

Berkshire Family Historian

The quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society

December 2018

Volume 42

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excluding living people, authors of sources, royalty, corporate names, glancing reference to famous people and members' interests

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to your December 2018 *Berkshire Family Historian*. Again, we hope to have produced a quality magazine containing a wide variety of articles, from what's on at The Centre for Heritage and Family History, to fascinating articles relating personal stories, research hints and tips and looking at a local archive and museum.

Society events continue apace with popular walks, talks and workshops. We look forward to bringing you 'new' events in the next year – keep your eye on future editions of the *Berkshire Family Historian*, the society website and events leaflets for further information as it becomes available. The displays at The Centre for Heritage and Family History continue to

attract attention, and we have again included a brief overview of the 'Life on the Thames' display. The Events Programme in this edition will tell you what is going on during the next few months.

As usual, we are pleased to receive any articles from our readers, and are always grateful for the effort, as they are invariably interesting. If you feel there is an article within you waiting to be written, please put 'pen to paper' and send it to us at editor@berksfhs.org.uk. Long or short articles, it doesn't matter, they all count and are welcomed.

Vicki Chesterman
editor@berksfhs.org.uk

Chairman's Corner

Incredibly, it is now a year since we moved into our new Centre for Heritage and Family History and how time has flown. It's been an exciting twelve months, with challenges along the way, but some amazing opportunities. Thank you to everyone who has helped the society achieve all it has during 2018.

As I suspected in my last Chairman's Update, the society has reviewed its opening hours and days in line with changes at Reading Central Library. You'll find these on the Research Zone page and our website is always up to date. Don't forget we have access to free parking on Tuesday evenings and Saturdays.

'War' seems to have dominated my life in recent months, predominantly the First World War, as I was heavily involved, with others, in organising a series of events to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice, in the village in which I live in Berkshire. But also the Second World War, as you'll see in one of the articles in this *Historian*. As I researched Purley during the First World War I was struck by just how much the lives of many who lived during those terrible times were shaped and altered by the war. Often we focus only on those who served, but life on the home front changed beyond all recognition for many, something I'm probably guilty in not fully appreciating in my own family history research. And once life had changed, it

was often impossible to go back.

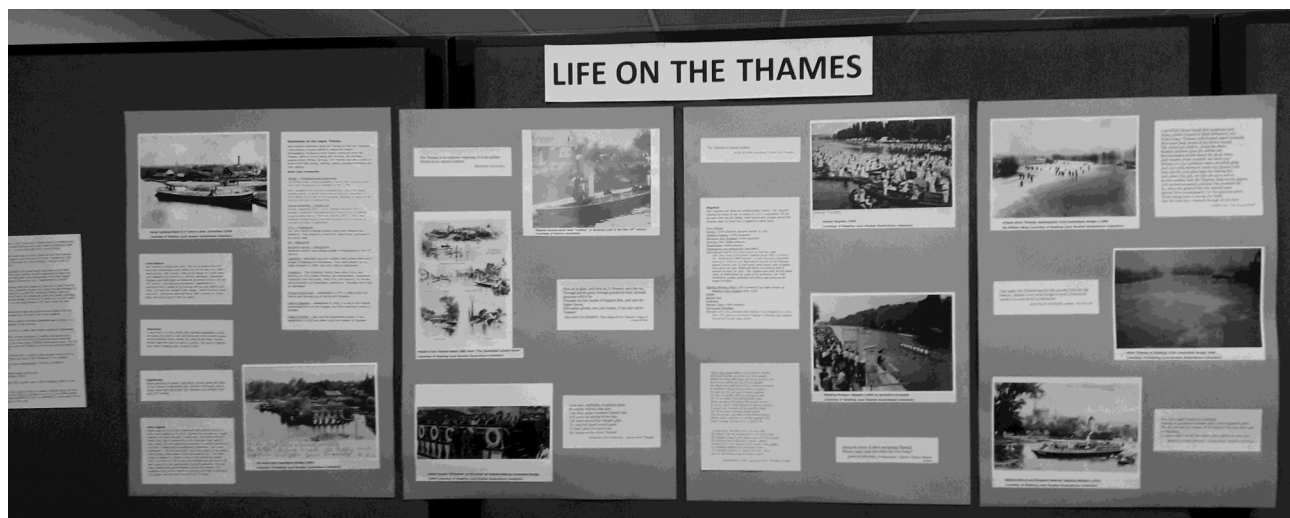
The war wasn't all doom and gloom either. A delightful entry in Purley's school log book in January 1915, describes the afternoon when a British hydrogen-filled observation balloon was spotted out of the window by the children, who immediately rushed outside to watch it. The kind pilot brought the balloon down into a field near to the school and spent the rest of the afternoon taking them up for rides and then giving them a lesson in how to pack up a balloon. I wonder how many of those children passed that story down to their own families and whether it remains within collections of treasured family anecdotes. I suspect not in many, but just writing about it brings a smile to my face. Recovering such stories is surprisingly more achievable than you might think, if you know where to look, and, you're prepared to explore a subject from all angles. Jane Barrett's article in this *Historian* certainly gives food for thought.

My New Year's resolution – to get more out of every source. We have some cracking workshops and courses planned for 2019 in the Centre, to help you do just that, if that's also important to you. Don't miss out.

Catherine Sampson
chairman@berksfhs.org.uk

Life on the Thames Display at the Centre for Heritage and Family History

In case you didn't get to see it, here's a bit of what you missed



Life on the Thames Display

During the late summer, the display theme for The Centre for Heritage and Family History was 'Life on the Thames'. We were very lucky that Reading Libraries Local Illustrations Collection gave us permission to display several of the images from their collection relating to our theme.

The display covered the working and leisure aspects of life on the Thames. Barge building featured, as did regattas, pleasure cruising and the Thames Conservancy.

Regattas have been held on the Thames in Berkshire since 1839, and some are still in existence today, most notably the Henley Royal

Regatta. Some have faded from memory and can only be found in books and online histories.

The next display available to view is 'The Armistice', which will be in place in The Centre for Heritage and Family History until the end of December.

In the 1600s & 1700s there were several wharfs in Reading with a network of small streams and small barges trading with wool and corn etc. - it must have been like a small Venice.

E W DORMER wrote that the Holy Brook and the River Kennet gave more trade to the town than the River Thames ever did. (Remember there was the 'Seven Bridges' structure near St Mary's Butts.)

There are accounts that small barges operated on the lower reaches of the River Loddon carrying quantities of paper and corn down to Wargrave, then manhandled onto much bigger Thames barges to either go up or, downstream to London.

1770, proposals were put forward to construct a canal from the Sonning area, bypassing Twyford and going through Waltham St Lawrence and join up with the Thames at Monkey Island at Bray. It would have not needed any locks and saved traversing right up around Henley, Marlow and Taplow with its many weirs and locks - but the Government of the day turned the idea down.

1771, Mapledurham Weir was breached and barges were not able to proceed past this point until it was repaired.

1790, William MASON & William BURNHAM were partners in a barge business at New Windsor.

1795, the DARVILL family were Barge Builders at Maidenhead.

Early 1800s, canvas produced in Reading was loaded onto barges at the wharf by Duke St Bridge and taken down the Thames to the Royal Navy Chatham shipbuilding yards. (An old yarn used to say that 'Reading's canvas sails won the Battle of Trafalgar')

C1810, Thomas MAY, a wealthy miller bought Sonning Mill for his son Daniel who had a fleet of barges for his business.

Mr R MILLS was a Bargemaster, formerly of Broad St, Reading.

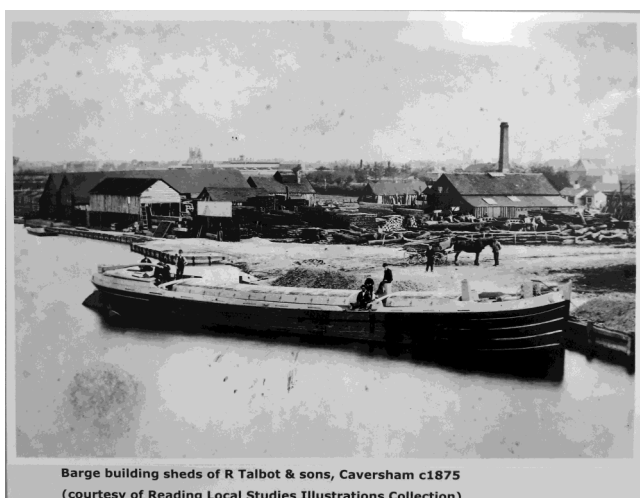
Other barge people names are:-

1859, William DYSON

Alexander REID, Barge- owner, late of Reading, died 9th July 1860

Also in 1860, large numbers of people collected along the river Kennet and Thames to witness the trial of a new Steam Barge which Messrs BARRETT, EXALL & ANDREWES constructed for the purposes of their trade.

Barge building display information



Projects & Publications Update

There are two new CDs being announced this quarter, Berkshire War Memorials Edition Two and Monumental Inscriptions Collection Three, and more imminently in the pipeline. Thank you to everyone who responded to our plea for photographs of Berkshire's war memorials.

The War Memorials Project has now come to an end and thanks go to Brian Wilcock, who has project managed this throughout, Tony Wright who built the CDs for the first and second editions, Alan Hutchins whose memorial transcriptions form the basis for much of these

CDs, and everyone who has continued further transcriptions and photographs.

As I write this update, we are in the final stages of preparing the datasets for Berkshire Marriages Edition Four. Thank you to John Pearce who is building the CD and to everyone who has transcribed and checked marriage registers. Keep an eye on the website for its launch and we will include details of the coverage in the next *Historian*. On to Berkshire Baptisms Edition Three next!

Catherine Sampson

BERKSHIRE and LONDON

(all of England & Wales for 19th and 20th centuries)

Experienced and affordable researcher.

I am a member of the Society of Genealogists.

No task too small.

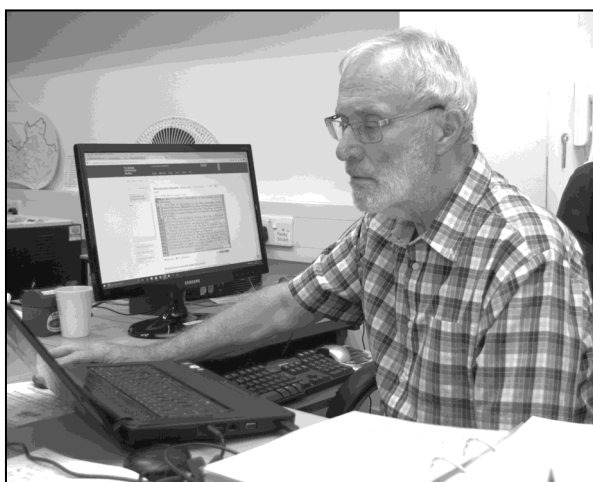
**Please contact me for more information –
the initial consultation is free.**

Rob Dickinson BSc

Chestnut Tree Genealogy

9, Leighton Road, Ealing, London, W13 9EL

Email: info@chestnut-tree-genealogy.co.uk



CALLING ALL FAMILY HISTORIANS

Would you be prepared to share your expertise
and knowledge with others?

Could you spare some time to help other members
and visitors with their family history?

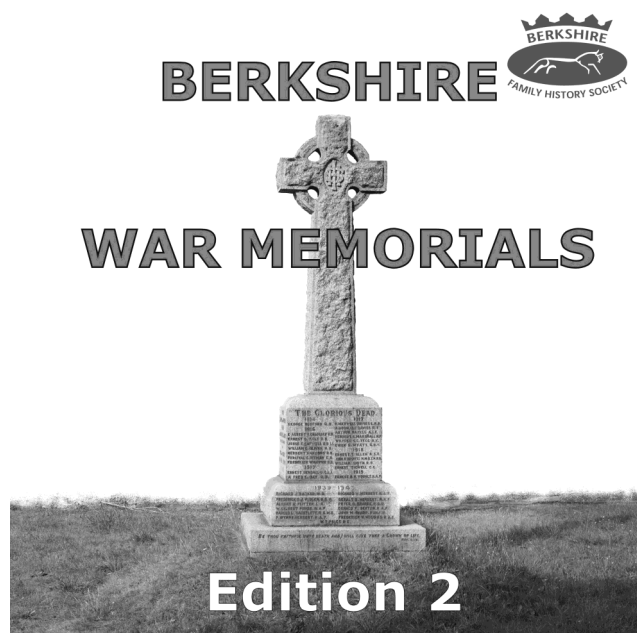
Then why not volunteer in the new Centre for
Heritage and Family History? We are looking for
some more help on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

You'll find it very rewarding and we can guarantee
you'll learn more too.

For more information email
researchcentre@berksfhs.org.uk

New in the Bookshop

Berkshire War Memorials, Edition 2 (CD)



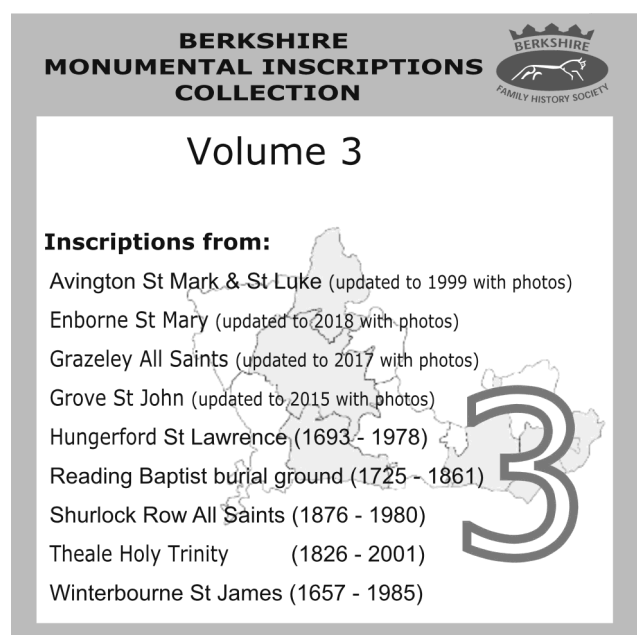
Berkshire War Memorials, Edition 2, CD released to coincide with the centenary of the end of World War 1, builds on the first Edition.

The extra efforts of 50 members of the Berkshire Family History society have added a further approximately 150 memorials, including many Commonwealth War Graves. Of the CD content, 56% now has images, including all of the new memorials and many more of the Edition 1 entries. All of the material is presented in pdf format and indexed with a variety of finding aids.

Price: From new: shop £20.00 members £18.00, from edition 1, shop £5.00 members £4.50

See centre pages for postal rates.

Berkshire Monumental Inscriptions, Volume 3 (CD)



These include monuments at Avington St Mark and St Luke, Enborne St Mary (a project from the society's Newbury branch) and Grove St John (a project from the society's Vale of White Horse branch) all updated with photographs.

In addition, previous fiched data from Hungerford St Lawrence, Theale Holy Trinity and Winterbourne St James is included and new material from Grazeley Holy Trinity and Shurlock Row All Saints, both of which are now private houses with obviously limited public access.

Finally, material is presented which was initially recorded in 1869, and covers 1726-1861, from the former Reading Baptist burial ground which no longer exists.

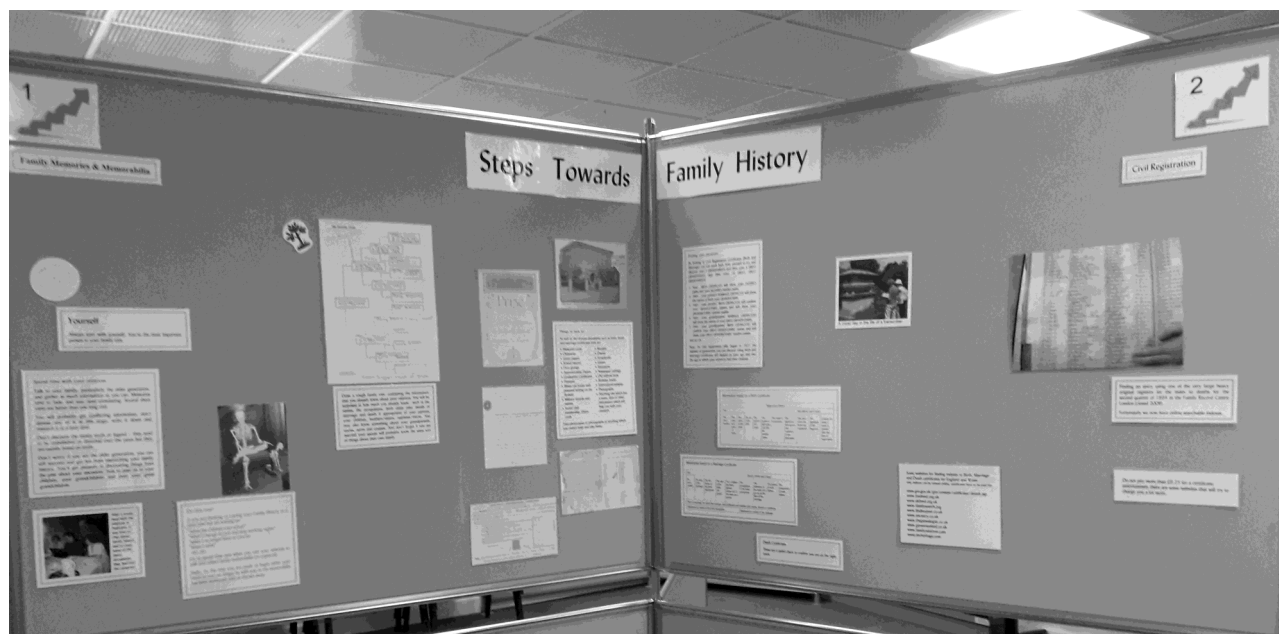
All of the material is presented in pdf format and over 4,500 names are fully indexed.

Price: shop £10.00, members £9.00

See centre pages for postal rates.

Berkshire Monumental Inscriptions Collection vol 3 CD, provides data from several churchyards previously only available on fiche or by viewing paper copy at the society's library, as well as some locations not previously published.

Heritage Open Days



First Steps Display at the Heritage Open Days

This year's Heritage Open Days spanned the first two weekends in September. Usually, there is only one weekend of events, so this year meant double the opportunity to encourage people into The Centre for Heritage and Family History.

During the first weekend we were open on the Friday and Saturday and the second, the Thursday and Saturday.

Due to the general opening hours at Reading Central Library we were unable to open on Sundays, as we used to be able at Yeomanry House.

Many visitors attended though, 68 in total, a



Some Visitors at the Heritage Open Days

majority of whom had no experience, but a keen interest in researching their family history.

They were shown how to utilise the subscription sites we have available in the Centre, rudimentary research techniques and the range of books we have available to aid further research.

Refreshments were available as were, for the first time, children's activities. Our current display 'Life on the River Thames' was on view, as was a special display, for Heritage Open Days, about Olivia Colman's Reading connections.

This followed on from the recently aired *Who Do You Think You Are?* episode and the article by Katie Amos in the September Berkshire Family Historian.

A 'How to start your family history' display was also available which showed the first steps in research. This received a lot of interest both from those new to the hobby and those with some experience.

As the first Heritage Open Day we have held in our new venue we were pleased with how things went.

Lots of leaflets detailing membership, the events programme run out of the Centre for Heritage and Family History, and branch meetings and information were handed out.

Events at The Centre for Heritage and Family History

December 2018 to March 2019



Why not combine your visit for an event with time for research as well? The Centre will be open for an hour before each event, even if it's not one of our normal opening days.

Month and Day	Event	Booking Details
December		
Saturday 1st 12.00-2.00 pm	Christmas Market: Chance to grab those Christmas bargains from the society's family and local history bookshop and other 'history' sellers. Refreshments available. For free parking arrangements please contact the Booking Administrator.	FREE just drop in
Tuesday 4th 12.00-2.00 pm	Drop-in session: Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith	FREE just drop in
Thursday 6th 2.00-4.00 pm 'The Armistice' Talk series Final talk of five	Putting Berkshire on the Map: with John Leighfield CBE If you like maps this is one not to miss. John will talk about the history of mapping with particular emphasis on Berkshire, beginning with Matthew Paris' map of Britain c.1250 and finishing with Google and modern mapping. For attendees wishing to do some family research whilst visiting the Centre, the research zone computers will be open from 1 pm.	TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is highly recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). Coupon code SOTWELL20
Tuesday 11th (note a week later than normal) Arrive 6.45 7.00-9.30 pm	Natter Group: Informal discussion led by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. There is a small charge for refreshments. After 7.00 pm, you can obtain entry to the Library via its rear door on Abbey Square. Free parking is available, email events@berksfhs.org.uk for details.	FREE just turn up

Month and Day	Event	Booking Details
January		
Tuesday 8th 12.00-2.00 pm	Drop-in session: Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith	FREE just drop in
Tuesday 2nd Arrive 6.45 7.00-9.30 pm	Natter Group: Informal discussion led by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. There is a small charge for refreshments. For parking, see end of table.	FREE just turn up
Thursday 10th 2.00-4.00 pm ‘Transport’ Talk series First talk of five. The other talks in this series are on 24 th January, 7 th February, 21 st February and 9 th March.	The Early Years of Reading’s Railways: with Paul Joyce Paul Joyce is Chairman of Reading Transport Group. Reading was linked to London by railway in 1840, and to Bristol the following year, bringing important economic growth to the town. This talk focuses on the early years of the railway. For attendees wishing to do some family research whilst visiting the Centre, the research zone computers will be open from 1pm.	TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is highly recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). Coupon code SOTWELL20 Book all five talks in the series for the discounted price of £20 (members £16). Contact The Booking Administrator with any
Saturday 19th 11.00-1.30 pm For free parking arrangements please contact the Booking Administrator.	Understanding Old Handwriting Course: Session 1, Tutor: Joan Dils Joan Dils is an Honorary Visiting Fellow in History at the University of Reading and President of the Berkshire Local History Association. She taught history and local history for the former School of Continuing Education at the University where she was a part-time lecturer. This course will look at the structure of documents from the 17-19th centuries, which are of most use to family historians, and teach attendees how to read the various handwriting styles used. Attendees may bring a document with them to decipher.	BOOK £30 for three fortnightly sessions 19 th January 2 nd February and 16 th February (Members £24) Includes tea or coffee. Places limited, pre- booking required. coupon code SOTWELL20 Contact the Booking Administrator with any queries.
Thursday 24th 2.00-4.00 pm ‘Transport’ Talk series Second talk of five. The other talks in this series are on 10 th January, 7 th February, 21 st February and 9 th March.	Getting Around in the 1960s: with Mike Hurst An entertaining illustrated talk about how we were on the move in the ‘Swinging’ Sixties. Covering cars (often second hand), motorbikes, scooters, buses, air travel, a railway system in apparently terminal decline, the first motorways, the rise of lorries and car ownership, inclusive tours abroad and the switch of ocean liners to cruising. A decade of amazing change and already history!	TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is highly recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). coupon code SOTWELL20

Month and Day	Event	Booking Details
January continued		
Saturday 26th 11.00 am-1.00 pm For free parking arrangements please contact the Booking Administrator.	Workshop: Merchant Navy Records Tutor: Tony Wright What was your seaman eating? How much was he paid? Who was he sending money home to? Where did he live? Where did he travel to? These and many other questions will be answered in the workshop. Attendees will discover what records are available and how and where to find them. The workshop will also look at the Seaman's Certificate of Continuous Discharge, Crew Lists, Ship's Logs, Lloyds Register of Shipping, Ship's Movement cards, and some online resources for finding more information.	TICKETS £10 Members £9 includes tea or coffee. Places limited, early booking recommended. Coupon code SOTWELL10
February		
Tuesday 5th 12.00-2.00 pm	Drop-in session: Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith	FREE just drop in
Tuesday 5th Arrive 6.45 7.00-9.30 pm	Natter Group: Informal discussion led by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. There is a small charge for refreshments. For access arrangements after 7.00 pm, and details of free parking – see the entry for 11 th December.	FREE just turn up
Thursday 7th 2.00-4.00 pm 'Transport' Talk series Third talk of five. The other talks in this series are on: 10 th January, 24 th January, 21 st February and 9 th March.	Heroes of Woodley Airfield: with Joy Pibworth A whole host of important individuals in the history of aviation have associations with Woodley Airfield – many such as Sir Douglas Bader, Amy Johnson, Geoffrey de Havilland and Charles Lindbergh, household names. Others, such as ladies world speed record holder Lettice Curtis, less well-known. Joy's talk will bring to life the stories behind the names.	TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is highly recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). Coupon code SOTWELL20
Saturday 9th 11.00-1.00 pm For free parking arrangements please contact the Booking Administrator.	Workshop: Census Records – England and Wales Tutor: Tony Roberts Find out how to get the most from Census records for your family history research. This workshop considers the background to the census and looks at it in some of its early forms in England and Wales. Attendees will explore the development in the modern census from 1841 to date, including also the 1939 Register, and have the opportunity to examine examples of different censuses.	TICKETS £10 Members £9 includes tea or coffee Places limited, early booking recommended. Coupon code SOTWELL10

Month and Day	Event	Booking Details
February continued		
Monday 18th 12.00-2.00 pm	Drop-in session: Military Records with Trevor Maidment	FREE just drop in
Thursday 21st 2.00-4.00 pm ‘Transport’ Talk series Fourth talk of five. The other talks in this series are on 10 th January, 24 th January, 7 th February and 9 th March.	The Wilts and Berks Canal: with Paul Joyce The Wilts & Berks Canal opened in 1810 and links the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington, near Melksham, to the River Thames at Abingdon. It was abandoned in 1914, hastened by the collapse of Stanley aqueduct in 1901, but in recent decades sections have been restored and re-watered. Paul’s talk will highlight the importance of this waterway and its mixed fortunes over the years.	TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is highly recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). Coupon code SOTWELL20
March		
Tuesday 5th 12.00-2.00 pm	Drop-in session: Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith	FREE just drop in
Tuesday 5th Arrive 6.45 7.00-9.30 pm	Natter Group: Informal discussion led by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. There is a small charge for refreshments. For access arrangements after 7.00 pm, and details of free parking – see the entry for 11 th December.	FREE just turn up
Saturday 9th 12.00-2.00 pm ‘Transport’ Talk series Final talk of five. The other talks in this series are on 10 th January, 24 th January, 7 th February and 21 st February.	Smith’s Coaches of Reading: with Paul Lacey Smith’s Coaches of Reading were an integral part of the local scene for six decades, as well as being seen all over the county on excursions, tours and seasonal coastal expresses. This is the story of how the enterprise developed from a single charabanc to become the largest privately-owned coaching firm in Southern England. For free parking arrangements please contact the Booking Administrator.	TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is highly recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). Coupon code SOTWELL20
Tuesday 12th 10.00 am-12.30 pm	Guided Walk – Reading: with Terry Dixon Terry has been running ‘Reading Walkabouts’ for almost three years with great feedback from those who have attended. He offers a fact packed, but easy going walk exploring Reading’s history. This is a 2 mile walk around Reading which will look at ‘Reading’s strategic position, the importance of the coming of the railways and Reading’s rapid growth’.	BOOK £5 Members £4 Places limited, early booking highly recommended. coupon code SOTWELL20

Month and Day	Event	Booking Details
March <i>continued</i>		
Saturday 16th 11.00 am-2.00 pm (includes lunch break, so please bring lunch with you) For free parking arrangements please contact the Booking Administrator.	Workshop: Where there's a will there's a relative Tutors: Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens This workshop will look at wills, pre- and post-1858, plus other probate documents such as inventories, administrations and death duties. Find out their benefits for family historians and where to locate them.	TICKETS £10 Members £9 includes tea or coffee Places limited, early booking recommended. Coupon code SOTWELL10

How to book

Use the society website

Follow the link for 'Events' on the home page at www.berksfhs.org.uk and you will find that you can either:

- Book and pay online, or
- Download an events booking form as a PDF, complete it and send it, with your cheque (payable to Berkshire Family History Society) for full payment, to the society at the Centre address.

When booking online, please quote your membership number and the relevant coupon codes to obtain your member's discount.

Coupon codes are valid for all bookings made between 28th November 2018 and 28th February 2019, regardless of the event date. The next coupon code will be published in the March *Historian*.

Book at the Centre for Heritage and Family History

If you are visiting the Centre, events may also be booked during normal opening times. The society is able to accept credit and debit card payments at the Centre.

Book by phone during Centre opening hours

If you do not have internet access, call the society on 0118 950 9553 during Centre opening hours and ask for an events booking form to be posted to you.

NOTE The society is unable to accept card payments over the telephone.

Dates for your diary

15-16 February 2019 10.00-5.00

Back to our Past

Belfast, Northern Ireland

<http://backtoourpast.ie/>

26-27 April 2019 Friday 9.30-6.00, Saturday 9.30-5.00

Family Tree Live

Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way,
London, N22 7AY

www.family-tree.co.uk/ftre/show/family-tree-live

What did You do in the Great War?

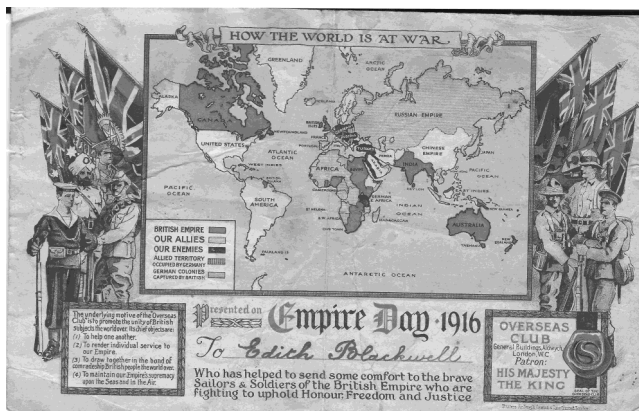
Jane Barrett takes a look at what was done at home during World War 1

This phrase was often used to shame men into fighting in the Great War, but what of the women and children in those times?

I have already researched the exploits of my Berkshire male ancestors in the Great War (BFH vol. 39 December 2015) but when I was recently handed a certificate given to a young girl in 1916, this set me thinking about what children did to help the war effort in those times.

Edith Blackwell was born in East Woodhay in 1907 to Arthur and Alice Blackwell. She went to Woodhay School, along with her siblings Harry two years younger and Alfred two years her senior.

In 1916, at the height of the Great War and at the age of eight, she was given two certificates one on Empire Day May 24th, the other at Christmas of that year. The certificate shows the British Empire in the traditional pink.



Edith Blackwell Empire Day Certificate (J Barrett)

Empire Day was first recorded as a notable date in Britain on 24th May 1902, the year after Queen Victoria's death, commemorating her birthday in 1819 and celebrating the glory of the British Empire. However, although celebrations occurred on that day over the ensuing years, especially across the other Empire nations, the first officially recognised Empire Day in Great Britain was in 1916. After a vigorous debate in parliament as to whether celebrating Empire Day was celebrating militarism or Britishness it was agreed that on this day the Union Jack could be paraded in public.

The Overseas Club awarded these certificates to children who provided tobacco and other comforts in gift boxes to the troops by fundraising. Those who raised the most were given certificates. Possibly Edith and her friends held a "flag day" where children would sell little flags or badges that people could pin to their coats. Flag days were used to raise money for all kinds of wartime projects. This raised money for funding the war effort, for example to build warships, or to help wounded soldiers. There was even a Blue Cross fund to help horses hurt in battle.

The Overseas Club, a charity which organised fundraising, and distributed the certificates to schoolchildren, had been formed in 1910. Upon inauguration its stated motive was to promote the unity of British subjects the world over.

Its chief objectives were:

- "(1) To help one another
- (2) To render individual service to our Empire
- (3) To draw together in the bond of comradeship British people the world over
- (4) To maintain our Empire's supremacy upon the seas."

Later "and in the air" was added to the 4th line.

In 1915, the charity sent out an appeal to schoolchildren, asking them to raise money so that gift boxes could be purchased and sent to servicemen. Sir Edward Ward, who was in charge of the Overseas Club, wrote to children, asking them to imagine 'how unhappy [the soldiers] must be...when they have to stand hour after hour, in the trenches, often deep in water, with shells bursting all around.'

Children also collected other things that would be useful for the war effort, such as blankets, books and magazines. These were sent to the soldiers at the front.

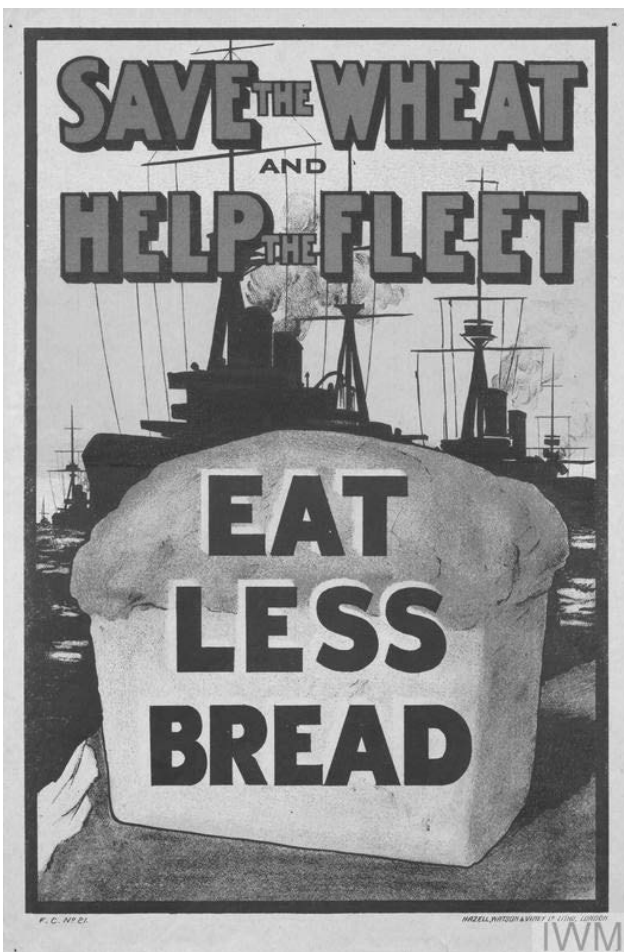
Between 1914 and 1918, everyone was expected to 'do their bit' to help with war work. Many

British children were very keen to lend a hand. They wanted to support their fathers and older brothers who were away fighting at the Front.

Children did many jobs. Around the home they would look after younger brothers and sisters. They helped with housework, carrying water and chopping firewood. They also joined long queues for food in the shops. Food was scarce because German U-Boats were sinking the ships bringing supplies to Britain. 'Growing your own' became very important. Children helped dig and weed vegetable patches and worked in the fields at harvest time.

Conkers were used to manufacture explosives during the Great War. In 1917 children were encouraged to collect conkers and they could earn seven shillings and sixpence (37.5p) for a hundredweight.

Many types of war work were done in schools. The girls were involved in domestic clubs; knitting "comforts" - scarves, socks, balaclava helmets, etc - to send to the troops while some near military camps undertook the mending of uniforms. Others collected jam, chocolate, books and other "comforts" to be sent.



© IWM (ART.IWM PST 4470)

Children also collected scrap metal and other essential materials that could be recycled or used for the war effort.

Children (as well as adults) were also encouraged to eat less with posters such as the one shown (bottom left). Interestingly, rationing was not introduced until 1918 after years of long queues at shops. Meat was limited to two pounds weight per week and sugar and fats to half a pound. Rationing continued after the war and butter was still on ration until 1920. Since Edith and her family lived in the country they may have suffered less from rationing than children in the towns.



The War 1915-16 (J Barrett)

Contemporaneous books about the Great War were written for children by Elizabeth O'Neill e.g. The War 1915-1916 A History for Boys and Girls.

This book, part of a series of 5 volumes, was published in 1916 and gave an upbeat if rather dull reading account of British success.

Edith Blackwell died aged 74 in 1982 and lived her entire life in the Woodhay area. I am grateful to her family for permitting me to tell her Great War story.

Queen Victoria's Visit to Bracknell, and The Relief of Mafeking May 1900

Wendy Wright relives a celebration in Bracknell

Some years ago, I inherited some very large and lovely photo albums, mostly places in Berkshire and Hampshire. The majority of them have been deposited for safe keeping and conservation in the respective County Record Offices, but I have copies, and am always intrigued by where they were taken.



As part of this quest, I recently posted some pictures on the Bygone Bracknell Facebook page. Members helpfully identified the locations, and there was a great deal of interest in two particular images dated 19 May 1900 and featuring many Union Jack flags. A faint caption said "Queen Victoria passed through ... Celebration of Relief of Mafeking, S. Africa".

Challenged to find out more, I found the following article in the Reading Mercury of 26 May 1900:

THE QUEEN'S VISIT AND MAFEKING.
Never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Bracknell has there been such good-natured crowd as assembled in this town on Saturday all on holiday intent. For some days previous it was understood that her Majesty would pass through on her drive to Wellington College, and great preparations had been made to accord her a loyal reception.



Early on Saturday came the news of the relief of Mafeking, and further efforts were made to celebrate the two auspicious events. No expense was spared, and Bracknell was "en fete" after mid-day, business then being practically suspended.

The route taken by her Majesty was through Winkfield, along Clay-lane the top of the High-street, thence along Church-road over the Station Bridge into the Crowthorne-road. The road was prettily decorated, every house making a gratifying display of either flags, bunting, mottoes, whilst various devices gay bunting spanned the road at intervals.

Visitors began to arrive about 1 p.m. from all the outlying districts, and took their positions the line of route, and by four o'clock, the time her Majesty was supposed to arrive at Bracknell, the crowd could be counted in its thousands, all waiting to give a loyal reception to the Queen.

About 4.30 p.m. a roar of cheering, which was taken along the line, announced her Majesty's approach. Arriving near "The Elms" the horses were changed (a relay having been previously sent on and stabled at the Hind's Head Hotel), and the journey resumed. Her Majesty was in an open carriage drawn by

four greys, and accompanied H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught and the Dowager Lady Churchill. Two outriders and two cyclists made up the procession.

As her Majesty passed through the crowd cheer after cheer was raised and graciously acknowledged. The return journey was made about 6.30, when her Majesty again received a loyal welcome. During the time changing horses Miss T. Western, daughter of Mr. W. Western, veterinary surgeon, presented her Majesty with a lovely bouquet of white flowers, and Mr. H. Gregory presented a photo of General Baden-Powell, both presents being graciously accepted.

Besides the route taken by her Majesty, the whole of the town, especially the High-street, was gaily decorated, and all business premises were closed for a period, to allow the assistants to take part in the reception accorded her Majesty. The Bracknell Brass Band gave a selection of music and paraded the town in the evening.

The Queen's personal journal, dated 19th May 1900 states :

"Fine day. Started at half-past three with Arthur and Jane C. for Wellington College, Beatrice having preceded us. Changed horses at Bracknell. The whole way along people turned out and cheered, especially where there was an immense crowd, who came up quite close to the carriage, cheering loudly, and finally singing God Save the Queen.

Flags were hung up and pictures of General Baden-Powell exhibited in honour of the relief. The people are quite mad with delight, and London is said to be indescribable.

Reached Wellington College at five, Went first into the Chapel, where Mr Pollock showed us the memorial to the late Archbishop Benson, who was first headmaster of Wellington. Then was rolled in my chair to the

Library and big dining-hall, through the Cloisters.

Re-entered my carriage, and drove to Mr Pollock's house, where we had tea. Left again at six. A very fine arch was put up near Wellington College, on which was inscribed, "Welcome to the Queen of Mafeking." Bracknell was beautifully decorated."

Mafeking was besieged at the start of the Second Boer War in 1899 and the siege lasted 217 days, until 17 May. It had taken two days for the news to arrive in the UK. Despite the lack of instant news bulletins that we enjoy today, the British public had been following coverage of events over seven months and there was great celebration everywhere. What an exciting day that must have been for my great-grandparents and grandfather and other Bracknell residents!

The UK death toll at the siege was 212, with over 600 casualties. Boer losses were significantly higher. It was also where Robert Baden-Powell became a national hero. There is a memorial in Mafeking to those who fell in defence of the town.

The Berkshire Yeomanry was well represented in the Second Boer War, arriving there in early 1900, after the issuing of a Royal Warrant allowing volunteer forces to serve in the war, 24 December 1899, as part of the Imperial Yeomanry.

Recently, I was in Chester when the Queen and Duchess of Sussex (Meghan Markle) came to open a new theatre complex. A happy and busy day not dissimilar to the above - flags, decorations, and cheering from the large crowd, although no horses were involved in their journey. Good to carry on a family tradition!

Sources

The original photos are part of a deposit in the Berkshire Record Office, ref. D/EX1690

The Reading Mercury transcript is from the British Newspaper Archive online

The Journal extract of Queen Victoria is from 'The Letters of Queen Victoria Volume 9' Edited by George Earle Buckle (Cambridge University Press, 2014)

The Royal Berkshire Medical Museum and Archive

Lifting the lid on some of our local archives and museums

The Museum is open to the public on the first and third Sundays in the month from 2.00pm to 4.30pm. It is open at other times by arrangement for group bookings (please phone 0118 9549371). See below for specific archival enquiries.

Most of the collection dates from the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. A range of medical, surgical, dental, nursing and pharmaceutical topics are covered.

Particular attractions include an iron lung and live leeches.

The Museum is run entirely by volunteers many of whom are retired members of the hospital staff. They can offer to identify medical artifacts but do not undertake valuations.

For directions and further information please see www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/museum.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) Archive

The RBH Archive is located at the back of the Berkshire Medical Museum.

They have a large number of records relating to the history of the RBH, along with records of a number of other local county hospitals. These include:

- Berks and Bucks Joint Sanatorium, which later became Peppard Chest Hospital (includes financial and legal records, minutes, inpatient records, annual reports, journals and published history)
- Battle Hospital (a small number of records, but a large number of plans and some nurses records up to the 1950s)
- Blagrove Hospital (no staff or patient records, but they have written

reminiscences, plans, buildings works papers and correspondence, and a few photos)

• Cold Ash Children's Hospital (they have



An Iron Lung from the 1950s

no staff or patient records, but do have minutes and annual reports)

• Henley and Wallingford Joint Smallpox Hospital, later Whitelands (no staff or patient records, but they have financial records and minutes)

• Henley War Memorial Hospital (includes financial records, minutes, written reminiscences and photos)

• King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor (rules and annual reports)

• Prospect Park Hospital (a small number of photos and some written reminiscences)

• Smith Isolation Hospital (financial records, minutes, admissions book, letter books and inventories)

• Wallingford Isolation Hospital (large set of records including accounts, deeds, contracts, tenancy agreements, rules, minutes, admissions records, job

applications, annual reports, plans and correspondence and papers relating to building works)

- Wallingford Cottage Hospital (includes financial and legal records, minutes and annual reports).

The biggest collection, however, is that of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. They have records going back to the establishment of the RBH in 1839 right up to the early 1990s.

These cover a vast range of categories including financial records (accounts, appeals, legacies), legal records (deeds, contracts), publications (annual reports, press cuttings, journals), photographs, building works correspondence and plans, records of societies, lecture notes, events and anniversaries, minutes of various committees, patient records (admissions and discharges, anaesthetics journals, statistics, correspondence), staff records (registers of nurses, certificates and prizes, job applications and registers of non medical staff).

The size of the collection is estimated to be around 2,000 produceable units (i.e. documents, bundles, rolls or volumes).

A large number of these records have now been catalogued. Whilst there is still much work to

do, they are happy to arrange visits to the archive to view records under supervision (usually on a Monday). Access to the records is free of charge.

They also offer an email enquiry service. Enquiries mostly come from family and local historians. Queries can be sent to:

Betty Messer
1 Roundhead road
Theale
RG7 5DL
Email: bettytmesser@aol.com

They aim to make all our records accessible for consultation and research, unless access is prevented by statutory exemption (such as the Freedom of Information or Data Protection Acts) or likely to cause damage to an already fragile item.

Patient and staff records are subject to a 100 year closure, but do get in touch with them if you have a query about staff or patient records and they can advise you.

There is so much to discover within the collections and they are happy to answer your questions!

Ancestors in Debt

Penny Stokes reveals the truth of circumstances that could affect people of any status

Debt has at least as long a history as the concept of money: long before personal banking became the norm, every community has had a few individuals who lent out money to their friends, family and associates.

Evidence of this comes to us from the earliest probate inventories, in which the deceased's outstanding debits and credits were tallied for settlement.

The Statute of Bankrupts of 1542 was the first piece of English legislation to deal with those who were unable to pay their debts.

Predicated on the widely-held assumption that all debtors were criminal, it talked of those:

“craftily obtaining into their hands great substance of other men's goods... for their

own pleasure and delicate living, against all reason, equity and good conscience...”

Fault lay entirely with the debtor: the law took no account of insolvency which might be due to forces beyond the debtor's control.

Under the authority of the Lord Chancellor, the debtor's assets would be seized (in toto), and if he was found to have sheltered anything against seizure, the traditional penalty was the pillory, where his ears would be cut off.

If any debt remained outstanding after distribution, the debtor went to prison, and stayed there at the pleasure of his creditors.

These conditions and attitudes prevailed until the early eighteenth century, when legislation of 1705/06 introduced the novel concept of

discharge from bankruptcy, albeit under stringent conditions.

For the first time, a legal distinction was made between the honest and the fraudulent bankrupt.

The former could obtain a release from his unpayable debts, although the latter would face the noose rather than the pillory. In this latter respect, the new legislation was far harsher than the old.

However, the carrot-and-stick policy would seem to have worked, for only four Englishmen were hanged for fraudulent bankruptcy between 1706 and 1820, although some historians believe that weak law enforcement kept the statistics low.

The same legislation allowed for the bankrupt's wife and children to keep their clothing. One shudders to think of the suffering of families under former insolvency practices.

A distinction arose also between bankrupts and insolvent debtors. To benefit from the new legislation, i.e., to go bankrupt, one had to be a trader, making one's living by buying and selling. Farmers were specifically excluded.

Those struggling to meet the criteria usually described themselves as "dealer and chapman" as a legal convenience, and in bankruptcy records this phrase is no true guide to an individual's occupation.

Those who did not meet the criteria were mere insolvent debtors, and went to the debtors' prison as of old.

Around 10,000 were imprisoned annually for debt during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. London had nine debtors' prisons of

which, thanks to Charles Dickens, the Marshalsea is probably the best known: his father was sent there, inspiring the story of *Little Dorrit*, whose father's debts were so complicated that he faced a lifetime of incarceration.

Inmates would not be released until they had paid their debts in full and, furthermore, they had to pay for their own keep. Support from friends bringing in food, small comforts and money to bribe the gaolers was essential for survival.

The misery surrounding insolvency has handed a few phrases down to us: *in the Clink* refers to another of London's debt prisons; *stoney broke* also comes from the Clink, with its debtors' entrance on Stoney Street; and lastly, the slightly lesser-used phrase *on Carey Street*, a euphemism for financial embarrassment, originates from the London street to which the UK bankruptcy court moved in the 1840s.

Nineteenth-century legislation encouraged the formation of corporate trading bodies and gradually loosened the bonds of bankruptcy and insolvency, in recognition that a healthy economy needed entrepreneurs who should not fear going into business.

Those who made honest mistakes should get a second chance to prove themselves productive citizens.

Key dates to be aware of include:

- The Insolvent Debtors (England) Act of 1813 established the Court for Release of Insolvent Debtors through which gaoled debtors could ask for release after 14 days by taking an oath that their assets did not exceed £20, provided none of their creditors objected
- The Bankrupts (England) Act of 1825 allowed debtors to apply for their own bankruptcy (with the agreement of their creditors).
Hitherto, only creditors could start the proceedings
- In 1832 the Court of Bankruptcy was established, taking matters out of the hands of the Court of Chancery. Ten years later district bankruptcy courts were set up for cases outside London
- From 1844 companies, rather than just individuals, could use the process,



Marshalsea Gates by Russel Kenny (CC-BY-SA 3.0)

NOTICES OF DIVIDENDS—continued.

Debtor's Name.	Address.	Description.	Court.	No.	Amount per Pound.	First, or Final, or otherwise.	When Payable.	Where Payable.
Chesterman, Charles ...	27, Whitley-crescent, Reading ...	Market Gardener ...	Reading ...	2 of 1901	4s. 5½d.	First and Final	Dec. 10, 1902	Office of Official Receiver, 85, Temple - chambers, Temple-avenue, London, E.C.
Allen, John Lester ...	31, Watt's-avenue, Rochester, Kent, and 147A, High-street, Chatham, Kent	Solicitor ...	Rochester ...	34 of 1902	1s.	First	Dec. 20, 1902	23, High-street, Chatham
Pemble, Walter ...	8, Station-road, Strood, Kent ...	Wholesale Fruit and Potato Salesman	Rochester ...	16 of 1902	2s. 10½d.	First and Final	Dec. 9, 1902	Official Receiver's Office, 9, King-street, Maidstone
Downes, George ...	Newport, in the county of Salop ...	Plumber and Glazier ...	Stafford ...	1 of 1902	5s. 0½d.]	First and Final	Dec. 12, 1902]	Official Receiver's Office, King - street, Newcastle, Staffs.
Aimers, John William ...	Late of 25, Mandale-road, now of 5, Primrose-terrace, both in Thornaby-on-Tees, in the county of York	Late Fish Dealer, now Labourer	Stockton-on-Tees ...	25 of 1902	1s. 6d.	First and Final	Dec. 10, 1902	Official Receiver's Office, 8, Albert-row, Middlesbrough
Shaw, John Fryer ...	The Half Moon Inn, Northgate, Darlington, in the county of Durham	Inn Keeper ...	Stockton-on-Tees ...	27 of 1902	6s. 4d.	First and Final	Dec. 13, 1902	Official Receiver's Office, 8, Albert-road, Middlesbrough
Dee, George Leopold (trading as George Dee)	48, Kyrle-road, West Side, Clapham Common, carrying on business at 69, Battersea Park-road, Battersea, in the county of London, and Hersbain-road, Walton-on-Thames, in the county of Surrey	General Draper and Hosier	Wandsworth ...	15 of 1902	6s.	First and Final	Dec. 11	Office of Trustee, 99, Cheapside, London, E.C.

APPLICATIONS FOR DEBTORS' DISCHARGE.

Debtor's Name.	Address.	Description.	Court.	No.	Day Fixed for Hearing.
Knowles, William Henry ...	12, Francis-street, Halifax, Yorkshire ...	Insurance Agent ...	Halifax ...	47 of 1886	Jan. 8, 1903, 11 A.M., County Court-house, Prescott - street, Halifax
Collerson, John Youngs ...	2, Portland-terrace, Hastings, Sussex...	Builder...	Hastings ...	84 of 1901	Jan. 13, 1903, 1 P.M., Townhall, Queen's-road, Hastings
Llewellyn, Albert Howard ...	Residing at His Majesty's Prison, in the city and county of Kingston-upon-Hull, lately residing at Elloughton Lodge, Elloughton, in the East Riding of the county of York	Saddler...	Kingston-upon-Hull ...	18 of 1902	Jan. 23, 1903, 12 noon, Court-house, Townhall, Hull
White, John ...	Three Firs, Petersfield, Hants ...	Gentleman ...	Portsmouth ...	33 of 1886	Dec. 11, 1902 (Application to review Order of Discharge), 12 noon, Court-house, St. Thomas-street, Portsmouth
O'Hara, Thomas ...	58, Erdington-road, lately residing at 31, Brunswick-street, and carrying on business at 15, Dickson-road, all in Blackpool, Lancashire	Grocer and Chimney Sweep ...	Preston ...	21 of 1901	Dec. 23, 1902, 10 A.M., Sessions-hall, Preston
Pennington, N. G....	2, Park-hill, Richmond, Surrey ...	Architect ...	Wandsworth ...	13 of 1902	Jan. 12, 1903, 10.30 A.M., Court-house, Wandsworth, Surrey

Application for Debtor's Discharge, London Gazette, December 5, 1902

reflecting changing attitudes to commercial corporations

- From 1861 insolvent debtors could apply for bankruptcy even if they were not traders

The Debtors Act of 1869 reduced the circumstances under which debtors could be sent to prison. Some sources describe it as the end of imprisonment for debt, although at least one historian quotes the figure of 9,759 gaoled in 1869 plummeting to 6,605 the following year, yet by 1905 the figure was 11,427.

So where might a family historian find information on an insolvent ancestor?

From the early 1700s all bankruptcy proceedings were announced in *The London Gazette*, the first official newspaper of record.

Announcements invited creditors to submit their claims to the receiver at an appointed time and place, often a reputable local inn.

The entire archive can be searched for free on <https://www.thegazette.co.uk>. However, the *Gazette* doesn't always tell you what happened next.

Having found your impecunious ancestor in *The London Gazette*, you will know his name, date, location and possibly his trade. Then visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/bankrupts-insolvent-debtors to explore your specific case.

TNA holds a vast and complex archive of insolvency records, all admirably explained here.

Article Sources

Wikipedia on: Debtors' prisons; History of bankruptcy law; UK insolvency law; and the individually named Acts.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/bankrupts-insolvent-debtors/

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/all-notices/content/100938>

Emily Kadens. The last bankrupt hanged: balancing incentives in the development of bankruptcy law (Duke Law Journal, v59, April 2010m no 7)

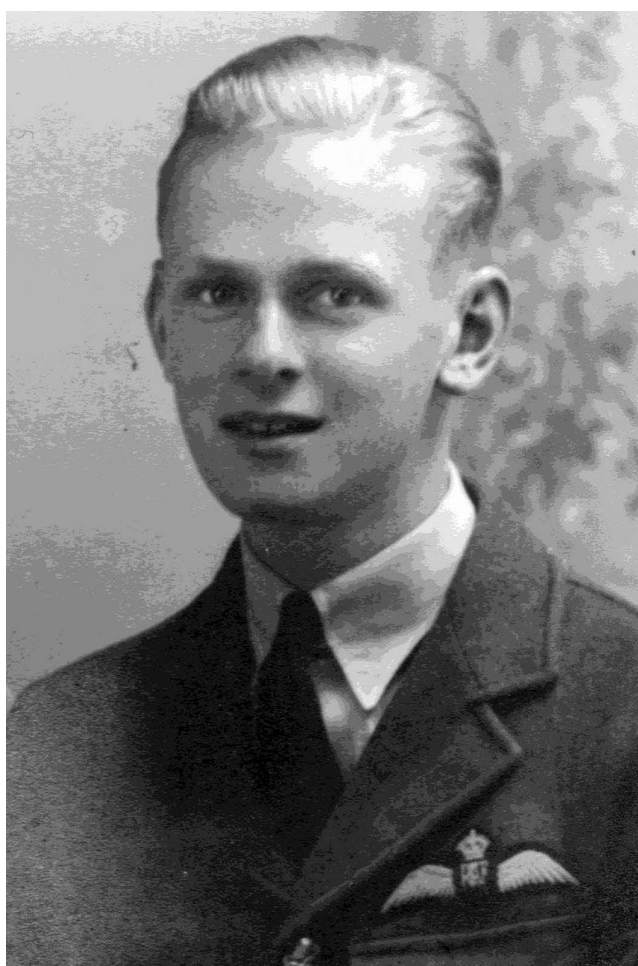
Ann Carlos et al. Conformity and the certificate of discharge: bankruptcy in early eighteenth century England (Colorado University, 2010)

Remembering Sergeant Robert Chanin

By Catherine Sampson

When Pat Taylor, one of the society's Research Assistants at the Centre for Heritage and Family History, picked up the telephone one Tuesday morning in May, little did she know the series of coincidences which would unravel.

The call was from a researcher helping Cawston Historical Society, in Norfolk, who were planning to erect a memorial to honour the lives of four RAF men killed during the Second World War.



Robert Arthur Chanin

On February 10th, 1941 a Handley Page Hampden bomber, returning from a mission over Germany, crashed into the Bluestone plantation in Cawston killing all the aircrew.

One of those crew members, Sergeant Robert

Chanin, came from Reading, hence the call to see if we could help uncover some information about him.

Pat immediately turned to the resources in the Centre and also those of the neighbouring Local Studies Library and discovered a newspaper cutting from the Reading Chronicle reporting Robert's death and including a photograph of him.

Robert had lived at 93 London Street in Reading, with his parents, a Mr and Mrs Arthur Chanin, and two siblings.

He had been educated at number IX School Reading, and Felstead Grammar School in Essex, and on leaving school went to Messrs Francis and Sons, the accountants in the Forbury.

He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in May 1939, gaining his wings six months later. Robert was killed on his 21st birthday.

Pat was also able to trace his family line forward and made contact with a surprised but delighted



Paul Chanin with family photos

nephew (Paul Channing) to let him know about the planned memorial.

Paul Chanin was able to provide more information and memorabilia about his uncle and in early September, along with a cousin, made the long trip from Exeter to Cawston, to attend the unveiling.

A couple of weeks after the phone call, and whilst still in the midst of researching Robert's life, Pat and I were on duty in the Centre together and she told me about the call and the plane crash.

It was one of those coincidences which you look back on later and wonder if it was meant to be.

I already knew about this plane crash; I'd grown up hearing my father talk about it.

He was ten years old at the time and living in Cawston where his father was the village policeman.

My grandfather had recovered the bodies of the men and later attended the inquest in Norwich.

It was a particularly poignant crash, as the plane had been damaged by enemy gunfire as it flew back across Germany and the crew had been diverted to neighbouring RAF Oulton, as the nearest airfield to attempt to land.

Tragically, a piece of the tail fell off over Cawston and the plane crashed less than half a mile from Oulton airfield.

As the plane lost height, three of the crew bailed out, the pilot only remaining on board, but there was insufficient height for the parachutes to open and my grandfather recovered their bodies in a straight line across the village.

Sadly, my father died at the beginning of May, but the previous year he had been in contact with Cawston Historical Society and shared his



The newly unveiled memorial in Cawston

memories of the war years with them, including his memories of this crash.

My father, it later transpired, had inspired them to erect this memorial plaque. So in September, I also made a trip to Cawston, together with my brother, to honour those killed, and to remember the contribution made to these events by our father and grandfather.

It was a pleasure to meet members of the Historical Society with who by then I'd been talking to on the telephone for some months, and also to meet the nephews of Robert Chanin, who continue to keep his memory alive.

Poignantly, some of those present at the unveiling remembered my grandfather and father and were able to share new stories from the war with us.

The 'Ghost' of Reading Cemetery

Adele Harbor highlights where project work transcribing records can lead you

I have always had an interest in history. It was by far my favourite subject at school, taking it for GCSE and A-level. I particularly enjoy the social side of history; learning about people and the stories they have to tell. I'd rather read a memoir from someone who served in World War One than a general book about the conflict. I still enjoy learning about history but now want to put my love of this subject into something more tangible. Cue my Mother. She has spent more than 30 years researching our family history. It is safe to say I am related to nearly everyone in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and a few convicts in Australia. With over 17,200 people on her Genes

opened in 1843 to 1959 when the last grave plot was purchased. She also transcribed the actual burial registers that list the full names of the deceased, their age, date of death, the location at which they died, grave number, grave section and date of burial. Some entries also give the names of those who purchased the plots. There are a few familiar Reading names you might recognise; the locally famous Sutton family being one. In all, four box files containing a few thousand sheets of paper have sat in a blanket box in my parent's bedroom for over 20 years gathering dust.

Until one day about two years ago I decided to start a project of my own and give them a 21st

century makeover – hello Excel! For the last two years I have spent my spare time inputting each person's details into two excel spreadsheets; a surname index and full burial transcription. Once the surname index was completed, I turned my attention to the remaining three box files that contained the more personal details of each person buried in the cemetery. At time of writing I have reached 1870.

As you can imagine there are some very interesting names hidden within these thousands of pages. One

name in particular has stood out so far; Robert Ghost who died on the 28th September 1866 in the Royal Berkshire Hospital aged 46. He was buried the next day in section 41 of the cemetery; the paupers' section. I thought to myself 'how ironic' someone with the name 'Ghost' buried in a cemetery. So, I used my mother's subscriptions to family history sites such as Findmypast and Ancestry, including The British Newspaper Archives, to see if I could find out more about Mr. Robert Ghost.

I began by looking for a marriage for Robert Ghost, but I could not find one, meaning there



Cemetery Junction entrance (courtesy of cemeteryjunctionwargraves.org.uk)

Reunited family tree – and that's just the dead ones – new surnames appear everyday.

In the mid-1980s my mother became a member of the Berkshire Family History Society and in the early 1990s volunteered to transcribe the registers from the 'old' Reading Cemetery in London Road. Some might say she was completely mad but knowing my mother she relished the challenge. The project took her six years to complete, giving birth to my baby brother half way through in 1994. The transcripts consist of a full surname index of those buried in the cemetery from the year it

were no “legitimate” children. This was already quite sad, but his story was only to become even sadder. I typed Mr Ghost’s name into the British Newspaper Archives and came across a few entries from various local papers from 1866 reporting his suicide. On the 29th September 1866 the Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette reported the following:

SHOCKING SUICIDE – A man named Robert Ghost, lodging at a cottage in Brook-street, committed suicide on Tuesday afternoon by cutting this throat.

He was a pensioner, and latterly had been in a low desponding way, but it was not anticipated that he would lay violent hands upon himself. He partook of a hearty dinner on the day in question and was left alone in the house about half-past two o’clock.

On the return of the occupier of the cottage between three and four he found Ghost lying upon the bed with his throat fearfully cut. He was attended by a surgeon and afterwards removed to the hospital, where every possible attention was paid to him, but he died about two hours afterwards.

An inquest was held before Mr. W. Weedon, the newly elected borough coroner, and a verdict returned of suicide during a fit of temporary insanity.’

This was a very sad article to read, discovering that Robert Ghost had committed suicide at the age of just 46. However, the word ‘pensioner’ caught my attention. How could a man less than 50 be classed as a pensioner?

My mother had the superb idea of looking to see if he had a war record. We typed his name into the ‘military, armed forces and conflict’ search option on Findmypast and discovered Robert Ghost was a decorated war hero and a Chelsea pensioner.

According to his war record Private Robert Ghost was born in the parish of Wokingham in 1820 and a labourer by trade. He joined the 52nd (Oxfordshire) Regiment of the Foot on the 28th November 1838 aged 18 years and 10 months. During his time with the regiment he served abroad for just over 12 years in North America



Indian Mutiny Medal with two Lucknow clasps (CA BY-SA 4.0)

(5 years 4 months), the West Indies (1 year 8 months) and the East Indies (5 years 8 months). He was also positioned in ‘Berbice and Demerara’ in 1841, and in Limerick in Ireland from 1st January 1851 to 31st March 1851.

Robert Ghost also received the India Mutiny Medal but was invalided back to England and discharged from hospital on the 14th February 1859.

He sought discharge from the

army on the 26th January 1860 after 21 years and 60 days service. With regards to ‘character’ and ‘conduct’ Private Robert Ghost had been ‘good’ and was ‘in possession of (3) three good conduct badges’. He was ‘never tried by court martial’. According to the ‘final description’ on his discharge papers, Robert Ghost was 5ft 6”, had fair skin, hazel eyes and brown hair.

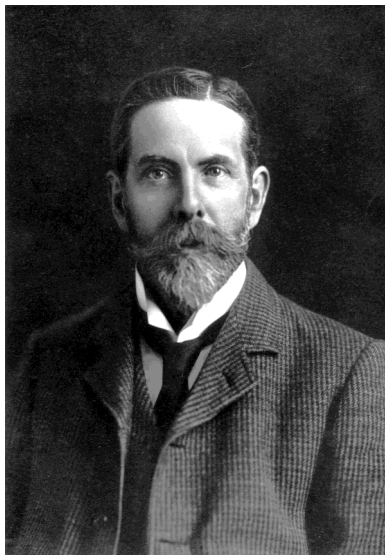
Robert Ghost became a Chelsea pensioner on the 14th February 1860 and received 11 shillings a month. In 2018 this would be the equivalent of just £32.52 – not very much.

We shall never know exactly what happened to him during the last few years of his life, but one can only assume that perhaps he found it difficult to adjust back to ‘normal’ after serving in the army for nearly half of his life and couldn’t go on.

I am still ploughing my way through the burial records in the hope of coming across some more interesting names of the 75,000 individuals buried in Reading London Road Cemetery with lots more intriguing (but hopefully less sad) stories to tell – until next time.

Henry Marriage Wallis — a Reading Benefactor

By Vicki Chesterman



HM Wallis (Courtesy of Reading Local Studies Illustrations Collection)

Henry Marriage Wallis – although a name likely to be unknown to many – had several prominent roles during his time in Reading.

Born in Ipswich, Suffolk in 1854, Henry Marriage was the son of Henry (senior), a corn merchant, and Elizabeth (nee Reckitt). Henry M had three sisters and the family lived

comfortably around the Ipswich area.

His paternal grandmother's maiden name was Marriage, hence his unusual middle name.

The family were Quakers and Henry continued his association with the Society of Friends throughout his life. He was educated at Bootham School, York from 1865-1869.

Henry's father appears in Reading's trade directories from 1874 as an 'artificial manure and oilcake manufacturer and corn merchant' at Reigate Wharf, Kings Road.

Within a couple of years he had succeeded the long established John May in the coal trade, at Victoria Wharf, 66 Kings Road, Reading, and was living in the recently built Dorset Villa in Craven Road.

He died in 1899 at his home, The Lawn, Upper Redlands Road.

The business continued until 1939 in the guise of Wallis, Son and Wells, with Henry's involvement ending in 1909.

Henry married Sarah Crosfield, the daughter of a tea merchant, in 1878.

The marriage information has Henry's residence as Sunderland in Durham. The Berkshire Chronicle of 31st August 1878 states:

'Aug 22, at the Friends Meeting House, Reigate, Henry M Wallis, son of Henry Wallis, of Reading, to Sarah Elizabeth, second daughter of Joseph Crosfield, of the Dingle, Reigate.'

In 1881, Henry, Sarah and their son, Anthony (b.1879) appear in the census at Southern Hill, Reading. Later that year the family welcomed their second son, Basil.

The family continued to live in the Upper Redlands Road/Southern Hill area of Reading until 1899, when they appear at Ashton Lodge (No. 40) Christchurch Road. Sarah died in January 1886, leaving Henry a widower with two young sons.

In need of support in raising his sons, Henry moved back in with his father and sister. In 1891 he remarried to Annie Laird Hurry and had three further children (Rosamond b. 1892, Elliott b. 1897 and Violet b. 1898).

Soon after his arrival in Reading, Henry threw himself into local politics and law by becoming a prominent figure in the Reading Liberal scene, becoming Vice-President of the Reading Young Liberal Association.

By the mid 1890's, he was involved in several local organisations – Reading branch of NSPCC, Reading Literary and Scientific Society, Reading Fat Stock Association. By 1881, he had founded the Reading Natural History Society.

On 21st December 1894 Henry was sworn in as a magistrate on the Reading Borough Bench following the receipt by the Town Clerk (Mr Henry Day) from the Home Office of the names of the gentlemen appointed to that role.

This list returned to the Town Clerk was much shorter than the one sent by the Council to the Lord Chancellor. The Berkshire Chronicle labelled it:

'...the second instance of Radical jobbery in appointing magistrates for the borough since

the Government were returned to power in 1892.'

Henry continued in his role as Justice of the Peace for Reading Borough Bench until 1924, over thirty years service to the town of Reading.

By 1911, Henry was again a widower, with his youngest child being 13 years of age. It's at this point in his life when his humanitarian efforts come to the fore and make it in to the newspapers.

In 1912, the Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, Epsom District Times and County Post of Saturday November 16 states that Henry offered to go out to Bulgaria at his own expenses, to oversee the distribution of funds (from the Society of Friends Relief Fund).

His offer was accepted and he stated he intended to proceed immediately to Sofia to superintend the work of relief.

In Jan 1914, as the administrator of funds of over £15,000 for the relief of non-combatant



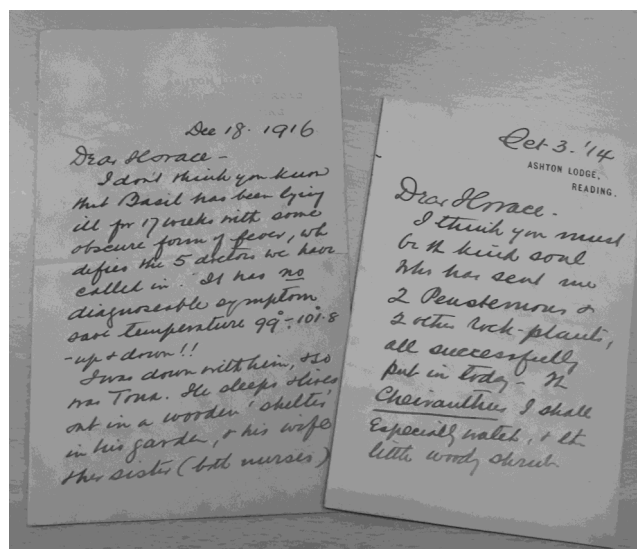
Families of Belgian refugees in London, Sept 1914 © IWM (Q53305)

sufferers in the late Balkan War, he received a letter of thanks from the Queen of Bulgaria.

Later that year, Henry was involved in the control and housing of Belgian refugees in Reading.

From September 1914 to October 1915, over 200 refugees were received in Reading, eight of whom had a cottage in Bucklebury put at their disposal by Henry.

Henry was a prolific writer of papers and essays on a vast array of topics from literary to architecture to scientific to natural history.



Letters by Henry Marriage Wallis

He wrote a piece on Archbishop Laud for 'Some Worthies of Reading' by John James Cooper (1923, The Swarthmore Press Ltd.), and also wrote novels under the *nom de plume* Ashton Hilliers (names used in two of his homes in Reading).

In addition, he wrote many letters, two of which came to us from the archives of the University of Lisburn in Northern Ireland. These two letters date from 1914 and 1916 and give an insight into Henry's character.

In the letter dated 'Oct 3 '14', Henry writes:

'We are full up with Belgians – 148 are 'bedded out' (literally) in Reading & neighbourhood.

We know so many, & believe around 20 more are among us. Some are sick, & low & very miserable – others not so bad.

But many have horrid experiences – At the Police Court today I saw the sworn depositions of an English sergeant (wounded) as to his having watched from a window the Germans putting out the eyes, & cutting off the ears of Belgian & French prisoners before shooting them.

Nor do I think this an extreme, or isolated case.

Two poor naked girls, bleeding to death, reached our (Berkshire) Regiment at Mons, & were wrapped-up by our boys in their coats.

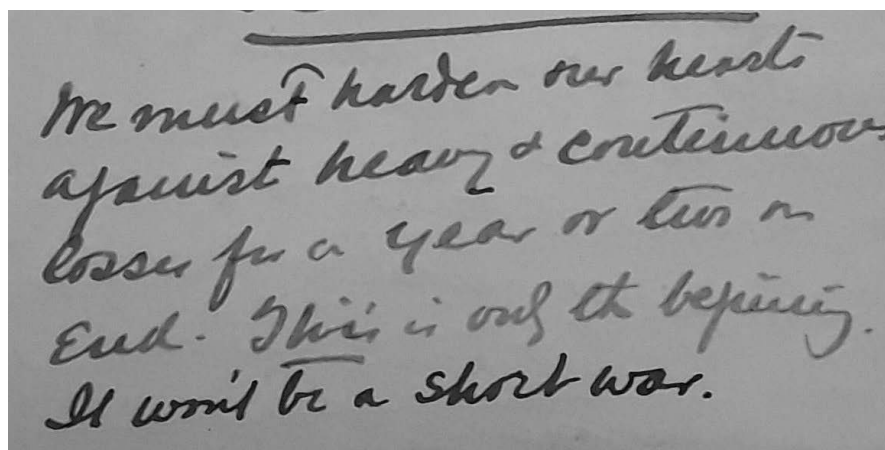
Surely there must be an awful recompense awaiting Germany?

The cutting of hands off wounded, & prisoners, is proved: I have it in a letter from a hospital orderly as to one of his cases.

I don't recognise the old German character as thus shown – it is as bad as the Turk or Greek.

It is amazing that civilised men should have acted as they have en gros, but to act thus en detail is staggering.'

As a postscript, he goes on to make this insightful comment:



Henry's Letter 3 Oct 1914 postscript

'We must harden our hearts against heavy & continuous losses for a year or two on end. This is only the beginning. It won't be a short war.'

Henry's letter of 18 Dec 1916 says:

'LP [Leighton Park School where Henry's sons were schooled] has scored three D.S.Os or D.S.Ms, & has 10 O.Ls [Old Leightonians] under the sods in France – May God rest their gallant souls! Amen! – Alas, to Evans' deep content – one sniveller in Wormwood Scrubs; not for refusing to fight, but for declining to nurse! (O, Lord, how long?)

Evans [Head master at Leighton Park School] says he is equally 'proud' of him & - Cadbury!! I'm so glad there's only him. Nearly 50 young Quakers have already testified for Peace at Any Price with their blood.

Probably 400 are in arms, but you'd never learn this from the pure (but false) columns of the Friend [the Quaker Maga-

zine], where 6 to 9 columns weekly are devoted to the trials of C.O.s, & deaths in action are condensed into 4-5 lines at the foot of the last page.

I tell Evans he must stop his O.L doing these things, downing Zeps, & so forth, or else one will get a V.C. & ruin the school!'

Henry was unapologetic in his support of World War 1, as can be seen above.

Unfortunately, Henry was predeceased by his two sons from his first marriage, Anthony dying in 1919 in Cumberland, after forging a career for himself as H.M Chief Inspector of Schools.

Basil died at the end of January 1917 in Cornwall, not long after Henry's second letter was written.

In the early 20th century, Henry was Honorary Curator of Zoology (Vertebrates) for Reading Museum for many years and established the nationally important Thames Conservancy Board (TCB) Collection held there.

He continued to travel widely into his eighties, primarily following his interests in zoology and ornithology.

Henry's interest in Ornithology began during his schooling at Bootham School.

He was a member of the British Ornithologists Union from 1895. In his latter years he continued to regularly attend British Ornithologists Council meetings (British Birds vol. XXXV):

'he rarely intervened in discussion, but when he did so the vigour and liveliness of his mind were manifest...

He was also a great raconteur and to the end, even when he was bedridden, he would regale visitors with lively stories of his adventures among the birds and in other fields too: certainly his tales lost nothing in the telling.'

Henry died on 10 November 1941 leaving his substantial estate (£27436 11s 9d – equivalent to over £1,000,000 today) to his three surviving children.

The Centre for Heritage and Family History

Gain a new perspective on your research from the Centre

Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3BQ

www.berksfhs.org.uk 0118 950 9553 centre@berksfhs.org.uk

Main features of the new research zone

- **FREE admission** for everyone
- **FREE of charge access to burgeoning online datasets** of Findmypast, The 1939 Register, The British Newspaper Archive, Ancestry worldwide edition and The Genealogist.
- **Research assistants** — society volunteers provide expert advice and support where needed.
- **Printing and photocopying** available for a nominal charge
- **Dedicated PC preloaded with Berkshire data** (including baptisms, marriages, burials, probate records and trade directories). Data from many other English counties too, including the National Burial Index, 3rd edition.
- **Reference library** containing an extensive collection of primary and secondary source material such as Berkshire trade directories. You can also copy material, subject to provisions of UK copyright law.
- **Microfiche data** is available on most English counties.
- **Complementary resources** — Reading's top-class local studies library adjoins the Centre.
- **Quarterly exhibitions** to inspire your research.
- **The Bookshop** with society publications, and a range of products in electronic and print formats. These include transcriptions, indexes, general and local guides for family historians, maps and a selection of local history books for Berkshire and adjoining counties. Browse and purchase at the Centre (credit and debit card payments accepted).
- **Refreshments** — tea and coffee, at just £1.00 a cup.
- **Lockers** to ensure that your personal possessions and valuables stay secure at all times.

Opening hours (correct at time of going to press)

Mondays	11.00 to 16.00
Tuesdays	10.30 to 16.00 and 18.45 to 21.00
Saturdays	10.30 to 14.30
And last Thursday in the month	10.30 to 16.00



Assisting family historians at a distance

The society recognises that not everyone can take up the research benefits of the Centre straight away. Keep in mind that the website, discussion list, and social media like Twitter and Facebook still offer you the means to benefit from the collective expertise and experience of fellow researchers.

In addition the society offers an established postal/online search service of Berkshire names based on:

Berkshire baptisms

Berkshire marriages

Berkshire burials

Berkshire probate index

Simply nominate a surname (or several surnames) to access information. The detail supplied for each entry will vary depending on the particular database, and the content of any individual record within it.

You can request searches online or by post. Current charges are:

- **Individual database search: £3 per surname per database.** You will receive full details, to a maximum of 25 entries. Where there are more than 25 entries (likely for more commonly encountered Berkshire surnames), the society will let you know what the extra cost would be of supplying them all.
- **Search of all available databases: £6 per specified surname.** You will receive full details, to a maximum of 25 entries per database. Again, the society will advise the extra cost if there are more entries than this.

To obtain an estimate of likely costs for any searches that you are considering, or to resolve any other query, contact berksnamesearch@berksfhs.org.uk

For postal requests, you need to enclose a large A4 self-addressed envelope and stamps to cover return cost. (UK Large Letter size, First Class £1.01, Second Class 79p; Overseas postage costs will be between £2.65 and £3.45 according to country. Prices correct at July 2018.) Send postal search requests to Berkshire Name Search at the Centre for Heritage and Family History.

Or supply an email address and results will be emailed to you. In case of any queries, it is helpful to provide a UK phone number too.

Around the Branches

Bracknell and Wokingham Branch

bracknell@berksfhs.org.uk

Our Autumn programme began with Jameson Wooders giving a very interesting and informative talk on '*Probate Inventories: Living and Working in Early Modern England*'.

The inventories of household goods that were compiled as part of the probate process in England and Wales from approximately 1530 to 1750 can provide family historians with much useful information about how their ancestors lived and worked.

At this time personal capital was subject to strict control, and a probate inventory was required for any man (or independent woman) dying with goods worth £5 or more.

The deceased's goods could be held against their debts, and an inventory would therefore protect the executor from subsequent personal liability. The deceased's movable goods being appraised by at least two 'impartial' men.

Probate inventories are less objective than they might first appear, however. Their survival is biased by age, social class and gender, and there are a wide variety of reasons why particular items might be omitted.

Specialist occupations (blacksmiths, carpenters, textile workers, shoemakers, etc.) often had specialist equipment that might also be listed in inventories, whilst the inventories of mercers, chandlers and chapmen highlight the range of shop goods that were available to the wider population.

We are continuing to hold our drop-in sessions at Bracknell Library (second Tuesday of the month) and Wokingham Library (fourth Tuesday of the month). So, if you have hit a 'brick wall' or need any help at all with your family history come along to these sessions.

Work is in progress with the documentation of MIs at St. Catherine's, Bearwood.

Sandra Barkwith

Computer Branch

computerbranch@berksfhs.org.uk

The Computer Branch did not have a monthly meeting in July or August, but we did have a successful outing to the National Archives.

Ten people attended the visit. After a well-deserved drink we then went on a tour of the building starting with the main document reading room. A reader's ticket is needed to get into this room (that is why we suggested everyone have a reader's ticket even if they do not use it for their own research on the first visit).

One of our visitors had been on our previous visit and he had pre-arranged to view some documents, we used this as an example of how to collect your original documents, what sort of seat and desk you are allocated, how to view and handle the documents, how photographs can be taken and so on.

We then toured the rest of the first floor with their useful help desks, large number of computers, the vast stacks of library books and an area where the London LDS are based. We then went up to the next floor where maps and larger documents can be viewed in the second reading room, known by most people as the Map room. We had to go through security, as we had done in the main document reading room, and then saw the slightly different arrangements for collecting documents and viewing arrangements. After this we split up to do some research, view records, etc.

I will be returning sometime soon so if anyone would like someone to travel with then you are welcome to join me.

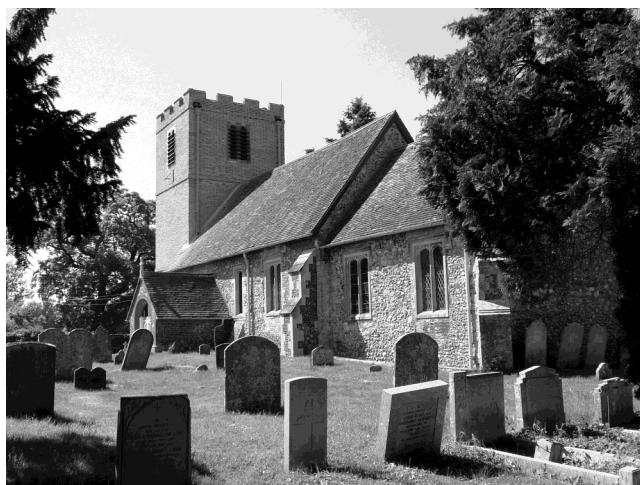
Gillian Stevens

Newbury Branch

newbury@berksfhs.org.uk

Our autumn season of meetings started with a lively talk entitled '*Royal shenanigans and courtesans*'. The speaker Mike Rendell writes,

speaks and blogs on all things Georgian, and for us he lifted the lid on murder, rape, incest and false imprisonment in the context of the Prince Regent and his dissolute family. He outlined the celebrity status enjoyed by the leading sex workers of the day, leaving our members suitably aghast by such depravity.



Hamstead Marshall Church

The Hamstead Marshall MI project is well under way. The churchyard inscriptions had been previously transcribed in 1930, containing more than 109 entries, and was in need of checking and updating.

Brian Snook continues to offer weekly, well attended FH advice sessions at Thatcham Library. At Newbury Library Judith Thomas' Friday morning sessions attracted 37 visits during the period May to August, with some regular attendees.

Nick Prince attended SWAG family history fair at Swindon Railway Museum in June, and the Shaw Church and House open day (in September, for HOD), where registers were on loan from Berkshire Record Office. Nick spoke with about 12 people, several of whom had already researched their families. Eileen Schofield represented the branch at the OFHS Fair in Woodstock on Saturday 6th October.

Penny Stokes

Reading Branch

reading@berksfhs.org.uk

Reading branch continued our monthly drop-in sessions at The Centre for Heritage and Family History through the summer. We welcomed visitors of varying research experience, from

the absolute beginner to the well-seasoned researcher.

Our branch meetings recommenced after a summer hiatus, with Peter Christian's talk on '*Irish Family History Resources Online*'. This proved to be a very informative talk detailing what resources are available online and where we can find them. The limitations of the Irish online resources were explained, highlighting the point that, although slow to start getting the records online, more and more are becoming available, often in a local and piecemeal fashion.

Vale Branch

vale@berksfhs.org.uk

After hosting the Society's AGM the Branch has had a sabbatical across the summer with no meetings in July and August.

The speaker at our September meeting was Linda Haynes, an archivist from the Oxford History Centre who gave us a talk with slides on the '*Shipton on Cherwell Railway Disaster*', a major accident that occurred on Christmas Eve, 1874 a few hundred yards from the village of Hampton Gay north of Kidlington, Oxfordshire.

The accident involved the derailment of a long passenger train that formed the London to Birkenhead Express. With large numbers of people travelling for Christmas an additional engine and a third-class carriage were added to the train at Oxford. This carriage was of an old design and, as the train reached the bridge over the River Cherwell, the tyre on one of its wheels broke. After the bridge and before a similar bridge across the Oxford and Birmingham canal, the carriage went down an embankment taking other carriages with it, which broke up and another fell into the canal.

Twenty-six people died at the scene, with more dying in the following days. This brought the death total to 34 making it the worst national disaster up to that time, and the worst ever on the Great Western Railway.

Aside from the defective tyre, factors that contributed to the accident were poor communication between passengers and the train staff and poor braking as carriages didn't have their own brakes and there were insufficient brake vans.

Simon Burbidge

Windsor, Slough & Maidenhead

Windsor@berksfhs.org.uk

In July we decided to forgo an off-site visit, instead asking Eric Probert to come and give the talk we were due to have last February but had to cancel because of the bad weather.

His talk, entitled '*Lesser Known Sources for Family History*' gave us plenty to think about with a host of sources and ideas to follow up. We were guided through books, magazines, hospital records, inventions and patents, Post Office archives and specialist websites.

There was also parish magazines, company magazines, newspapers, professional Institutes and shareholder lists.

In closing, his advice to successful research was inspiration, diligence, patience and a little luck.

We did not have a meeting in August but continued with the Family History Advice sessions at Cippenham library, which are held on every first Wednesday afternoon of every month. August saw several new people attend following our presence at the Cippenham Community Carnival in July.

For a quite different meeting in September, we were entertained by Peter Charlton with his talk '*An Actor's Life for Me!*' Peter is the Historian for the British Music Hall Society and he treated us to his renditions of performers from the Victorian age and early 1900s.

We listened to words and songs, viewed posters, were told stories of the Langley Howard players and read quotes.

Music Hall performers were able to command a much better income compared to 'legitimate' actors. This talk was not so much a talk, rather an opportunity to be taken back to another age. No radio, no television or cinema as we know it, but a time when there was a direct interaction between artist and audience.

In what must be a first for all Family History meetings at Windsor, we were invited to end the evening by joining in with a sing-a-long to some of the songs from the Music Hall era, such as: "Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner", "Any Old Iron", and finishing with the energetic "Knees up Mother Brown".

Ken Houghton

Natter Evening

We continued the Natter evenings through the summer with slightly lower numbers but hopefully that will pick up in the Autumn once the holiday season is over.

In August we had eight attendees and the main topic was all about probate records, that is wills, administrations, inventories, death duty tax (my favourite type of record) and so on.

In September we had nine attendees and the main topic was all about poor law records, both pre-1834 and post-1834, how to find it, what is it – bastardy, examinations, removal orders and so on.

Examples were demonstrated using our society's Overseers' Papers CD; I just wish that more family historians with Berkshire ancestors would think about using this valuable resource for their research.

Both evenings included general chat about other things that were happening both in and out of the family history world, and, as always, DNA is often on the chat list.

In September I was very excited to have just been able to prove that I do at long last have an ancestor from Berkshire.

I have just found a new cousin via DNA as we both have a 4x great grandparent baptised in Abingdon St Helens (it would have to be a church that holds its own records!!).

Not only am I lucky that enough DNA could be found in both mine and my cousin's DNA samples to descend though all those generations, but also, thanks to Debbie Kennett's DNA workshop held at the Centre, I uploaded my DNA results to other websites which enabled me to be matched as my cousin had tested with a different testing company than I had used.

Gillian Stevens

Bookends

New reviews from Tony Roberts

Emmbrook, Much More Unfinished History

P R Shilham (Emmbrook Residents Association, 2018), A5 booklet, 62pp. Shop £4.00, UK £5.26, airmail £9.15

This is the sixth book in the series on the people, places and activities of Emmbrook. In this volume the miscellany includes a piece on a Korean War soldier from the village; acrimonious 19th C. dissent at Hurst St Nicholas; the people and developments relating to the Bill Hill estate; reports on village sports events; and the mishaps and misdemeanours of local folk.

In addition, there are pieces on early references to the village; Matthews Green House; matters related to Matthews Green, early 20th c changes; the village hall; and a section of miscellanea entitled Related Matters.

The book contains many family names but unfortunately no name index. Nevertheless, it is a good read and useful source for those who have interest in the village, and of course complements the five earlier volumes by the author.

Referencing for Genealogists, Sources and Citations

Ian G Macdonald (The History Press, 2018) 144 pp, perfect bound, £16.00.

Reliable genealogical solutions depend on reliable data. Central to any good investigation is an appreciation of where the data came from,

so that others can re-examine it and re-establish the conclusions reached. Genealogy is little more than anecdote when the sources for facts are not cited and where clear references to sources are not given.

The conscientious family historian should always record the sources from which data is obtained if for no better reason than to avoid unnecessary or unwitting returns to sources previously visited.

For the average family historian, it is likely that no more than basic referencing or citations is necessary. However, if there is a likelihood that others will continue your research a more rigorous approach is desirable, and for the serious genealogist it is essential.

The book covers material and digital sources, a consistent way of creating references, suggested style, dealing with primary and secondary source information; email, blog and web page citations; nominal, material (property and possession), reportage and procedural records; the use of maps and images, and finally the use of these approaches in one's own writing.

Throughout the book, examples are given of the many variations that occur in citing each type of source.

This book is intended primarily for the professional genealogist and researcher, but its thorough approach to providing evidence gives amateurs pause for thought and to question the adequacy of their own approach to the matter of citations and referencing. It is available from the publisher or through Amazon.

While you wait for the next issue of *Family Historian*, don't forget the society's website is kept up to date with the latest information and news.

www.berksfhs.org.uk/

Bookshop Notices

Update on new titles by Tony Roberts

The Eureka Partnership has announced three new publications, which are available from the publisher - 2 Little Close, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 9LQ.

Faringdon Union Miscellany 60pp, 2018, £4.50 plus postage and packing

A transcription of the surviving birth (1835-1917) and death (1875-1917) registers for the Faringdon Poor Law Union together with Miscellaneous Correspondence (1870), Miscellaneous Receipts (1884), Lists of Pauper Lunatics in Asylums (1884), Extra Medical Fees Claimed for certain paupers (1884), and Statements of Attendance of Workhouse Children at Faringdon Schools (1884).

The Faringdon Poor Law Union was formed on 2 February 1835 and initially comprised the parishes of Ashbury, Baulking, Buckland, Buscot, Charney Bassett, Compton Beauchamp, Eaton Hastings, Fernham, Great Coxwell, Great Faringdon, Hatford, Hinton Waldrist, Kingston Lisle, Little Coxwell, Longcot, Longworth, Pusey, Shellingford, Shrivenham (including Bourton and Watchfield), Stanford in the Vale, Uffington and Woolstone [all Berkshire] Coleshill [Berkshire and Wiltshire], and Kelmscot and Langford (including Grafton, Little Faringdon and Radcot [all Oxfordshire]. Lechlade [Gloucestershire] was added on 25th January 1836.

This miscellany contains 500 family names.

Swindon Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Volume One – Baptisms 1817-1874 60pp, 2018, £4.50 plus postage and packing

The Swindon Wesleyan Methodist Circuit was formed in 1817 from the Hungerford Circuit and covered a large area centred on Swindon including Clanfield [Oxfordshire], Faringdon [Berkshire], Highworth and Wootton Bassett [both Wiltshire].

This booklet contains a transcription of the baptismal entries recorded in the various registers maintained by the Circuit and covers the period 1817-1874.

Some 420 family names appear in the booklet.

Reading Registration Authority, Canal Boat Registrations 1879-1921 16pp, 2018, £2.00 plus postage and packing.

A Parliamentary Act of 1877 introduced the registration of canal boats to ensure that only the registered number of people lived on them and that conditions on board each boat were maintained at a level considered fit for human occupation.

The registers subsequently created by the Reading Registration Authority are the subject of this book. Each registration document includes the name and registration number of the boat, the name of the owner(s), the master's name, details of the route along which the boat is intended to ply, the nature of the traffic (cargo) the boat is intended to carry, the mode of propulsion and whether it is a 'narrow' or 'wide' boat.

Also the registers give the number and dimensions of the cabins, the date of registration and the maximum number of persons permitted to occupy the boat. Many of the registration pages have additional information regarding the history of the boat.

This slim booklet contains 53 boat registrations; 45 owner's or master's family names are recorded.

Newbury Borough Police 1836-1875 by Richard Godfrey

Richard Godfrey's book was first published in 2008 and has been out of print for some time. Now a new second edition has been prepared by Charlie Farrow of Heresy Publishing of Newbury. This new edition has made two minor amendments, but the text is otherwise the same. It is available from Amazon, price £10.99 per copy plus postage and packing.

In our review of the first edition in the June 2009 Edition of Berkshire Family Historian we said "This is a fascinating history of Newbury's first police force, established in 1836... The account has been written by a local resident and former Chief Inspector in Newbury, who illustrates his interest in the history of the force in this well researched and written book. It is absolutely fascinating to read."

News from the Berkshire Record Office



By Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist at the Berkshire Record Office

Behind the Scenes at the BRO: 18th March 2019, time 10.30 to 11.30

Ever wanted to know what goes on behind the scenes at the BRO? Then come along on our tour and find out! You will be shown how we store our documents and given an insight into the job of our conservator. It's FREE and there are 12 spaces available. Booking is essential. Please email arch@reading.gov.uk or call 0118 937 5132.

Have you read our World War One blog? Each post relates to that day or month 100 years ago as the 1914-1918 war unfolded before Berkshire's eyes. Why not take a look and see what you can discover? <https://berkshirevoiceswwi.wordpress.com/about-berkshire-at-war/>

Round up of 'recently catalogued' items at the Berkshire Record Office 2018

Baptisms and deaths for an unidentified chapel, possibly Wash Water Independent Methodist Chapel, Enborne, 1825-1837 (N/D111)

Newbury solicitors Pitman & Bazett, 1481-1937 (D/EPT).

Stuchbery & Son of Windsor, solicitors, 1628-1633 (D/ESB)

Royal Merchant Navy School and its predecessors, 1827-2002 (D/EX2363)

White House School (formerly Grosvenor House School), Wokingham, 1785-2012 (D/EX2314)

A letter from Thomas Maher, a pupil at Caversham House Academy, 1879 (D/EX2508).

Lambrooks Haileybury School, Winkfield (D/EX1832)

St Mark's School, Windsor, 1885 (D/EX2545)

Reading Collegiate School, 1926 (D/EX2522)

Maiden Erlegh School, c.1935 (D/EX2541)

Denchworth School, 1863-1891 (D/EZ187)

St Giles' Boys' School, 1910-1917 (D/EX2635)

Hawthorns Primary School, Woosehill, Wokingham, 1986-1997 (SCH42)

Papers from a former pupil of Newbury County Girls' School, 1934-1944 (D/EX2644)

Map of Earley Common Field and Mead, 1669 (R/D178).

Agreement for private enclosure of the common fields and commons in Sunningwell, 1722/3 (D/EX2593)

Manorial records of Ascot and Winkfield manors, 1758-1921 (D/EX2650)

Manorial records of Petwick and West Challow Manor, 1577-1609 (D/EX2525)

Manorial records of Wantage Manor, 1757-1912 (D/EX2524)

Manorial records of the manors of Didcot and Sotwell Stonor, 1456-1457 (D/EZ191)

Accounts for Shaw manor and mill of the Andrews family of Shaw, 1462-1553 (D/ENM1)

Newbury Borough Deposited Collections 1311-1986 (N/D).

Longland family of Abingdon and Radley, 1839-1917 (D/EX2564)

Dewe and Floyd families in Grove and East Hanney, 1632-1920 (D/EFL)

Marriage settlement of Elizabeth Guy of Littlewick and Edwin Cales of Maidenhead, 1843 (D/EX2609)

Account book of John Sherman of Hungerford, 1765-1787 (D/EX2528)



Reminiscences of Ada Mears, air raid warden and munition worker, 1939-1943, (D/EX2495)

Photographs of members of the 4th Berkshire ATS platoon, 1939-1940 (D/EX2505)

Berkshire Insurance Committee, 1913-1950 (D/EX272).

Poor Law Commission Orders, (Windsor), 1834-1836 (D/XGWI1)

Thatcham Parochial Charities, 1654-2003 (D/QX14)
 Hurst Consolidated Charity, 1905-1905 (D/QX30)
 Contract for building Bear Place, Wargrave (D/EX2544)
 Architect's elevation of the Albert Institute, Windsor, 1878 (D/EX2386)
 Plans for bungalows in Bracknell, 1920-1922 (D/EX2485)
 Redevelopment of Orts Road, Reading, in 1977 (D/EX2494)
 Redlands Estate Company, 1836-1928 (R/D69)
 Charlton rate books, 1875-1922 (G/WT)
 Windsor Municipal Charities (WI/Q)
 Archdeacon's Visitations of Berkshire, 1729 and 1786 (R/D80)
 Newbury Rural Deanery, 1970-1984 (D/RDN)
 Vale of White Horse Rural Deanery, 1948-1969 (D/RDV).
 Will of Samuel Torrent, vicar of Reading St Giles, 1729 (R/D151)
 Fuller, Coleman, Pope and related families of Abingdon and elsewhere, 1681-1886 (D/ECM)
 Thomas Holdsworth trust fund, 1887-1896 (D/EX2618)
 Probate of John Dickenson of Bill Hill, 1842 (D/EX2643)
 Scrapbook relating to the Royal Family in the 1860s (R/D181)
 Phoebe Cusden (1887-1981) and her husband Albert (1891-1953) (D/EX1485)
 Windsor Labour Party, 1936-2001 (D/EX832)
 Hurst Conservative and Unionist Association, 1906-1955 (D/EX2606).
 Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes (D/EX2007) [Additional]
 Closed branches of the WI across Berkshire (D/EX1925) [Additional]
 Basildon WI (D/EX2447)
 Bradfield WI (D/EX2390)
 Theale WI (D/EX2550)
 Winnersh WI (D/EX2567)
 Berkshire Federation of Townswomen's Guilds, 1991-2016 (D/EX 2634)
 Tilehurst Townswomen's Guild, 1968-2017 (D/EX2632)
 Sonning and Bracknell Deaneries Branch of the Mothers' Union, 1900-2000 (D/EX2682)
 Arborfield Wives Group, 1949-1990 (D/EX2601)
 Reading School, 1746-2001 (SCH3)
 Hemdean House School, Caversham, 1835-2014 (SCH40)
 Caversham Nursery School, 1946-2011 (SCH43)
 Reading and District Boy Scout Association, 1909-2004 (D/EX1500)
 South Berkshire District Scouts, 1953-1993 (D/EX741)
 Report of the official inquiry into the death of Reading schoolboy Lester Chapman, 1979 (D/EX2597)
 Coroners' inquests for Reading Borough (COR/R) and Reading District (COR/RB) up to 1942
 Newbury and Community Primary Care Trust cover healthcare in the area 1884-2010 (P/HA7)

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Members' Interests

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7601	ALLWAY	Bearwood	BRK	19C
7601	ALLWAY	Henley	OXF	18C
7601	ALLWAY	Reading	BRK	19C
7601	ALLWAY	Wokingham	BRK	19C
8079	CLIFT	Bramley	BRK	1657-1918
8079	CLIFT	Wokingham	BRK	1657-1918
7601	COKER	Chalfonts	BKM	18 & 19C
7601	COKER	High Wycombe	BKM	19 & 20C
7601	COOMBS	Chippenham	WIL	19C
7601	COOMBS	Warminster	WIL	18 & 19C
7601	FERRIS	Long Wittenham	BRK	18 & 19C
8080	GLASSCOCK	Any	ESS	1600-1800
7601	GOODFELLOW	Warminster	WIL	18 & 19C
8090	GRANTHAM	Mortimer	BRK	1450-
8090	GRANTHAM	Stratfield	BRK	1450-
8090	GRANTHAM	Kensington	LND	1870-
8090	GRANTHAM	Paddington	LND	1870-
7601	GREEN	Long Wittenham	BRK	18 & 19C
8080	HAMILTON	Any	LKS	1700-1900
7601	HERMON	Long Wittenham	BRK	18 & 19C
8080	HOPKINS	Lambeth	SRY	1770-1900
8080	HUGHES	Any	DNB	1830-1920
8080	IVEY	Chieveley	BRK	1630-1800
7601	JONES	Cookham	BRK	19C
7601	JONES	Maidenhead	BRK	19C
8090	KEATES	Any	BKM	1600-1750
8090	KEATS	Any	BRK	1650-1750
7601	KEMP	Warminster	WIL	18C
7601	KING	Eton	BKM	19C
7601	KING	High Wycombe	BKM	19 & 20C
7601	KING	Naphill	BKM	19C
8080	LINFERD	Any	NFK	1700-1900
8080	McKINNON	Inverness	INV	1800-1900
8080	MOFFAT	Any	LKS	1800-1900
8080	PALMER	Any	ESS	1600-1800
8080	PALMER	Southwark	SRY	1800-1900
8080	PETT	Any	NFK	1700-1900
8080	RABJOHN	Cullompton	DEV	1630-1800
8080	TALBOT	Lambeth	SRY	1775-1830
8080	TALBOT	Pangbourne	BRK	1700-1800
8080	TALBOT	Rotherhithe	SRY	1830-1905
8079	TILLIN	Arborfield	BRK	1727-1922
8079	TILLIN	Clewer	BRK	1727-1922
8080	WARE	York	YKS	1700-1900
7601	WILLIS	High Wycombe	BKM	19C