

Berkshire Family Historian

The quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society

September 2019

Volume 43

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

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to your September *Berkshire Family Historian*. We have the usual range of articles for you including a look at historical services in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the fight for women's suffrage in Reading, exciting news about the Society websites, and our regular round-up of what's been happening around the County and what is yet to come.

As the latest season of *Who Do You Think You Are?* draws to a close, you may find that you are spurred on with a renewed vigour to delve further into your family history. Why not sign up for a course or workshop to broaden your knowledge? The Society events pages have a different look this time, please let us know what you think. Our usual reminder is repeated that the events are proving ever popular, especially the walks. It is advisable to book places early to avoid disappointment.

Your local branches will be returning to their regular events after their summer

break. Monthly meetings and outreach events at local libraries and The Centre for Heritage and Family History are open to all for advice, discussion and getting together with like-minded folk. Their experience and expertise is something you cannot get from online research – the human factor counts for a lot.

The branch committees have continued to work hard to arrange a variety of talks and outings, covering aspects of family, local and social history – see the back cover for more information.

As always, we welcome articles from our readers, and are always grateful for the effort. Please send anything you feel would be of interest to others 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



It was lovely to see so many of you at this year's AGM and thank you to the Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch Committee and

society secretary Vicki Chesterman for organising such an interesting evening. During the meeting, I concluded my Chairman's Update with a heartfelt thank you to all of the society's many volunteers and I would like to take the opportunity to repeat that here.

The society would not have been able to operate over the past twelve months or to

achieve the strident steps forward it has made with its services to members and the public, without the many members, and even some non-members, who regularly and generously give their time and expertise to the benefit of others. Thank you to each and every one of you – your hard work, support, expertise and creativity is hugely valued.

If you are not currently volunteering but feel that you have something that you might be able to offer the society, please do get in contact.

Catherine Sampson
chairman@berksfhs.org.uk

Annual General Meeting Report

The forty-fourth annual meeting of the society was hosted by Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch at The William East Room, Berkshire College of Agriculture, Hall Place, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead on Tuesday 25th June. Fifty-eight members attended.

All the officers, the president, vice-presidents and trustees shown on the agenda were voted in, and the resolutions regarding the amendment to the society constitution and of the appointment of an independent examiner of accounts were endorsed by the meeting. Eileen Schofield stood down at the AGM as trustee, and Chad Hanna stood down as a vice-president. Both were thanked for their valued contributions.

Mr James Puxley was re-elected as society president and Ms Angela Buckley, Mark Stevens and Derek Trinder as society vice-presidents. New trustees joining were Nick Prince as Newbury branch representative, replacing Eileen Schofield, and Gillian Stevens who returns as Computer branch representative. John Dunne, who was Computer branch representative, stays on as trustee. The officers and other trustees were re-elected for a further term.

After the formal business of the meeting was concluded, members were entertained by a talk by Dr Kathy Chater titled 'Film and Sound Archives for Family Historians'. A summary of this talk is given later on in this journal.

The William East Room proved a characterful location for the meeting, and appreciation was given to Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch for organising the evening and providing the assembled company with refreshments.

Vicki Chesterman



44th Annual General Meeting of Berkshire Family History Society

An abridged Chairman's Report to Society Members: Year ending 30 June 2019

The Centre for Heritage and Family History – *helping more and more researchers*

The society has now completed its first year in its new home and has settled in comfortably into its space. Our thanks go to Simon Smith and his team at Reading Central Library who have made us feel very welcome. During the last year, we have welcomed a growing number of individuals to The Centre, members and non-members, with a wide range of research interests.

Following a review of opening hours across Reading Libraries, the society also reviewed its opening hours and from October began opening The Centre on Monday's from 11.00am to 4pm, instead of Wednesdays, and until 2.30pm only on Saturdays.

Membership—*Time to encourage more to become members*

We extend a warm welcome to the many new members who have joined (or in some cases re-joined) the society during the past year. Our membership numbers have remained generally steady with more new members joining since our move to the centre of Reading. In June 2019, the society introduced a 15% discount for all society members who purchase a subscription through *Findmypast*.

Branch meetings and outreach activities—*A Berkshire-wide presence*

Approximately 1,500 people, members and non-members, came to Branch meetings in the year, about the same as last year. Branch outreach sessions of help and advice to individuals in local libraries, museums and other organisations, across the historic county, also continued, although attendee numbers slightly decreased from the previous year.

Berkshire Family Historian—*A quality quarterly publication*

During the last membership year, an editorial panel has continued to produce the *Historian* and has aimed to provide a rich and varied content to reflect the breadth of research interests of the society's membership.

Projects and Publications—*Making Berkshire records more accessible*

Four new CD products were published during the year: Burghfield St Mary Monumental Inscriptions, Berkshire War Memorials Edition 2, Berkshire Monumental Inscriptions Collection 3 and Berkshire Marriages Fourth Edition, making another 144 new datasets more readily accessible.

Online publication of the Society's transcriptions – *A service to all researchers*

The society has signed a new contract with *Findmypast* extending the publication of society transcriptions online for a further five years. More society parish register transcriptions were added and published on the *Findmypast* website earlier this year, and more data is planned for the coming months. Thank you to Mark Stevens and his team at

Berkshire Record Office for their continuing help in attempting to secure outstanding parish permissions for online publication of parish records.

Events, education and promotion—*Raising awareness, knowledge and interest in family history and heritage in Berkshire*

The society's Events and Education Programme in The Centre has proved to be increasingly popular. Over 1,000 individuals attended events during the year, and so far in 2019, attendee numbers have increased by 63% on the same period last year.

The programme included social history talks and walks, family history workshops and courses, visits to archive repositories, free family history advice sessions, informal natter evenings, book sales, and DNA talks, workshops and a special interest group. The programme continues to evolve and offer new topics and is increasingly contributing an important new source of income to the society.

The society supported the London History Fair at Sandown in September 2018, the new Family History Live at Alexandra Palace, London, in April 2019, and Open Days of four family history societies from adjoining counties. In addition to the events above, the society also actively supported Heritage Open Days, as well as giving talks or representing the society at other local events.

Communications, shop, website, and social media—*Reaching researchers worldwide*

Substantial effort has gone into building the society's online presence. New society and shop websites are both close to completion. Priority has been focused on offering a more attractive, simple and straightforward online experience and providing more useful material for Berkshire researchers, wherever in the world they may live. Coupled with this, the society is aware of the pressing need to make the society's transcriptions more accessible in new formats and potential solutions are being explored.

The society continues to make good progress in the use of social media – Twitter, and the Branch and Berkshire Genealogy Facebook sites. These have proved popular and Berkshire Genealogy now has in excess of 450 'members', an increase of 50% in the last twelve months.

Services for members and the public—*Lists, searches and members' interests*

More specialist research guides for visitors to use whilst in the Centre have been written, and the Members' Area of the website now contains a number of new 'useful' websites guides, including an extensive guide for those interested in Irish Family History Research.

Delivering Public Benefit—*what a charity does*

The Charities Act, 2011, sets out that all registered charities have a duty to report a summary of their main activities and achievements in relation to the objects of the charity. For Berkshire Family History Society, its charitable objects include:

- to advance education of the public in research into family history and genealogy, primarily but not exclusively, within the boundaries of the pre-1974 Royal County of Berkshire;
- to work to promote the preservation, transcription, indexing and ready public accessibility of related records and information

Many of the benefits that the society offers have been laid out in this report.

Society governance – Keeping the focus on our aims and objectives

The society is a registered charity, managed by an Executive Committee (the trustees), elected annually by members. They met seven times this year, for six bi-monthly meetings and once to approve the financial statements for 2018/2019.

What of the future? – Enhancing our online presence and continuing to seek new ways to possibilities

The society entered a new and exciting phase in its history with the move to Reading Central Library, with more opportunities to develop its outreach and improve its services than previously available. Moving forward we need to build upon the momentum already in place and now improve our online presence and online services.

THANK YOU to every volunteer

Thank you to all of the society's volunteers – your hard work, support, expertise and creativity is hugely valued. Thank you also to my fellow trustees for their dedicated work in managing the many facets of society activity in what has been a busy year. Thanks go in particular to Eileen Schofield, who steps down as a trustee at this Executive under the five-year rule, and also to Chad Hanna, who also continues as an active volunteer and IT Manager, but who steps down as society Vice-Chairman.

Catherine Sampson

Do you have any Hewett ancestors from Reading?

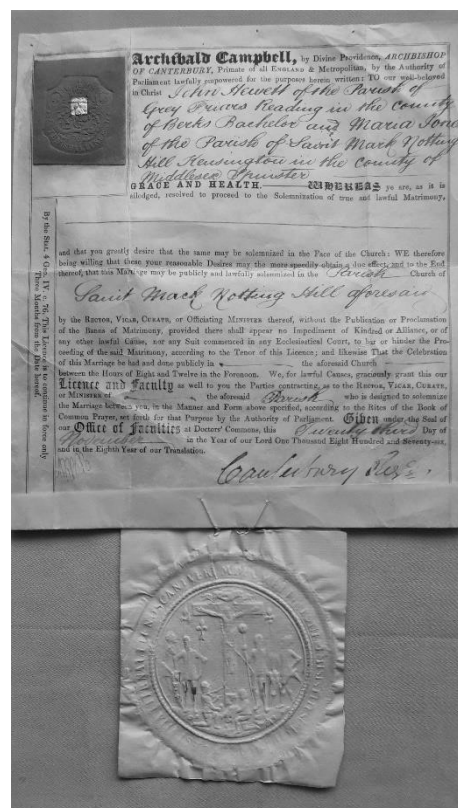
This marriage license was found in a bric-a-brac sale in Leicestershire. The people who found it have sent it to the Society in the hope that it can be passed to a member of the right family. They did some cursory research and found the Marriage License, dating from 1876, related to a John Hewett and his wife Maria. In the 1911 census they were living at 63 Waylen Street, Reading, and John was 61 years old and is recorded as a carpenter and joiner. John and Maria, 60, had two daughters, Minnie Florence aged 33 and Annie Bertha aged 25.

The handwritten part of the document reads,

‘John Hewett of the Parish of Grey Friars Reading in the County of Berks Bachelor and Maria Jones of the Parish of Saint Mark Notting Hill Kensington in the County of Middlesex Spinster’.

They planned on marrying at Saint Mark's Notting Hill Kensington.

Do John or Maria fit in to your family? If so, please contact the editor at editor@berksfhs.org.uk.



Projects and Publications

By the time you read this, the society will have submitted another substantial batch of Berkshire baptism and marriage transcriptions to Findmypast. This follows on from a previous submission of burial transcriptions in January, so there should be plenty of new data to look through. Happy hunting.

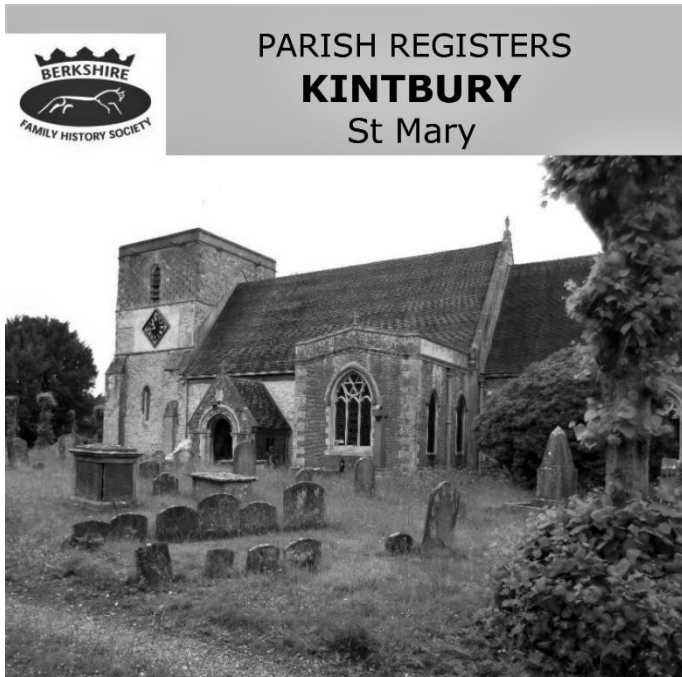
Work continues on Berkshire Baptisms Third Edition and Berkshire Burials 13th Edition. Hopefully there shouldn't be too long a wait for the first to be published, a little longer for the second. Work also continues on completing a new Peasmore St Barnabas Parish Registers CD, but I'm pleased to advise that Kintbury St Mary Parish Registers CD is now published, which frees up focus to turn next to publishing Newbury St Nicolas Parish Registers. Projects are also underway for Childrey St Mary, Winkfield St Mary and Shaw cum Donnington St Mary. So plenty to get on with at present and hopefully to look forward to.

If you feel you could give a little time, especially in transcribing and checking records at the Berkshire Record Office in Reading, transcribing and mapping monuments in burial grounds, joining our team of CD builders, or helping us make the transition into data downloads, please get in touch. My email address is projects@berksfhs.org.uk

Catherine Sampson
Projects co-ordinator

New in the bookshop

Kintbury St Mary Parish Registers (CD)



Baptisms 1558-1953
Banns 1754-1932
Marriages 1557-1981
Burials 1558-1972

This CD contains a fully indexed and edited transcript of the baptism, banns, marriage and burial entries in Kintbury's parish registers, including all of the information given in the register for each entry. The CD also contains an illustrated history of Kintbury indexed.

Price: shop £8.00, members £7.20

See centre pages for postal rates.

Events at The Centre for Heritage and Family History September – December 2019

Drop-in Sessions - FREE just turn up	
September - Tuesday 3 rd 12noon - 2pm	Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith.
September - Monday 16 th 1 - 3pm	Merchant Navy Records with Tony Wright.
October - Tuesday 1 st 12noon - 2pm	Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith.
November - Tuesday 5 th 12noon - 2pm	Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith.
November - Monday 11 th 1 - 3pm	Military Records with Trevor Maidment.
December - Tuesday 3 rd 12noon - 2pm	Breaking down Brick Walls with Sandra Barkwith.

Natter Group – FREE just turn up	
September - Tuesday 3 rd October - Tuesday 1 st November - Tuesday 5 th December - Tuesday 3 rd Arrive 6.45pm, 7 - 9.30pm	Informal discussion led by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. Free parking is available nearby for attendees.

Social History Talks	
TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake Advanced booking is recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability). Book all five talks in the series for the price of four. Coupon code ASCOT20 (current website only)	
September - Thursday 5 th 2 - 4pm ‘Shops & Businesses’ 5 th talk in series	Reading’s Manufacturing Industries: with David Cliffe Sixty old Reading firms in sixty minutes – richly illustrated. Discover some of the many different things produced in Reading over the years, including flour, silk, railway signals, barges and racing cars.
October - Thursday 10 th 2 - 4pm ‘Institutions’ 1 st Talk in series	Reading Abbey: with John Painter Discover the impact of Reading Abbey on the town of Reading, both in its heyday as a royal Abbey and as one of the ten leading monasteries in the country. Hear about the impact of the dissolution and its subsequent use as a royal palace, the destruction of the Civil War, and the subsequent re-development of the Abbey Quarter and preservation of the Abbey Ruins up to the present day.

<p>October - Thursday 24th 2 - 4pm 'Institutions' 2nd Talk in series</p>	<p>The History of Reading Gaol: with Mark Stevens County Archivist, and Berkshire Family History Society Vice-President, Mark Stevens explores the history of the prison from the Georgian period until its first closure in 1920. Find out about the separate system of 'hard labour, hard board and hard fare' that characterised the Victorian regime; before hearing about Oscar Wilde, some of the prison's executions and Reading's little-known role in the Easter Rising.</p>
<p>November - Saturday 9th 12noon - 2pm 'Institutions' 3rd Talk in series</p>	<p>Murder at Reading Gaol: with Angela Buckley In the second of our talks focusing on Reading Gaol, crime writer, and Berkshire Family History Society Vice-President, Angela Buckley will share stories of the Victorian inmates of Reading Prison, including the nefarious acts of baby farmer Amelia Dyer, and the murder that inspired Oscar Wilde to write The Ballad of Reading Gaol.</p>
<p>November - Thursday 21st 2 - 4pm 'Institutions' 4th Talk in series</p>	<p>The History of Reading's Hospitals: with Lionel Williams Discover the history of Reading Hospitals from 1837 to the present day in this fascinating talk. The talk mainly focuses on the Royal Berkshire Hospital, which opened on London Road, Reading in 1839, but also includes some information about Battle & Prospect Park Hospitals.</p>
<p>December - Thursday 5th 2 - 4pm 'Institutions' 5th Talk in series</p>	<p>Reading's Nineteenth Century Schools: with Joan Dils In the 19th century, churches and individuals were the main benefactors setting up local schools, until in 1871, when the local authority in Reading also became involved in the provision of education through Reading School Board. Joan will tell us about the development of education in Reading through this period of time.</p>

Family History Talks

TICKETS £5 (members £4) includes tea and cake

Advanced booking is recommended but you can pay on the door (subject to availability).

Coupon code ASCOT20 (current website only)

<p>October - Friday 4th 2 - 4pm</p>	<p>The Foundling Hospital: with Simon Burbidge Incorporated by Royal Charter in 1739, The City of London sought to prevent the "frequent murders of poor miserable children at their birth, and to suppress the inhuman custom of exposing new-born infants to perish in the streets." It continued to receive young children until the 1950s, when British law changed the focus in care for foundlings from children's homes to foster care and adoption. Discover the story of the hospital and the young foundlings it cared for in this fascinating talk.</p>
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DNA Interest Group

TICKETS £3 includes tea and cake

Facilitated, special interest discussion group for those wanting to get the most out of their DNA results. Initial sessions will benefit from the expertise of international DNA expert, Debbie Kennett. Meets quarterly. Booking not required, pay on the door.

<p>October - Saturday 5th 2.30 - 4.30pm</p>	<p>All welcome.</p>
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Social History Walks

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Places limited, pre-booking required.

Coupon code ASCOT20 (current website only)

October – Sunday 27th
2 - 3.30pm

Tour of Reading University's London Road Campus: with Friends of Reading University
Explore the London Road campus and the early history of Reading University. Visit the pre-existing buildings (East Thorpe, Acacias and Green Bank), find out about the site's links with the Palmer and Sutton families, before looking at the growth and development of the University (Great Hall, Library, War Memorial and gymnasium). Walk includes a visit to the Museum of English Rural Life.

Courses

TICKETS – individual course prices below, includes tea or coffee.

Places limited, pre- booking required.

Coupon code ASCOT20 (current website only)

September - Thursday
12th and Thursday 26th
1 - 3pm

Tickets £20 (members
£16)

Basic Latin for Family Historians Course: with Joan Dils
Joan Dils is President of the Berkshire Local History Association and a former tutor at Oxford and Reading Universities in English Local History. This two-part course will cover the words and phrases commonly found in the most frequently consulted family history documents and resources. An unmissable opportunity for a rare to find course.

October – Wednesday
9th and Wednesday 16th
November –
Wednesday 13th and
Wednesday 27th
1 - 3pm

Tickets £30 (members
£24)

Beginners' Family History Course: with Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens
A series of four workshops for those new to researching family history including where to start, how to progress and good research practice. Learn how to work with core records of civil registration, censuses, parish registers and modern wills. Discover the different genealogy websites, the content they offer and their strengths and limitations.

Workshops

TICKETS £10 (members £9) includes tea or coffee.

Places limited, pre- booking required.

Coupon code ASCOT10 (current website only)

September - Saturday
28th
11am - 1pm

Parish Registers
Tutor: Catherine Sampson MSc
Increase your chances of success with family historians' core resource. Better understand what registers can provide for you, where to find them, how Church of England and non-conformist registers differ, and how to interpret them. Also, indexes and transcripts, their benefits and pitfalls.

<p>October - Saturday 19th 11am - 1pm</p>	<p>Writing Up Your Family History Tutor: Dr Barry Jerome Have you been researching your family tree and would like to write it up as a story but don't know how to start? In the workshop, Barry will help you get started and show you how you can structure it, so that you can write-up your family history while still continuing your research.</p>
<p>November - Saturday 16th 11am - 1pm</p>	<p>Suffragettes Tutor: Dr Margaret Simons Interested in the subject of votes for women or have a family connection to the suffragette movement? Discover the wealth of information available from: The National Archives, newspapers, oral histories, diaries, personal papers, photographs and film footage. All add to our understanding of the activities of a cause that attracted supporters and detractors from both sexes.</p>

<p>Christmas Book Market FREE Entry just turn up Chance to grab those Christmas bargains, pre-loved and new books on family, local and social history at prices to suit all purses. Don't forget there is free parking near The Centre on Saturdays if you want to really stock up on your reading. For details contact booking@berksfhs.org.uk November - Saturday 30th 12noon - 2pm</p>	
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How to book (note: important changes when the new website is launched)

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, the society's current website will require you to quote your membership number and the relevant coupon code to obtain your members' discount. When the new website is launched, the relevant discount code will be given to you during the booking process.
- Coupon codes supplied in this *Historian* are valid for all bookings made between 1st September and 30th November 2019, on the society's *current* website, regardless of the event date.

Book at The Centre for Heritage and Family History Face to Face or via the phone

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. 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.

Contact the Booking Administrator by emailing booking@berksfhs.org.uk for details of the free parking arrangements on Saturdays and for any other queries. The Centre will be open for an hour before all talks for anyone wishing to do some research.

Between October and December, the Centre Exhibition will focus on 'Institutions'.

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Museum, Arts and Local Studies Service

Our borough has a rich and diverse history that we are fortunate to explore each day. Our team creates exhibitions, collects oral histories and deals with enquiries on a daily basis. We work across the borough through the museum and library service to share local history and culture.

We are passionate about preserving our past and present for future generations to discover. We have visitors from all over the world exploring their past and connecting with ancestors. The Windsor and Royal Borough Museum attracts 75,000 visitors a year through exhibitions, tours and online content.

You will find our team at the museum as well as at Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot libraries. The team would be happy to help with your enquiries, just email local.studies@rbwm.gov.uk or phone the museum on 01628 685686.

As a result of the dedication of staff and volunteers over many decades, our local studies collection comprises over 10,000 resources. The material reflects the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, its places and people and also relates to neighbouring counties and communities. There are many hundreds of books including Victoria County Histories, directories, maps, press cuttings, pamphlets, photographs, parish registers, electoral registers and council minutes.

'We have the longest established collection in the Borough and staff to help people use it. The collection is divided geographically, the main locations being Maidenhead and Windsor libraries plus a smaller

one in Ascot. Each of our community libraries stocks a few local items.' Barbara Story

You can book an appointment with the team to view our resources or access our archives at the borough libraries. Please see www3.rbwm.gov.uk for library opening hours. We also have a variety of resources online.

'As a keen family and local history researcher I lean heavily on the electronic resources available to me, as there are so many. At the Royal Borough's libraries, we have quite a few free resources to aid the local or family history researcher.'
Alex White

When you visit a library you can use our public computers to access:

- Ancestry.com – This is widely used for family history research
- Access To Research – A variety of academic e-journals and research papers
- Thames Pilot – A rich archive about the history of the River Thames
- Times Digital Archive – Digital copies of Times newspaper 1785-2013
- Who's Who and Who Was Who – Short biographies of significant figures in history

Maidenhead Local Studies Collection

At Maidenhead library there are directories from the 19th Century and a large collection of photographs of the town, villages and neighbouring places such as Cliveden. If you are interested in maps, we have a significant Ordnance Survey collection and Goad plans which show the changes in the area over the years. The Brooks collection of Parish Registers (1500s to 1837) and electoral registers from 1947 will help you discover who lived here. We have the Maidenhead Advertiser on microfilm (from 1870), the *International Genealogical Index* on microfiche and council minutes, painting a picture of local life. Barbara Story can be found at Maidenhead Library on a Wednesday if you have any enquiries about this collection.

Windsor Library Local Studies Collection

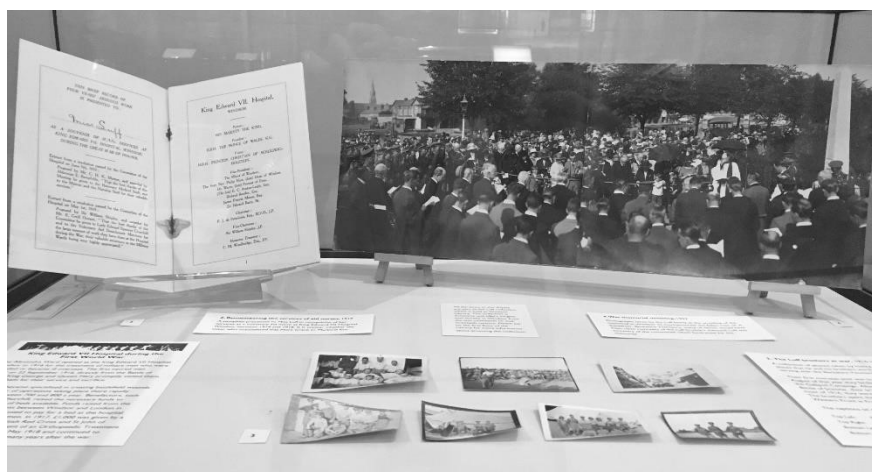
In Windsor library, the collection comprises directories from 1846 (Hunts), a small collection of photographs, Ordnance Survey maps and Goad plans relating to Windsor. We have the transcript of the Parish Registers for the church of St John the Baptist (1559 to 1837), the Windsor Express on microfilm from 1900 and Windsor Council minutes from the 1920s. Being a royal historic town, there are also collections about the Castle, Royal Family and Eton College.



Alex White is available on Tuesdays at Windsor Library if you have any enquiries about this collection.

Windsor Library is the custodian of the Luff collection which offers a unique insight into this prominent Windsor family. It is a rich source of information about society and politics in Windsor from the late 19th Century to the mid-20th Century. It was collected by Thomas Edward Luff, a local councillor for many years who served as the Mayor of Windsor between 1912 and 1913.

‘One of the really intriguing items in the collection is a family scrapbook. This contains mementos from family life prior to the First World War before starkly changing in tone and becoming a record of the wartime experiences of the Luff children. Thomas, Henry and Edmund, all joined the Berkshire Yeomanry in the first month of the war, whilst their sister volunteered as an aid nurse at King Edward’s Hospital in Windsor. The scrapbook, which contains letters sent home by Edmund Luff as well as his official



The Luff Collection

documents, is, along with other items relating to the Luff family's wartime experiences, currently on display at the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum.' Becky Tabrar

Ascot Library Local Studies Collection

Ascot library has a number of books, directories, maps and other documents relating to the south of the borough. They are shelved in the Community Room at the back of the library so please ask if you would like to consult them. Louisa Knight is available on Thursdays at Ascot Library if you have any questions about Ascot and the surrounding area.

Windsor and Royal Borough Museum

There are over 13,000 objects in our museum collection representing life and society in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. We care for many sorts of objects: art, archaeology, documents, books, domestic and decorative items, clothing and textiles from all periods of history.

The collection began due to local historian Maitland Underhill's dedication and passion to exhibit the history of Windsor as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations in 1951. In 1991, we became the museum for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead collecting objects which also represent Maidenhead, Ascot, Sunningdale, Eton and the surrounding villages.

We obtain objects in a variety of ways. Some are kindly donated by individuals or family groups, such as the Colenso and the Hadfield collections, some are bequeathed to us and some, considered to be of particular local importance, we secure funding to buy.

The Colenso family were from Windsor and donated over a hundred objects from

the 1950s including toys and domestic items. The Hadfield collection was bequeathed to the museum. Mr Hadfield spent many years working for the highways agency. There are nearly 200 items in the collection including two 'cat's eyes'.



HMV radio bought in early 1950s by Mr John Colenso, from Windsor and Royal Borough Collection

'We are a learning resource and promote history, art and culture in the local community. As well as creating exhibitions, we use objects for events, school visits and learning sessions. We run craft activities with a local theme during school holidays. We also handle enquiries of all kinds ranging from helping visitors to history research.' Louisa Knight

Future Collecting

We constantly add to our collection and resources. In 2014 we secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for our project *For King and Country*, an online database with over 2,500 soldiers named from memorials around the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Our volunteer researchers used the Commonwealth and War Grave Commission's website, Ancestry and many other internet sources to add information behind the names. The website can be found at www.rbwm.gov.uk/search/fkac/.

'We have uncovered some tragic stories of young men, many who were farm labourers, who travelled to places they knew nothing of to fight for their country.' Margaret Kirby

The team is currently digitising the collection to make it accessible online, you can see some of our objects at www.windsormuseum.org.uk/our-collection. If you are interested in any of these projects or assisting with keeping our local studies collection relevant and up to date, please get in touch, just email local.studies@rbwm.gov.uk or phone the museum on 01628 685686.

The Museum, Art, Local Studies Team
The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Have you heard of Familypedia?

Familypedia is part of the Wikia site. Currently it has nearly quarter of a million articles about deceased individuals plus another 360,000 genealogy related pages. Just like the usual Wikia pages, you create the articles about your ancestors and provide links to other related articles, genealogy pages and online services. To find out more, visit <http://www.familypedia.wikia.com> and click on GETTING STARTED, GUIDED TOUR, and also on TUTORIAL, all shown in the menus along the right hand side of the home page. You also may want to use the HELP DESK where you can ask other contributors for help regarding the Wiki or genealogy in general.

Members' Interests

Compiled by **Bob Plumridge** memsec@berksfhs.org.uk

MEMBERS SUBMITTING THEIR INTERESTS:

6835 WOOLDRIDGE Mr D, 6 Merlewood, Harmans Water, Bracknell, RG12 9PA
woolldridge@talktalk.net

7113 PASSEY Dr S, 36 High Street, Over, Cambridge, CB24 5ND
simonpassey@hotmail.com

7113	CHALLIS	Hungerford	BRK	1700-1900
7113	COVENTRY	Abingdon	BRK	1700-1900
7113	COVENTRY	Dry Sandford	BRK	1700-1900
7113	ELDRIDGE	Cholsey	BRK	1600-1800
7113	HANDS	Cholsey	BRK	1600-1800
7113	HANDS	Moulsford	BRK	1600-1800
7113	HILLIARD	Dry Sandford	BRK	1700-1850
6835	LESSEY	Any	NFK	pre 1850
7113	MARSHALL	Avington	BRK	1700-1900
7113	MARSHALL	Hungerford	BRK	1700-1900
7113	NEALE	Cholsey	BRK	1600-1800
7113	PASSEY	All	BRK	1850+
7113	WITHERS	Hungerford	BRK	1700-1850

INTRODUCING FOR 2019-2020

YOUR TRUSTEES



Catherine Sampson - Chairman

Catherine joined the society in 2009 and has been Projects co-ordinator and a trustee since October 2011. She became

society chairman in June 2017. She is also chairman of the Projects and Publications committee and is a member of the Education and Events, and Marketing and Communications committees, the team leading the new website development, and the journal's editorial panel. Her own family history research is mainly concentrated in East Anglia and the North-East. Catherine is a keen social historian and photographer and actively involved in her village community. She is also chairman of Project Purley, Purley's local history society.



Andrew Rice - Treasurer

After qualifying as an accountant, Andrew moved to the charity that runs the British Forces Broadcasting Service. After 14

years he then moved to become Finance Director and Company Secretary of a central London charity where he stayed for 17 years. In 2013, Andrew joined a local children's hospice charity working four days a week where he has remained ever since and has now clocked up over 5 years' service. In June 2016, Andrew became a trustee of the society and the society's treasurer a few months later. This does not give him much time for his own family history, but he does enjoy meeting up with his grown-up sons for a family meal!



Vicki Chesterman - Secretary

Vicki has been a member of the society since 2002. She joined the Reading branch committee in 2004 and became

programme secretary for that branch in 2005. Vicki is on the Education and Events committee, assists in The Centre for Heritage and Family History, is part of the editorial panel for the Berkshire Family Historian, and has been society secretary since 2017. Vicki has been a trustee of the society since 2014.



Sandra Barkwith - Bracknell and Wokingham branch

Sandra joined the Executive Committee in 2012

as the Representative for Bracknell & Wokingham branch. She became chairman of the branch in 2015. She has been a member of the Society since 1998. Currently, Sandra is Convenor of the Research Zone Committee and the Branches Consultation Group and a member of the Education and Events Group.



Gillian Stevens - Computer branch

Gillian joined the society in 1998 and has worked closely with the Federation of Family History

Societies, Findmypast and The National Archives. She has served on the Executive

since 2007, bar two one-year compulsory gaps, and represents the Computer branch of which she is chairman. She also sits on the IT Development Team and the Education and Events group. Gillian forms part of the 'Tuesday evening team' who provide technical as well as family history advice to visitors to the Centre for Heritage and Family History. Gillian has recently found her first and probably only Berkshire ancestor whilst researching her own family history and by making a worldwide study of the Blofeld surname.



Vanessa Chappell – Vale of the White Horse branch

A society member since 2006, Vanessa has been chairman of the Vale of the White

Horse branch for over 6 years. She is returning to the Exec after a few years break. Vanessa has lived in Abingdon and been married to Duncan for over 25 years and has two children Robert and Nicole, who are working in London and travelling the world respectively. When not looking for her ancestors in various parts of the country or working in her garden, Vanessa helps run her husband's retirement project 'Big Ginger Tom Music', which promotes live acoustic music and can be found behind the bar in Harwell Village Hall on gig nights!



Nick Prince – Newbury branch

Nick is still a full-time civil servant based in London. He began researching his family history in early 2007. He is a member of Newbury Branch and former branch chair. A

change in his status at work now allows him to be a trustee and he is hoping to be a good representative for the branch. He is married to Maureen and has 3 stepchildren. His 11-year-old granddaughter is the only one of his family to share his interest. She attended 2 fairs in 2018 to support the society. Nick is also a member of Thatcham Baptist Church and local theatre groups.



Graham Vockins – Reading branch

Graham joined the society in 2010 and was elected chairman of the Reading branch in 2013

serving as a trustee for one year. In 2017, he returned as a trustee and branch representative. He has been married to Carol for over 40 years and has two children and five grandchildren. He is proud of his Berkshire roots, which is made up of ag labs and shopkeepers. Graham is also Interim Secretary and trustee of Shinfield Players Theatre.



Helen Conchar – Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead branch

Helen was brought up in Warwickshire, but her parents came from the north west.

Helen and her sister moved to London in the early 1980s. She first started researching her family history in the early 1990s. Helen discovered that a branch of her Scottish ancestors came from Bracknell, and she started going to WSM meetings in 2000 while working in Windsor. She joined the committee a couple of years later. Although Helen now lives and works near Watford, she still drives back to Windsor as she enjoys meeting her friends at the branch.



Margaret Crook

Margaret was chairman of Reading branch for five years, serving as branch representative on the Executive and a trustee throughout this time. She became a trustee

again in 2016. Margaret is a member of the Education and Events committee and organises our presence at events and fairs through the year. She and her husband are keen boaters and during the summer months they enjoy navigating Britain's waterways in their canal boat.

College London and is also cataloguing the BFHS book collection.



Tony Henty

Tony joined the society in 2010 and became a trustee in 2016. He has been married for over 50 years and has a son, daughter and 4 grandchildren. Since

qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1962, he has worked in manufacturing, wholesaling, building, transport, pharmaceuticals and commercial property. His research has highlighted that through his paternal grandmother he is the 3rd cousin 4 times removed of Sir Frederick Henry Royce of Rolls Royce fame. For approximately 40 years, Tony has been a volunteer to various organisations and charities and is currently treasurer and trustee of a charity called Earleybus based in Earley and is also a trustee of Earley Crescent Centre. He now assists the Bookshop with their book-keeping.



John Dunne

John joined the BFHS about 20 years ago and has been a committee member of the Computer branch for over 15 years. Since taking early retirement from the NHS in 2008

he has had more time to catch up with Irish, American and British relatives as his father was one of 15 children and his mother one of four children, he has many aunts and uncles and of course very many cousins to keep track of. John moved to the Reading area in the early 1980s from his home in Bracknell. He had been in Bracknell since 1958 when his family left West London to start a new life in the wonderful New Town, which was a big change of pace for all.



Tony Roberts

Tony first joined the Exec in 2012, having been a research assistant. He has been a member since 2010 and was the society's secretary

for 4 years. He is one of the Directors of Berkshire Family History Enterprises Ltd, as well as a member of the society's journal editorial panel, Marketing and Communications, and Education and Events groups. Tony is a retired Chartered Engineer and Environmental Manager, and has a daughter living locally, and a son & grandson living in Western Australia. Currently he is a member of St Paul's, Wokingham & St Nicholas, Emmbrook PCC and is treasurer of the latter church among other interests.



Angela Gunn

Angela was co-opted to the Executive Committee in 2017-2018. She was a medical librarian for over 30 years working in London

and Oxford universities. She now works part time as an Information Specialist in the Institute of Neurology at University



YOUR SOCIETY PRESIDENT – Mr James Puxley DL, Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire

We are pleased to announce that Mr James Puxley is returning for a second year as President of Berkshire Family History Society. He became our Society President last year after expressing an interest in genealogy at the official opening of the Centre for Heritage and Family History in 2018. He has looked into his own family history and is in the fortunate position of having a wealth of archives to refer to enhance the stories of his predecessors.

Born in 1948, Mr Puxley was educated in Berkshire before attending the University of Bristol where he obtained a BA degree in history. He attended the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester where he obtained a diploma in rural estate management and worked as a rural chartered surveyor for several years following qualification as a chartered surveyor.

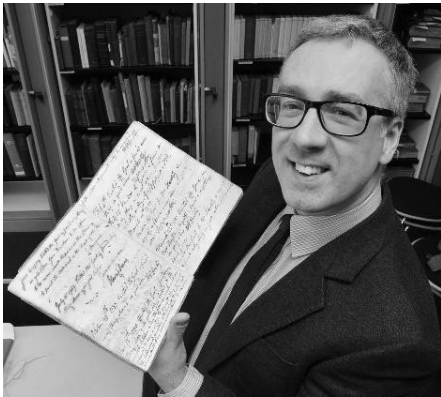
In the 1980s he started to manage the Welford Estate, near Newbury on behalf of his mother and then on his own behalf when she transferred ownership to him. He continues in this role today living at Welford Park with his wife, Deborah, who assists her husband in the management of the Welford Estate and organises the annual opening of the grounds for 5 weeks every February for the public to come and view one of the country's finest snowdrop displays.

Welford Park is a historic house in extensive grounds of 3000 agricultural acres. The property has been owned by James' family on his mother's side for 400 years, originally being purchased in 1618 by Sir Francis Jones Kt, Lord Mayor of London in 1620. It was subsequently inherited via the female line several times by the Eyre and Archer Houblon families.

Mr Puxley was High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire from 2000 to 2001. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant in 2005 and became Vice Lord Lieutenant in 2010. In 2015 he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County, thereby becoming the Queen's representative within Berkshire. This role involves taking considerable interest in and supporting very many aspects of county life, civic, voluntary, military, religious, business and others.



YOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS



Mark Stevens

Mark is Berkshire's current county archivist. He grew up in Maidenhead and has a lifelong love

of history in the Royal County. He is particularly interested in historic mental health care and the people who received it and is the author of two related books: *Broadmoor Revealed* and *Life in the Victorian Asylum*. He was elected as vice-president of the society for the first time in 2016.



Derek Trinder

Re-elected as a vice-president, Derek attends Executive Committee meetings by invitation. His perspectives reflect some two decades of

society involvement. He is a past chairman, branch chairman and trustee. Derek is a member of both the Marketing and Communication group and of the IT Development team. He provides a voice for the society in local media and represents it on some external bodies. He is a director of Berkshire Family History Enterprises Limited too.

His family and local history research interests embrace Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire — and Ireland. Derek's other pastimes include theatre, gardening, music (all genres). He is also a long-standing (and long-suffering) Queens Park Rangers season ticket holder.



Angela Buckley

Angela is a keen family historian, with a particular interest in crime history. She began researching her family history and

soon discovered that many of her ancestors had broken the law.

She has written many articles about her criminal ancestors, as well as other family history related topics, for national magazines and newspapers. While she was researching her Italian roots in Manchester, she discovered the fascinating casebook of Jerome Caminada, a celebrated 19th century detective who served on the Manchester City police force. This led to the publication of her first book, *The Real Sherlock Holmes*.

Angela moved to Reading twenty years ago and, although she hasn't yet found any ancestral links with her adopted town, she has very much enjoyed researching local historical crimes. When she settled in Caversham, she learnt about Victorian baby farmer Amelia Dyer, and published an account of the shocking discovery of her crimes in *Amelia Dyer and the Baby Farm Murders*, giving many local talks on the topic.

A former chair of the Society of Genealogists, Angela's passion for family history continues. She loves sharing stories from the past with other family historians and is delighted to have been elected as vice president of Berkshire Family History Society. She says, "I'm delighted to continue to support the work of such an excellent organisation."

Coming soon to a screen near you ...

The society's websites get a refresh

Paul Barrett gives us an enticing glimpse of what we can expect to find on the websites in the coming months

Can you believe it? It has been ten years since the current web site was launched. It has served us well, but it's time for a complete makeover so that we can bring you a better user experience and make the site easier to manage.

The makeover applies to the society and the shop sites, and they will be launched around the time this edition of the Berkshire Family Historian drops through your letterbox.

Design approach

Our aim was to create a modern, clean, uncluttered design that was visually appealing, easy to use and navigate, and that made content easy to find. We want to sell the society and attract new members.

The main pages were redesigned to make extensive use of graphics. Text was kept to the minimum required to convey the message effectively and quickly. We also simplified the menu system, to make it easier to find things, and moved some functionality around not just within the sites but between them too. And the new site is much more accessible on all devices, including smartphones and tablets.

Events have moved!

Previously events publicity was handled on the charity site while bookings were handled on the shop site. This required the event details to be entered on both sites. Now, the entire events life cycle is handled by the charity site. Users will be able to view the events, make (and where applicable pay for) bookings and download the event to their calendar - in one seamless transaction. Event managers will be able to enter and edit their events from the main menu.

How to access the new sites

The charity site's URL remains <https://berksfhs.org.uk>, so the switch will be seamless.

The shop site URL has changed and is now <https://shop.berksfhs.org.uk> (update your bookmarks). If you use the old URL you will be redirected to the new site automatically.

How to log in

Log In

Become a part of our community!

Username

Password

Remember Me

LOGIN

1 Forgot your password? Get help

Reset Password

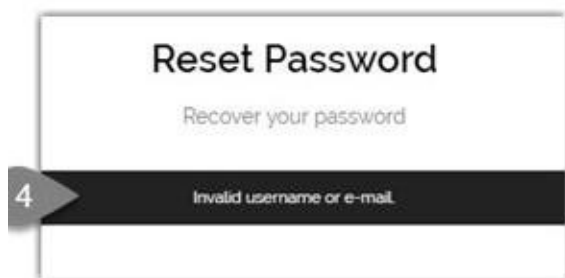
Recover your password

2 Username or E-mail

3 SEND MY PASSWORD

A password will be e-mailed to you.

Back to LOGIN



Charity Site

The site has public content, so there is a lot you can see without logging in, and we have extended the range of publicly viewable content a little.

To access the members' content, you must set a new password. It's easy to do. Go to the site and select the **Log in** option on the menu. Then it's as easy as 1-2-3 - see the diagram.

Don't try to log in. Instead, choose the **Forgotten your password?** link.

1. Enter your username or email address.
2. Press **Send my password** and wait for an email to arrive with further instructions (if it doesn't arrive within 30 minutes, check spam/junk mail folders). That should be all there is to it.
3. If the message '**Invalid username or e-mail**' appears, your account hasn't been created because you haven't renewed yet, we haven't synced the databases since you renewed, or we had a senior moment. If you get this message but **have** renewed, click the **Feedback/Problems** button at the foot of the page and fill in the form. We'll get back to you.

Shop site

You can place orders on the shop site as a guest.

Accounts have not been transferred from the old site to the new. Neither has your previous order history. If you want the ability to access your order history on the **new** site, you will need to create a new account.

Future plans

We have extra features under development and will release those over coming months. Check out the News section of the website to learn about new features. If you sign up for email newsletters, you'll be notified when new content is published. We'll also have a regular spot in the Berkshire Family Historian, highlighting new features and news from the website.

The December issue will contain a much more detailed account of the changes we have made and are planning.

FAQ

Why can't I use my old password?

Passwords are encrypted for security reasons, and the two sites use different algorithms. This means we were unable to transfer them to the new site.

The good news is that if your old password meets the security rules for the new site, you can enter it during the set-password routine above and continue to use it on the new site.

Where's the Members' Area on the new site?

There isn't a dedicated area. Instead, the other menus will show additional options when you are logged in.

Will I be able to access my previous order history from the old shop site?

No. The old site will not be accessible when the switchover happens - it would be too costly to maintain two systems, and we are unable to transfer the order history between servers.

What happens to unshipped orders when the switchover happens?

We will aim to ship all orders prior to switchover. Where we can't, we will recreate those orders in the new system for you.

Around the branches

Bracknell and Wokingham Branch bracknell@berksfhs.org.uk

Our April meeting started with the Branch Annual Meeting. This was followed by a talk entitled 'The Duke and the Miner's Daughter, the truth behind a family myth' given by Tony Hadland. Tony's research showed how a family myth possibly has an element of truth, as he traced the life of his great-great-grandmother, Elizabeth Young, who was a servant at a house in Coleford and who became pregnant. Elizabeth's father was a quarryman, but upon his death, less than two years after her son was born, he died leaving two houses, insurance policies worth £400 and effects valued at £450, so was he paid to keep quiet about his daughter's pregnancy?

'Berkshire & South Oxfordshire Churches' was the title of our May talk given by Catherine Sampson. The talk was divided into three parts: Locations Tell a Story, Historical Connections and Don't Miss. Churches included Frilsham with a circular graveyard, believed to have been the site of a former pagan temple and



Hatford St George Church where Anne, daughter of Edward Seymour and cousin to Edward VI, apparently secretly married Sir Edward Upton

Wargrave Church, which was rebuilt due to its destruction in an apparent arson attack in June 1914, allegedly by the suffragettes.

Our June meeting started with a talk entitled 'A One Name Study or sort of' given by Stuart Ingham. He related how he became interested in the first name 'Diladidilve' from a letter dated 1841 and the family bible in which it is spelt 'Dilavivulve'. The name has many variations of spelling throughout the years but is believed to be derived from the time of William I. During our break we enjoyed strawberries, cream and scones along with tea, coffee and cold drinks. Our evening concluded with a quiz compiled by Bryan Pledger which included many questions based on talks given in the last few years.

Hit a brick wall; come and join us at our Drop-In Sessions at Bracknell and Wokingham Libraries.

Sandra Barkwith and Bryan Pledger

Newbury Branch newbury@berksfhs.org.uk

Jenny Mallin spoke to Newbury Branch in May 2019 about her Anglo-Indian heritage. Titled *A grandmother's legacy*, her talk was based around a 175-year-old book of recipes, passed down through five generations of her family. Jenny introduced her great-grandmothers who, together with their families, had lived in Mysore and the south of India. We then sampled some Indian food which Jenny had brought for us.

Indian ancestry turned up again in June, at our last meeting before the summer break. Tony Hadland took the DNA route to discover whether or not a family story of Spanish ancestry was true. Apparently, it wasn't: the Victorians were renowned for

explaining dark skin as “Spanish”, when so often it was due to Indian ancestry and, on the basis of his DNA test, this turned out to be overwhelmingly more likely in his family. The process also put him in touch with a previously unknown second cousin, and thereby uncovered an entirely separate and hidden adoption story.

Meetings break each summer until September, but library outreach continues in Newbury, Hungerford and Thatcham throughout. A degree of confidentiality applies to individual cases, but Judith Thomas, our outreach co-ordinator, has compiled this interesting summary of her experiences at Newbury Library:

“There’s been no shortage of emotion on Friday mornings at the family history advice sessions at Newbury Library over the last four years.

- Tears, when a widower carrying on his wife’s research found an elusive ancestor.
- Frustration, when the only way to proceed seems to be to wait for the release of the 1921 census or the Second World War records.
- Surprise, when Romany ancestors were uncovered.
- Disbelief, when it seems a grandfather had adopted on his marriage a new surname and a fictitious father.
- Elation, when all the clues such as a regular Christmas card from “relatives” and a grandmother from Porthmadog finally fitted together, to produce a family tree which led back to a minor Edwardian celebrity who played both rugby and soccer for England.
- And amusement, when we’ve come across (female) ancestors with names like Himalaya Dunn, Antilious Seddon and Fanetty Smith, or when a grandfather married four times in the 1870s, twice bigamously.”

Penny Stokes & Judith Thomas

Reading Branch **reading@berksfhs.org.uk**

In March, Tom Doig spoke on the subject “Old Photographs for Identification”. In what was an entertaining and informal talk, Tom’s key suggestion was that we should focus on the type of image created rather than the costumes worn by the sitters, when attempting to date old photographs. Fashion does not travel very fast around the country and what may be fashionable in London may not reach Reading for ten years. Subjects photographed may be poor and be less likely to buy latest fashion. Additionally, sitters sometimes used costumes provided by the studio. A more reliable method is to look at the materials of the picture and its surrounding mounts. These can be used to accurately identify a certain studio.

In April, Gill Thomas spoke about “Welsh Ancestors, Language, Culture and Geography”. The English language has been used in Wales since 1733, prior to that Latin was common. Worship was conducted in Welsh. Non-Conformity regularly practiced included Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers and Unitarians. Jewish worship was established in Goat Street, Swansea c.1750. The Catholic faith was only missionary status prior to 1850.

In May, Mark Bowman explored the 1939 Register and its origins and uses in a highly entertaining and informative talk. On Sunday 3rd September 1939, war was declared, Royal Assent being received on the 5th September. Impressively, by Friday 29th September, 65 000 enumerators were assembled to complete national registration and issue identity cards to a population of 41 million people, over just a four day period. After the Second World War, this register was used to set up the National Health Service and the Act was finally repealed as late as 1952. Identity cards were used for rationing during the

war, thus giving incentive to keep records up to date. The N.H.S. register was kept up to date until 1991.

Drop in sessions at The Centre for Heritage and Family History continue on the last Thursday of the month.

Graham Vockins

Vale Branch
vale@berksfhs.org.uk

Our speaker at our April meeting was Sue Smith who gave us a talk entitled 'Stories of Conscientious Objectors in First World War Oxfordshire'. Compulsory conscription came into force following the Military Service Act of 1916.

Approximately a third of all men who were called up asked for exemption but only a small number of these were Conscientious Objectors (COs). Such men would have to appear before a local tribunal, the records of which have not survived, so Sue had to use local papers for her research.

There were around 17,000 COs nationally, many of whom accepted non-combatant work such as in the Friends Ambulance Unit. Some 6,000 refused all war work and were sent to prison where they were given hard labour such as ploughing moorland. Most were not released until 1919 at the earliest and then found that returning troops took priority for any jobs.

Sue described what happened to a number of Oxford men, including John Hoare, the son of a bishop, who had Christian pacifist views. He was arrested at University College, but the CID Officer apparently withdrew to allow him to have tea with his mother! He refused alternative service and was sent to Wormwood Scrubs for 6 months hard labour. He accepted work at Wakefield and Dartmoor prisons as an alternative to service, but in 1918 he refused to continue and was sent back to prison. He went on to do youth work in London and in 1933 became a Quaker. He

is featured in the White Feather Diaries, a project to publish the diaries of five COs from WW1.

Our May meeting was the branch's Annual Meeting, followed by a discussion with the theme of research using free websites. There were plenty of suggestions and subsequent discussion about using these websites and even seasoned researchers found out about some they hadn't used themselves. Vanessa kindly accumulated a list and distributed it after the meeting.

Our June meeting saw the return of Dr Simon Wenham, who gave a talk on 'Poverty, Pestilence and Public Health in Victorian Britain'. During that period, the country experienced dramatic transformation because of industrialisation and urbanisation. The nation became the 'workshop of the world', had the largest empire ever seen, introduced universal education and improved the lives of many of its citizens as a result of technological innovation, social reform and new leisure pursuits. However, despite these considerable advances, Britain was a divided country, as poverty, disease and crime all remained stubbornly persistent.

Whilst Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Booth and others focused on the urban poor, Booth showing that 35% of those living in the East End of London were living in abject poverty, rural poverty was just as extreme. Simon outlined the typical daily diet of the rural poor – dried bread in soup, possibly with an onion for breakfast; bread with hard, dry pieces of skimmed milk cheese for lunch and potatoes and cabbage for supper. Issues related to poverty included prostitution and crime with the rise of gangs such as the Scuttlers in Manchester in the 1870s.

With regard to pestilence, Simon listed a number of occupational diseases such as Phossy Jaw, which was most commonly seen among match workers, famously, the

“London matchgirls,” whose strike of 1888 brought the problem into the public eye. Others included Black Lung disease (Pneumoconiosis) in coalminers and Brown Lung disease (Byssinosis) in textile workers, especially young girls working in the cotton mills.

Although TB caused a quarter of all deaths, Cholera was the most feared disease. 50,000 died in a single outbreak in Sunderland in 1831. Such outbreaks produced a change in attitude towards state intervention and the 1847/48 cholera epidemic drove action, resulting in the 1848 Public Health Act. It was however a bit of a half measure and in 1875 another act was introduced, which forms the basis of the current law.

John Snow, an English physician, is considered one of the fathers of modern epidemiology, due to his work in tracing the source of a cholera outbreak in Soho, in 1854, to a public water pump. He showed that the Southwark and Vauxhall Waterworks Company was taking water from sewage-polluted sections of the Thames and delivering it to homes, leading to an increased incidence of cholera. Such outbreaks, together with the Great Stink in July and August 1858, prompted Government action and led to the building of London’s sewerage system by the civil engineer Joseph Bazalgette. His work ensured that sewage was no longer dumped into the Thames and brought an end to the cholera outbreaks.

Simon Burbidge

**Windsor, Slough and
Maidehead Branch
windsor@berksfhs.org.uk**

It has been a busy 2019 for the WSM branch, so busy that we neglected to provide an update for the last Historian (sorry!), so here is a summary of our year to date.

In January, we held a members’ open evening, with “Interesting Finds Night”. Our regulars and some new faces did a series of show and tell presentations with objects, heirlooms, photographs and fascinating stories. A fun night which varied from a Bodgers chair to death by Powerpoint on Polish Jewish genealogy (that was me).



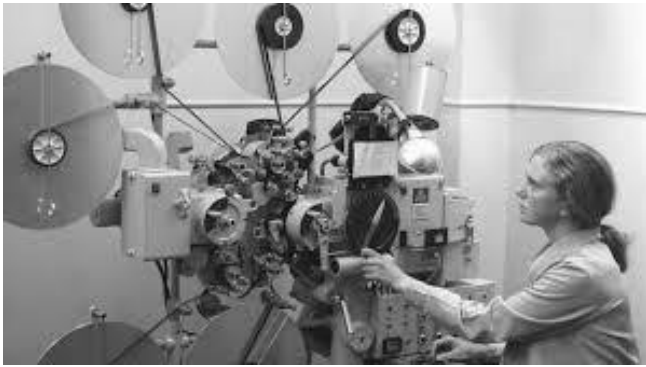
February saw our more regular speaker format with “The First Railway Workers” by David Turner, who considered the careers and lives of early railway workers between 1825 and 1870. Why did they join the railway? From what industries did they come? What was early railway work like?

March was not poor or mad in the slightest, but our talk by Louise Taylor “Poverty and Madness from Stepney to Colney Hatch” was based on her study of sixteen women from Stepney who were admitted to Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum (Colney Hatch) in the late 19th century. She drew on evidence from Charles Booth’s poverty survey, Poor Law Union and asylum records, to tell the stories of individual women.

April detailed “The Police Strike of 1919” by Steve Beamon, who is a member of the British Transport Police History Group and spoke of the strike that shook the Empire after the passing of the Police Act of 1919.

May is our regular branch annual meeting, where the rather ungentlemanly elbowing aside of all in my path saw me take the helm as WSM branch chairman. This was followed by the rather more civilized, if considerably more deathly, “A Titanic Story by Paul Blake, the story of the

Goodwin family and a mystery not solved for 99 Years.



Finally, June was the Society AGM where it was the WSM branch's great pleasure to host the meeting in Maidenhead at the Berkshire College of Agriculture's splendid William East Room. About 60 members

attended, which made us comfortably quorate for the Society business to be transacted. That was followed by a well-received talk on "Film and Sound Archives for the Family Historian" by Kathy Chater. Millions of Individuals, some professional performers, but most ordinary folk, have been preserved in film and sound archives. Kathy explained how to find out if your ancestors - walking, talking or acting - are in them, delivered with an obvious depth of knowledge and a great sense of humour.

Leigh Dworkin

Black and Asian Merchant Seamen in the First World War

Dr Jesse Ransley, anthropologist and archaeologist, at the time of writing this article working at the Marine Archaeology Trust, explores the stories of black and Asian merchant seamen during the First World War

In 2018 Dr Jesse Ransley wrote the following article about a group of people that many have never heard of.



"In 1914 Britain had a maritime empire. Goods, people, materials and ideas moved by sea. Nearly 2/3 of the food and drink consumed in Britain came from abroad. This global maritime supply network – that fed and fuelled civilian and military populations – was key to the First World War.

The crews of the ships that connected the empire were international. 30% of British merchant mariners were 'foreign'. 17.5% were classed as 'lascars' (of Asian or Arab origin). That is 1 in 6 or about 51,000 men. Chinese, Arab, Asian, African and West Indian seamen were recruited in colonial ports like Aden, Lagos, Kingston, Cape Town, Bombay, Singapore and Hong Kong and from black and Asian sailor communities in British ports including London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Barry, Cardiff, Hull and Southampton.

Three Lascars on the Viceroy of India (National Maritime Museum [no restrictions])

Yet the stories we tell of the First World War often focus on soldiers in the trenches, naval battles and the sacrifices of white, British men.

The Marine Archaeology Trust's 'Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War' project investigates the 1,000+ wartime wrecks along England's south coast and focuses on the little known but vital struggle that took place on a daily basis just off our shores. Among the stories these wrecks tell are those of their crews – and of the black and Asian seamen who risked, and often lost, their lives on those ships.

These are not always comfortable stories. Many of these men were British colonial subjects, like the white seamen from Canada, New Zealand or Australia, but they were paid less (1/3 to 1/5 of the wage of men on standard or 'European' contracts), received fewer rations and smaller living quarters. Their conditions and rates of pay provided lucrative savings for the private shipping companies that made up the 'British merchant marine'.

Racist ideas about supposed physical attributes determined a seaman's role on a ship. Many black and Muslim seamen worked in the engine rooms or 'stokeholds' – dangerous and physically exhausting work in hot and noisy conditions. Hindu Asian and Chinese seamen frequently worked in galleys and on passenger liners it was Catholic, Portuguese-Asian men (often from Goa) who were stewards and in roles requiring interaction with white officers or passengers.

Casualties and deaths among black and Asian seamen were disproportionately high, in part because they worked in the most dangerous places. Ships sank fast and it was hard to reach lifeboats from below decks. A direct hit on an engine room was likely to be fatal.

These men had not joined the Navy but risked their lives anyway. Most had little choice. Many had lost their land as a result of imperial expansion and an imperial racial hierarchy, based on European ideas about race which emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, governed their working lives. In 1916-1917 there was a crisis in British shipping in Bombay when thousands of Indian seamen, including c.4000 Punjabis, took safer jobs with the British Mesopotamian labour corps. But new colonial regulations and coercion rather than better conditions forced them back to sea.



SS Aparima in 1906 (public domain)

Black and Asian seamen do not appear on the 1928 Mercantile Marine War Memorial at Tower Hill, London. Instead, they appear on other Commonwealth memorials in Mumbai, Hong Kong or Suez. Historian John Sibbon suggests that the Imperial War Graves Commission separated seamen so that only white British and European sailors would be commemorated in London. The memorials of the seamen who died on the SS Aparima certainly reflects this suggestion. Of the 56

who died, 54 were British colonial subjects. The 24 white New Zealanders are all listed at Tower Hill, but the 29 Indians are recorded in Mumbai and the Chinese second carpenter in Hong Kong.

This post-war practice reflects some of the reasons why stories of black and Asian seamen are not often told in histories of the First World War. The records through which their lives are traced were written by colonial administrators and shipping companies for particular commercial and political purposes. Names were anglicised. Identities were blurred and memorials whitewashed. First World War histories are also histories of empire and race. They are not always comfortable, but they are British histories – black, Asian and British histories.”

You can find more information on black and Asian seamen in the First World War, including a free booklet, on the project website

<http://forgottenwrecks.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/lascars>

Dates for your diary

5 October 2019, 10.00 – 16.00*

Oxfordshire FHS Family History Fair

Marlborough School, Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1LP

www.ofhs.org.uk

24-26 October 2019, 9.00 onwards

RootsTech London Conference

Excel London, One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL

www.rootstech.org/london?cid=bl-fsup-8055

2 November 2019, 10.00 – 16.30*

WSFHS Surrey Family History Fair

Woking Leisure Centre, Kingfield Road, Woking GU22 9BA

www.wsfhs.co.uk/pages/openday.php

30 November 2019, 12.00 – 14.00*

Berkshire Family History Society Christmas Book Market

The Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library,

Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BG

www.berksfhs.org.uk

* *Berkshire FHS present with a stand – come and have a chat with us*

News from the Berkshire Record Office



By Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist at the Berkshire Record Office

What new archives are now available at the BRO?

Recently catalogued items which may be of interest include the records of Shinfield manor and estate, 1424-1811 (D/EZ194); a stray poor rate book for Shrivenham, 1895 (D/EZ195), as well as deeds for property in Reading, 1895-1954 (D/EX2691) and Windsor, 1909-1910 (D/EX2697). We have also catalogued the diaries of the Revd James Randall (rector of Binfield 1831-1859 and later Archdeacon of Berkshire), 1814-1840, (D/EX2418); the papers of George Brewer of Binfield and Warfield, schoolmaster, 1860-1872 (D/EX2617); the records of the Wernham family of Chieveley (D/EWN) and the papers of Dorothy Kaminski (nee Wernham), who was a governess in Warsaw and escaped with the Polish family who employed her when the Germans invaded Poland in 1939.

A number of early baptism registers for the Reading Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, 1836-1900 (D/MC1) and Reading Primitive Methodist Circuit, 1831-1955 (D/MC2) as well as numerous clubs and societies such as the Reading Co-operative Allotment Association (later Reading Allotment Society), 1910-1968 (R/D147); Sunningdale and District Gardening Association, 1936-2016 (D/EX2661); and the Datchet Working Men's Club, 1881-1986 (D/EX2481) are also now available.

Our website has lots of information about family and local history in general, as well as our opening hours and online catalogue; you can even read our latest newsletter and see what events we have on – why not take a look: www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/. If you're interested in seeing something, please do visit, but if you're not able to come in person, we can still assist you remotely; just use our online contact form on the website and get in touch.

What's going on at the BRO?

We hope to have a new exhibition towards the end September relating to the Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes to tie in with their centenary. At the time of writing, full details are yet to be confirmed, but will be available on our website once they are.

Behind the Scenes at the BRO

11th November 2019, time 10:30 to 11:30

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

How to Read Old Handwriting Workshop

18th November 2019, time 10:15 to 14:45

Always wanted to know how to read old handwriting, but don't know how? Then come along to our workshop! It will be held at the Berkshire Record Office where we will look at samples from 16th to 18th century documents held here. Cost is £20 per person. There are 10 places available and booking is essential. Please email arch@reading.gov.uk or call 0118 937 5132.

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 researchcentre@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
Wednesdays	10.30 to 16.00
Saturdays	10.30 to 16.00
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 83p; Overseas postage costs will be between £2.80 and £3.60 according to country. Prices correct at March 2019) 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.

Women's Suffrage: the cause in Reading

Dr Margaret Simons gives us an overview of events surrounding the fight for women's suffrage in Reading

February 6th 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the passing of The Representation of the People Act, which extended the vote to all men over the age of 21 and to those aged 19 and above in the armed forces. However, more significantly, it gave the franchise to women, specifically those who were aged over 30 and who met the £5 property qualification. This newly enfranchised population voted for the first time a month after the Armistice on Saturday 14th December 1918. It was a key moment for women's suffrage and one that had been anticipated and continually debated in Reading as elsewhere for over 50 years.

In 1866 1500 signatures were collected for the first mass women's suffrage petition and the lone signatory from Berkshire was a Mrs Eliza Ratcliffe, Principal of the Burlton House Ladies' School in Castle Hill, Reading.¹ John Stuart Mill, MP, presented the petition to Parliament and proposed an amendment to extend the franchise to all householders regardless of sex who met the qualification of the second Reform Act of 1867. Although defeated, support came from both sides of the house and from 1870 onwards bills in favour of women's suffrage were presented on an almost annual basis.²

In 1872, the National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS) organised a meeting at Reading Town Hall. Chaired by George Palmer, the hall was crowded with men and women. He argued the case for the extension of the franchise on the basis of equality and fairness, to him, a matter of common sense. He argued that the 1869 Municipal Franchise Act qualified 500 women to vote for town councillors, yet they were excluded from full suffrage. He ended by saying, "It could not be right to perpetuate injustice towards one half of the human race."³ The meeting agreed that the Chairman should sign a petition in favour of the current bill.

For many, however, it was a subject which challenged traditional thinking regarding the role of women in society, their intellectual abilities and aptitude for matters such as politics. At what appears to be the next major meeting in Reading in May 1878 headed 'Taxation and Representation,' indecision and uncertainty are evident. The chairman and Mayor, Mr J. Silver, made it clear that he did not entirely sympathise with the subject, but was reported as saying:

'In common with everyone he never could oppose women's rights. They could not be opposed. They had all the argument and sympathy as well as the persuasive power on their side. As to the question of the franchise, he would certainly prefer trusting himself to the quiet thoughtful vote of the women than to the excited balderdash emanating from beer and sawdust.'

Perhaps he could see both sides but could not quite relinquish the established way of doing things. George Palmer moved the first resolution stating:

'...it was contrary to free and constitutional government that any number of persons should be deprived of representation in Parliament and that the suffrage should, therefore, be given to women.'

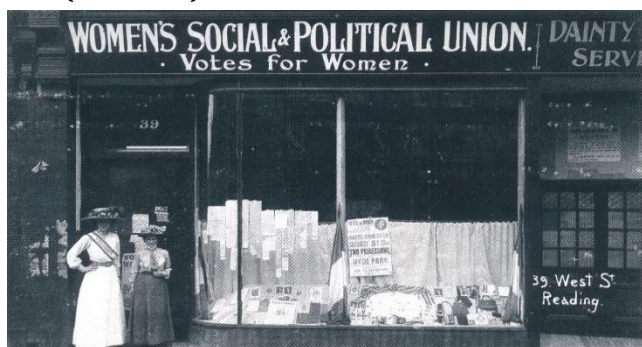
Interestingly, Palmer went on to say that enthusiasm in favour of women's rights in Reading was lacking and further evidence to suggest that the cause still had some way to go came from the Rev. C. D. Du Port who said he had:

'...asked two men above the average of culture and education to attend the meeting, one sent him a few lines of rhyme, and the other, a clergyman, said it was too good a joke for him to stand by him on such a platform in Lent.'⁴

In 1878 George Palmer was elected MP for Reading and, in his maiden speech in the Commons, he was in support of a private member's bill to grant women the vote. He asked, 'What is the best thing to be done in the interests of the country?'⁵ In his answer he cited the case of his mother, who with substantial lands and responsibilities, was disqualified from voting simply because she happened to be a woman.

At the old Town Hall in January 1887 Palmer was joined by Millicent Fawcett of the NSWV. After a short introduction by the chairman, the resolution was put forward that the Parliamentary Franchise should be extended to women who possessed the relevant qualifications and who, in matters of local government, had the vote.

During the 1895 general election the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was formed under the leadership of Millicent Fawcett. Suffragists had no



Courtesy of Reading Library's Local Studies Collection

particular political allegiance, used legal and peaceful means to further the cause, continued with the introduction of Parliamentary bills and spread the word through meetings. However, frustrated by the 'so near and yet so far' results of the organisation, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel, with others, WSPU shop at 39 West Street, Reading established a breakaway group in 1903. The Women's Social and Political Union or WSPU embraced a more militant approach to the elusive franchise and the suffragettes adopted the slogan 'Deeds not Words'.

Until 1907, it is suggested, there was little in the way of a concerted following or presence of suffragists in Reading until the NUWSS formed a local group.⁶ They were followed in October 1908 by WSPU and Mrs Pankhurst was enthusiastically received at the time by an audience at a local meeting which included a number of men. The large amount of heckling and disturbance suggested many still held different views.

The first militant suffragette activity takes place in Reading in January 1908; a liberal party meeting was infiltrated by seven suffragettes who stood up at intervals and shouted, 'Votes for Women' or 'What about the Women'. Their outbursts were met by calls of 'chuck her out' and they were physically removed from the meeting, one dropping on her way out a leaflet outlining '14 reasons for supporting women's suffrage'.⁷

Both the NUWSS and WSPU opened shops in Reading selling suffrage literature. WSPU had shops at 39 West Street and 49 Market Place. The WSPU campaign in Reading, it is thought, focused on the women working at Huntley and Palmers and on a group of men who were in favour of women's suffrage. The NUWSS had committee rooms at 154 King's Road and a stall in the market arcade for literature.

On June 13th 1908 the NUWSS held a procession of 13,000 women to the Albert Hall and among their number were 70 members of the Reading Women's Suffrage Society. The Reading banner was followed by 50 to 60 members and amongst those heading the group was Councillor Edith Sutton. Teachers and nurses were among the dozen working women taking part, the female doctors joined the medical section of the March and one walked under the banner of the Primrose League.⁸ The Tilehurst group of the suffragettes held their first meeting in December 1908 and opinion was divided. One speaker said it was the view of the meeting that militant action was alienating people to the cause instead of winning them over, another stood and defended this approach as necessary if the issue were to be taken seriously.

In December 1909 there was a meeting of the Reading Branch of the National Anti-Suffrage League in the Palmer Hall, Admiral Fleet was in the chair. Mrs. Colquhoun was reported as saying:

‘that there would be danger to the State if the vote were given to women. It was necessary that they should have a clear idea of what the vote meant.’⁹

About this time David Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, came to Reading to canvass for the liberal cause and to lend his support for their candidate Rufus Isaacs. At the tram sheds, Mill Lane, on January 1st 1910 a crowd of 6,000 gathered. Although precautions were taken to keep out likely troublemakers two canny suffragettes, Miss Streatfield and Miss Hudson, infiltrated the meeting. They were eventually discovered and ejected, but not before one of them shouted, in response to Lloyd George who was making a reference to robbery:

‘You’re a robber, because you take the women’s money and don’t give them the vote.’¹⁰

As Lloyd George left the meeting Kenneth Duke Scott of Hurst Nurseries, Twyford, seized him by the collar and refused to let him pass. Scott was a notable supporter of women’s suffrage and acted on behalf of the women. Order restored, a note was given to one of the newspaper representatives, which said:

‘Don’t you think you’re a miserable hypocrite to reject as you do the just claim of women for enfranchisement?’¹¹

Later Scott defaced his copy of the 1911 census return form, refusing to give the names of the female members of his household.

A suffragette demonstration on July 15th 1910 at the corner of Station Road used the statue of King Edward VII as a podium and to display the WSPU banner. That the large crowd listened to the speakers showed a level of interest in their controversial demands. Mrs Pankhurst herself was in Reading later in the year when she addressed a meeting in the large Town Hall. Others on the platform were Miss Edith Morley, Dr Esther Carling and



WSPU shop in 49 Market Place, Reading (ground floor of the light-coloured building) Courtesy of Reading Library's Local Studies Collection

Mr Carling. A resident of Caversham, Mable Norton, took action and was sentenced to seven days in Holloway for her part in a demonstration. In her account she said:

'I wasn't a bit hysterical when I took a small hammer and smashed five windows one after the other. I did it quietly and deliberately. Then walked down the street to the police station cheered by a friendly crowd.'¹²

In March 1914 at least two church services were interrupted in Reading when a suffragette stood up to offer a prayer for Mrs Pankhurst who was once again in prison. On both occasions the women were allowed to proceed, showing perhaps a certain level of tolerance, but this was before the fire at Wargrave Church and the threats made to St Mary's in the Butts.

Whether it was the outbreak of war that saved St Mary's from such a fate we shall never know, but it was war that proved the catalyst for women's suffrage. The issue continued to be debated during the war years, but the militancy stopped as many women focussed their energies on the Home Front. In taking on the jobs of men and by using their skills and abilities on all fronts to aid the war effort, they converted even their most ardent opponents. In 1918 the Reading electorate had increased to 45,379, but now it included 18,305 women.

¹ <https://www.parliament.uk/1866>

² A further nine Reading-based women added their names to the universal suffrage petition of 1869. <https://livingreading.co.uk/news/suffragettes-in-reading>

³ *Berkshire Chronicle*, December 7th 1872

⁴ *Berkshire Chronicle*, May 4th 1878 This article is the source for all of the quotes from this meeting.

⁵ Corley, T.A.B., *Quaker Enterprise in Biscuits Huntley and Palmers of Reading 1822-1972* (London, 1972) p. 117

⁶ <https://livingreading.co.uk/news/suffragettes-in-reading>

⁷ *Berkshire Chronicle*, Jan 25th 1908

⁸ <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/five-reading-citizens-and-fight-for-votes-for-women>

⁹ *Reading Standard*, December 11th 1909

¹⁰ *Reading Standard*, January 8th 1910

¹¹ *Reading Standard*, January 8th 1910

¹² <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/five-reading-citizens-and-fight-for-votes-for-women>

Margaret is running a workshop on Saturday 16th November looking at what information can be found about those involved with the fight for women's suffrage. See the events pages for more information.