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# Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY, SEVENOAKS, KENT  
[www.nwkfhs.org.uk](http://www.nwkfhs.org.uk)



## NEXT BRANCH MEETING

11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AT SEVENOAKS

Electoral Registers

ERIC PROBERT

## OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

### BROMLEY

16<sup>th</sup> May - The Kings Mercenary - the life & times of Marcus Hawkeslade during the English civil war 1642-1651

PHILIP BARHAM

### DARTFORD

6<sup>th</sup> June - On-line Sources for Property, Taxation & the Law

PETER CHRISTIAN

Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch. In addition to the talks, we have a number of interesting tables for you to browse. These include a bookstall, old magazines and journals, exchange journals and a reference book library. Plus don't forget to take a look at our notice board.

The books from our library may be borrowed at no charge and the magazines are a snip at 20 pence each. You might just find the publication or book you are looking for.

Do visit our computer help desk where Karina will make every effort to assist with your family history brick wall.

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road Sevenoaks, TN14 5DN. Doors open at 7.15pm, meeting starts at 8pm. There is free car parking - and refreshments are available.

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

Guests we appreciate a £1.00 donation to the society's funds.

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**THIS EVENING'S TALK - "The History of Oldbury Hill" by DAVID WILLIAMS** - The summit of Oldbury Hill, near Ightham, is a commanding and strong defensive position where one of the finest Iron Age hill forts can be found. It is sure to have a long and interesting history.

## NEWS ITEMS

**TheGenealogist** - have released a significant enhancement to their tithe map collection. In addition to the previously released maps for Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex and Surrey there is now included the counties of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Lancashire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Yorkshire. Furthermore they have completed the Tithe Apportionment records for England and Wales.

They have also added another batch of records to their war memorials section and to their Worcestershire baptism transcripts collection, as well as 750,000 Parish Records from 22 countries - visit [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)

**Irish Newspaper Archives** - cuts subscription. Payments now cost 178 Euros for an annual subscription, 30 Euro for a monthly subscription and 10 Euro for a day subscription. Visit [www.irishnewsarchive.com](http://www.irishnewsarchive.com)

**Findmypast** - Has announced that, in partnership with The National Archives, it will publish the 1939 Register. This will be a significant release, listing as it does the civilian population of the UK in the war years. In 1939, on the cusp of WWII, the British government introduced an act that would allow them to collect information about the country's population. This information would inform their decisions on identity cards, rationing, conscription and more, including ultimately the formation of the NHS. It is of consequence because the 1931 census does not survive and because no census was taken in 1941. The register will supply a person's name, address, marital status, occupation, date of birth and whether or not he or she was a member of the armed or reserve forces.

## EVENTS

### **5<sup>th</sup> May through to 9<sup>th</sup> October - Victorian London in Photographs - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB**

The arrival of photography in London in 1839 would change the way people saw their city, and each other, forever and the collections at LMA contain an extraordinary range of images, recording the capital and its people in stunning detail. This exhibition presents some of the most striking images of London and Londoners from the era, from the first known photograph of the capital to the opening of Blackwall Tunnel, taking in the Crystal Palace, the first Tube line and life on the city's streets.

Free Event - open during normal office hours - Contact by phone 020 7332 3851 - Website [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### **18<sup>th</sup> May - Reading Old Handwriting - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB**

This practical session gives expert help in reading different types of handwriting from the 18th to early 20th centuries. You will practise with copy documents from LMA's collections and get tips for deciphering all kinds of writing; suitable for beginners.

Cost £8.00 - Time 1430 to 1530 - Booking essential - Contact by phone 020 7332 3851 - Website [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### **20<sup>th</sup> May - Use LMA: Getting Started- LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB**

This event is a tour of the Information Area to find out how to get the best out of the LMA research facilities. Meet at the Information Area desk.

Free Event - Time 1100 to 1145 - Booking essential - Contact by phone 020 7332 3851 - Website [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### **26<sup>th</sup> May - Use LMA: Using the Catalogue - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB**

There are 3.5 million record descriptions in the LMA online catalogue! This talk will help you find your way around with advice and guidance for searching the LMA OPAC.

Free Event - Time 1100 to 1130 - Booking essential - Contact by phone 020 7332 3851 - Website [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### **30<sup>th</sup> May Tracing your Trade and Craftsman Ancestors - SOG, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd. EC1M 7BA**

Remember many of our surnames hark back to the trades and crafts of our ancestors, Butcher, Baker, Thatcher, etc. You will learn of about the non-industrial trades and craft fields in which our ancestors worked (tailors, merchants, mercers and shopkeepers, smiths and metal workers, and the building trades to name a few). This lecture will look further at Guilds, training & working conditions, & genealogical resources for research. A half-day course with Adele Emm from 1400-1700 - Cost £ 20.00 Contact by phone 020 7553 3290 or email [events@sog.org.uk](mailto:events@sog.org.uk) or book a place on line at [www.sog.org.uk](http://www.sog.org.uk)



## Madame Tussaud

On 1 December 1761, Madame Tussaud was born Anna Maria 'Marie' Grosholtz in Strasbourg, France. Her father, Joseph Grosholtz, a German soldier, died in battle during the Seven Years War 2 months before her birth. Her mother, Anne-Marie Walder, took her to Bern, Switzerland, where her mother worked as a housekeeper for Dr Philippe Curtius a physician, wax modeller and artist. It is from him that the young Marie learnt the art of wax, becoming his prodigy; she would call him uncle. In 1765 Marie and her mother moved to Paris with Dr Curtius.

In 1770, Dr. Curtius opened a museum featuring life-size wax figures that immediately became popular among Parisians and visiting royalty. It is around this time Marie Antoinette marries the Dauphin, Louis-Auguste. Marie learnt much from Dr. Curtius and met some of the great celebrities of the day including Benjamin Franklin, Francois Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In 1778 she is experienced enough to created her first wax figure of none other than Rousseau and she later modelled the French writer Voltaire and Franklin. Two years later, she was appointed art tutor to Madame Elisabeth, the sister of Louis XVI, and she was invited to live at the magnificent Palace of Versailles. In 1789 at the outbreak of the French Revolution Marie returned to Paris at the request of Dr. Curtius.

Dr. Curtius was involved with the revolutionary movement, entertaining its leaders at his house and participating in the storming of the Bastille. During this time Marie met some important figures, including Robespierre and Napoleon Bonaparte. During the 'Reign of Terror' Marie was arrested and imprisoned with Josephine de Beauharnais, later wife of Napoleon. Marie's head was shaved in preparation for execution by guillotine even before supporters of Curtius had her released. She was commanded by the regime to make death masks of prominent figures of the Revolution including Marat, Robespierre and even Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. She was given the gruesome task of searching through the Revolution's mass graves to find heads of those that may be of interest, victims of the guillotine. Undoubtedly unpleasant, but it saved her life. Dr.

Curtius' exhibition continued to flourish as people flocked to see the likenesses of the men & women who's ruthless determination for social and political change reshaped their lives.

Dr. Curtius died in 1794 and Marie solely inherited his waxwork collection. A year later, she married Francois Tussaud, a civil engineer. By 1800, she had given birth to a daughter, who later died, and two sons, Joseph and Francis. During the Napoleonic Wars, France was in a state of turmoil and visitors to the attraction decreased. Concerned with her future success and the country's economic decline and in 1802 Madame Tussaud moved to England, without her husband. Taking her collection, she crossed the English Channel with her elder son Joseph then four and in 1821/2 her younger son Francis joined her. She never returned to Paris, nor did she see her husband again.

During the next 33 years, Madame Tussaud toured throughout Great Britain and Ireland with her growing collection. By 1835, tired of travelling, she opened her first permanent exhibition in London, in Baker St. on the upper floor of the 'Baker Street Bazaar'; not far from the present site on Baker Street.

In 1842 she made a self-portrait, her last work, still on display in the entrance to the London museum. A few of her sculptures still survive today and are on display. Near the end, she began to suffer from severe asthma and she rediscovered her Roman Catholic faith. Her sons were at her bedside when she died and her last words were to beg them never to quarrel. She died on 16 April 1850 aged eighty-eight. By then, her name was as famous as her exhibition. She left her collection to her two sons, who, with her grandchildren, continued the business. She was buried in the Catholic chapel in the Fulham Road. Her coffin was subsequently moved to St Mary's in Cadogan Street.

Today, The Merlin Entertainments Group operates the attraction. For more than 200 years, Madame Tussauds has been entertaining millions of people with its signature wax figures; it has grown to be one of the most popular London tourist attractions and has branches worldwide; a remarkable achievement and a most remarkable woman.

Sources: <https://womenofhistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/18/madame-tussaud/>  
[https://www.madametussauds.com/SiteImages/Assets/9/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Life%20of%20Madame%20Tussaud\\_4.pdf](https://www.madametussauds.com/SiteImages/Assets/9/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Life%20of%20Madame%20Tussaud_4.pdf)

13/05/2015

## ON THIS DAY

**MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> is the 134<sup>TH</sup> day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 231 days remain until the end of the year.**

- 1264** Henry III of England is captured and forced to sign the Mise of Lewes, making Simon de Montfort the *de facto* ruler of England
- 1483** Coronation of Charles VIII of France ("Charles l'Affable")
- 1610** Henry IV of France is assassinated, bringing Louis XIII to the throne.
- 1643** Four-year-old Louis XIV becomes King of France upon the death of his father, Louis XIII
- 1796** Edward Jenner administers the first smallpox inoculation, using cowpox pus, in Berkeley, Gloucestershire
- 1842** Illustrated London News; the world's first illustrated weekly newspaper, begins publication
- 1870** The first game of rugby in New Zealand is played in Nelson between Nelson College and the Nelson Rugby Football Club
- 1878** Vaseline is first sold (registered trademark for petroleum jelly)
- 1889** The children's charity, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is launched in London
- 1908** 1st passenger flight in an airplane
- 1926** Eric Morecambe, English comedian and actor born (d. 1984)
- 1998** Frank Sinatra, American singer and actor, dies at 82
- 2004** Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark and heir apparent, marries Mary Elizabeth Donaldson, at Copenhagen Cathedral
- 2012** Stanford University scientists develop prototype bionic eye

## 2015 AGM at Sevenoaks



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We hope you enjoyed the AGM last month as much as we did. Here are a couple of pictures from the day. The first one is of the plaque awarded to Sevenoaks branch and the other is Barbara Stead doing a terrific job on the raffle table. Maybe you were lucky enough to win a prize. The speakers of the day Michael Gandy and Dave Annal were outstanding; entertaining and extremely interesting. Congratulations to Colin Willeard, Margaret Furlonger, Colin Watkins and Michael Austin who were the recipients of the Josephine Birchenough Awards 2014. There will be a full report in the next issue of the Journal, which will be circulated to all members in early June.

*To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root. – Chinese Proverb*

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### The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

Committee Members

Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett, Bernie Wilkins, Barbara Stead