



9th May 2026

ISSUE NUMBER 129



Sevenoaks Newsletter

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

Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch

Our meetings are held at Otford Memorial Hall, 28A High Street, Otford, TN14 5PQ.

Doors open at 10:45 am, meeting starts at 11am - Nominal parking fee.

We welcome visitors and new members, and we aspire to offer all the helpful advice that you might need.

If you are a guest we appreciate a donation to the society's funds.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Sanitiser and masks available and chairs placed at a friendly distance for those concerned about Covid. We are pleased to inform you that we now have a hearing system at this event to enhance the audio experience for attendees who may need it.

TODAYS TALK : "Let's go to the Pictures": The British Cinema of the 1930s

'Going to the pictures' once (or even twice) a week was a major leisure activity in the pre-television age of the middle decades of the twentieth century. This was also the age of the 'super' art deco modernist cinemas. Alan will explore the history of the cinema in Britain, give a brief history of cinemas in Sevenoaks, and explain what 'going to the pictures' was like for its audience. Alan lives locally with his wife and children near to Otford and is a Lecturer. He is a very active member of the 1940s Society, Otford, and many of his talks reflect his interest. Alan has been a regular speaker to Sevenoaks over the years and it will be a pleasure to hear him again.

Speaker : Alan Williams

NEXT SEVENOAKS BRANCH MEETING

13th June 2026: "Well I never" The surprising stories of the villages of the Darent from Westerham to Dartford

Rod Shelton describes himself as an author, artist and model-maker. He has lived in Otford for 25 years and is active in village matters. Rod is a local historian as well as model builder. He specialises in reproducing homes of historical interest back to the period in which they were first built. This takes much research and reference as well as a fair amount of calculation. His particular interest is in the life of the people who lived there at that time. A large selection of his models of featured places and homes in the Darent Valley are on permanent display at Lullingstone Castle.

Speaker : Rod Shelton

DARTFORD BRANCH MEETING

6th June 2026 : Eltham Palace and the Courtauld Family

The manor of Eltham was mentioned in the Domesday survey and David will explain its fascinating and chequered career from manor house to royal palace to ruin and its eventual rescue by the Courtauld family in 1931. David is an expert on Eltham Palace. He started volunteering there in 1995, progressing to paid roles as an Event Steward and an Historic Property Steward.

Speaker : David Sleep

Bring Your Own Mug



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.

UP AND COMING LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

Library DNA and General Family History Discussion Group with Pam Goddard	13-05-2026 10:30 am
Library Writing Group with Pauline Heathcote	27-05-2026 10:30 am
Library DNA and General Family History Discussion Group with Pam Goddard	10-06-2026 10:30 am

ZOOM GROUPS

Zoom Talk : Mapping Alchemy for Genealogists with Sophie Kay	14-05-2026 7:30 pm
Zoom DNA Discussion Group with David Cufley	13-05-2026 10:30 am
Zoom Discussion Group with Carolyn Greenwood	20-05-2026 10:30 am
Zoom Workshop: Record Keeping with David Cufley	27-05-2026 7:30 pm
Zoom Discussion Group with Ann Clarke: What records or databases have you found best for storing your family trees and the details you discovered about them?	03-06-2026 10:30 am
Zoom Talk: Putting Your Ancestors in their Place: a one place study with Janet Few	11-06-2026 7:30 pm
Zoom Discussion Group: Let's Talk Family History with Dee Johnson	10-06-2026 7:30 pm
Zoom DNA Discussion group with Laura Lincoln	17-06-2026 10:30 am

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

How to get the Zoom Link - Booking is no longer required for Zoom Workshops and Discussion Groups.

A Zoom Register has been created to cover all attendance to any of the zoom groups. Any society member who would like to be added to the register needs to submit their name, email address and membership number to workshop.booking@nwkfhs.org.uk. You only need to register once. Once a month the zoom links for the discussion groups and workshops will be sent by email to those members on the register. Members who have registered can then attend as many of the Zoom groups as they wish with no need to make a specific booking for each one.

All Zoom Workshops and Discussion Groups are members only-events.

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

<https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/shop/nwkfhs-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

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 – word files or simply text in the body of an email is fine. We look forward to hearing from you.

SOCIETY VACANCIES

Many hands make light work. That is certainly true when it comes to sharing the tasks that keep our Society operating smoothly. Please review these volunteer opportunities. This list will be updated monthly on the Society website. If you can help, please email <https://www.nwkfhs.org.uk/?location=1#Contact> marked for the attention of the Society secretary.

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.

Bought-in-Books Transporter - Dartford & Sevenoaks Branch Meetings

Dartford & Sevenoaks 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.

Librarian Assistant

The Society Librarian urgently needs volunteers to help with running the Library in Joyden's Wood and to help fellow members with their research. The situation is about to become worse, as one of the current volunteers is moving away soon. We must have at least two volunteers on site for the Library to be able to open on Wednesdays. Good IT skills and knowledge of Microsoft Windows would be helpful, but are not essential. Are you free on Wednesdays and could offer help on one or more Wednesdays a month?

Society Library

The Society Library is open every Wednesday for members to do their own research, socialise, participate in library based workshops and discussion groups and receive help from the library volunteers. The library address is 80 Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood, Bexley Kent DA5 2EE Free parking in nearby side roads.

You can use the library's PCs to access Ancestry - and FindMyPast (which currently does NOT include access to the 1921 census, something we are investigating with the library). 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 demand for library PCs.

The library is open from 10am to 4pm but it greatly helps the volunteers if visitors with research queries call in earlier in the day rather than later. Please also bring as much information as you already have about the ancestor you are researching.

ON THIS DAY

May 9 is the 129th day of the year; 236 days remain until the end of the year.

1386 – England and Portugal formally ratify their alliance with the signing of the Treaty of Windsor, making it the oldest diplomatic alliance in the world which is still in force.

1645 – Scottish Royalist forces under Lord Montrose defeat Covenanter forces under John Urry.

1662 – The figure who later became Mr. Punch makes his first recorded appearance in England.

1671 – Thomas Blood, disguised as a clergyman, attempts to steal England's Crown Jewels from the Tower of London.

1945 – World War II: the Channel Islands are liberated from Nazi occupation.

Births

1800 – John Brown, American abolitionist (died 1859)

1860 – J. M. Barrie, Scottish novelist and playwright (died 1937)

1930 – Joan Sims, English actress (died 2001)

1936 – Albert Finney, English actor (died 2019)

1936 – Glenda Jackson, English actress and politician (died 2023)

OLD OCCUPATIONS

NAGSMAN A person who schools horses, usually for his employer

NARROW WEAVER A weaver of ribbons, tapes, etc

NAVVEY A labourer building canals, roads or railways

NEATHERD A person who has the care of cattle; a cow-keeper.

NECESSARY WOMAN A servant responsible for emptying and cleaning chamber pots

NEDELLER A needle maker

NETTER A net maker

NIGHT SOILMAN One who emptied cesspits, ashpits and backyard toilets

NIGHTWALKER A watchman or bellman

NIPPER A lorry boy, a young person employed by the carter or wagoner

NOB THATCHER A wig maker

NOTERER A notary

The Sevenoaks Committee: Branch Chair – Vacant

Members: Barbara Phillips, Norma Holmden, Bernie Wilkins, Sandra Marchant, Barbara Attwaters, Maureen Berry, Jon Henderson, Janet Rose, Christine Hills