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Berkshire Family Historian

for family historians in the Royal County of Berkshire

June 2006

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Chairman's note

I'm extremely pleased that we have our first issue of the *Berkshire Family Historian* provided by our new editor Penny Stokes. I'm sure that this is just the first of many to come.

I do not wish to pre-empt anything Penny may say or write, but would like to ask any of our many members who are considering writing an article to send it direct to Penny for possible inclusion in future issues. There must be a few budding authors out there somewhere.

We appear to be going from strength to strength with people going to the branches, and we can build on this. It appears that many people wish to trace their families, but get stuck at the first hurdle in knowing how and where to start. This is where the branch members, with their greater experience, can provide much useful information and assistance, as it is this first failure which causes many future researchers to give up far too early.

I intend that these notes be kept short as, like me, you are more interested in reading the rest of our journal.

Nigel Saltmarsh

Another year

The society's year closes with the Annual General Meeting, which this year is held at 19.15 on Tuesday 27 June at the Christ Church United Reformed Church, William Street, Windsor.

This issue of the *Berkshire Family Historian* carries an invitation to members to renew their subscriptions. The benefits of this modest sum are remarkable: copies of this journal, free access to a research centre and reference library packed with search tools, and the online discussion group to name but a few. Don't delay - renew today.

Berkshire Strays Index - an update

A stray is a recorded event in which a person is described in the source record as being from, or connected with, a place outside the area in which they normally lived or were born.

Federation of Family History Societies
<www.ffhs.org.uk/General/Help/Strays.htm>

From Abingdon to Bury St Edmunds; Aldermaston to Bristol; Hungerford to Hastings; Maidenhead to New Zealand; Newbury to Yorkshire ... Berkshire people stray far and wide, and for many years the Berkshire Strays Index has aimed to round them up wherever they appear. It could never be complete, but the index now stands at 20,500 entries, consisting mostly of census entries (69 per cent), with some emigration, address, marriage and burial details, and other information from numerous sources. Much was taken from the slips held in the Research Centre as part of the Berkshire

Name Index (BNI) along with information sent by members when they discovered a Berkshire stray in the course of their own research.

It should be stressed that the index is just a finding aid. Any information gained from it should always be checked with the original documents.

All the census details can now be fully searched on the internet, as can the deaths of both world wars, the IGI, and the births, marriages and deaths of many parishes. The need for a strays index is decreasing rapidly as more information comes online, and more people have the ability to search. There is no advantage in adding details from a searchable website to the index, so no more data will be added, but the index, which has been computerised and forms part of the BNI, will continue to be available at the Research Centre.

Margaret Young

An editorial introduction

It was with considerable trepidation that I slid into the editorial chair. I have some publishing experience, but responsibility for a magazine that has won the Elizabeth Simpson award is a daunting undertaking. I would like here to pay tribute to John Gurnett, the former editor who earned the award, and who has been enormously supportive as I stumbled around this unfamiliar territory. I should also like to thank Chad Hanna for his helpful introduction and for editing the last issue, thus freeing me to find my way around my new tasks rather than being pitched in midstream.

I've been busier during the last six weeks than at any time since my retirement five years ago. I'm already finding the job rewarding, stimulating and increasingly addictive. I hope that I can translate these qualities onto the page, such that you as readers find the magazine equally compelling.

I must take this opportunity of exhorting you as members to send feedback into the magazine. I live in the west of West Berkshire, so I am particularly keen to

acquaint myself and maintain contact with the eastern half of the county, but I look forward to receiving contributions from members wherever they are, and I note that a significant (and vociferous) proportion of the membership lives overseas. I should like to see some growth in *Write Now*, the section specifically dedicated to members' comments, stories and queries. I hope that some of you will also be tempted to longer endeavours, and that you will submit articles for publication. If you want suggestions for research topics you have only to ask.

The features we publish are usually, but not invariably, Berkshire-related. One of my jobs is to maintain a balance of regional relevance, family history versus local, the academic versus the anecdotal, and many other editorial factors. Sometimes I may have to hold back an article for reasons which may not be obvious to the writer. Please don't be discouraged by this.

Above all, read and enjoy.

Penny Stokes

News from the Berkshire Record Office

New BRO acquisitions include:

Hurst baptisms 1890-2004, marriages 1950-2003, banns 1847-2003, burials 1869-1961. Speen banns 1834-1868.

Minutes of Maidenhead Waterworks Company 1874-1957, and Wokingham District Water Company 1926-1934.

The day book of Wokingham ironmonger E. A. Bullock 1935-1936.

A booklet presented to Reading's school-children in 1905 to commemorate the centenary of Trafalgar and 1930s photographs of the staff and pupils of Kendrick Girls' School. Records of Wokingham Townswomen's Guild and the Cookham, Cookham Dean and Pinkneys Green branch of the British Legion.

From 1 April BRO research fees increased to £18 per hour (£9 per half hour). Mark Stevens, senior archivist, acknowledges that increases are never popular, but he points out that this is still a very competitive rate for research.

Also increasing are the charges for certified (i.e. handwritten) copies of baptisms and burials to £12 per copy, in line with Church of England fees. Other copying charges remain unchanged.

Spaces are still available for the BRO introductory visits scheduled for Mondays 10 July and 9 October. Each begins at 14.00 and takes about an hour. Ring 0118 901 5132 to book a place.

Surname profiling

a new slant on family history

An academic research project into demography and migration has resulted in the creation of a fascinating and free online tool for family historians.

The Surname Profiler is part of a joint research initiative by UCL, the University of Nottingham and the University of Leicester, supported by numerous other academic bodies. Researchers investigated the distribution of surnames in Great Britain, both current and historic, in order to understand patterns of regional economic development, population movement and cultural identity and, in so doing, collected the most common 25,000 family names in the UK from the 1881 census and the 1998 electoral register. From this they built the Surname Profiler website, which maps surname concentration by county, and is freely accessible to the public.

Searchers can key in a surname and generate a map which shows its distribution in either 1881 or 1998. Surprisingly, this regional distribution of many surnames has remained consistent over the generations. Smith is the

most popular surname, with more than 500,000 Smiths in the UK. Jones is not far behind, followed by Williams and Brown respectively.

The map is based on index values, which means that it shows the relative rather than quantitative occurrence of a name. Thus unusual names, provided that they are in the database, are mapped as extensively as Smith and Jones.

Additional information presented in a table shows the linguistic derivation of the surname, ethnicity, frequency, ranking and occurrences per million names for both years. The site will also generate a table of international comparisons for that name, covering Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada.

The basis is explained in detail on the website, which can be found at www.spatial-literacy.org/UCLnames. Note that this is a change from the web address published when the site was first launched.

News from neighbouring counties

The new **Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre** at Cocklebury Road in Chippenham is under construction, and the archives will be moved there in 2007. This will mean a limited service for Wiltshire and Swindon archives from the spring of next year. No original records will be produced throughout the period of moving, but there will be a reduced service for users of microfiche readers available in Trowbridge during the summer of 2007.

The new centre aims to open in the autumn of 2007. More precise dates will be available nearer the time.

Oxfordshire Record Office is now closed on Tuesdays, opening only from Wednesdays to Saturdays.

Wiltshire Family History Society is holding an **open day** on Saturday 17 June from 10.30 to 15.30, at New College, Queen's Drive, Swindon. FHSs present include Berkshire, Bristol and Avon, Dorset, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Hampshire and Somerset.

Ock Street Abingdon

in search of a vanished community

Visitors to Abingdon, if they are historically aware, will certainly have noticed Ock Street. Half a mile long, reasonably straight and remarkably wide, it has plainly been a major approach road to the ancient town for a very long time, as well as an obvious location for markets and fairs. Leases from the thirteenth century show that it was partly built up even then, and a survey of the sixteenth century lists 88 holdings spread along its two sides.

Over time, the inhabitants of Ock Street developed into a distinct community with its own economy based on industrial labour, its own non-conformist religious practices, and its own cultural icons

such as the morris dancers, who elected a mayor of Ock Street and vied for the trophy of the Ock Street Horns. By the nineteenth century Ock Street (and the crowded courts behind it) was home to almost a third of the population of Abingdon.

This tradition came to an end about the middle of the last century, when slum clearance (carried out, it would seem, with no great sensitivity) dispersed the inhabitants to soulless new estates on the outskirts of the

town. But the memories persist, and they are being explored in a new project within the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society.

It started in 2004, when the Abingdon Buildings Record, a group primarily interested in the architectural history of the town, held a public meeting in Ock Street. The response

was unexpected; so many people were turned away that a second meeting had to be held. The interest and enthusiasm generated led to the formation of an Ock Street Research Group, which now unites local historians with a variety of specialised skills in an effort to recover the



Floods in Ock Street in 1894

history of this unique community.

2006 is the 450th anniversary of Abingdon's first charter and, as part of the celebrations, the Ock Street Research Group plans to put on an exhibition of its findings to date. This will be at the Trinity Church Hall in Conduit Road, Abingdon, just round the corner from Ock Street, from 29 September to 1 October 2006. Everyone will be welcome.

Email your enquiries to <local@aaahs.org.uk>.

Win £350 for yourself - and £150 for your society

The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies is marking its 50th anniversary with a competition. The task is to write a biography of an ancestor born before 1890, using genealogical research. The judges will be looking for an interesting and well-written account putting the ancestor's life into a social and historical context. The prize is £350, plus £150 to the family history society of the winner's choice.

Entry is free, and the closing date for submissions is 1 February 2007. Full details and an entry form can be found on <www.ihgs.ac.uk/contact/competition.php> or by post from IHGS Competition, 79-82 Northgate, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1BA.

Military memorabilia and help with your queries

If you have a military photograph, medal or cap badge needing identification, bring it to the Victorian Military Society's Victorian Military Fair on Sunday 11 June 2006, where the society's experts will do their best to help. Advice about records and sources of information is also available at no charge, but please note that the society cannot give a valuation on any item.

There will be stands selling militaria, toy and model soldiers, military prints, books on military history, ephemera, stands from museums and publishers, displays by the award-winning re-enactment group The Die Hards (re-creating the Middlesex Regiment of the 1880s), a corps of fifes and drums, and lectures by guest speakers.

The fair is being held at Firepower, the museum of the Royal Artillery in Plumstead Road, Woolwich, London SE18, from 10.00 to 17.00 on 11 June 2006. There is free car parking

and Woolwich Arsenal station is only four minutes' walk away

(the route is clearly signposted). Entry is £3, with children under 16 (and anyone in period costume) free. The admission ticket for the fair also gives half-price admission to the museum.

The Victorian Military Society is an international, non-commercial, organisation which exists to promote the study of military history of all nations and races in the period 1837-1914. For further details contact the Victorian Military Society, 20 Priory Road, Newbury, Berks RG14 7QN (01635 48628) or visit the website at <www.vms.org.uk>. Email address is <vms-dan@msn.com>.



Gay and lesbian archives

The National Archives and London Metropolitan Archives are working in partnership on a pilot project to bring together archival collections from across the UK that are relevant to lesbian, gay and transgender history.

The launch of *Out There* was scheduled to coincide with Lesbian and Gay History Month in February. Organisations already contributing include Borthwick Institute for

Archives, Brighton Ourstory, London School of Economics and Political Science, National Register of Archives, Access to Archives (A2A), and Archives Hub. It is hoped other UK archives will add their material to expand the portal, making it easier to see what information is available, where and how to access it. To learn more visit <www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

More in store at 1837 online

1837online.com now has a vastly expanded range of archives following its acquisition in April of the National Archivist files. The NA databases contain digital images of original military, colonial and professional listings, emigration and passport application records. The National Archivist site (not to be confused with The National Archives) has now closed down,

and subscriber accounts have been transferred to <www.1837online.com>.

1837online now boasts complete county coverage of both the 1861 and 1891 censuses for England and Wales, claiming to have transcribed "more fields than any other online census" (excluding county census transcriptions such as the Berks FHS 1851).

Diary dates

Sat 10 June 14.00 to 16.30
Introducing wills: talk and workshop with Dr Gillian Spraggs. £7.50
London Metropolitan Archives 020 7332 3820

Sun 11 June 10.00 to 17.00
Victorian Military Fair at Firepower (museum of the Royal Artillery), Plumstead Road, London SE18 01635 48628 (see opposite)

Sat 17 June 10.30 to 15.00
Wiltshire FHS open day at New College, Queen's Drive, Swindon

Tue 27 June 19.15
Berkshire FHS AGM at Christ Church URC, William St, Windsor

Sat 15 July 10.00 to 17.00
Kent FHS open day at Maidstone Leisure Centre, Mote Park, off Willow Way, Maidstone ME15 7RN

Sat 29 July 10.00 to 16.00
Bucks FHS 30th anniversary open day at Grange School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury

1 - 5 September
Putting flesh on the bones: study of the common man
Beds and Northants FHSs international conference in association with the Federation of Family History Societies at University of Northampton. Details from <www.conference2006.org.uk>

Women warriors online release of WAAC

The National Archives celebrated International Women's Day in March with the release online of 7,000 newly digitised records from the Women's Army Auxiliary Service (WAAC) 1917-1920.

These were the first British women to serve in a combat zone, although they were not on combat duties. Women in the WAAC were divided into officials (officers), forewomen (sergeants), assistant forewomen (corporals) and workers (privates). They did not enjoy full military status, being enrolled rather than enlisted, and they were employed in telephony, baking, waitressing, electrical work, cooking, typing, printing, signalling, clerking and despatch carrying. Even so, their working conditions entailed

distinct physical risk. They endured shelling from heavy artillery and bombing raids by German aircraft. During one attack in April 1918, nine WAACs were killed at the Etaples Army Camp, and three others received the Military Medal for their bravery under fire during an air raid at Abbeville.

Between January 1917 and the Armistice over 57,000 women served in the WAAC. However only 7,016 of the records survived the depredations of World War Two. These records detail the women's military service, physical appearance, age, marital status, family details, civilian employment and character references. They can be accessed through <www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.



WAAC motorcyclist in World War One

As others see us

family history's image in the media

A sure sign that genealogy is the new gardening is the emergence of opposition. Miles Kington wrote in *The Independent* earlier this year under the headline *My name is MK and I'm not tracing my family*. He went on to say: *Forget avian flu. There is another, more insidious disease, already infecting large numbers of people in Britain. Its technical name is "genealogophilia". Its medical name is "obsessive family history disorder"*.

Not many of us have the kind of ancestry that makes good newspaper copy, so the press now inflicts involuntary genealogy on celebrities. The *Daily Mail* has recently been fossicking in the family trees of the famous. Marianne Faithfull turns out to be the fifth cousin of Joanna Lumley, and her great-great uncle, an Austrian aristocrat called Sader-Masoch, emerges as the source of the word masochism. The singer James Blunt is credited with family connections to an improbable trio of the Irish playwright J. M. Synge, prison reformer Elizabeth Fry and the founder of Barclays Bank.

In Stephen Poliakoff's play, *Perfect strangers*, broadcast earlier this year, a vast and uneasy family gathering is assembled, with the predictable tumbling of skeletons from cupboards. Family historians will have enjoyed the unintended humour of one scene in which Alice, played by Lindsay Duncan, has a brief word with the "family archivist" about how to set about researching her ancestry, and is then seen tapping feverishly at a keyboard. Later the same day she rushes into the foreground waving what appears to be an extensive family tree on A3-sized paper, and claiming that she is descended from a famous eighteenth-century aristocrat.

But if it were that easy, where would the fun be?

One must, of course, be prepared for unwelcome news. Nick Barratt, the genealogist who researches *Who do you think you are* and is *The Daily Telegraph's* "family detective", recently discovered that his great-uncle, a civil servant in the Foreign Office, spied for Stalin in the 1930s, and subsequently committed suicide rather than be exposed.

The best possible start in family history

***A course of five evening
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at the
Berks FHS Research Centre***

***Mondays 4 Sept to 2nd Oct
19.00 to 21.30 £25***



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Family history afloat

The Waterways Trust has recently launched a website, Virtual Waterways, opening up the history of British waterways.

<www.virtualwaterways.co.uk> offers a free online search through the records of more than 40,000 waterways, covering the histories of local communities on and around waterways, vessel histories, enhanced family history information from canal workers' records, local environmental and habitat studies of waterways corridors, heritage and listed building studies and archaeological investigations.

The collections consist of material relating to British Waterways and its predecessors, the original companies that built and maintained the network of inland waterways, dating from the sixteenth century to the present day. The source materials are located at 15 different repositories across the UK, making research difficult for family historians in the past.

Virtual Waterways is a live resource that will continue to grow, with new information being added to the database. Plans are already in hand to catalogue the records of the post-nationalisation bodies up to 1970, and to include photographs.

The Cox Library

For more than 150 years Berkshire has had a deep involvement with the racing industry. Ascot and Windsor were just two of a dozen or so racecourses operating within the county in Georgian and Victorian times, and Lambourn has been home to the racehorse training industry since the mid-nineteenth century. Berkshire's family trees are more likely than most to contain a jockey, stable lad, trainer, tipster, breeder, bookie or racecourse official, but whilst racing celebrities have enjoyed prominence in print, those who underpinned the industry with less glamorous labour tend to be harder to trace.

Family historians in pursuit of a racing ancestor should therefore take note of the Cox Library, a remarkable archive which formally opened in 2003 in Dorking. The library is the private collection of Timothy Cox, painstakingly put together over many years. True, Tim Cox is more interested in horse pedigrees than those of humans, but his material on

the organisation of the horse-racing industry is full of personal names, extending all over the world. From these archives, for example, the riding careers of jockeys in India, France and Hungary have been traced for family historians.

The Cox Library contains books, magazines, newspapers, scrapbooks, prints, postcards, cigarette cards, postage stamps, games and ephemeral material, such as betting tickets and racecourse badges. One of many resources not easily accessed elsewhere by researchers is a complete run of the *Racing Calendar* and its predecessors from 1727 to the present day. All items are for reference only. The collection occupies a three-floor extension to Tim Cox's private house, and access is therefore at his discretion and convenience. Details, including a catalogue, may be found on <www.thecoxlibrary.com>. Enquiries can be submitted through the site,.



Racing at Port Meadow, Oxford in 1799. An engraving after Sartorius

Hungerford

archives of town and manor

Fred Bailey, archivist of the Hungerford Historical Association, details a storehouse of local information of great interest to family historians.

The archives of the Hungerford Historical Association are housed in an upstairs room in the Methodist Church Hall, which is at the rear of the Methodist Church in Bridge Street, Hungerford. It mainly contains records on the history of Hungerford, gathered either by research or donation over the past 25 years. The range of subjects is diverse, but the archive deals mainly with the history of the town itself and its development, rather than with individual family histories.

When the association was started in 1978, members formed research groups to enquire into various aspects of the history of Hungerford, and the bulk of the material held on file is the result of this initial research. Much of it was carried out by the Buildings Group, which looked into the history of the prominent buildings in the High Street, and in this area the records are quite extensive. In other areas many documents are unique,

being the original research records of individuals into various aspects of the town's history, passed to the association for safe keeping.

There are over 170 publications dealing with aspects of the town's history. These have been purchased by the association or donated over the years to form as complete a picture as possible on all aspects of the history of the town and the surrounding area. The archive holds a comprehensive collection of maps of Hungerford and Berkshire, and also several photograph albums illustrating the history of the town and its prominent characters and events.

Also held are copies of the notes used by many of the speakers at the association's monthly meetings; by this method members and researchers can benefit from other people's research.

The original parish records of births, marriages and deaths are held in the

*Hungerford mapped by
Ordnance Survey in the first
edition 1881-87
(from the Berks FHS CD of
Berkshire maps, available
from the bookshop:
see centre pages)*





Charnham Street, Hungerford, in 1906

Berkshire Record Office in Reading, but the association holds transcripts of all of these. Enquirers should bear in mind that these transcripts cover only the parish of St Lawrence Church, whereas Hungerford can also mean the old Hungerford parish, extending over a far larger area including the Bedwyns, Titcombe and other villages. The county boundary changed in the 1890s, which means that some records of the wider Hungerford area may be found in the Wiltshire rather than the Berkshire Record Office.

Records of family history are gradually being built up, and to date there are on file details of 32 Hungerford families, a few of which are quite extensive whilst others contain only a single sheet at present. These records can only be built up when individual researchers into their family history

donate a copy of their findings to the association.

A complete catalogue of the records held by the association is available on the association's website <www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk>. Should researchers wish to visit the archives this can be arranged by contacting the archivist Fred Bailey on 01488 682243 or by email to <fred@hungerfordfred.fsnet.co.uk>.

Alternatively, initial research can be undertaken by the archivist on behalf of the researcher, normally without charge. Charges are however made for any copies which are required, together with postage as necessary. Over the years requests for help have been received from researchers into family and town history from places as far apart as Canada, America, Australia, and Vanuatu in the Pacific.



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Who was who down on the farm?

Jonathan Brown explores the hierarchy of agricultural labour before the machine age.

Who were the people who worked the land? The census for 1851 recorded 1.1 million males and 143,000 females as farm workers in England and Wales. There were many different types of work and workers contained within that total.

There was a hierarchy amongst the labourers on the farm. The shepherds were reckoned to be at the top, for sheep husbandry had enjoyed status in English farming for centuries. The independence of the shepherd also set him apart. The horsemen might dispute that precedence, and on some more arable farms it is arguable that they did hold the top rank. Certainly they held a senior status. If there was a farm foreman, he more often than not was appointed from the ranks of the horsemen.

The men who worked with the horses were usually specialists; the man at the head of the stables certainly was, although some of those who assisted him in the fields may have been ordinary labourers. These specialist horsemen were styled differently in various parts of the country. In the north east of Scotland, for example, they were called simply horsemen, as they were in Essex and Suffolk. In Suffolk they might also be known as baiters. In Kent they were usually referred to as waggoners. There were also waggoners in the east Midlands and Lincolnshire, although horseman was also used. Carter was another common term, used throughout most of southern England, and ploughman another widespread name. Less common was teamsman, the style used in Cheshire and Lancashire.

The workers with cattle had lower

status. They were variously described as cattlemen, byremen, or garthmen, and there were dairymen and maids. Below these specialists came the mass of general labourers, commonly called day labourers in the nineteenth century.

On large farms there was likely to be further hierarchy, most clearly seen with the horsemen. The head horseman was answerable to the farmer or his foreman, and under him came the second horseman, third horseman and so on down to the junior ploughboy. On large farms six or seven horsemen were not unusual, with two or three lads who generally did the light jobs until they were old enough and strong enough to take on ploughing. Precedence was rigidly maintained: the head horseman's authority over the stables was unquestioned. He passed the farmer's orders on down the line of horsemen, and expected the respect due to his position. The head horseman always had the best horses, and he led in everything, however small. He was the first to enter the yard in the morning, first to feed his horses, first to harness.

Most of those specialist workers, such as the horsemen, shepherds, cowmen and dairymaids, were employed by annual agreement. The hiring fair was the occasion for agreements to be struck, when the waggoner would stand in the market place with whip in hand, and the shepherd with his crook to betoken his work, and await the approach of prospective employers. In the more northern areas of England at least, this custom was still alive into the twentieth century.

In the mid-nineteenth century census returns these people hired by the year were the ones distinguished as farm servants (indoors). By farm servant the census meant employees who were boarded by the employer, most often in the farmhouse, but sometimes in an outhouse or perhaps billeted with the farm foreman. In some parts of the country these might be referred to as “confined men”. Young single people were most often employed in this way. They might also be described as servants, maids and boys. Boys and girls might enter farm service between the ages of 12 and 15. The initial arrangement was usually between the parents and the prospective employer. This was, for example, how Flora came to leave Lark Rise to enter domestic service in Laura Thompson’s *Lark Rise to Candleford*.

After this initial engagement the servants could move of their own accord. The farm servants were hired and paid by the year. At the year’s end, when they were free to move on, many did: study of parish records can reveal the frequency. In the eighteenth century and for most of the nineteenth, these moves were effected through the hiring fair, or statutes, as they were commonly called. That was not an exclusive method: hiring could be made by private arrangement, and by the late nineteenth century advertisement was increasingly the way to get a job and an employee.

When they got married the young man’s or woman’s employment as an indoor servant was likely to come to an end. There were, of course, many older, married horsemen and cattlemen, still paid by annual agreement, but



living in their own cottage. The term servant was still applied to them in many quarters. The census returns were not likely to include those living out as servants. There remained also some confusion in the census returns between the figures recorded for female farm servants and domestic servants, even of farmers’ relatives.

However recorded and described, farm servants were in decline. In the 1851 census farm servants formed 17 per cent of the total number of agricultural workers. Estimates for the eighteenth century were that they had made up between a third and a half of the agricultural workforce. Decline was by no means universal. In some parts of the country, such as North-umberland and the wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, over 40 per cent were still living in the late nineteenth century, and the practice had not entirely died out by the beginning of World War Two.

The second broad category in the census returns was the agricultural labourer (outdoors), which meant those who lived out of the farm, and therefore included some of the specialists as well as the general labourers.

By the turn of the twentieth century the whole concept of farm work was starting to change. The term labourer was giving way to farm (or agricultural) worker, a change symbolised in the name of the new agricultural workers’ union founded in 1908. Some of the specialist terms were changing, as byremen and garthmen became stockmen, and soon tractor-drivers replaced horsemen. With that also went much of the established hierarchy on the farm.

Jonathan Brown is the business records officer at the Museum of Rural Life in Reading. He is the author of “The English market town”, “The horse in husbandry” and “Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1945”.

Aldermaston

a parish portrait

Tom Hine

Aldermaston is one of the most unspoilt villages in the Kennet valley. The village lies halfway between Reading and Newbury, and is best reached by turning south off the A4 close to the railway station where the wharf, lock and narrow swing bridge soon come into view. After crossing the Kennet and Avon Canal here, another mile or so brings one to an old iron bridge spanning the river Kennet with the Old Mill Hotel on the right hand side. This was a working flour mill until the 1920s.

A little further on lies the recreation ground, in the north-east corner of which is the old village lock-up, said to have been last used in 1865. Next is the Hind's Head, boasting a clock tower with a gilt fox as a weather vane. This tower also housed the village fire alarm bell, which was used until the fire brigade was disbanded in 1930. In 1800 this inn was called the Congreve Arms, for in those days the village belonged to the Congreve family.

Halfway through the village is the old blacksmith's shop, which is now Aldermaston Pottery, exporting its wares all over the world. At the top end of the village, where the road forks, is a deep well,

believed to be Roman. It was discovered when a cow broke through the cover in 1940.

In some Berkshire villages there are quaint customs relating to the fair distribution of land. At Aldermaston a piece called Church Acre is let by candle auction every three years. On 13 December villagers gather at the parish hall to drink hot punch, whilst the churchwardens and the lord of the manor smoke churchwarden pipes. A tallow candle is lit, and a horseshoe nail is pushed into it about an inch below the flame. Traditionally the first bid for the rental is made by the vicar, after whom those people interested continue bidding. The candle burns down, and the nail eventually falls, at which point the highest bidder secures the land for the next three years. The field lies in Fishermans Lane, and it measures two acres, one rood, and 33 poles.



Aldermaston mapped by Ordnance Survey in the first edition 1881-87 (from the Berks FHS CD of Berkshire maps, available from the bookshop: see centre pages)



*Aldermaston Court
(Phil Wood)*

Aldermaston's main street rises from the Hind's Head through a medley of brick and tile houses fronting directly onto the roadway, with gardens at the rear. The street climbs to the entrance lodges of Aldermaston Court, which are of brick, and are Dutch-gabled. They were once the wings of a house, the centre of which was pulled down to create the entrance to Aldermaston Court. Splendid iron gates (said to have been won in a card game from the owner of Midgham House) complete this entrance.

Formerly Aldermaston Manor, this was the home of the Achard family from 1227 (when they entertained Henry III here) until 1361. It is not known what the Achards' house looked like, but their heirs, the De La Mares, appear to have built a quadrangular building of the type that was popular in the late fourteenth century, almost at the side of the parish church. Only the elaborate chimneys survive after the younger Sir Humphrey Forster who had inherited Aldermaston, mortgaged the estate to rebuild the house. (His enemies claimed he used the money to support the King's cause in the Civil War.)

Aldermaston Manor burnt down around 1843, just as the last of the Forsters' successors, the Congreves, died. Fortunately the beautiful wooden staircase survived, together with some stained glass, and some five years later both were incorporated into the newly built house of Daniel and Mary Higford Burr, Aldermaston Court. This is an Elizabethan-style courtyard house, standing 200 yards east of the original manor house, the cellars of which still exist beneath the

lawns. Mary Burr's initials can be seen in the brickwork of an imposing tower. The house was sold in 1893 to Charles Edward Keyser, who donated some land next to the church in 1923 for modern burials.

Aldermaston Court was again sold in 1939 to Associated Electrical Industries together with the estate, farms and park. The company intended to relocate here from London, but in the event it was all requisitioned by the government, and an airfield constructed, later to become the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment. The estate is currently owned by Blue Circle Cement, which occupies lakeside offices. The manor house is now an hotel and conference centre.

Aldermaston is in the hundred of Theale, and its parish church of St Mary the Virgin was once a Saxon minster. The Achard family gave the parish church, mentioned in the Domesday book, to Sherborne Priory in Hampshire. Nothing remains of it today, and the site is unknown. Aldermaston's present church, the second, was probably started about 1150 and, following tradition, built close to the manor house. The church adjoins the mellowed brick wall of the park. Its architectural features include a fine late Norman doorway with much cable moulding and bird-adorned capitals, and a triple Early English lancet window containing two circular panels of thirteenth-century stained glass, the first depicting the Annunciation with figures in white on blue ground, and the second the Coronation with the ground again blue and the flesh of the figures tinted. The walls are



*Aldermaston Church
of St Mary the Virgin
(Phil Wood)*

decorated with paintings, some of which are old, notably the large fresco on the south wall of St Christopher with the Infant Christ in his hand and a mermaid and fish below his feet.

The church has many memorials to the Forster family, who owned the manor for some three centuries, and here several times entertained Queen Elizabeth. The finest of them is the alabaster tomb to Sir George Forster and Elizabeth his wife “wiche Elizabeth dyed the VII day of December in the yere of our lord god MCCCCXXII.” Sir George’s feet rest on a hind, and his head on a helm, while his lady has the comfort of a pillow supported by angels, and the solace of a pet dog tugging at her cloak. The sides of the tomb are elaborately carved into niches

holding their 12 sons and seven daughters. The tomb suffered slightly when an arch collapsed in the 1830s, but the damage is not great.

The fourteenth-century tower rests on a thirteenth-century arch. The short steeple was built of timber in the seventeenth century. There is a peal of eight bells.

Aldermaston has further attractions. In these gardens one John Stair first propagated the William pear in 1770. The mill to the north stands on a lovely site, where the river Kennet is joined by the smaller river Enborne. Nearby, Aldermaston Wharf is adjacent to the lock, with its various water activities, and beside the lock are the remains of what was once a large brewery, now long gone.

More about Aldermaston

can be found by searching on Access to Archives <www.a2a.org.uk>, which catalogues 143 holdings in several repositories.

Berkshire Record Office holds the following parish registers: baptisms 1558-1869; marriages 1558-1965; burials 1558-1992; banns 1754-1812, 1823-1918; registers of services 1903-1969; marriage licences 1811-1860; benefice papers 1906-1979.

The 1815 parliamentary enclosure award for Aldermaston can be downloaded from <www.berkshirenenclosure.org.uk>.

The Berks FHS CD of Monumental Inscriptions for Aldermaston (1533-2002), including photographs, is available from the Berks FHS Bookshop (see Mail Order Booklist in centre pages).

The Newbury Coat

a tale of 195 years ago

Judy Rebbeck Watten, a member living in California, spotted this anecdote in a book of 1886 entitled The House of Wayland, written by Robert Waylen of Devizes. It is reproduced here as written, with no editorial corrections.

John Coxeter the owner of Greenham Mills at Newbury, who always took care to introduce the best and latest machinery into his business, encountering at a market dinner Sir John Throckmorton of Buckland House, and the conversation turning on recent inventions, Mr. Coxeter ventured to say, "I could take off your coat and resolve it into wool and remake it into a coat in the space of 24 hours." And so fully did the manufacturer, in private conference, secure the baronet's confidence, that at a subsequent dinner Sir John himself became the challenger, and laid a heavy wager that between sunrise and sunset a coat should be made of which the wool should the same morning be growing on the sheep's back. In accordance with the terms of the challenge Sir John appeared at five o'clock in the morning of 25 June 1811 at Greenham Mills in company with his shepherd and two Southdown sheep. With prompt dexterity the quadrupeds were closely shorn; the fleece was then washed, stubbed, roved, spun, and woven, the weaving being done by Mr. John Coxeter jun. beside whose loom there stood Mr. Toomer of Newbury (of whom it was recently said, he still survives to tell the tale.) By four o'clock the cloth was scoured, fulled, tented, raised, sheared, dyed, and dressed; just eleven hours from the first clip of the shepherd's shears. Mr. White of Newbury performed the "cutting out" and

then nine tailors "cut in" with a will, needle and thread in hand, and "fixed up" the promised garment by half-past six or seven o'clock, a good hour and three-quarters before the stipulated time. Arthur Mursell who relates the story, says that while recently enjoying the hospitality of a descendant of Mr. Coxeter, his attention was attracted by a picture representing a tall stout elderly gentleman standing on a raised platform and putting on a coat in presence of a large group of spectators, which picture he first imagined must represent the conclusion of a prize-fight - till his host explained that it was Sir John Throckmorton drawing on the famous "Newbury Coat" in front of Mr. Coxeter's drawing room, in presence of the crowd which the tidings had collected. Meanwhile the two sheep were roasted, and devoured by the people with the aid of 120 gallons of strong beer distributed by Mr. Coxeter himself. The chief performers in this "dress rehearsal" dined together with the hero of the drama; and the coat, which was a large hunting garment of rich damson colour, was exhibited in the 1851 exhibition at Hyde Park, where it occupied a mahogany case with strong plate glass; and it now hangs in its case in the hall of Buckland House, a "sign" Mr. Mursell finally observes "of what our forefathers could do by getting up early in the morning, and taking tups and time by the forelock".

The Newbury Coat is now on display at the Throckmorton family seat of Coughton Court, in Warwickshire. A second Newbury Coat was produced on 21 September 1991 in a re-enactment of the feat. It can be seen in the West Berkshire Museum in Newbury.

Margaret MacDonald Kemsley's last journey

Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury, a Berks FHS member who is currently doing a History of London Diploma at London University, undertook this personal pilgrimage to gain an understanding of what her great-grandmother suffered as a smallpox victim of the 1880s.

Sometime during the 1940s my paternal grandmother told me a story that has haunted me ever since. She told me that her first memory was of wearing a coat, which had a cape attached, trimmed with black. She was with her two-year-old brother and he was wearing a black armband. The year was 1889 and she was four years old. The two children were put on a train and sent from their home in Kent to West Hartlepool. On the train, she heard someone saying, "Poor little orphans". When she asked what orphans were, she was told it meant somebody who had no parents. This was the first intimation she had that her parents were dead.

She told me that she learnt eventually that her parents had died of smallpox on an isolation ship at sea. As a small child, I had a picture of two people being sick on board ship and then being unceremoniously tipped over the side!

About three years ago, when my interest in family history began, I determined to find

out more. My search took me to Montrose, in the north of Scotland, to the London Metropolitan Archives, the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and eventually to the Radio 4 *Making History* programme.

I discovered that in the 1880s smallpox patients were taken from all over London to one of two specially built wharves at Greenwich and Rotherhithe. There they were examined.

The medical superintendent at the time wrote: "Conditions were far from ideal. The receiving room at South Wharf Rotherhithe, measured 12 feet by nine, only six inches longer than a stretcher, and had to accommodate four people as well as the stretcher. The only source of heat was a smoking stove, the lighting inadequate and the floor and walls made of rough-hewn wood."

Patients were then put on an ambulance steamer, and sent down to the mouth of the Thames where they were put on one of the three hospital boats bought for the purpose by



The Atlas, one of three ships used for isolating smallpox victims



Hospital ships moored at Long Reach

the London Metropolitan Board. These were the *Castilia*, the *Endymion* and the *Atlas*.

In February 2005 the producer of the Radio 4 programme *Making History* contacted me and invited me to join Angela Robson, a BBC researcher, for a day in London on the smallpox trail. On one of the coldest days of the year I met up with Angela and Peter Higginbotham, an amateur historian with an encyclopaedic knowledge of both workhouses and isolation hospitals.

Our first stop was at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, home of the first smallpox hospital. However the local NIMBYs soon put paid to that, and smallpox patients were removed to a purpose-built isolation hospital down river at Dartford, or to one of the three isolation ships.

From Hampstead we drove to the London City Farm at Greenwich, where some of the brick wall from the wharf still stands. It was a freezing cold day, snow sleeting down in our faces and a cruel north wind driving through our clothes. I shivered not only with the cold, but also with the image of my great-grandmother being put on board a ship on one such February day 115 years earlier.

From Greenwich we drove through London to find the site of the Joyce Green Isolation Hospital. The area became increasingly drab, endless brown-field sites, car lots and run-down shopping precincts. As the scenery became more depressing so did my mood. I began to wonder whether the reality of the research was just a step too far.

After a long drive and much map reading we found Joyce Green Lane, a cart track which

we followed until it petered out. We abandoned the car to walk through blinding snow, struggled across a field, picked our way over a mossy plank, across a ditch and stumbled across the remains of the isolation hospital bristling with signs warning us to keep out.

We walked on, slipping and scrambling up a bank, and at last came up on to the bank of the Thames. I had no idea that the Thames was so wide at this point. The scene was of utter desolation compounded by the mournful hooting of a couple of dredgers making their way upstream.

We were able to pinpoint the spot where the isolation ships were moored midstream, and I felt so emotional and a real connection with the great-grandmother I never knew. I hoped that when she went on board she was too ill to know or care about the two small children she was leaving behind, and that her death was quick and free of pain. She was 25.

From there we drove back to the London Metropolitan Archives, where I hoped to find out more about my great-grandfather. Unfortunately time was against us, and although the archivist had been briefed by the BBC, there had been some miscommunication, and he had not looked up any records for us.

So, as so often happens in family history research, I was left with a question. Was my grandmother's recollection correct? Had both her parents died of smallpox? I told myself that if my great-grandfather had lived, surely he would not have sent two small children to a new life so far from London with relatives that they hardly knew.

I traced my grandmother and her brother in the 1891 census to West Hartlepool, and found her living as she had told me with her aunt and uncle, who already had nine children. Sadly, her brother was in the workhouse. Perhaps they just could not take in another child. I know that my grandma's hands were put to good use, as she told me of the jobs that she used to do; cleaning the knives with paste, polishing her cousins' "snap" boxes (five of them were miners), helping to turn the mangle, and pegging out endless baskets of washing.

What I would give for an hour with her now to ask all the questions I never thought to ask.

She had a rich and happy life, living to over 90 surrounded by children, grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. Sadly, her brother died in World War One at Ypres.

There was no cure for smallpox. The recovery of the patients depended on their previous good health and level of nutrition. The dice were very heavily loaded, as always, against the poor of London, and at the height of the epidemic 20,000 Londoners died.

More about hospital ships and smallpox epidemics

can be found at Peter Higginbotham's website

<www.workhouses.org.uk/MAB-HospitalShips>

and on

<www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.68/chapterId/1661/Containing-smallpox-in-Victorian-London.html>

Murder in Wantage

Declared by the Coroner's Inquest to have been murdered by George King, who separated the head from the body by one stroke of a beanhook on the evening of 30th August. He was apprehended the next morning, convicted at Reading 29th February 1834, and executed on 3rd March. Ann Pullin. Died 30th August 1833.

This gruesome tale was uncovered by Berks FHS member Meg Goswell in the course of transcribing material from the Wantage register for the National Burial Index. Although farm accidents and deaths by fire were relatively routine, this entry struck her as sufficiently startling to merit further investigation.

She learned that Ann Pullin was murdered at the White Hart in Wantage, where her body was found the next morning by her 10-year-old stepson James, her decapitated head still with cap tied under the chin. Money was missing.

George King, an 19-year-old labourer from Cumnor and Mrs Pullin's former lodger, was found blood-stained and in possession of money that could not be accounted for, including Mrs Pullin's "lucky sixpence". During his trial at Reading Assizes several witnesses testified to his presence in the bar of the Blue Boar on the fateful evening, and at the White Hart later. King pleaded not guilty, and he had legal representation, but his defence was weak. The jury took just half an hour to find him guilty. The trial and subsequent hanging were followed in detail by the *Reading Mercury* and *Berkshire Chronicle*. These accounts suggest that by modern standards King might have been considered unfit to plead. The autopsy carried out by police surgeons after his hanging discovered brain damage from a farm accident years earlier.

The National Monuments Record in Swindon

Jane Golding, outreach officer of NMR, details a little-known source for family historians

Given that historic photography is a key resource for family historians, an archive of over eight million photographs, dating from the 1840s onwards, is likely to be of considerable interest to researchers. It should be noted first however, that historic buildings and landscapes form the principal focus here rather than portraiture (although people often feature in the images held). These are the holdings of the National Monuments Record (NMR), the public archive of English Heritage, which can provide a wealth of information if you are interested in the local history of the places where your family used to live.

Developing a sense of identity through an understanding of the past lives of family members often requires gaining a similar understanding of a sense of place. This involves not only discovering where our ancestors lived but also finding out more about their locality and community. Outreach work at the NMR has recently developed a number of community projects which have helped people to become actively involved in exploring the history of their own locality. Each project has taken inspiration from people's memories and individual family histories and linked these to community and formally held archives, such as those held by the NMR. The second half of this article looks at these projects in more detail.

But first, what does the National Monuments Record hold? The NMR's collections arise from the work of national institutions concerned with research and survey programmes of the buildings and archaeology of England, and from records they acquired from others. The scope and content of the collections is therefore wide-ranging. Holdings include modern and historic photography, coverage of the whole of England

in aerial photographs, information on most known archaeological sites and listed buildings, measured drawings, and a specialist reference library. Although photographs form the largest proportion of the NMR's holdings, collections also include plans, reports, correspondence and digital files. A substantial number of images from the NMR are now available online (see page 23).

There are a number of ways to gain access to the images and information held by the NMR: you can browse the online sources; visit the public search rooms in Swindon; or use the enquiry and research services. The NMR offers a remote enquiry service that provides a comprehensive search for information on your area of interest. For some collections, such as vertical air photographs, a formal search request is essential. Search requests are handled free of charge providing they fall within standard search criteria (for example for air photographs a geographically defined area not exceeding nine square kilometres; and for buildings information, a single building per enquiry). However, if you would like to request a more specialised search, such as a thematic search, the staff will be happy to advise details of services and relevant fees.

Aerial photography can provide a good visual historical reference of a place by creating a point-in-time record of the landscape from a unique perspective. The NMR holds the largest public archive of air photographs within England, organised as two distinct collections (oblique and vertical) each acquired from different sources. More than 680,000 oblique (taken at an angle to the ground) aerial photographs of locations throughout England are available on open access in the NMR search rooms. The NMR also holds more than

two million vertical (bird's-eye view) air photographs, covering the whole of England, including near-complete coverage taken by the RAF in 1946-48. Access to these, as indicated above, is via a formal search request.

Of similar interest to family historians, will be the tens of thousands of high-quality period photographs taken by photographers of national acclaim. For example, the NMR holds the surviving negatives and a large number of prints by the commercial architectural photographers, Bedford Lemere and Company (1864-1944). The founder, Harry Bedford Lemere, spent much of his time on extended country house commissions from owners and agents throughout England. As with many professional photographers, a substantial proportion of his work relates to commercial commissions which are now appreciated as invaluable historical records. Illustrated below is a photograph taken by the firm of the Cellular Clothing Company's factory in Rodbourne, Swindon in 1904. The factory was an important local source of female employment, employing around 350 women, whilst the men of Rodbourne were employed in the nearby Great Western Railway's engineering works. The rows of terrace houses in this residential area of Swindon were developed as a late Victorian working-class suburb to provide housing for the workers of the Great Western Railway Company.

The NMR itself is housed in the former General Office of the GWR, so it naturally followed that the NMR's outreach team should select Rodbourne for its pilot community project. This aimed to give local people

the resources to explore the history of their own community for themselves through the use of archives. The first step involved setting up a community archive using the community archive network software, Comma. The second photograph (opposite page) is typical of the type of photograph loaned to the project by local people. Over 700 photographs have been scanned and are now held within, and shared by, the community. The group then made two short films on the history of the area, in which they combined old photographs, people's memories and a range of archive sources, including air photographs from the NMR. Open days were held in the local community centre attracting an audience of over 600 people. Participants not only gained new skills, but also an increased local knowledge and pride in their area with a sense of how this can contribute to the future of the community. A similar project has recently been completed on the Marsh estate in Lancaster. Ideas and guidance on how community local history groups can undertake similar projects will be available on the English Heritage website later in the year.

This paper has aimed to provide a number of illustrations of how the holdings of the NMR may enrich the research of family historians. Given opposite are further details of how you can access the collections, either by contacting the NMR direct or by conducting your own searches online.



*Cellular Clothing Company,
Rodbourne, Swindon, 1904.*

*Photographer: Bedford Lemere & Co
BL 16856A Reproduced by permission of
English Heritage NMR*



*Hawkins Street,
Rodbourne, Swindon, c 1938.
Reproduced by permission of Sylvia Spackman.*

NMR / English Heritage enquiry services

Requests are normally completed within 15 working days, but if the information is required urgently, a priority service is available. The NMR offers a full range of reprographic services and copies of material may be ordered. A Local Studies Resources Pack has been designed especially for people interested in finding out more about their local area. The pack includes: three air photographs, laser copied onto A3 size paper; an index of the listed buildings; and full listings for the archaeology in your area. The pack may be ordered for £15.00, including VAT, from NMR Enquiry and Research Services, NMRC, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ.

tel 01793 414600 email <nmrinfo@english-heritage.org.uk>

NMR online

The quickest and easiest way to view our collections is on our website
<www.english-heritage.org.uk/NMR>

There you will find links to the following online resources, as well as more information about what we can offer. Alternatively, just type in your selected web address directly. All of these resources are free to browse.

Viewfinder <www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder>

At Viewfinder, discover tens of thousands of digital images dating from the 1840s to the present day. Many aspects of England's industrial heritage, social history, architecture and archaeology are caught on film.

Images of England <www.imagesofengland.org.uk>

This ground breaking initiative offers a photographic record of England's listed buildings at the millennium. At present, there are over 230,000 images, with more being added all the time, making this the largest free photographic resource on the internet. Simply log on and search by place, building type or material.

Pastscape <www.pastscape.org/homepage>

This database provides a quick and easy way to find information about many of England's ancient and historical sites, buildings and monuments. The information published online is taken directly from our huge national historic environment database (containing over 400,000 records). Links to maps and aerial photographs on other websites are given, where possible.

Commanet

Details of the community archive network can be found at <www.commanet.org> or telephone 0845 45 88 132.



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Gleanings from exchange magazines

Daphne Spurling trawls the magazines of other family history societies.

Several dozen of these titles are received under the FFHS exchange scheme, and filed in the Exchange Magazine Archive at the Research Centre. They are also taken to branch meetings in Reading and Bracknell, from where they may be borrowed by members. If you cannot get to Reading or Bracknell, but would like to see one of the articles in full, please contact Daphne Spurling on <Dmspurling@aol.com>. It may be necessary to make a small charge to cover postage and photocopying.

How permanent is your CD-R? Conclusion that you get what you pay for, and don't put precious images on a CD-R that costs a few pence.

[*Australian Family Tree Connections*, Jan 2006]

Spotlight on the parish of Cranborne.

[*Somerset & Dorset FHS*, vol 33, no 1, Feb 2006]

Could my ancestor vote? Notes from Northamptonshire Studies.

[*Northants FHS*, vol 27, no 3, Feb 2006]

Taxation records. Part 2 of Adding detail to your family history.

[*Northants FHS*, vol 27, no 3, Feb 2006]

Photographic MI survey: computers and tombstones. Third in series of articles, this deals with downloading and afterwards.

[*Aberdeen & NE Scotland FHS*, no 98, Feb 2006]

Hayes Middlesex.

[*West Middlesex FHS*, vol 24, no 1, March 2006]

The men who fought at Trafalgar. Lists classes of naval documents at The National Archives with a brief description of their contents.

[*Bucks FHS*, vol 30, no 1, March 2006]

Two twentieth-century sources of research: the Lloyd George Domesday [started 1911] and the National Farm Survey [1940/3].

[*Bucks FHS*, vol 30, no 1, March 2006]

Recording interviews: first steps.

[*Bucks FHS*, vol 30, no 1, March 2006]

Portrait of the parish of Llanfrechfa.

[*Gwent FHS*, no 81, March 2006]

The function key: spreadsheets for census records.

[*Hertfordshire FHS*, no 96, March 2006]

A potted history of Malvern and its parishes.

[*The Midland Ancestor*, vol 15, no 5, March 2006]

Have you killed them all off? Brief history of New Zealand with sources for immigrant records.

[*Sussex FHS*, vol 17, no 1, March 2006]

Anglo-Italian Family History Society.

[*Dorset FHS*, vol 19, no 1, Dec 2005]

My parish: Chew Magna.

[*Bristol and Avon FHS*, no 123, March 2006]

Great Ashfield: details of the village including names from several rolls and directories from the seventeenth century to 1900.

[*Suffolk FHS*, vol 31, no 4, March 2006]

Write now

the page on which you have your say

Please send your letters and articles to the editor, either by email to [<editor@berksfhs.org.uk>](mailto:editor@berksfhs.org.uk) or by post to The Editor, Berkshire Family Historian, The Holding, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury Berks RG20 0HW

It will be assumed, unless you ask otherwise, that you are happy to have your postal and email address published for replies.

Seeking Margaret Day

Rosemary Arthur

I have found the baptism certificate of a Margaret Day, daughter of Thomas and Mary Day, baptised at Swallowfield on 9 January 1842. If any of your members would like to claim it, I will gladly pass it on.

Unreliable sources

Patricia Ford (1860)

In this day and age of computers, it's easy to spend hours happily searching for ancestors. It's then that you discover the person you knew had been born in Brighton somehow appears to have been born in Beighton; easy to dismiss if you are English and know about such things, but highly disruptive if you're checking from abroad. I have a Dutch relative whose Christian name was Jacoba, yet this is spelt Jacota on websites. The mis-spelling of a Christian name is less of a concern than that of a surname, which in past centuries could vary; my ancestors named Rowe sometimes appear as Row, and Jefferys can be changed to Jeffries. My Dutch family, mostly and correctly written as Atzema, has once been Atzenia.

Furthermore, not all BMDs appear on websites. Having bought the wedding

certificate of a distant relative and discovered an address, I searched census returns, which revealed that in 1891, the couple were living with a daughter aged one. By 1901 this girl is living with her widowed mother and a sister who was eight. I've entered this second child's name into every website imaginable, and there is no mention of her at all. So I went to a major library and checked the microfiches and found her birth had been registered, but not that of her elder sister. In the 1901 census her age is given as 10, which would seem to indicate that she was born in 1890-1891, tying in with the 1891 census. I've searched everywhere in websites and the basic indexes, checking from 1888 onwards, and there is no mention of this child. So, reversing the advice that not all BMDs feature in the likes of Ancestry.com, I have shown that sometimes a family member is listed whose existence could never otherwise have been known!

Lost Lambournes

Don Lambourne

My ability to get to the 1861 census via 1837online prompted me to look at an old query I had with the movements of my great-grandfather John Lambourne (1817-1896). He was married to Mary Ann in 1845 and had children Sarah 1848 in Chipping Norton, Charles 1857 in the Strand, London, Esther 1862 in Camden Town, London and Harriet 1865 in Wantage.

In the 1871 census John was in Evesham. Rather a wanderer. We didn't discover the members of his family after Sarah until the 1871 census - no baptisms because of being a Quaker. Sarah was by then married to a Quaker. I was concerned about the two big gaps. I couldn't find him in the Berks 1851 census and now I can't find any of the family in the 1861 census.*

Quite by accident when looking at the 1861 census I discovered another John Lambourn (quite unrelated) from Upton with children in Russia. I wondered, did my John go to the Crimea, though I thought it strange, being a Quaker. I thought the five-year gap between Charles and Esther feasible but a nine-year gap between Sarah and Charles most odd. Does anyone have any ideas?

**Shortly before this magazine went to print Don Lambourne told us that he had found John Lambourne in the 1851 census in Lambeth, Surrey, recorded as Lambert.*

Nevills of Hampshire and Berkshire

Guy Nevill

As part of my family history research, I have traced my male line of Nevills back to an Edward Novell [sic] who was married to Elizabeth Allright at Mapledurwell, HAM on 15 November 1725. As yet I have found no baptism or his likely parents.

My search has covered (or I should say is covering because one never stops) likely parishes in Hampshire and Berkshire. Many references to Nevill (all spellings) events have been identified and a name index created.

The Nevill Index now has just over 1,000 references concentrating on the Berkshire Hampshire border. It contains type of record, first name, county, parish, document reference, date of event, record office and cross reference to other members of the

family. I am willing to check it for anyone interested in Nevill (all spellings) ancestors.

In addition to the proven Nevill family tree centred on Odiham, Hampshire, I have a series of conjectured trees based on parishes in northeast Hampshire and southeast Berkshire. Some have been verified by other family historians, in particular much of the Stratfield Turgis tree by Pat Sloan and Jill Lincoln, both of whom I am indebted to for additional information.

In short, if your members are seeking a Nevill and think I may be able to help, then I would be pleased to assist. Similarly, if anyone can throw any light onto the missing Edward, I would like to hear from them.

Please note that for reasons of privacy private email and postal addresses have been redacted from this online archive. If you wish to contact someone named in this issue please contact the society.

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Bookends

Jean Debney presents a bumper bundle of reviews due to the interregnum in editors in the past year.

General research books

Dating twentieth-century photographs

by Robert Pols.

Federation of Family History Societies, 2005.
A5 flexiback, 127pp. ISBN 1-86006-1915
£6.50 Berks FHS Bookshop, or by post
including p&p £7.75 UK, £8.60 abroad.

This is a new title to help you put a date to your family snapshots. The chapters discuss prints, transparent images, pose, costume, special family occasions and backgrounds. As in his other publications, all the example photographs and brief notes are grouped at the back, together with 11 new and useful dating charts: processes, formats, postcards, colour and light, roll film negative sizes, themes and conventions, outdoor settings, vehicle registration, women's clothes (two charts) and men's clothes.

Genealogical jargon for family historians

by Stuart A. Raymond.

Federation of Family History Societies, 2005.
A5 flexiback, 48pp. ISBN 1-86006-192-3
£3.95 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post
including p&p £4.60 UK, £5.15 abroad.

This little booklet is intended as an aide-memoire for those about to set out on the family history trail. The A-Z of definitions runs from *A2A* through to *yeomanry* and is intended to supplement the family historian's pocket dictionary. A very useful publication.

Words from wills and other probate records 1500 - 1800

by Stuart A Raymond.
Federation of Family History Societies, 2004.

A5 flexiback, 114pp. ISBN 1-86006-18108
£8.50 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post
including p&p £9.45 UK, £10.35 abroad.

A-Z from *abb* to *yrne* via *lapis tutty*. A very useful publication.

The National Archives: a practical guide for family historians

by Stella Colwell.

National Archives, 2006. B5 flexiback, 208pp.
Facsimile documents, further reading, useful
address, index. ISBN 1-903365-85-6
£9.99 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post
including p&p £11.75 UK, £13.00 abroad.

Each chapter has sub-headings in the wide margins such as *what will you find?* (in a particular record), *finding aids*, *what if you can't find your ancestor?* and so on. Clear and concise information by an experienced researcher. An excellent publication for everyone.

Berkshire research books

Abingdon Congregational Church: baptisms 1723-29 and 1780-1844, burials 1729-40 and 1787-1853, members 1807-98.

Transcribed and published by the Eureka Partnership, 2005. A5, green flexiback, 64pp.
£4.00 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post
including p&p £4.50 UK, £4.90 abroad.

Indexed lists of eighteenth-century baptisms and burials, supplemented with nineteenth-century members' lists with details of admission and removal. Also an incomplete undated list which may be prior to that commencing 1807.

Reading and District Congregationalists baptisms, marriages and burials.

Transcribed and published by the Eureka Partnership, 2006. A5, grey flexiback, 32pp. £2.50 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £3.00 UK, £3.40 abroad.

More very useful indexed data for family historians. This publication includes Ebenezer Independent Chapel, Oxford Road (C1820-29), London Street Independent Chapel (C1821-24), Castle Street Independent Chapel (CMB1857-62), Hosier St Congregational Chapel (C1865-75, 1888-95; M1867-72), St Paul's Presbyterian Chapel, York Road (C1898-1901; M1898) all in Reading; Pangbourne Independent or Congregational Chapel (C1829-1836; B1838); Arborfield Independent or Congregational Chapel (C1765-1836) and Stratfield Mortimer Independent (C1806-37). There is also a membership list in 1855 for Castle St, Congregational Chapel, Reading. Entries in the Reading chapels include addresses, and rural chapels have entries from surrounding places in Berkshire and some in Hampshire.

Berkshire local histories**The story of Reading** by Daphne Phillips.

Countryside Books, rev ed 2004. A5 flexiback, 192pp. Illustrations, index. ISBN 1-85306-606-0.

£9.95 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £11.30 UK, £12.30 abroad.

A very readable and interesting book about the county town of Berkshire.

The stranger in Reading by John Man.

(first published 1810). Two Rivers Press, Reading, 2005. 200mm x 218mm (7.8" x

8.7"), 132pp. Illustrations, index.

ISBN 1-901677-44-3.

£12.00 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £14.00 UK, £15.20 abroad.

Reprint of an informative eyewitness account of Georgian Reading.

Battle Workhouse and Hospital 1867-2005 by Margaret Railton and Marshall Barr.

Berkshire Medical Heritage Centre, 2005. 160mm x 238mm (6.4" x 9.4") hardback with dust jacket, 420pp. Illustrations, index. ISBN 0-9539417-1-X.

£15.99 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £15.99 UK, £17.20 abroad.

An important record of an important Reading landmark, now due for major development.

The top of Whitley by Daphne Barnes-Phillips.

Corridor Press, 2002. A5 flexiback, 159pp. Illustrations. ISBN 1-897715-01-3.

£8.95 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £10.10 UK, £11.05 abroad.

Whitley, a former hamlet in the parish of St Giles, Reading, now lost under modern development.

Pamber Heath history by Raymond West.

Published by the author, 2001. A4 flexiback, 150pp. Photographs. ISBN 9-780954-144203. £12.50 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £14.50 UK, £15.70 abroad.

Two hundred years' history of the Heath in Pamber, north Hampshire, in photographs, maps, text and local memories.

Sandhurst in the Second World War.

Sandhurst Historical Society, 2005. A5 flexiback, 84pp. Illustrations. £6.00 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £6.85 UK, £ 7.60 abroad.

Personal recollections by local residents. Lots of names and dates of local happenings.

The five villages of Hurley: Burchetts Green, Hurley, Knowl Hill, Littlewick Green and Warren Row by David Burfitt et al.

For Hurley Parish Council, 1999. A4 hardback, 207pp. Photographs, maps. £19.50 Berks FHS Bookshop or by post including p&p £23.50 UK, £25.00 abroad.

A fascinating book covering each of the villages with mainly twentieth-century photographs, historical text, facsimile documents and maps. If you have relatives or ancestors from this area there will surely be something of great interest.

Free rein: racing in Berkshire and beyond, 1700-1905 by Penelope Stokes. Published by the author, 2005. B5 flexiback, 131 pp. Illustrations, index.

ISBN 0-9528339-1-3
£12.50 + £2.50 p&p from the author, The Holding, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, Berks RG20 0HW.

This is a well researched and produced publication by an experienced author. It is illustrated with maps, photographs and three appendices: a chronology of the Cravens in racing, a chart listing the places and dates of racecourses within 40 miles of Newbury and a description of the Berkshire racecourses from 1700 to 1905. There is an extensive bibliography of the sources used. This is an interesting and good read.

The 2nd Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment in World War One by Ian Cull

in association with the Royal Gloucester, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regimental Museum. Tempus Publishing, 2005. B5 flexiback, 192pp. ISBN 0-6524-3571-X £19.99 . Please contact Tempus Bookshop for further details.

This is a well researched and detailed history of the battalion's part in the WWI trenches and elsewhere. There is also a brief history of the regiment, formerly the 66th Regiment of Foot, from its formation in 1758. Illustrated with photographs and maps, there are eight appendices with biographies and alphabetical lists of men who received the Delhi Durbar Medal in 1911 plus the roll of honour, fatal casualties, honours and awards from WWI, etc. The index is limited to the main text only. There are many references to men from Berkshire, making this an important source of family history.

Family history

Whatmore panorama: a family in history by Geoffrey Whatmore.

1st ed 1994, updated 2005. A5 flexiback, 189pp. Price unknown.

Wat's brother-in-law: a social history of the Watmough, Watmer, Watmore and Whatmore family by Geoffrey Whatmore.

1st ed 1982, updated 2005. CD-ROM prepared by Rhys Whatmore. ISBN 0-9522529-4-5. £12 Both published by and obtainable from Geoffrey Whatmore, Morewood House, Abbey Place, Defford Road, Pershore WR10 1JF.

These two publications are the result of a labour of love over many years tracing and compiling the family trees over the centuries of numerous families in England who bear these surnames. Information about the Watmores of Reading, etc in Berkshire and north Hampshire is in ch.14 of the book, *The south country Watmores*.

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Members' interests

compiled by Bob Plumridge
<bob@theplumridges.com>

Please note that for reasons of privacy private email and postal addresses have been redacted from this online archive. If you wish to contact someone named in this issue please contact the society.

5423	AMOR	Reading	BRK	1860-2006	1325	COLLINS	Thatcham	BRK	1800-1851
6042	ANDREWS				1325	COLLINS	Winterbourne		
		Bristol	AVN	1800-1850				BRK	1840-1900
6021	ARGYLE	Abingdon	BRK	1780-1820	1325	COLLINS	Newbury	BRK	1850-1920
5808	BAKER	Westerleigh	GLS	1818+	6014	COOPER	Wallingford	BRK	pre 1900
5808	BARRY	Merthyr Tydfil	GLA	1883+	6032	COX	Flitwick	BDF	1865
5423	BEARD	Shinfield/Reading			5808	DAVIS	Ramsbury	WIL	1840+
			BRK	1816-2006	5808	DAVIS	Ramsbury	WIL	pre 1826
5423	BEARD	Shiplake	OXF	pre 1816	5808	DREWEATT			
5808	BLANCHARD						Ramsbury	WIL	1845+
		Ramsbury	WIL	1826+	6007	DUDLEY	All	BRK	pre 1900
6032	BRAGG	Whitehaven	CUL	pre 1759	6042	FORD	Worting	HAM	1750-1820
5808	BROWN	Ramsbury	WIL	All	6042	FORD	Blackmoor	HAM	1810-1900
5808	BROWN	Westbrook	BRK	All	6042	FORD	Baughurst	HAM	1820-1900
5808	BRYANT	Sherton	WIL	1822+	6042	FORD	Hurst	HAM	1850-1900
5808	BRYANT	Bristol	GLS	1797+	6042	FORD	Portsea	HAM	1800-1850
6014	BUTTON	Wallingford	BRK	pre 1900	6042	FORD	Bucklebury	BRK	1700-1840
6000	CHANEY	Bermondsey	SRY	1850+	6042	FORD	Kingsclere	HAM	1850-1900
6000	CHANEY	Dorking	SRY	1800+	6042	FORD	Basingstoke	HAM	1810-1900
6021	CHAPMAN				5423	GALE	Reading	BRK	pre 2006
		Abingdon	BRK	1780-1851	6014	GAMMON			
6032	CHOULERTON						Wallingford	BRK	pre 1900
		All	DBY	All	6014	GAMMON			
5423	COBB	Newington	OXF	pre 2006			Cholsey	BRK	pre 1900
6007	COLE(S)	All	BRK	pre 1860	3835	GARRETT	All	WIL	All
6007	COLE(S)	Henley	OXF	1851+	6007	GIRLING	Stradbroke	SFK	All
1325	COLLINS	Kingsclere	HAM	1700-1850					

6032	GLAZEBROOK	Stapleford	NTT	1800				
1325	GOLDFINCH	All	BRK	1700-1850				
1325	GOLDFINCH	All	HAM	1700-1850				
6042	GRIFFITHS	Malpas	CHS	1750-1870				
3835	HARSE	All	All	All				
6007	HASTINGS	All	NFK	pre 1850				
6000	HEAL	Wells	SOM	pre 1870				
6032	HEATH	Kingswinford	STS	pre 1780				
6032	HENDERSON	Scotland	SCT	1820				
5808	HIGGS	Yate	GLS	1832+				
3835	HUBBARD	All	SFK	All				
6000	HUGGINS		Blewbury					
BRK	1700-1850							
6000	HUGGINS		Reading					
BRK	All							
6042	HUNT	Steventon	HAM	1800-1880				
6042	HUNT	Southampton	HAM	1850-1950				
6032	JELLIS	Flitwick	BDF	1750				
6000	JENKINS	Barnstaple	DEV	All				
3835	KESSELL	All	CON	All				
6032	LEES	Maxstroke	WAR	pre 1840				
5808	LEWINGTON	Axford	WIL	1831+				
3835	LOVEDAY	All	WIL	All				
3835	LOWTHER	All	WIL	All				
6000	LUXTON	North Devon	DEV	All				
1325	MARTIN	Winterbourne	BRK	1800-1900				
6042	MAY	Sandford Woodley	BRK	1800-1920				
6042	MESSENGER	Waltham St. Lawrence	BRK	1750-1860				
6021	MORGAN	Abingdon						
BRK	1780-1852							
5828	NEWMAN	Kintbury	BRK	pre 1870				
5808	NICHOLLS	Westerleigh	GLS	1852+				
5423	NOAKES	Yateley	HAM	pre 1840				
5423	NOAKES	Reading	BRK	1840-2006				
6032	NUZUM	Dublin	DUB	pre 1850				
6000	ODAM	All	DEV	All				
6000	PARK	Reading	BRK	1870-1910				
6000	PARK	Bristol	GLS	1800+				
6032	PATTINSON	Caldbeck	CUL	1810				
5423	PEARMAN	Great Dunmow	ESS	pre 1870				
5423	PEARMAN	Reading	BRK	1870-2006				
1325	PIATT	All	BRK	1850-1850				
5808	POWER	Merthyr Tydfil	GLA	1849+				
6000	PUGSLEY	Barnstaple	DEV	All				
6021	PUSEY	Sutton Wick	BRK	1800-1851				
1325	PYATT	All	BRK	1750-1850				
5808	RADNEDGE	Bristol	GLS	All				
6032	RODDIS	Pertenhall	BDF	1700-1800				
6032	RODDIS	Flore	NTH	pre 1700				
3835	ROSIER	All	SFK	All				
5844	SIMS	Compton	BRK	pre 1700				
5844	SIMS	Hampstead Norris	BRK	pre 1700				
5423	SPENCER	Great Ellingham	NFK	pre 1850				
5423	SPENCER	Reading	BRK	1850-2006				
6042	STACE	Newhaven	SSX	1750-1900				
5828	STROUD	Froxfield	WIL	pre 1865				
6014	TAPP	Guernsey	CHI	pre 1900				
6042	TAYLOR	Guernsey	GSY	1800-1900				
5808	THATCHER	Yate	GLS	1841				
6032	TIMPSON	Bocking	ESX	pre 1845				
6007	TOMALIN	All	OXF	All				
5828	TURNER	Tilehurst	BRK	pre 1865				
3835	VERRAN	All	CON	All				
6032	WALLIS	Stapleford	NTT	pre 1812				
6032	WATSON	Minto	DFS	1820				
3835	WEBB	All	CON	All				
5423	WHITE	Reading	BRK	1800-2006				
6032	WHITEHOUSE	Dudley	STS	pre 1800				
1325	WHITING	Ufton	BRK	1750-1800				
5423	WILLIS	Shinfield/Reading	BRK	1800-2006				

Members' services

Berks FHS Research Centre
Yeomanry House
131 Castle Hill
Reading, Berks RG1 7TJ
<www.berksfhs.org.uk>

The Research Centre contains almost all the published 1851 census for England and Wales, a fully fitted computer suite including the 1881 census of the United Kingdom, Vital Records Indexes, CD ROMs as well as many other county indexes. We also have continuous access to the internet with the Ancestry Library edition, giving access to English and Welsh census returns between 1841 and 1901, and thousands of books, fiches and transcripts.

The Research Centre supplements the Berkshire Record Office and the Berkshire local studies libraries; you will also find much information about other counties in England and Wales, Scotland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and many overseas countries.

How to find us

Next door to the Berkshire Record Office, off Coley Avenue, close to the centre of Reading. Good parking, 15 minutes' walk from the main railway station, with buses passing close by. Follow signs to the Berkshire Record Office.

Berks FHS Bookshop

The society bookshop is always available in the ground floor room. Purchases can be made and paid for on the spot. Check the website for the latest bookshop news.

Visitors can join the society here by filling in the application form and paying the relevant fee. Membership renewals can also be made by completing the relevant form.

Research Centre and Reference Library tours

The tours scheduled for the next few months are:

Saturday 16 September 14.30 to 16.30
 Monday 20 November 19.30 to 21.30

Whether you are a member or just a visitor, these tours will show you what research and finding aids are available to enable you to make the most of the rich resources at the Research Centre.

Opening hours

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10.00 to 16.00
 Late opening on Tuesday from 19.00 to 21.30 with computer help
 Second and fourth Sunday of each month from 11.00 to 16.00
 Full details are on the website.

Berkshire Name Search

The Berkshire Name Search consists of the following censuses and indexes:

1851 census: complete checked transcription of the 173,748 persons within Berkshire on 30 March 1851. Printouts are available for a name search.

1861 census: most individuals have been transcribed. Reading town is the major omission, soon to be remedied.

1871 census: transcription and index of 230,000 people now completed. Checking ongoing and will be included as available. Printouts as 1851.

1881 census: complete transcription and index of 223,936 people.

Berkshire Marriage Index: work in progress transcribing and checking pre-1837 registers. Includes 127,336 entries to date. See the website for parishes and dates covered. Printouts of early entries give only dates and names of bride and groom; later entries include if from another parish or by licence.

Berkshire Burial Index: work continues transcribing from burial registers with over 437,000 entries to date. See the website for up-to-date contents. Some 50% of entries show all available data; the rest show (where available) name, age, abode, relationship, occupation and title together with note indicating if there is further information such as date, place or cause of death etc. in the original record. An updated version of the index is available on CD.

Berkshire Strays Index: this dataset includes 20,500 people recorded in events taking place outside Berkshire if the person has given some reference to Berkshire. Strays records come from a variety of sources including the 1851 census of several neighbouring counties. As detailed in the News section, no further additions are being made to this index.

Berkshire Miscellaneous Index: this dataset is based on the former Berkshire Name Index and includes 100,279 records that were extracted and submitted by individuals. When possible running sets (such as baptisms from a parish register) will be placed in specialist datasets, leaving the disparate individual records and small datasets in this miscellaneous index. The amount of information available depends upon the record.

Berkshire Name Index

This is the master index for all of the above indices.

To search the Berkshire Name Index you may

- do your own search at the Research Centre
- visit a Berks FHS stand at a family history fair
- request a postal search

Postal search

Send your request to Berkshire Name Search, Berks FHS (BNS), Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ enclosing a cheque for the charge, together with your email address or a A4 sized stamped self-addressed envelope and two IRCs.

Charges

To search the Berkshire Name Index send £2 per surname requested to obtain the number of entries in each census or index. This search will not provide any information from the records.

To obtain the full details from the records printed on an A4 sheet (up to 25 entries or lines; we will advise the additional cost if more entries are found).

- £2 per surname per requested database
- £5 per surname to search all databases currently available (price will increase as more databases are included).

Records wanted

If you have records of any names that would fit into the Berkshire Miscellaneous index (event occurs within Berkshire) please send them by post to Berks FHS, Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ or by email to <miscindex@berksfhs.org.uk>.

Birth Briefs Index

Birth Briefs are five-generation ancestral charts submitted by members of the society. Fully completed charts contain the names and vital records (birth or christening, marriage and death or burial) of the member and up to 30 ancestors.

You can search the index, currently 28,595 names, on the website or for £2 per surname by post. You can order a copy of a particular Birth Brief for £2. Quote the ID no. obtained from the website or from the postal search. The Birth Brief can be sent as a hard copy, in PAF Pedigree format or as a file in GEDCOM format.

Please post search requests and orders for copies to Berks FHS (BB), Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ. Mark your envelope BB and include the ID no. if known. Enclose a sterling cheque, drawn on a UK bank, your email address and an A4 self-addressed envelope either stamped or containing two IRCs.

You can contact the person submitting the Birth Brief if they are still a member. We will pass on a letter, or email if they have an email address. (See website.)

To contact the person submitting the Birth Brief you may either:

- send your letter with two unstamped envelopes, one self-addressed and one blank, with three IRCs (not stamps) to Berks FHS (BBxxxx) at Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TG
- email your message to BBxxxx@berksfhs.org.uk (where xxxx is the BB ID no.)

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