom-discussion-group/zoom-discussion-group-discussion-group-what-keeps-me-going-should-i-leave-that-brick-wall-alone-with-ann-clarke>

10 December 10.30am Zoom DNA Discussion Group with Laura Lincoln

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/zoom-discussion-group/zoom-dna-discussion-group-leader-laura-lincoln-2>

10 December 10.30am Library DNA & General Family History Discussion Group with Pam Goddard

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/discussion-group/library-dna-general-family-history-discussion-group-with-pam-goddard-8>

17 December 7.30pm Zoom Discussion Group: Let's talk about Christmas Family Traditions with David Cufley

<https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/events/overview/all-upcoming-meetings/zoom-discussion-group/zoom-discussion-group-let-s-talk-about-christmas-family-traditions-with-david-cufley>

Society Library – Wednesday Open Days

The Society Library is usually open every Wednesday for members to carry out their own research, enjoy a cuppa, socialise, and take part in workshops and discussion groups held at the library. Our team of volunteers is also on hand to offer help and guidance.

Members are welcome to use the library's PCs and WiFi to access both *Ancestry* and *FindMyPast*, which now include the 1921 census. We recommend joining **Kent Libraries**, as this allows you to access these websites on your own device while at the library—helping to reduce demand for the library's PCs.

Not yet a member? You're welcome to join the Society in person at the library on any Wednesday.

📍 **Address:** 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley, Kent DA5 2EE

🚗 **Parking:** Free in nearby side roads

🕒 **Opening hours:** 10am to 4pm

To assist our volunteers, we kindly ask that visitors with research queries aim to arrive earlier in the day if possible. Please bring along any existing information you have about the ancestor you're researching, and consider bringing a **USB memory stick** to save any discoveries you make during your visit.

Important Note: to enable our library volunteers to enjoy their own Christmas Holiday **the library will not be open 24 December (Christmas Eve) or 31 December (New Year's Eve).**

Our Journal Editor Pauline would love to hear your stories and receive your images for inclusion in the 2026 Journals.

Copy Date for the March 2026 Journal is 10 January. But please don't be deterred by this as there will be three more Journals to fill in 2026.

Perhaps write a little about your family history - maybe an ancestor with an interesting occupation, or a widely travelled individual.

Do you have a family heirloom? Something which has little monetary value but means a lot to you and your family. Could you share an image? A clock, a hat from an Easter parade or even a toy.

And if not could you send the editor an email explaining why not? This might be humorous, or really help her to understand why contributions have dried up?

Also needed are images of your local war memorials, churches or schools that feature in your family history.

Pauline Heathcote, Journal editor

SEND a brief message to Pauline right now using <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/contact> Pauline will be delighted to hear from you and all such communications will receive a response.

You will then have her email address to submit your photo and/or research story.

The Journal is sent to all members, and is available online to logged-in Society members here <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/community/nwkhfs-quarterly-back-journals/past-quarterly-back-journals>

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Medway Archives Free Christmas Drop-In 3 December 10am - midday

[https://www.medway.gov.uk/events/event/1012/medway archives centre christmas drop-in](https://www.medway.gov.uk/events/event/1012/medway%20archives%20centre%20christmas%20drop-in)

Join Medway Archives for a friendly social with a small sale of old and new books and enjoy seasonal refreshments.

Discover treasures from the archive of Percy Fitzgerald, a friend of Charles Dickens, and go behind-the-scenes to see the new Dickens Room.

It's free, there's no need to book, just drop in.

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Gibraltar Evacuees

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Gibraltar-Evacuees/>

The *Putting Names To Faces* project was instigated by Joe Gingell (himself a war time evacuee from Gibraltar). Some years ago Joe and his late daughter Michelle researched material for a book about the evacuation of the Gibraltarians during the second world war. In doing so they harvested a large collection of photographs.

<https://www.chronicle.gi/joe-gingell-calls-on-public-to-help-piece-together-gibs-evacuation-history/>

A book, published in 2011 entitled ***We Thank God and England*** contains all the photographs. The proceeds of the book were donated to various cancer charities. The new book ***Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea*** is now also available.

<https://nationalarchives.gi/NamesEvac.aspx>

The aim of this project is to identify as many people as possible. Please examine the photographs and see if you can make a positive identification.

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Next Enews – Submissions Welcome

The next enews will be sent out on **1 January** If you have any items you'd like included, please send them to me **as soon as possible**, and no later than **28 December**. Simply reply to this email to submit your content.

Going forward, the enews is circulated **monthly at the beginning of each month**. I may occasionally send a mid-month update as a reminder about an upcoming Zoom talk, as some other societies do.

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Click on our other links <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/community/news-journals/blog> [Facebook](#) [Flickr](#) <https://bsky.app/profile/nwkhfs.bsky.social>

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 contact me if there's anything you want to say about enews. Just reply to this 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

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