



East End, East Woodhay c 1900

Image colourised by Jim Bradshaw

Hi friend

East End, Easy Woodhay is yet another easy find in our then and [now](#) series - it really doesn't get any easier than this. The sense of rural tranquillity is also maintained unlike some of the modern images we have seen. Cars have had little impact here. East End is tiny - take a virtual walk around the map and admire the old buildings.

Last chance for the early bird offer on Conference Tickets!

When the clock strikes midnight on 31 Mar, you won't have to flee the ball but you will have to pay to pay the full cost of a ticket. [Book now to secure the early bird price of £50 \(non-members £60\)](#)



DNA testing site 23andMe files for bankruptcy protection

Popular DNA testing firm 23andMe has filed for bankruptcy protection, and announced that its co-founder and CEO, Anne Wojcicki, has resigned with immediate effect.

The company will now attempt to sell itself under the supervision of a court. 23andMe said in a press release, that it plans to continue operating throughout the sale process and that there "are no changes to the way the company stores, manages, or protects customer data."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9q4r9xy9wro>

Important points from the article

As the article says, 'In the UK, [DNA] is considered special category data under data protection laws and is subject to legal protections.' But this is US company so what are the US authorities saying? The article goes on to say 'The Attorney General in 23andMe's home state of California issued a consumer alert on Friday advising

customers to delete their data from the site.'

In the words of Prof Carissa Veliz - author of *Privacy is Power* - it is arguably the most valuable personal data you have. *"If you gave your data to 23andMe, you also gave the genetic data of your parents, your siblings, your children, and even distant kin who did not consent to that."*

What should you do?

We can't recommend what you should do, it's a personal decision, but you have a choice to make. Wait and see what happens or remove your data? If you choose the latter you should:

1. Download it but do not delete it, yet. This [link](#) tells you how to download it.
2. Upload it to another DNA site such as [GEDmatch](#) (you can't upload it to Ancestry.)
3. Once you've checked it's uploaded properly, it's then safe to delete it from 23andMe, using the instructions at bottom of [this page](#)

Be aware though that 23andMe's servers are [struggling with the download/deletion demand](#)



Public invited to share WW2 family letters as part of VE Day anniversary celebrations

Younger members of the public have been invited to share their cherished family letters from the Second World War as part of national celebrations of the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced Letters to Loved Ones, a new campaign to collect Second World War letters, in partnership with Imperial War Museums (IWM) and the National Theatre. It's also a great opportunity for older and younger generations to discuss the war and their own family stories.

The Letters to Loved Ones campaign is seeking letters or postcards sent by family members during the Second World War to their loved ones. This could include soldiers on the front line; men, women and children on the home front; or relatives who contributed to Britain's war effort from Britain and Commonwealth countries.

James Bulgin, head of public history at IWM, explained *"For this 80th anniversary we are inviting schoolchildren to talk to their families, learn more about the Second World War and discover any letters sent by their relatives to loved ones. These can be uploaded to the official VE/VJ Day website so the nation can hear new, as yet untold stories of those who witnessed events first hand."*

Some of the letters will become part of a public performance at a special VE Day event at IWM North in Manchester on 7 May.

To take part in this event, members of the public must submit their letters by 14 April.

Letters can be uploaded on the Letters to Loved Ones site:

<https://ve-vjday80.gov.uk/letterstolovedones/>



Appeal for help with recording Windsor Memorials

Mike Bailey from our Windsor Branch has been working to record all the memorials in the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Windsor, for some time now. It is intended that eventually the records will be published electronically by the Berkshire Family History Society for the benefit of family history researchers generally. The work inside the church is essentially complete with the texts and descriptions of individual

memorials recorded in relation to location references noted on plans of the church.

Work to record the remaining tombs and memorials in the churchyard is currently hindered by a lack of someone with CAD expertise to draw up the digital plans of the churchyard. Do you have the skills and expertise to help to progress this project? If so, please get in contact with Mike via our projects email address:

projects@berksfhs.org.uk



EVENTS



April Natter Group

Tue 01 Apr 18:45 for 19:00

Led by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens

Online

Join in this online discussion from your own home, wherever you live. Open only to members of Berkshire Family History Society.

Informal discussion group. Topics are chosen by the group on a monthly basis. End time varies.

Members only, free to attend, but pre-booking is required.

Book

Abingdon Town Walk

Fri 04 Apr 14:00 - 15:00



Walk Leader: Friends of Abingdon Civic Society

Meeting Point will be notified within booking process

The historic county town of Berkshire, the area around Abingdon has been occupied from the Iron Age onward. Abingdon Abbey was founded about 676, giving its name to the emerging town. In the medieval period, Abingdon flourished as an agricultural centre with an extensive trade in wool, alongside weaving and the manufacture of clothing.

Discover the hidden, and not so hidden, history of this picturesque town. Our guides are the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society. Learn about the Abbey, churches and other notable buildings, the people associated with these places and the town, and the changes to the town over the centuries.

Image: Abingdon East St Helen Street by Christopher Hilton, CC BY-SA 2.0 (cropped)

Tickets cost £5 (members £4). Pre-booking is required.

Book



DNA Special Interest Group April

Sat 05 Apr 14:30 - 16:30

Facilitator: Debbie Kennett

Online

This special interest discussion group is aimed at those wanting to get the most out of their DNA results. It is facilitated by DNA expert, Debbie Kennett.

Sessions are held quarterly, but there is no obligation to attend on a regular basis. First time attendees are always welcomed.

This is a great opportunity to ask questions, to gain ideas for how you can use your

results to solve questions and to share your successes with others. All levels of expertise with interpreting DNA results welcome from beginner level to experienced.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4). Pre-booking required.

Book



Wills Workshop

with tutors
Gillian Stevens and Chad Hanna
Tue 08 Apr 19:00 - 21:30

Online

This workshop will give you a solid basis for researching wills and probate records in England and Wales. Much of this will apply throughout the English-speaking world. You will learn:

- What a will is and why people make them, plus what happens if you don't.
- Where to find post-1858 central government probate records and pre-1858 probate records proved in Church courts.
- How probate accounts and inventories can help.
- How death duty records can help locate and update will information.
- What happens when a will is contested in Chancery courts.

This interactive workshop is spread across two sessions one week apart. The second session will allow time for students to bring up some specific questions relating to their research.

Tickets cost £20 (members £18). Pre-booking required.

Book

Baptists in Newbury

with speaker **Nick Prince**
Wed 09 Apr 14:00 - 16:00
West Berkshire Museum, Newbury



This talk is aimed at providing the background to the history of the Baptist church movement in England from its beginnings in the early 17th century to modern times. The structure of the Baptist Church movement can make this quite challenging but not impossible.

We will look at the origins of Baptist Christians, how they arrived in England and the impact of laws on where records could be held. Following this we will look specifically at Newbury Baptist Church which has had three histories which contain useful information.

Free to members (non-members £5)

Find out more



Historic Reading Talks Series

Thu 10 Apr 11:00 - 14:00

Thu 12 Jun 11:00 - 14:00

The Centre for Heritage & Family History

This all series ticket covers both talks in the “Historic Reading” talks series, for the discounted price of £8 (members £7). You may also book each talk individually – see each separate event page.

The talks last about an hour with time for questions and discussion afterwards. Tea, coffee and cake after the talk is included in the price.

A *third* talk in May is our special VE Day event – a fish and chips lunch after which we will have a talk with Q&A afterwards. This third talk is priced at £12 (to include lunch) (members £11) and needs to be [pre-booked separately to the series ticket](#).

[Thursday 10 April 2025 – From the White Man's Grave to Cemetery Junction: the story of Mary Smart with Richard Stowell](#)

Mary Smart was just 17 years old when she died in 1849 to become one of the earliest people buried at Reading's London Road Cemetery. Who was this 'pious African girl', and why was she in Reading? Richard Stowell has unearthed the fascinating story of Mary's brief life, the time she spent in England, and the family she left behind in West Africa.

[Thursday 12 June 2025 – The History of Reading's Cinemas with David Cliffe](#)

The author of several books, including "Picture Palace to Penny Plunge: Reading Cinemas", David is ideally placed to talk to us about the history of Reading's cinemas. He will describe the history of the single-screen cinema in Reading, from the travelling shows at the turn of the twentieth century, its heyday with the Vaudeville Electric Theatre in the 20s, through to today's multi screen entertainment 'villages' and outdoor screenings. This is a talk which is sure to bring back many memories. Both for those who remember the cinemas mentioned and for those who loved going to the cinema in their younger days.

Find out more in these fascinating face-to-face talks.

Pre-booking is preferred, but you can pay on the door for this series ticket at the first talk, if there are spaces available.

Book series ticket

That was just a small selection from our extensive
events programme



Our events often sell out so please book early to avoid disappointment

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