



**December 2017**

**Tadley and District History Society  
(TADS) - [www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**Next meeting - Wednesday 20th December 2017  
at St. Paul's Church Hall, 8.00 to 9.30pm**

# **‘Annual General Meeting and Social’**

## **Catering at the Social.**

As usual drinks will be provided and members are asked to bring a contribution to the food, both savoury and sweet.

Assistance with clearing up and cleaning crockery, etc. will be much Appreciated.

**Membership fee** - The committee have very reluctantly decided that the membership fee will have to be increased by £1 to £18 to help with rising costs.

*Comments, queries and suggestions to Richard Brown (0118) 9700100,  
e-mail: [richard@ilexind.plus.com](mailto:richard@ilexind.plus.com) or Carol Stevens (0118) 9701578*

**[www.tadshistory.com](http://www.tadshistory.com)**

**TADS Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018**  
**‘A History of Hampshire through Ten Objects’**  
**By Tony Cross**

**TADS Meeting 15th November 2017**

**Madame Tussaud**  
**by Tony Weston.**

Imagine just a few years ago, precious film prints of maybe 6 to 12 photos.... But, imagine about 200 years ago and you wanted your likeness made: if rich your portrait was painted or sculpted; or poor and a bit bad, it was possibly the DEATH mask for you!

When wandering round Madame Tussaud's in London or possibly Louis Tussaud's in Brighton, one doesn't always recognise the significance or importance of the founding lady. Born Anna Marie Groscholtz in Strasbourg, 1760, on the Rhine's Franco – German border, her mum was housekeeper to a medical man, Dr. Phillipe Curtius. His odd hobby was making wax body parts. Somehow the hobby overtook the profession, and after exhibiting his wax body parts in Berne, (Switzerland) for lucrative cash, the good doctor decided to up-wax to Paris.....

Being a personable chap, Dr. Curtius knew, and was known by, everyone who was anyone. Paris was an 'uneasy' place in 1765, as revolution was rumbling in the veins and arteries of the city.

6-year old Marie and her mum moved to Paris in 1767 to help the good doctor. Dr. Phillipe already knew the 22 year old beauty, Mme. du Barry who was King Louis XV's mistress and the King's cousin, the Prince de Conti.

By 1770, with the 'hot wax flowing', it was noted that Marie was a very good observer, listener, artist and modeller, who could 'feel' one's character. When only 17, she modelled Voltaire's head from memory....

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were the next monarchs in 1780 and Marie taught their children to draw and paint at Versailles. She noted the luxury within the palace gates and contrasted it with the grinding poverty outside. Louis XVI's sister, Princess de Lamballe had a conscience and she and Marie gave food hand-outs to the poor.

Canny Dr. Curtius also detected trouble in Paris and made it his business to befriend politicians AND agitators alike.... In 1789 in France the monarch was all-powerful; the nobility and clergy rich, and the poor had nothing but paid all

the taxes. Soon 6,000 people gathered in the centre of Paris. A crazy 2 years followed with the ageing Dr. Curtius keeping a low profile. The 'old' Paris disappeared for ever. The Revolutionaries became guillotine-happy – practising on a thief first and noting that one's hair had to be cut short or it messed up the guillotine works (1792).

Then Marie came into her own. The mob broke INTO prison, murdered and mutilated who they pleased. And she made many, many DEATH MASKS. Marie must have had a strong stomach as she had to make a death mask of her friend, Princess de Lamballe. Also, of the King (21 Jan.1793) and Queen Marie Antoinette (16 Oct.1793).

France was still guillotine-happy, executing 12,000 alone, in 1794 in Paris.

NB. All major French towns had guillotines at this time

Marie, her mother and a Creole lady, later to be VERY famous: Josephine, were all imprisoned in the same cell but escaped the guillotine.

In 1794, Dr. Phillippe died and left all to Marie. Said Josephine married the jumped-up little Napoleon I. Marie modelled his (living) head. She foolishly married a lazy, ne'er-do-well, Francois Tussaud in 1795.

To earn money and support herself and their children Mme. Marie Tussaud went to England with a magic-lantern showman. Her wax models (1802) were streets ahead of his magic lantern shows. She stayed for 20 years and became rich, famous and a powerful businesswoman. She made £70. (£5,000 in 21<sup>st</sup> C money) in one day, with her 70-90 full-sized 'wax-works', so from 1803 onwards, this phrase, first coined in Belfast, stuck. Mme. Tussaud even came to Reading.

We all know what George Washington, USA, and our own Admiral Lord Nelson etc. looked like because Mme. Tussaud 'waxed' them!

In 1834, Madame decided to remain in England permanently. She worked hard and constantly up-dated her figures; and found the public wanted heroes – not death masks of rogues in the same room. The canny lady put the death masks in the dungeons, called them The Chamber of Horrors and charged extra accordingly. She even advertised her shows on the horse buses of the day.

Aged 85 years, Madame T. at last took on an assistant.

Something of an enigma she died aged 89 years in 1850 and is now buried in London's Chelsea. Her business was bought by American showman, Phineas Barnum; but it's now in British hands: Merlin Entertainments, who also own Thorpe Park Resort (theme park) in Surrey.

Tony, thank you for your talk of constant wonders. Many of us learned SO MUCH!

Rosemary Bond.

## ***What's on? Events which may be of interest.***

**Milestones Museum.** For coming events: Tel. 01256 477766 or see:

<http://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/milestones-museum>

**Willis Museum** - The museum is running an ever changing series of special exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery. The Museum also hold workshops on assorted topics. *For information tel 01256 465902 or see*

<http://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/venue-events/52>

2-22 Dec. ***The Basingstoke Project:*** An Artikinesis exhibition - Five artists take a close look at Basingstoke

**Friends of the Willis Museum** (7.30pm at the museum - Non-members £2, booking essential through the museum telephone number above)

No open meetings until February.

**Basingstoke Archaeological & History Society** (7.30 at Church Cottage)

11th Jan. 'Excavations at Worsley House, Chilton Candover' by

Mark Peryer – BAHS and Tim Schadla-Hall – UCL

---

### **Membership and data protection form**

New Data Protection Regulations come into force next year. To enable TADS to conform with them we will be asking you to fill out a new form when renewing your membership. This form will ask for your contact details and to update your contact preferences. Doing this will ensure you continue to receive all TADS' news.

---

**The Committee send you their Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year.**

***TADS annual membership is £18 per person.  
Correspondence to Tadley and District History Society,  
c/o 5 Church Road Pamber Heath Tadley. RG26 3DP  
Email: tadshistory@googlemail.com***