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Berkshire Family Historian

for family historians in the Royal County of Berkshire

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Notice of annual general meeting

The Berkshire Family History Society Annual General Meeting, with annual reports from the chairman and treasurer, will be held before the Vale of the White Horse (Abingdon) Branch meeting at 7.15pm on Monday 18 June 2007 in the Long Furlong Community Centre, Boulter Drive (off Dunmore Road), Abingdon OX14 1XP. (Landranger OS map ref 164/500991 or see <www.streetmap.co.uk>.)

If you would like to nominate a member to the executive, please let the secretary know, in writing, by 1 June. Nomination forms may be obtained from the secretary, at branch meetings or downloaded from the website at <www.berksfhs.org.uk>. Please ensure that the person you nominate is prepared to sit on the executive committee and be a trustee of the charity. All nominations should be seconded. Information about being a trustee of a charity and what it entails can be found

on the Charity Commission website at <www.charity-commission.gov.uk> (publication CC3).

Certain people are not able to be a trustee:

- Persons under the age of 18
- Anyone convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty unless the conviction is spent
- Anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt
- Anyone who has been removed from the trusteeship of a charity
- Anyone who is disqualified from being a company director

Of the current executive committee, Phil Wood has served five consecutive years, and is thus not eligible for nomination, and Peter Francis has signified he is unwilling to seek re-nomination.

BRO news

The BRO holds a list of slaves at the Blagrove estates in Jamaica in 1774 (D/EX1271/1). The list is part of a volume containing information on the Blagrove family and their estates, and also includes an inventory of the goods of John Blagrove, including slaves, 1767.

Recent additions to the record office archives include

- *Contributions book of the United Plumbers' Association Reading and District Lodge (D/EX1977) listing plumbers in the Reading area 1894-1913*
- *Great Coxwell marriages 1992-2006 (D/P44)*
- *Eastbury baptisms 1867-2006, banns 1901-2006, burials 1867-2005 (D/P79B)*
- *Lambourn baptisms 1948-1979, marriages 1974-2002, banns 1979-1995 (D/P79)*

- *Woodlands St Mary (Lambourn Woodlands) burials 1842-2005 (D/P79C)*
- *Purley marriages 1994-2005 (D/P93)*
- *Sunningdale Baptist Church burial register 1843-1978 and membership records (D/N23)*
- *correspondence from offices of Hungerford solicitors Ryler and Matthews (later Matthews and Hulbert) 1797-1841 especially covering the bankruptcy of William Pinnell of Lambourn (D/EX1949)*
- *printed map of Slough showing air raid precautions and bomb shelters 1940 (D/EZ154/1)*

More items are listed in the current issue of the *Echo*, published online at <www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk>.

Introductory tours of the BRO are scheduled for 9 July and 8 October. Ring 0118 901 5132 for details.

Chairman's report

You will find your membership renewal form on the reverse of the address sheet. Please return this to our membership secretary, or renew your membership online.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that Nan Keightley has agreed to continue Margaret Pyle's valuable work co-ordinating the Christening Index project. However, Ivan Dickason tells me that he has been unable to find anyone to run the bookshop. Without the donation the society receives from BerksFHS Books each year I fear our subscriptions will have to be increased next year.

On behalf of all members I would like to thank Derek Trinder, Cliff Debney and Mike Booth, who have been looking at updating our old constitution, adopted in 1989, to bring it line with the Charity Commission's new guide-

lines. We hope to include a copy with this magazine.

I would also like to thank Gillian Stevens and Chad Hanna who have worked so hard putting together our stall for the WhoDoYouThinkYouAre?-Live event at Olympia. I do hope all who managed the trip to London enjoyed the experience.

Hopefully we will have a good turn out at Abingdon on 18 June for our AGM. You will find a nomination form for the 2007/2008 Executive Committee on our website. All forms have to be with the secretary by 1 June, so there is no need to be scared about turning up for an AGM!

Best wishes to all.

Jocie McBride

Don't discard the address sheet that came with your magazine...

...because on the reverse of it is the form which you need to renew your society membership. Please write your membership number on the reverse of the cheque, and don't staple the cheque to the renewal form. Sterling payments only please, from overseas members. If you have inadvertently lost your renewal form please go to <www.berksfhs.org.uk> and renew online.

Could you run the society's bookshop?

We urgently need a volunteer to manage the bookshop. The work is interesting, challenging and satisfying to anyone with an interest in family history and books. It involves about five hours a week at Yeomanry House most weeks, but some of the work can be done at home. The post could be job-shared between two. The work is largely administration, using a computerised stock control system, but the manager also gets to choose new titles for addition to stock. Training will be given, so no experience is necessary.

If you would like to know more please get in touch with Ivan Dickason on 0118 978 6785 or email him at <ivan@dickason.co.uk>.



Berkshire Burial Index *update*

The parishes and periods which have been added to the Berkshire Burial Index since the position shown in the March 2007 issue of the *Berkshire Family Historian* are set out below. The index now contains more than 497,000 entries.

Abingdon St Helen Jan to Mar 1762 (BTs),
1772 (BTs) and 1809 - 1813 (BTs)
Abingdon St Nicholas 1748 - 1812
Ashampstead St Clement 1838 - 1956
Ashbury St Mary 1687 - 1704
Brightwell St Agatha 1867 - 1902
Chilton All Saints 1813 - 1835 (BTs)
Compton SS Mary & Nicholas 1901 - 2005
Denchworth St James 1814 - 1835 (BTs)
Faringdon All Saints 1842 - 1896
Fyfield St Nicholas 1605 - 1812 (BTs) and
1813 - 1906
Great Coxwell St Giles 1868 - 1941
Hamstead Marshall St Mary 1605 - 1675 (BTs)
and 1813 - 1836 (BTs)
Little Wittenham St Peter 1543 - 1557
Newbury St Nicolas 1779 - 1783
Purley St Mary the Virgin 1901 - 1985

Reading Henley Road (Caversham)
Crematorium 1932 - 1947
Reading London Road Cemetery (burials in
consecrated ground) 1879 - 1885
Reading Prison 1862 - 1913
Reading St Mary 1710 - 1718
Ruscombe St James the Great 1569 - 1704
Shellingford St Faith 1782 - 1812 and
1813 - 1836 (BTs)
Shinfield Cemetery 1928 - 1952 and
1975 - 1991
Shottesbrooke St John the Baptist 1813 - 1836
(BTs)
Sutton Courtenay All Saints 1888 - 1919
Uffington St Mary 1783 - 1812
Wallingford St Leonard 1899 - 1929
Waltham St Lawrence 1813 - 1931
Wantage SS Peter & Paul 1877 - 1892
White Waltham St Mary 1813 - 1860

Details of the services for researching burials in the Berkshire Burial Index are given on page 34. See also Write Now on page 28.

David Wright

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Good as far as it goes

Discussion group members report on Ancestry's new WWI database

Ancestry's new database of First World War pension records has been compiled in conjunction with The National Archives, and contains service records of NCOs and other ranks who were discharged from the Army and claimed disability pensions for service in the First World War. The archive comprises documents which were salvaged from or escaped the fire which followed a bombing raid on the War Office during the Second World War. Described as the "burnt" and "unburnt" collections, these are estimated to be 40 per cent of the total original records.

In response to a request from the editor, several members tried a search of the Ancestry database, and posted comments on their findings on the Berks FHS discussion forum.

On the credit side, the detail supplied (on some names at least) seems to be impressive. Ancestry lists the database content as including forms relating to enlistment, medical history, casualty, disability, regimental conduct and awards. Thus searchers could hope to find name, age, birthplace, occupation, marital status, regimental number, date of enlistment and physical description. Pat Straughan traced two great-uncles and a distant cousin. Lynette Ambler found a full physical description of her great-grandfather, and even a facsimile of his signature which, it pleased her to discover, was like her own. Simon Aldworth, who had previously been stumped by a distant uncle's disappearance after the 1891 census, discovered him serving in South Africa with the Army Service Corps. Bob Britnell found the quality of the images good.

On the debit side Bob Britnell found some

transcription errors. Ancestry's own publicity acknowledges that some records were stored and filmed out of alphabetical order, and that names could be misheard, misspelled and misread. Some soldiers used only their initials, or nicknames.

In searching unsuccessfully for his great-grandfather, Simon Aldworth learned from The National Archives that soldiers who left the army after 1920 are not on the Ancestry database. This may also account for Eileen Barnes' inability to find any record of her father-in-law, whom she knew (from his surviving paybook) to have left the army with a pension around 1920.

Records of soldiers discharged after 1920 are kept at the Army Personnel Centre, Historical Disclosures, Mail Point 400, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX, and access to a file costs £20.

The archive deals with men who were wounded and discharged between 1914 and 1920, but is not complete even for this category. The archive specifically does not cover

- men killed in action, and having no dependants eligible for a pension
- those demobbed and not claiming a pension
- those leaving the Army after 1920 (Bob

Britnell reminds us that British troops were on active service in revolutionary Russia until that year).

The database also presumably excludes officers.

At the time of going to print the service is offering surnames beginning with A and B. The Smiths, Joneses and Robinsons within the society's membership will have to be patient.

This issue of the magazine went to press too soon for a report on the society's participation in the Society of Genealogists' Family History Fair at Olympia in May. A report will appear in the September issue.

Grave danger

memorial inscriptions may be lost if not recorded soon

Sue Cummings, the society's projects co-ordinator, makes a plea for more volunteers to join the team transcribing and recording memorial inscriptions in Berkshire's cemeteries.



Our memorial inscription project needs to be revived. For this reason I should like to start with a little story. Last May I took a trip north to research my maternal line, the Watsons. I had done my homework and traced my maternal great-great-grandfather through the 1841, 1851 and 1861 censuses. Easy enough, since Michael Watson, a schoolmaster, was also an enumerator for his district. In the 1861 census he had retired and taken on the superintendency of Jesmond Cemetery, just outside Newcastle-upon-Tyne. I had also emailed the local history library and asked if they held any MIs for this cemetery. They did, and the transcription was emailed back by the librarian, who had kindly copied it out. My next step would have been to get the plan of the cemetery from the relevant council department but, just my luck, I arrived as they were closing. I decided to go to the cemetery for a look-see. I found what I was looking for and after I had cleaned it up, I was able to take a picture for my Family Tree program.

The moral of this story? Well, only that I might have been completely out of luck had the old-timers not transcribed the cemetery records, and had the local history library been any less than very helpful.

Many other researchers are not so fortunate as myself. They depend on search engines, indexes and CDs. As with all records seen on

screen, they are dependent on the volunteers who painstakingly transcribe from the headstones, those who then digitise their work and check it thoroughly. Finally it can be added to the other work being done on the same parish, and sold as a complete item or, if it is very small, it can be put straight onto a website.

How are we doing in Berkshire? Well, the Berkshire Record Office has an enormous holding, as does the Reading Local Studies Library, and Berks FHS has Aldermaston, Knowl Hill and Wokingham MIs on sale, together with war memorials. However there are still quite a few churchyards that have not been transcribed, and the problem gets more difficult as time goes on. This is because the gravestones are beginning to fall. Where the graveyard is "closed", with no room for any more burials, it is maintained by the local council, and these innocuous stones are being laid flat for safety reasons, and therefore effectively lost from view forever.

Should you wish to help with our ongoing project to transcribe as many churchyards as possible, the society would like to hear from you. Who knows, there might be someone at your local branch who is struggling on alone, and could do with a friend to work alongside. Why not phone the Research Centre on 0118 950 9553 and offer your help?

News in brief

Another decade has been added to <ancestorsonboard.com> the passenger database launched by findmypast.com and The National Archives earlier this year. Searches may now be made from 1890 to 1919.

Phil Wood reports that West Berkshire Library is now subscribing to Ancestry Library Edition. The service should be available at any branch library linked to the main library computer network. Access is free, but the computers are heavily in demand, and need to be booked (01635 519900). Printouts are priced, but Phil recommends downloading images to the library's PC and then emailing them home using a webmail account.

A new catalogue of wills and other probate records has been published online by Wiltshire and Swindon Archives. This is the culmination of the Wiltshire Wills Project

started in 1998. The Wiltshire diocesan collection holds 105,825 wills and over 290,000 related records for the six counties of the old diocese (Wilts, Berks, Devon, Dorset, Hants and Gloucs), of which the Berkshire element comprises just over 11,000 wills entries, from 1539 until 1836, when the archdeaconry of Berkshire was transferred to Oxford. After this date only about 40 wills are registered. Visit <<http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/heritage/index.php>>, where searches can be made by name, place or occupation to generate a list of wills held. Some actual wills have been digitised, and this work is continuing.

Researchers into Scottish genealogy sources may now pool their thoughts and problems with like-minded historians at <www.talkingscot.com/> which, in addition to providing a discussion forum, posts details of Scottish family history societies, censuses and registration districts as well as a list of websites relating to Scottish research.

Still north of the border, Ancestry has announced the addition to its databases of the 1881 and 1901 censuses in Scotland, thus completing the 1841 - 1901 set.

Online publication of the 1911 census will permit researchers, in many cases, to see the actual handwriting of their ancestors, because it will be the first census digitisation in which the householder's schedule has remained the master entry, rather than the enumerator's notes. The National Archives, working in partnership with ScotlandOnline, promises that full public access will start on 3 January 2012 following a phased release of more limited information from 2009.



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Branch lines

Phil Wood, branch chairman, outlines the delights of Newbury branch membership

Newbury Branch meets on the second Wednesday of the month from September to June. Meetings are held at 7.45 pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Shaw on the northern outskirts of Newbury. One major advantage of this venue is the plentiful free parking; it is also a very pleasant hall attached to the lovely Victorian church of St Mary.

Visitors coming to the summer meetings, when the light is still with us, might like to turn up 20 minutes early, and stroll past the church to the outstanding Tudor mansion next door. Shaw House was built in 1581 by Sir Thomas Dolman, and is now owned and occupied by West Berkshire Council for offices, meeting places and as the site of the local register office.

Each meeting features a talk on a subject of interest to family historians with a mix spanning general and local family history interests. Leading speakers from the genealogical community are regular visitors, interspersed with talks on local history with a family bias. After the talk there is always the opportunity to question the speaker before having a cup of tea or coffee and a chat. At each meeting there is a small library of books that can be borrowed by members and a selection of items from the society bookstall is usually available.

An important aspect of any meeting is the chance to talk with fellow researchers. It would be a lie to say that all the chat is related to family history – some may simply take the chance to catch up on gossip with friends – but the meeting is full of people who have useful knowledge and experiences to share (and I have yet to meet a family historian who doesn't want to talk about the subject). If you have any

problems with your own research, whether it is "Where do I start?" or "I've done everything I can think of – what else can I try?", then make yourself known and we shall try to help.

Whilst the monthly meetings are the principal activity in the branch, we do get up to other activities. Trips are arranged on an irregular basis to The National Archives and the British Museum Newspaper Archive, run at cost using a self-hire minibus. If you haven't visited either of these outstanding resources, and want to do so in the company of a group of friendly folk who can help you learn the ropes, then come along to a meeting and let us know.

We are also keen to expand our horizons and visit new places, but we do need to find 12 or more people for each trip in order to keep the costs at a reasonable level. Any suggestions for trips are gratefully received.

A group of Newbury members has undertaken to transcribe parish records for publication by the society. This is new, as our project activity has been in abeyance for some years. The first parish to get the treatment is that of St Mary's in Speenhamland. The church of St Mary was built in 1830 to serve the northern part of Newbury, which lay within the parish of Speen. However, the reduced need for churches in the latter half of the twentieth century saw St Mary's demolished in the 1970s. This means that the parish registers are relatively easy to transcribe – no Tudor handwriting to decipher. Not content with the simple option of Speenhamland, the team is also beginning the much larger task of St Nicolas, the old parish church of Newbury, where there are thousands of Tudor entries.



Was Besselsleigh Berkshire's Gretna Green?

Phil Wood (4495) ponders on some marital irregularities in Besselsleigh, near Abingdon

In 1728 there were 24 marriages in the little church at Besselsleigh, a fact I noted with some interest when I checked the register for the marriage of Ann Head, a relative of mine.

Why should this little fact pique my curiosity? Two reasons. The first was that Besselsleigh is a tiny parish. Its population in 2001 was 87, almost unchanged since 1851 when 93 souls were recorded in the census. Even were the population quadruple this before the mechanisation of agriculture in the early nineteenth century, there is virtually no chance that 24 of the inhabitants would choose to marry in the same calendar year.

The second oddity was that the majority of the marriages were between parties from other parishes, and were carried out by licence – including the couple that led me there. Thomas Norcroft and Ann Head both came from Leckhampstead; why would they travel over 15 miles to marry, away from friends and family?

Further checking of the registers showed that this pattern of marriages continued from the earliest surviving register of 1668 through to 1753. This latter date is very significant and is further evidence of what was happening.

The registers tell a little more: the period 1719-21 has numbers alongside many of the entries, indicating the fees paid. These range from 5s to 10s 6d each, with most at 10s. A nice little earner for the rectors involved.

There is little doubt that the rector, quite probably with the collusion of the holders of the advowson, the Lenthall family of Besselsleigh manor, was prepared to issue licences and marry couples without the

knowledge of parents or guardians. In short Besselsleigh was a place to go for what was known as a clandestine marriage. At this time the age of consent for marriage was 14 for a boy and 12 for a girl; parental consent was not required. So quite legal marriages could be carried out that would horrify the parents. The most famous place for clandestine marriages was Fleet Prison in London, where hundreds of eloping couples tied the knot. How much more pleasant to find a spot closer to home.

In 1753 a Scottish case came before the House of Lords that highlighted the problem with clandestine marriages, and led to

Parliament enacting a law known as Hardwicke's Marriage Act. Ironically it never applied in Scotland, although the case that inspired it was from north of the border. This resulted in the popularity of Gretna Green, just yards over the Scottish border, as the new destination for eloping couples.

Following Hardwicke's Act marriages not held by a Church of England priest within a church or chapel had no legal standing, the only two exceptions being marriages within the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Jews. This was of immense importance, as legitimacy of birth could have a profound effect on the rights of any child. Consequently nonconformists would have to go to the parish church to marry despite any misgivings they may have had regarding the Anglican ceremony.

The Act would not have inconvenienced the rector at Besselsleigh – he had the church and could carry out legal marriages. However, Hardwicke also imposed some other criteria: licences could only be issued by the bishop of



St Lawrence's Church, Besselsleigh

the diocese or his surrogate, and minors could not marry without parental consent. So, with the rector stripped of his power to license the marriage of minors, it is no surprise that, from 1754, the number of marriages at Besselsleigh dropped off dramatically. The last of the clandestine entries is in February 1754; Hardwicke's Act came into force on 26th March. Besselsleigh's next marriage is in 1757.

So if you have lost a teenage daughter back in the 1668-1753 period you might have a

quick look at the Besselsleigh registers – you never know your luck.

Besselsleigh St Lawrence registers are held in the Berkshire Record Office, transcript available on OFHS CD Abingdon Reg District Vol. 3 OXF-AB03. For background on the case that provoked Hardwicke's Act see <www.historycooperative.org/journals/lhr/17.1/leneman.html>.

Evening courses on family history are held periodically by the society for beginners to intermediate level

*explanation by demonstration and examples
guidance on accessing archive material
using various media equipment
informal groups hands-on experience
advice on the options of sourcing material on many topics
direction on further research, suggesting books and websites*

**NEXT COURSE STARTS Monday 15 October 2007
continuing 22, 29 October, 5, 12 November, 19.00 - 21.30**

at the Research Centre, Yeomanry House, Castle Hill, Reading

£25 per person

book early

places are limited

<www.berksfhs.org.uk>

Dates for your diary

date	event	venue	more details
10.00 - 15.30 Sat 16 Jun	Wiltshire FHS Open Day*	Salisbury City Hall	< www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk/openday.htm >
10.00 - 16.00 Sat 28 Jul 2007	Buckinghamshire FHS Open Day*	Grange School Aylesbury	< www.bucksfhs.com >
10.00 - 16.00 Sat 22 Sept 2007	Oxfordshire Family History Open Day*	Exeter Hall Kidlington	< ofhs.org.uk/OpenDay.html >
10.00 - 16.00 Sat 29 Sept 2007	West Middlesex FHS conference	St Mary's Church Hall Twickenham	< www.west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk >
Sun 30 Sep 2007	Hampshire Family History Fair*	Horndean Technology College	< www.hgs-online.org.uk/hgs-events.asp >

*Berks FHS will be present at these events

Newbury Girls' School and Dr Barnardo's child migrants

Judith Thomas (1291) has been the librarian of St Bartholomew's School in Newbury since 1991. The school's archives include some vivid testimony of its involvement in the now controversial Barnardo's scheme whereby children from deprived homes were sent to Australia and Canada.

Newbury County Girls' School merged in 1975 with the Boys' Grammar School to become St Bartholomew's Comprehensive School. One of the school's most prized possessions in the archives is a scrapbook compiled in about 1952, recording 12 Barnardo's protégées whom the girls sponsored to send to Canada or Australia, from before the First World War right up to the 1950s.

This work of Dr Barnardo's has had a bad press since the publication of *Empty cradles* by Margaret Humphreys in 1994. From a TV documentary *The lost children of the Empire* shown in 1989 the public was horrified to learn that thousands of children were forcibly emigrated to the Dominions; some were told that they were going on holiday, some that their parents were dead. Some were separated at a very early age from siblings in this country, never to be heard from again. The motivation was not only to fill the Empire with white settlers; it was also, apparently, much cheaper to raise a child in the Dominions than in an orphanage in Britain.

The scrapbook and background material from the school magazine, the *Girls' School Record*, shows that motives for taking part were of the highest. Some teachers took an intense personal interest in the scheme, arranged for letters and presents from the Newbury girls to their protégées, sent telegrams of good wishes to the ship before the children sailed, and even on occasion went to the docks so that their protégées would feel that they had someone of their own to see them off. In return, the child migrants were encouraged to write back, and many letters have survived in the scrapbook.

In 1908 representatives of Dr Barnardo's and the United Girls' School Mission gave lectures to the school and "awakened our sympathy by relating pathetic stories of children wandering in London, homeless and uncared for." Newbury was a quiet country town in Edwardian days, and those at the Girls' School were mainly privileged daughters of the middle classes. Pockets of deprivation did exist in Newbury, but nothing on the scale of Camberwell, where "on 6½ acres about 7,000 people existed, that is, more than half the population of Newbury live in a space about twice the size of our old playing field."

During the autumn term 1913 Mr Hind Smith of Dr Barnardo's made the first of several visits to give accounts to the girls of the emigration scheme. He had taken out a party of 260 boys and girls in 1912, whose average age was only 11. "Canadians like them to go out early so that they will get used to the country and be better prepared for the life they are going to lead. When they arrive the children are boarded out at 5s a week and are sent to school until they are 14 years old. Often the people with whom they are boarded get so fond of the children that they adopt them as their sons and daughters."

There was no hesitation: the £10 needed was raised, and the whole school seems to have been involved in deciding whether a girl or a boy should be sponsored. By a small majority it was decided to ask for a girl. By July 1914 the school record relates that "Edith Purkiss has reached Canada and is now settled in a doctor's home quite near to her brother." Photographs in the scrapbook bear out the final report in 1930 that she "is in prosperous circumstances", married, with three children.

Dear Miss Campbell,
forgive me for not
We had a very
out. By now I
hope the school



The migration scheme was halted by the First World War, but fundraising still continued and, in what seems to us nowadays like propaganda, Mr Hind Smith told the school that “there are no society distinctions in the Dominion. The farmers are like big brothers and it is impossible to know which is the mistress and which the maid. Most of the boys choose to be farmers, and a great majority in time become their own landowners.” He did have the honesty to point out that only a few become members of the professions, but “all the boys and girls are happy, not one was discontented or unhappy in any way”.

Four more protégées were sent to Canada. One who died shortly after arrival of infantile paralysis was quickly replaced. The migration of children to Canada ceased for a few years in 1930 as a consequence of the Great Depression, but the last girl was sponsored to go in 1938.

Up to Miss Miller
Ontario
25. 12. 30.
Dear Miss
Thank you
so much for the lovely presents
which you raised for Miss
I was so pleased
to receive them.



The first protégée to go to Australia, one of the very first of Dr Barnardo's to go to New South Wales, left Britain in 1923. Two more followed.

There are two background reports in the scrapbook for these years. One protégée came from a family where the mother had died, leaving a family of nine children, five of them under 13 years of age. The eldest girl, aged 18, was “feeble-minded”, and the care of the children fell on her sister, who was only 13 years old. The father, a stonemason on small earnings, was unable to cope. Another



Dear Madam,
I was so pleased
when Mr Hindsmith told
me that your school had
paid for me to go to
Australia I was sorry to hear

report tells a similarly sad story, where both parents died within a few hours of each other from influenza, leaving the care of the children this time with an “aged and feeble grandmother”. In the 1920s social remedies for such misfortune lay with well-meaning, evangelical and imperialist charities.

Two sisters were sent to Australia in 1949, and the final protégée, a child of six, was sent in 1952. Today we could not possibly approve of sending such a young child so far away, and indeed there

Dear MacLure,
I think both you and the girls of Newbury school for
this very interesting telegram. When Mr Hobday first told me I
was very surprised. Well I hope to get on well in Canada
When I first read the telegram I was very excited to think that

523 Jarvis St
London
Canada
11 10 1952



seems to have been some hitch in the arrangements for the Newbury teachers to visit her before she sailed. A placatory letter from Barnardo's was sent to the school, apologising, and stressing that the presents had been sent on, that she was a "dear little soul and the spoilt baby of the party". She would be going to a Home in Sydney, and would take up employment according to her wishes and capabilities, and visited regularly even after her employment began. With advances in state welfare, doubts were perhaps arising in teachers' minds about the value of the scheme, for after this there were no more Barnardo's protégées for Newbury Girls' School.

"Australians are great meat-eaters and even if meat in England weren't rationed I don't think we would eat as much".

There is very little evidence that the protégées were unhappy in their new lives. Letters to the Girls' School are determinedly cheerful. After their lives in overcrowded homes, great mention is made of their new opportunities such as playing and watching regattas in Sydney Harbour, or snow-shoeing, skating on frozen rivers, and basketball in Canada. Rarely do they mention their educational opportunities, though one talks of hoping to pass exams to the Onondaga High School. Luxuries made the most impression, whether it was an expedition to buy "the most beautiful [sic] coats and hats you could think of from Eaton's clothing stores", or the fact that another had "a beautiful room with my own wireless. I also have my own shower room." One girl in Australia in 1949 cannot resist mentioning to the Newbury girls in a strictly rationed Britain, "Australians are great meat-eaters and even if meat in England weren't rationed I don't think we would eat as much".

Is there any evidence that they were separated from their families? In some cases, yes. Mary writes in 1936 that she has "sent the only photograph of myself to my brother at the Watts Naval Training School. I have only just found out where he is, and I have not seen him for such a long time". One girl sent to Canada in 1920 actually had a brother and sister who had been sent to Australia. Two sisters, however, were sent out in 1949 to join three of their siblings already in Australia.

Only one girl came back to Britain, as far as we know. Her motives are unknown, although she wrote to the school on the eve of her departure in 1931, after eight years in Australia. Strangely, she seemed convinced that the Australian Prime Minister of the time was a Communist and Moscow's poodle, and would shortly stop everyone from leaving the country. She later trained as a nurse at the Middlesex Hospital.

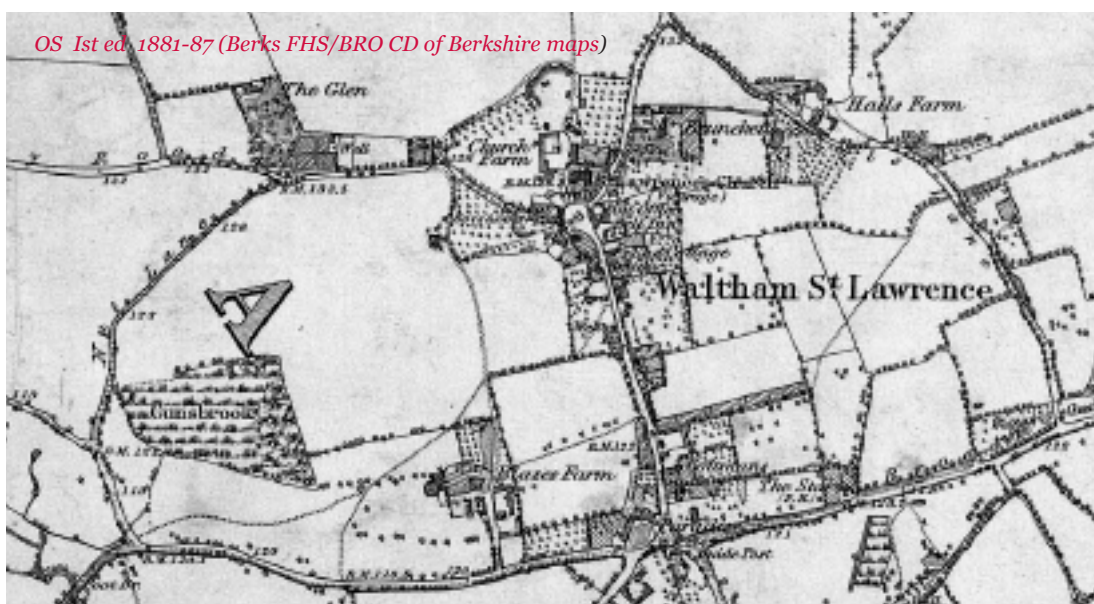
I Googled all the girls' names, wanting to publicise our treasure trove before the scrapbook is deposited at the Berkshire Record Office. In Rootschat.com I found a lady from Hertfordshire who was trying to trace her father's cousin, Mabel French, sent to Canada in about 1920. There were two more child migrants with that name, but we established that the Newbury protégée, Mabel E B French was indeed hers, and I was able to send her photocopies of all the photographs, letters and reports. She was delighted that she could tell the descendants of Mabel's brother and sister in Australia. All the girls' names have now been listed on the British Home Children Rootsweb mailing list.

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The British Home Children Rootsweb mailing list archives can be searched at <<http://archiver.rootsweb.com>>

Waltham St Lawrence *a parish portrait*

Margaret Railton has written a number of books on the history of local healthcare. Here she writes about her home village in east Berkshire, whose church of St Lawrence also is the subject of her most recent book, available from the mail order book list.



My interest in local and family history came about some 30 years ago, when I was helping with our Over-60s Club. One elderly member remarked upon the celebration of Empire Day in her childhood, and another told me that when she died it would be the first time for 300 years that there had been no member of her family in the parish. With these remarks in mind I asked members of the club to tell me about their families, and I started collecting old photographs of people, places and events in the village. All too soon these family histories became the basis of a parish history, and the links between the two were fascinating.

Waltham St Lawrence is a semi-rural village of some 3,000 acres and about 1,300 people. Its location, 35 miles west of London, has left it relatively untouched by modern development. The houses show a range of architectural styles from the fifteenth century

to the modern. The focus of the village is at the northern end with the church, pound, village hall and early cottages. The most important of these is the Bell Inn, a fifteenth-century Wealden house given to the parish in 1608 by Ralph Newberry, an eminent London printer and stationer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

The parish was divided into two manors: Waltham St Lawrence and Billingbear. The former falls into two parts with the village of Waltham St Lawrence to the north and the former hamlet of Shurlock Row to the south. The manor of Billingbear adjoins Shurlock Row and the neighbouring parish of Binfield. From the twelfth century the parishes of Waltham St Lawrence, Wargrave and Warfield, formed the Hundred of Wargrave. In 1189 Richard I sold the Hundred to the Bishop of Winchester, and it remained with

his successors until 1551, when Henry VIII gave it to Sir Henry Neville, a gentleman of the Privy Chamber. Sir Henry built a magnificent house at Billingbear and this, with the two manors, remained with the Neville family and their descendants until the twentieth century. Sadly, the Billingbear house was demolished in 1924.

Documents relating to the Billingbear estate and the Neville family are in the Berkshire Record Office (BRO) in Reading, as are manorial rolls for Waltham St Lawrence dating from 1662. These can be particularly useful in tracing families who were in the parish for some time. The pipe rolls of the Bishop of Winchester (at the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester) can be used for earlier research.

The church, dedicated to St Lawrence, dates back to Norman times. The registers, dating from 1558, have been deposited at the BRO. The parish was in the diocese of Salisbury until 1836 when it was transferred to the diocese of Oxford. Church records, including wills, can be found at the Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire record offices. Monumental inscriptions have been recorded for the churchyard and the church. A splendid memorial to the first Sir Henry Neville, who died in 1593, and his son, also Sir Henry, who died in 1615, can be seen in the church. Plaques recording the names of those who died in the two world wars are also in the church.

Until the mid-nineteenth century the village was mainly agricultural, with supporting trades including blacksmiths, wheelwrights

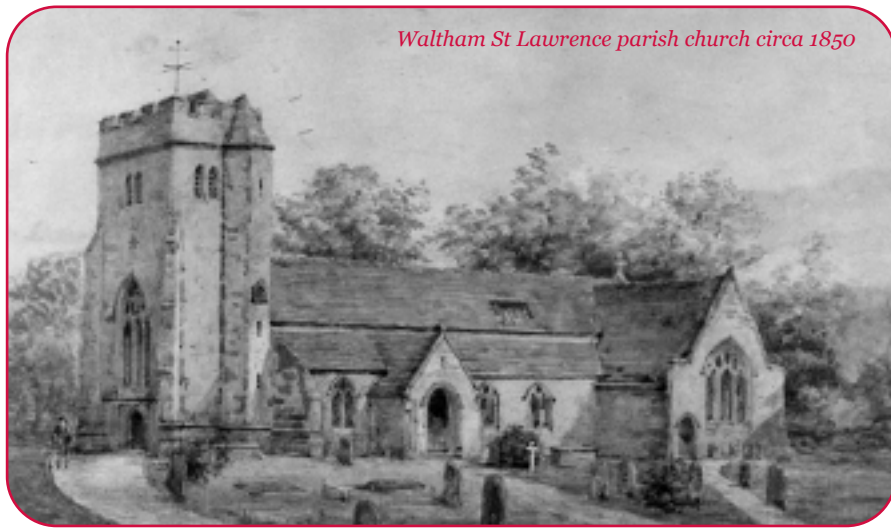
and carpenters. Large landholdings had been established over the years by a few families, and these were the principal employers. In 1847 a change took place, with the building of Hewett's Brewery in Shurlock Row. Cottages were built for the brewery workers, followed in 1863 by a Primitive Methodist chapel, and in 1870 All Saints' Church, a chapel of ease. The population of the Shurlock Row end of the parish now outstripped that of the Waltham St Lawrence end. New families arrived, introducing new blood into the parish. The registers show that at this time most marriages were between village families.



By 1900 the brewery had some 60 outlets, four of which were within the parish. In 1911, when production had almost reached capacity, Hewetts amalgamated with Dymore Brown's Brewery in Reading, and the brewery at

Shurlock Row closed. The loss of employment caused much hardship. Coinciding with this was the break up of the large family holdings and the arrival of newcomers. Fruit farms and nurseries were established and these, combined with the farms, provided most of the employment.

Since the Second World War the small farms, fruit farms and nurseries have gradually disappeared. Milking herds are no longer seen going through the lanes and polo ponies have taken their place. The Primitive Methodist chapel closed in the 1920s and became a house; All Saints' Church was recently declared redundant, and is being converted into a house. Local shops have also closed and are now residential properties. Only two garages, one butcher and a post



office store remain. The parish, so close to London and Heathrow, is now a most desirable area in which to live. Thanks to the farms which flank the village centre, the parish has been able to retain its semi-rural qualities.

The usual family history sources of registers, census returns, electoral rolls and wills are augmented by manorial and pipe rolls, enclosure awards and tithe maps. The parish magazine, established in 1886, gives interesting insights, but few copies are extant before 1924. Putting the flesh on the bare records is a challenge and in this respect court records can be useful in tracing those who came before the law. Details of village life and the character of those being questioned can be obtained from evidence given to JPs, quarter sessions and assizes, and from local newspapers.

Sometimes one can trace a family through the Poor Law and workhouse records. From 1835 Waltham St Lawrence was in the Cookham (Maidenhead) Union, whose workhouse and infirmary became St Mark's Hospital in Maidenhead. An example of combining court records with those of the workhouse can be seen in the case of a man transported to Australia for taking part in the Swing Riots of 1830. His family was left

destitute, and sent to the workhouse. From time to time various members were able to leave the workhouse when they got work, and eventually the wife obtained employment in the village as a washerwoman and was able to support her children, but her husband never returned from Australia.

Until 1910 there were two schools in the parish, one at the Waltham end and the other at the Shurlock Row end. In 1910 both closed, and a new school between the two opened. This primary school still thrives today, and its log books are to be found at the BRO.

The minute books of the parish council, formed in 1894, also provide an interesting source of information about the village. These too have been deposited at the BRO, and researchers whose ancestors were members of the council will find much to interest them about the life of the parish. Records of local clubs and societies can prove useful and also those of agricultural shows if one wants to follow up leads found among family papers such as certificates and photographs.

The sources of information for parish and family histories are almost endless and it is surprising how much has survived over the years. As readers will confirm, the task is time-consuming, but in the end well worth the effort.

Willats, Yard and Hooper Three Reading families

Les Hooper (1638)

These three families were probably well known to the people of Reading and the surrounding areas from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. They were tradesmen: corn merchants, ropemakers, maltsters, brewers, coalmen, tobacco and snuff manufacturers, whose families inter-married during this time, but by the end of the nineteenth century they had sold their businesses, and moved from Reading to London and Australia.

Thomas Willats was born about 1693 and, from a will dated 19 August 1760, he was a ropemaker of Reading. Elizabeth Oades, a widow, married Thomas in 1719 at St Lawrence in Reading. At least six children have been traced to this marriage, including Charles born in 1727.

Little is known about Charles and his marriage to a Mary beyond names and baptismal dates of their five children. The child that is of interest to this saga is Thomas, baptised on 4 January 1749 at St Peter's Church, Caversham.

John Yard, born about 1723, may have come from Hurst in Berkshire. He married Mary North in 1750 at Old Windsor, and was buried with his wife in St Giles aged 69 in 1793. John was a churchwarden of St Giles from 1765 - 1774 and again from 1781 - 1784. Their daughter Mary Yard was born late in 1754, and married Thomas Willats in St Giles in 1781; this is the first link-up in our three families.

The Reading Mercury of 4 February 1793 noted:

On Sunday 27 January died after a long illness, Mr. John Yard, Maltster of London St.

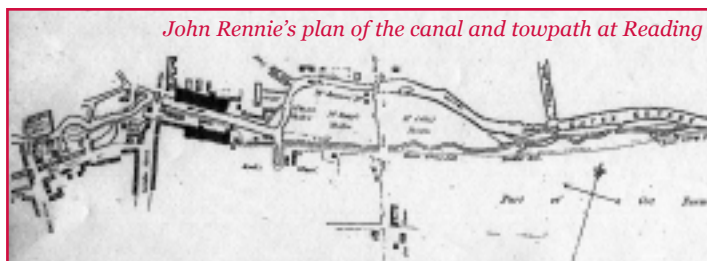
This was followed two weeks later by the statement:

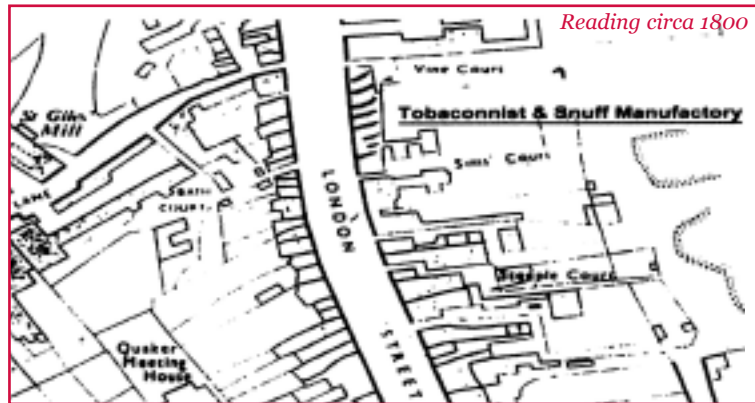
Thomas Willats, maltster, corner of Mill Lane, Reading, successor to and late partner with the late Mr. John Yard [his father-in-law], intends to carry on the malt, hop and coal trade at the above address.

Thomas and Mary started a tradition that has continued for seven generations, that of naming the eldest son John Yard Willats (the last four generations being born in Australia). The first was born in 1782 and took over the malt and corn dealing business in 1803 when he was 21, as directed by his grandfather's will. He married Mary North in Southwark in 1803 when both were 20. JYW must have been well known in the town, as in 1846 he became the mayor of Reading.

By the early 1800s the Willats business had its own wharf on the river Kennet. A drawing of the time, shows this and Blandy's wharf. In 1831 the two families combined to purchase a brewery in Mill Lane for £16,309. The brewery was in *The Reading Mercury* of 9 February 1838 under the headline *Mill Lane Fire*. The malthouse was completely destroyed along with 300 quarters of malt and barley, but both stock and building were fully insured.

John and Mary's first born was a girl named Mary Ann Yard Willats, christened at St Giles on 14 December 1804. John and Mary had 12 children, including John Yard Willats





(the second), but several of the other children died after only a few months or years. Mary is of interest, as she connects to Hooper, the next family of the trio.

John Hooper set up a tobacconist and snuff-making business in King Street in about 1809. Possibly born in St Encoder, Cornwall in 1777/8, he was nephew to Dr John Hooper, who had a practice in Reading from about 1788. Dr. Hooper's father, also a doctor in Reading, had patented Doctor Hooper's Female Pills in 1743. Tobacconist John married Rebecca Skinner at St Clement Dane's, Westminster, on 5 December 1798. She was the daughter of William Skinner, who had a well established tobacconist and snuff-manufacturing business at 240/243 The

Strand in London. John moved to larger premises at 128 London Street, Reading in April 1810.

The Reading Mercury of 30 April and 7 May 1810 advertised under the headline *Tobacco and Snuff Manufactory* that:

John Hooper takes the opportunity of acquainting his friends he is moved from his former house in King St., to his new establishment in London Street, opposite Mill Lane where by due attention, and a good article, on London terms, he hopes and trusts to receive their favours.

John and Rebecca had seven children, all christened in St Lawrence, Reading soon after

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their births but, curiously, they were all baptised again at one ceremony on 11 March 1812. As you cannot be baptised twice, we say they were “blessed again”.

John died on 29 April 1811 aged 33, only a year after his move to London Street. *The Reading Mercury* reported his death, stating that his widow Rebecca would carry on the business. Records show that she ran not only the London Street enterprise, but also her own outlet at 9 King Street, which she continued up to about 1850, when a Samuel Barter was the proprietor.

The final accounts of John dated April 22 1811¹ show both customers and suppliers from over a 100-mile area. Examples of these entries are:

<i>Adams John</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>£ 1.10. 0</i>
<i>Benfield William</i>	<i>Wokingham</i>	<i>£ 2. 8. 0</i>
<i>Jarmains Mary</i>	<i>Lambourne</i>	<i>£10.10. 0</i>
<i>Adams Brandy Merchant</i>		<i>£11.11. 0</i>
<i>Hiscock Butcher</i>		<i>£ 2. 2. 0</i>
<i>Wilson Shoemaker</i>		<i>£ 1. 6. 7</i>

Amongst his effects were listed a horse at £40, a horse engine and instruments of the trade £300, and £1.16.0 for mahogany chairs.²

Reading trade directories show Rebecca still running the business in 1826. She handed the responsibility over to her two sons William and Henry in about 1831. A year later, after big rows in the family, William bought out Henry and his four sisters for £500 each and by 1842 he had expanded the works from number 128 to include 127 London Street.

Henry was not satisfied with his share, and in a letter to his brother-in-law asked him to get William to part with a further £100, but with no success. Henry became a gentleman, and spent his money travelling; he was in Guernsey in 1832 and 1841, and in New York in 1835.

The Willats resided opposite the Hoopers in London Street, so Mary Ann Willats and William Hooper must have been constant

playmates. They married on 29 July 1828 at St Giles, and thus we have the final connection of the three families of Yard, Willats and Hooper.

William, like his father, died in his 30s, on 20 February 1844 of “dropsey”. His widow, Mary, carried on the business until at least 1847, but by 1850 there is no mention of the tobacco business. The next we hear of Mary is in the 1861 census, when she appears living with her daughter and son-in-law in Islington. She died 1885 in Uxbridge, Middlesex, aged 81.

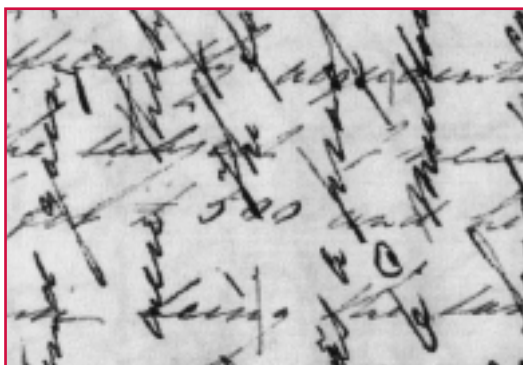
Most of the Yards and Willats are buried at St Giles’, whilst the Hoopers are buried at St Lawrence’s. The Hooper gravestone is still well preserved, and can be seen just off the path on the left hand side whilst walking from the church.

William Hooper’s sister Mary, with her share of the tobacconist buy-out, emigrated to Australia in 1858 with six of her children, leaving her husband in England. He never went to see the family, and she never returned.

John Yard Willats (the fourth) also took his family to Australia in 1881. He came back a few years later, also never to return to see his wife or family.

1. BRO D/ER F28

2. A list detailing over 400 customers together with their area of residence, and over 70 suppliers is deposited with the Berks FHS and the BRO.



Part of the letter showing the £500 Henry received for his share of the business. All Henry’s letters were written across and down the paper, making them hard to decipher.

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds"

John Gurnett, former editor of the Berkshire Family Historian, looks at militia records for family historians. Here in the first of a two-part article he details the lists that were drawn up of men needed to defend the country between 1750 and 1900.

Apart from a few isolated examples the 1841 census is the earliest giving details of family linkage. In this article I hope to examine other valuable source material, mostly drawn from preparations against the threat of foreign invasion or insurrection.

In times of crisis the government of the day relied on ad hoc local part-time forces to bolster the severely stretched standing army. In 1757 the government re-established a form of conscription, in which parishes were called upon to list all male adults between the ages of 18 and 50 (in 1762 the upper age was reduced to 45). From this list a ballot was held to select some for military service, a kind of Territorial Army.

The number of taxable houses within the parish boundaries determined the number of men each parish had to provide. Service in the militia was compulsory, for a term of three years. At any point the militia could be "embodied" or "disembodied". Embodiment required residence in a camp or barracks, while disembodiment meant attendance at an annual camp (if required).

Some members of society were exempt: articulated clerks, apprentices, and members of the armed forces. If a man was selected in the ballot, but refused to serve, he paid for a substitute to take his place.

The militia ballot lists (of all men) and the enrolment lists (of men chosen to serve) should provide a kind of annual census, but many of the lists and ballots have not survived. Those that have (from 1757 to 1831) include names and whether or not they had infirmities. From 1758 most lists include occupation, and from 1802 the number and

ages of children. These lists can form a rich source of information for family and local historians.

Volunteers were raised as auxiliary forces from 1794 for local defence during the wars against France. Voluntary units of local militia were also raised from 1808. Fencible* infantry and cavalry units were raised from the 1790s for temporary service, as required, and to serve at home while regular army regiments went overseas. The National Archives (TNA) holds muster and pay lists for the years 1781-82 in WO13. These have been indexed by county, and they record the men actually serving. Attestation (enlistment) forms for militiamen from 1806 to 1915 are in series WO96. The majority are from the later nineteenth century. These are arranged alphabetically under the regular army county regiment to which the militia regiment was attached from 1881. Some records of militiamen are also found in WO97 from 1760 to 1854, and they are searchable on the TNA website.

Muster books and pay lists for all militia, fencible infantry and cavalry, yeomanry and volunteers from 1780 to 1878 are in WO13. When a man appears for the first time his age is sometimes given. Musters for some London and Middlesex units are in WO70, and a few provincial units in WO79.

With the threat of an invasion by Napoleon the government introduced two further Acts: the Posse Comitatus in 1798 and the Levee en Masse in 1803/4. These men were not required for military service, but to assist the army in evacuating civilians and removing farmstock and crops from the invading army.

Both these Defence Lists, as they are often called, are records of able-bodied men, not already serving in the armed forces, with occupations like bakers, barge-owners and millers listed. The Levee listed all householders by name; some parishes entered age and occupation and those who needed to be evacuated. The Buckinghamshire Posse is probably the most complete, with 23,500 names. Surviving militia ballot lists, enrolment lists and the Defence Lists can be found in local record offices.

For example, a wide range of indexes and original material can be found in the Essex Record Office: there is a list of about 120 males in the parish of Upminster St Laurence of the militia, the Army of Reserve and volunteers with occupations and numbers of children, dating from 1795 to 1815. Lists of the Posse and Levee en masse exist for a number of parishes in Essex. Perhaps the most

interesting is a list of payments to dependants for Coggeshall in 1803.

The Berkshire Record Office has Militia Ballot lists for Shellingford (1807) and for Sonning (1808), enrolment lists for Abingdon (1797 and 1803-4) and regular militia for the whole county (1808). This final list contains 300 names. As well as these there is a card index to 1,200 members of volunteer troops of Berkshire Yeomanry Cavalry for 1794 - 1828 held by Mr C B Sanham, Rus House, High Street, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9DD.

The Wardrobe Museum of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment in Salisbury has a vast collection of material about the Royal Berkshire Regiment and its origins. For further information on all these early records see Gibson and Medlycot *Militia Lists and Musters 1757 - 1876*, which can be found in the BFHS Research Centre library in Reading.

*Fencibles were hostilities-only full-time regulars who were limited to home service.

In Part II of this article in September's magazine John Gurnett will look at the records of the various corps raised for home defence during the Second World War.

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Wallingtons, Kintbury

Brother Anthony Porter is a member of the De La Salle Brothers, the religious order which owns Wallingtons in Kintbury. He is intending to publish a book-length history of the house, and here he allows Berks FHS members a preview of his extensive researches.



For over 700 years a large country house about a mile south-west of Kintbury was known as Wallingtons; for the last 60 years it has been known as St. Cassian's Centre, and now it is a Catholic retreat centre, owned by the De La Salle Brothers.

Parts of the present building probably date from the beginning of the seventeenth century, but the estate has a much earlier origin. Around 1220 land was acquired by Robert de Wallington, from whom the name is derived. By 1292 the owner was Adam de Wallington, succeeded by his son, who increased the estate by buying two farms from his neighbour Edmund de Polhampton. The estate remained with this family until 1447, when Thomas de Wallington sold it to Thomas Waldronde. In 1478 it passed to his son-in-law Robert Strangbane who, in 1481 sold it to William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester. He had been founder in 1453 of Magdalen College, Oxford, whose archives helpfully

detail Wallingtons' owners before and tenants after it became college property.

Occupants of Wallingtons over the next 150 years appear fleetingly in the Kintbury parish registers: Bartholomew Parrocke, Richard Humphrey, Roger Fawne, Simon Stone, Edward Staverton, Thomas Bond, John and Daniel Kingsmill, and others.

In 1652 the estate passed to the Hayne family, when Daniel, his wife Elizabeth and their six young children moved from Aldbourne to Wallingtons, where six more children were added to the family; eight of the 12 survived into adulthood. The Hayne family were fairly well-to-do; Elizabeth was the daughter of Sir William Lovelace, and at least two sons went to Oxford University, their father being described as a gentleman. Daniel died about 1687, and was succeeded by his son Daniel, Daniel's widow Joanna, and then by her son Lovelace. It is likely that parts of the present house date from the Hayne period,

including perhaps a sundial on a chimney stack which bears the inscription *The Concern of the Rich and the Poor*, and which can still be seen in the courtyard. Thomas, a brother of Lovelace, fought under the Duke of Marlborough in the War of Spanish Succession, and died in August 1708 of wounds received in the battle of Oudenarde. In 1726 Lovelace Hayne moved to Oare, near Chieveley, and the estate passed to William Dixon, a barrister, then in 1737 to his elder son William and later to his younger son Samuel (also a barrister), who in 1757 acquired the neighbouring Balsdon estate.

Much of Samuel's legal work over many years was done for the Earl of Warwick, but not all of their correspondence concerned legal matters. On 18 August 1768 Samuel wrote that "we have had deluges of rain and it rains now; very little if any wheat yet carried", and three days later the Earl wrote "I hope your cold is better; eat not too much roast beef for a day or two and you will soon clear your voice." In his will Samuel mentioned two knights, Sir Henry Harpur and Sir Robert Burdett, as "my most respected and honoured friends" – another indication of the circles in which he moved.

In 1784 the house was broken into, robbed and then set on fire by Benjamin Griffiths, a servant who had formerly lived with the family. He was convicted and sentenced to death. The local newspaper said that the house was "entirely burnt to the ground", but possibly some parts survived, as some of the present brickwork is thought to pre-date the time of the fire. The house was rebuilt shortly

afterwards, with a castellated roof, sham battlements and mock-Gothic canopies for the windows. Samuel's sister Elizabeth, who died in 1786, requested that a fire engine be provided for Kintbury; this fire engine survives in West Berkshire Museum.

Samuel Dixon died without issue in 1792, leaving Wallingtons to his cousin Jane Peveril, who married Cuthbert Johnson. On her death in 1826 the house passed to Cuthbert and thence (on his death in 1840) to their daughters Emma, Louisa and Rosa. The sisters decided to sell the house in 1847, and the auctioneer's brochure described it as

a handsome manorial residence of the olden Gabled Style of architecture in the midst of a most highly respectable neighbourhood, it being studded with Family Seats...The station in Kintbury will be one mile from the Mansion, and the Estate will then be only about two hours' journey from London.

However Wallingtons was not sold until 1859, when bought by the trustees of Mr. William Williams-Brown of Chapel Allerton, near Leeds. He was related to the Dunn family, who had bought the neighbouring Inglewood House in 1829. From 1859 to 1892 both estates belonged to the same family. William Hew Dunn inherited Wallingtons, and was responsible in 1892 for some notable alterations, removing all traces of previous remodelling. The sham battlements were taken down and the Gothic canopies replaced by the present mullioned windows. William Hew Dunn, JP, Master of the Craven Hounds,

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High Sheriff and chairman of the county council died in 1911, and his obituary in the *Newbury Weekly News* showed the esteem in which he had been held: "A life of a fine English gentleman largely spent in devotion to public service in the county and in the district where he lived."

His widow sold Wallingtons in 1912 to A S Gladstone, grand-nephew of the statesman W E Gladstone. Immediately the new owner put further alterations in hand, and laid out the gardens to the front of the house; they remain largely unaltered. A S Gladstone died in 1940, and was obituarised in the *Newbury Weekly News* as "a true friend to Kintbury, taking a leading part in all activities; his greatest contribution to the social life of the village was his gift of a recreation ground, which is a lasting memorial to his generosity."

Wallingtons remained with his son until

1945, when it passed to Messrs Edwards, local timber merchants who were interested in the extensive woodland on the estate. It was from Messrs Edwards that the De La Salle Brothers bought the house with 85 acres of grounds in 1946, to serve as a house of studies for boys interested in joining the order. The house was renamed Saint Cassian's after a Roman martyr and teacher venerated by St John Baptist De La Salle, the French priest who had founded the order in Rheims in the 1680s. Inglewood nearby served as the Brothers' training centre from 1929 to 1971, when changes led to withdrawal from Inglewood. St. Cassian's remained as a house of studies until June 1975, when it became a residential retreat centre. The exterior has retained for the most part the Gladstone alterations of 1913, but interior alterations have been made, enlarging some rooms and sub-dividing others.

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Wartime schooldays in White Waltham



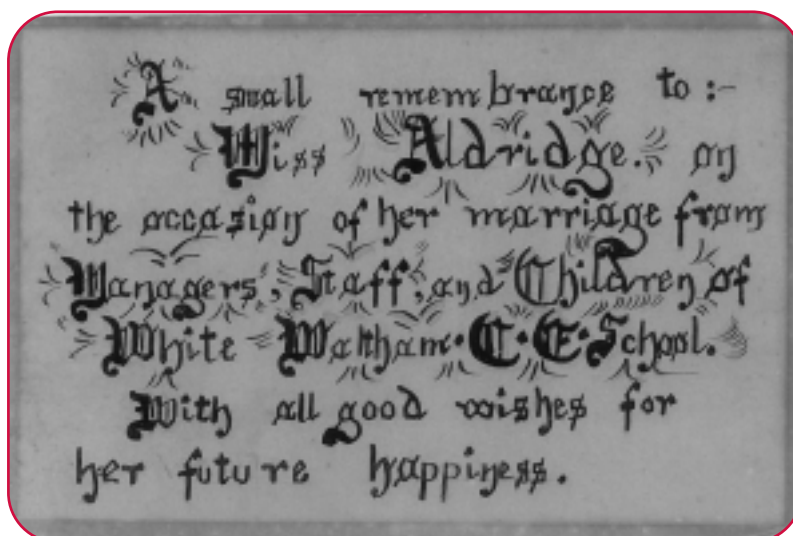
Dennis Tomlinson (5243), pictured right aged seven, recalls his schooldays at White Waltham School. He now lives in Norfolk, but keeps in touch with the village where he was born in 1931, and he helped to organise school reunions in 1997 and 2004.

I am the last member of my branch of the Tomlinson family to have attended what is now White Waltham C of E School. I was there from 1937 to 1943 at what was then an all-age (5-14) school. My late brother Brian attended from 1927 to 1936, and my brother John from 1930 to 1936.

The school was built in 1870 on the site of an earlier school. My father, George Tomlinson (1889-1959), and his five brothers all attended the school. The brothers continued to secondary education at Maidenhead Modern School, but for some reason my father missed out on this. He stayed at school until he was 15 and was then apprenticed for three years to James Moores, men's outfitters, at 12 High Street, Maidenhead.

I have further family connections with the school. My mother, then Miss Hilda Aldridge, taught there from 1910 - 1918, leaving when she married. Although this was the age when people were expected to look up to their betters and it was common to call the headmaster and vicar sir, my mother would never call them, or anyone else, sir. Maybe she was an early feminist. She had stayed on at Shurlock Row School as a monitor and then a pupil-teacher before her move to White Waltham when the Shurlock Row School closed.

When I started, in January 1937, I walked to school in the company of Ernie Denton, who lived nearby and was a few years older than me. Occasionally we had a lift in the



Testimonial presented to the author's mother on her marriage, 2 January 1918 at Binfield Chapel.

Neville and Griffin's lorry from Slough, which picked up the milk (in churns) from my Uncle Walter's How Lane Farm. Later, after Ernie's family had moved to Woodlands Park, I went to school with John French, who lived at 47 Littlefield Green. His neighbour, Sid Lovegrove, who worked for the Oppenheimer family at Waltham Place, was allowed to come home to breakfast on Mondays, driving his employer's 1930s Ford 15 motor car. He went back to work at the right time to give us a lift to school.

The distance to school was one and a quarter miles – slightly less if you took the footpath called Love Walk and then crossed the field to come out on the road via a kissing-gate opposite Grove House. There was a bonus for walking in the autumn – we could pick up conkers which fell from the horse chestnut trees at Littlefield Green.

Our return to school at the start of the 1938 spring term was delayed by a week as the installation of flush toilets had not been completed. School dinners did not start until after the Second World War began, so I used to take sandwiches for my lunch in my leather satchel. In the winter, when the coke-fired boiler which heated the water for the radiators was in use, we could go to the conservatory, where the boiler was housed, and toast our sandwiches. Woe betide you if they fell off the end of the poker into the fire. The school also provided hot cocoa at lunchtime, priced at one halfpenny per cup.

The winter of 1940 was very severe, but I do not remember the school being closed. I walked through snow up to nine inches deep. The headmaster, Mr L G Bradfield, lived in a house next door to the school. He taught the older children, Standards 5, 6 and 7. His wife taught the 8-10-year-olds, Standards 2, 3 and 4, and two other teachers taught the infants, top-class infants and Standard 1 children.

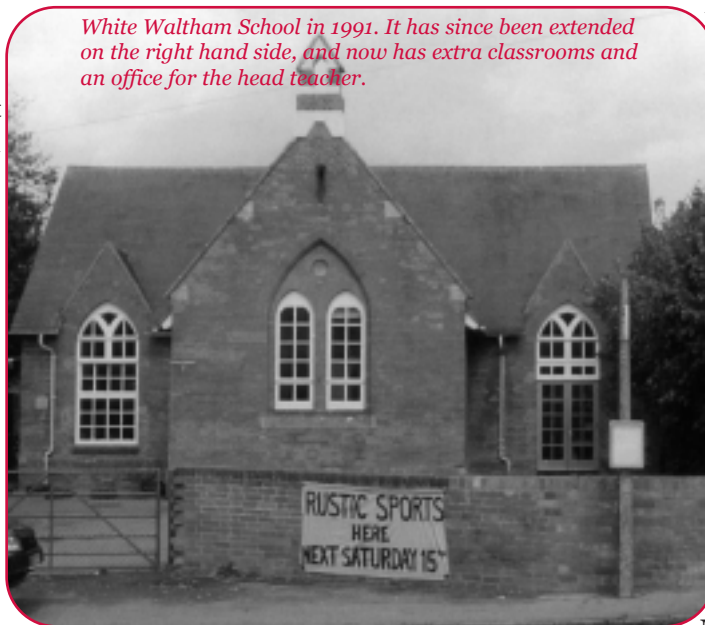
My first teacher was Miss Clark, whose home was in Reading, but I think she must have lodged in the village during the week and gone home at weekends. Miss Clark left after my first year and was replaced by Miss

Harrison (married name Mrs Barker), who cycled each day from Cookham, about four miles from White Waltham. I liked Miss Clark and Miss Harrison, who were very kind to the younger children. Miss Harrison read us stories from Enid Blyton and told us when Miss Blyton

moved to her new home – Green Hedges in Beaconsfield. The other infant teacher was Miss Miell (married name Mrs Addy) who lived at Shottesbrooke and spent her entire career at the school.

As we were a Church of England school, the vicar, the Rev John Henry Jackson, a scholarly and very courteous man, came in once a week and gave us a lesson in which we were taught the catechism and parts of matins – the order of morning prayer. I used to find it difficult to say that my name had been given to me in baptism because I knew that I had not been baptised. The Tomlinsons attended the

White Waltham School in 1991. It has since been extended on the right hand side, and now has extra classrooms and an office for the head teacher.



interdenominational Waltham Chapel at Paley Street, and my father did not believe in infant baptism. To his credit, the vicar never made an issue out of this. In my father's day, one of the curates told the children that we were baptised in The Cut, the stream which ran near to the chapel. Untrue, of course.

One of the regular health inspections was the visit of the nit nurse to check the children for head lice. The children's height was measured for a particular purpose after the introduction of clothes rationing. At 12 years old, if you were over five feet two and a half inches tall, you qualified for extra clothing coupons.

When school dinners started, they were supplied from the kitchen at Waltham St Lawrence School, and were delivered in containers. When I started to cycle, I used to go home to lunch as we had a one and a quarter hour lunch break. We also received a third of a pint of milk a day, drunk with a straw from glass bottles. The milk came from Mr A J Bucknell's Bury Court Farm. In very



The Tomlinson family. Left to right: Hilda, John, George, Brian. Sitting on his father's lap is Dennis, aged two.

frosty weather it would sometimes arrive with the top inch or so frozen. If you were really thirsty, you could drink from the water tap in the playground.

Evacuees came to the village in 1940 from Holy Trinity School in Paddington, and this caused some overcrowding. The parish room at Holly Cottage became an extra classroom and for a time we went to school in the mornings and the evacuees in the afternoon. The next week, the order was reversed. But this did not last for long. Extra places were found in Boyn Hill school and some evacuees returned to London.

Two brick air-raid shelters were built – one in the playground and one on the site of the cycle shed. When the air-raid warning siren sounded we went into the shelters, taking coconut matting mats to sit on as the concrete floor was very cold.

Although it was wartime, we had a Christmas party. We had to take our own mugs. We made paper-chains by sticking strips of coloured paper together, and had games like pinning the tail on the donkey. There were no ingredients for a Christmas cake but Mr Hall, the village baker, made us each a bun. I think the buns must have been made without fat, as they were very dry. At the end of the party, we each received a gift of one shilling (2007 equivalent £1.50), courtesy of the Oppenheimer family. This was nearly enough to pay for the cheapest seat at the Plaza Cinema in Queen Street, Maidenhead.

School days may not have been the happiest days of my life, but I can look back on them with few regrets and with profound thankfulness to the teachers who gave me such a good grounding in the three Rs.

Dennis Tomlinson's book A village at war: White Waltham 1939-45 is available from the mail order booklist – see centre pages.

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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Please send your letters and articles to the editor, either by email to <editor@berksfhs.org.uk> or by post to The Editor, Berkshire Family Historian, The Holding, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, Berks RG20 0HW. Letters may have to be edited, and it will be assumed, unless you ask otherwise, that you are happy to have your postal and email address published for replies.

Berkshire Burial Index

from **Peter and Glynis Croxford** (4360)

We recently purchased the fifth update of the Berkshire Burial Index CD, which has proven extremely helpful to our research, as well as being easy to use. Are the transcribers nearly completing their task, to what extent does it cover the burial registers at the BRO, and is the intention to continue with the annual update? Keep up the good work. Kind regards and thanks.

*Reply from **David Wright**, leader of the Berkshire Burial Index project*

It is always encouraging to the volunteer transcribers, inputters, checkers, and those responsible for producing the CD to receive messages of support such as this one, and I would like to thank them on behalf of the entire team. We continue to make steady progress in adding new material to the index, and would hope to reach half a million entries in the current year. Quite what this represents as a proportion of the total available number is difficult to calculate, given that the total number is not recorded and is growing all the time as more records are deposited. My guess is that we might at present be somewhere just beyond half way through the project.

To date we have included entries – the complete set of registers in some cases, but somewhat less in others – from all but half a dozen or so of the ancient parishes of pre-1974

Berkshire, together with an extensive coverage of Victorian and later parishes as well as non-conformist burials. We have also made a good start on the extensive registers for Reading (London Road) Cemetery, and have completed the deposited registers for Caversham (Hemdean Road) and Shinfield cemeteries. Work is starting on the registers for the cemeteries at Cold Ash and Newbury (Newtown Road) and we have permission to access the relevant parts of the registers for Reading (Henley Road, Caversham) Crematorium. We also understand that the registers for Reading (Henley Road, Caversham) Cemetery are likely to become accessible shortly.

As long as there continues to be sufficient demand, it remains our intention to update the CD approximately yearly, assuming also that enough new material continues to come forward to make it worth while.

Much work remains to be done on the various cemeteries noted above, not counting others throughout the county. There will be plenty to occupy the team for a good while yet, and there is a need for more volunteers to work at home, either transcribing from fiche or inputting. We particularly need more volunteers to work at the BRO in Reading transcribing and/or inputting. Anyone interested in helping should contact me through the Berks FHS.

See page 4 for the latest update to the Berkshire Burial Index.

Goswells

from **Leslie W Prescott** (5475)

I have been researching the name Goswell, mainly in Berkshire. I have traced one family back to a Henry Goswell, born c1597 in Pangbourne, who married in Pangbourne on 2 Feb 1622 Jone Flower born c 1597 also in Pangbourne. I have 610 names on this tree, of which 321 bear the name of Goswell.

I have another smaller tree dating back to John Goswell, born 1724 in Midgham, Berkshire, married in 1749 in Midgham to Amy Brown also born in Midgham. I feel sure that this branch marries up somewhere with the first tree.

I wonder if any of your readers can help me get further back with either of these two families. When I have got as far back as I can I should be delighted to give the society a CD of my tree which is on Family Treemaker 2006. Every entry on the tree is authenticated with either a parish record before 1837 and/or by an entry from the GRO index after this date. My research was greatly assisted by a copy of *Goswells only of Berkshire* which I obtained from the Berkshire Record Office.

Cliff Debney, who manages the Research Centre, replies that he would be delighted to receive the two trees for the Reference Library. Such contributions should be addressed to the Librarian.

Military and naval archives

from **David Painter** (3499)

As I needed to see copies of the Army List, I tried first Hampshire Record Office with very limited success. No copies in the county reference library. Then a chat with our local librarian led me to make a visit with my wife to the library of Aldershot Military Museum at 109 High Street, Aldershot
<www.hants.gov.uk/museum/aldershot/

library.html> . I made a prior arrangement, as there is limited availability to the collection.

Suffice to say that we were able to search swiftly and effectively among considerable numbers of Army Lists, although 1916 was missing. Beyond these items the collection is vast, and I recommend seeking help from the staff to find a book on a particular regiment or event. Parking is readily accessible just off the A323, Wellington Avenue. A nearby shopping mall provides facilities for refreshment. Limited opening hours will improve once work is completed to allow disabled access.

I also recommend the Royal Naval Museum at Portsmouth <www.royalnavalmuseum.org>, the Hampshire naval collection at Gosport Library <www.hants.gov.uk/library/navcol.html> and an extensive RN collection in the City Library at Guildhall Square, Portsmouth <www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning/1035.html>.

Family bibles

From **Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury** (5337)

I am sure I am not the only family historian who eagerly scans the bookshelves of the local charity shops, and it always makes me feel rather sad when I come across large family bibles. They somehow seem so neglected and unloved. I always feel honour-bound to rescue them, much to the glee of the shop assistant. I bought one such bible from a charity shop in Walsingham in Norfolk and, despite strenuous efforts, I was unable to track down the family who were recorded in the middle section as coming from Cheltenham. This time I hope to be luckier. I have just bought another, and the family recorded in its pages is the Knapp family. The first recorded entry is 1809 and the last 1999. One family member is recorded as having been married in St Peter's Church, Caversham, and one member died at Sonning Eye. If any of this rings a bell please do contact me. I shall be delighted to pass the bible on to its rightful owner.

Gleanings

from exchange magazines

Daphne Spurling

Sources for family historians at Guildhall Library. London Westminster & Middlesex FHS, vol 29, no 2, Dec 2006

Have you looked at the A2A site for your medieval ancestors? Details of the manorial system. Richmond & Tweed FHS, no 88, Dec 2006

Questioning Huguenot and Walloon heritage. Flemish often incorrectly included, hence a project to identify Flemish immigrants mainly using families from the Fens. Journal of Soc of Australian Genealogists, vol 36, pt 4, Dec 2006

Photographic images in the Northants Studies Collection. Northants FHS, vol 29, no 3, Feb 2007

Wiltshire electoral registers. Wiltshire FHS, issue 103, Oct 2006

Spotlight on Rillington and Scampstead. Banyan Tree (East Yorkshire FHS), no 109, Jan 2007

Ag labs – the forgotten revolutionaries. Detailed account of the effects of enclosures. Kent FHS, vol 11, no 9, Dec 2006

Hethersett village. Norfolk FHS, vol 5, no 1, March 2007

The parish church of St Mary and St Michael, Egremont. Includes some monumental inscriptions. Cumbria FHS, no 122, Feb 2007

Thinking about DNA. One family's experience. Cumbria FHS, no 122, Feb 2007

Fire insurance records. Cumbria FHS, no 122, Feb 2007

1930 who's who and where in the parishes of the local dioceses. Lists of clergy, church wardens, PCC secretaries and members of Chamber of Laity. Coventry FHS, vol 7, no 1, March 2007

The framework of family history – the origin and development of English surnames. Explains Soundex and Metaphonic methods of indexing variations. Bedfordshire FHS, vol 16, no 1, March 2007

What's it worth? Bedfordshire FHS, vol 16, no 1, March 2007

Family reconstitution in the parish of Merstham. Account of identifying main family and drawing trees using parish records from mid-sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries. East Surrey FHS, vol 30, no 1, March 2007

No vote no census! Threat of suffragettes to deliberately avoid being enumerated for the 1911 census. Derbyshire FHS, issue 120, March 2007

My parish – Newton St. Loe. Bristol and Avon FHS, no 127, March 2007

A farm at Blo Norton. Detailed account of farming in Norfolk 1820s to 1860s based on tythes, poor rates assessments and census data for a specific farm. Includes definitions of length and area terms. New Zealand Genealogist, vol 38, no 303, Jan/Feb 2007

Choosing resolution settings for scanning. New Zealand Genealogist, vol 38, no 303, Jan/Feb 2007

Bookends

Jean Debney reviews some new local and national family history titles

RESEARCH GUIDES

Four new publications from the Federation of Family History Societies (Publications) 2006

Introducing family history. Stuart A Raymond. A5 flexiback. 146pp. ISBN 1-86006-196-6 £9.50 posted in UK, £11.50 airmail

This long-awaited up-to-date replacement for the book by George Pelling is arranged in six chapters, each with numerous sub-parts, all listed in the contents. Brightly coloured boxes draw your attention in each sub-section to key information; to begin with (orange); addresses (green); web pages (yellow); further reading (blue); and false assumptions (brown). Two appendices list important acronyms and abbreviations used in family history plus the Chapman county codes. A worthy successor as a beginner's "how-to-do-it" item.

Finding out about your family. Kathy Chater and Simon Fowler. A5 flexiback. 31pp. ISBN 1-86006-202-4 £3.55 posted in UK, £4.50 airmail.

A basic introduction to researching family history, which leads you gently through first steps to using the internet, record repositories and the Family Records Centre. Included are details of other sources and useful books.

Basic facts about ...

Series of compact data in A5, flexiback, 16pp. £3.05 posted in UK, £3.70 airmail.

... Quarter sessions records. Richard Ratcliffe. ISBN 978-1-86006-206-3

This includes a brief history of the quarter sessions and where you can find the records. It goes on to give a brief account of the types

of records in which to find information about your ancestors, and ends with a select booklist and useful websites.

... Family history research in

Yorkshire. Pauline M Litton. 2nd ed. ISBN 1-86006-199-0

Four maps on the front and back covers show the county before and after 1974, its location in England and the deaneries. Concise text deals with the historic and modern county, civil (administration) records and civil registration, census returns, ecclesiastical organisation and religious records. Included are contact addresses and emails for various family history societies in Yorkshire plus the LDS Church and record offices.

MILITARY HISTORY SOURCES

The Second World War 1939 - 1945. Phil Tomaselli. (FFHS (Publications) Ltd, 2006) A5 flexiback. 47pp. ISBN 1-86006-201-6 £5.50 posted in UK, £6.50 airmail.

A small but useful new title on how to get started and how to find information about medals, casualties, records of units and other sources to be found in museums, newspapers and, almost inevitably these days, on the internet.

Nelson's Navy 1793-1815. Keith Gregson. (FFHS (Publications) Ltd, 2006) A5 flexiback. 32pp. ISBN 1-86006-200-8 £4.50 posted in UK, £4.50 posted in UK, £5.50 airmail.

Covers the period of the Napoleonic Wars culminating in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. The first chapter deals with general history and details the records and other sources (mainly books), websites and useful addresses in subsequent sections.

BERKSHIRE SOURCES

All transcribed, indexed and published by The Eureka Partnership, 2007 in A5, flexiback.

Newbury Lower Meeting Independent Church: marriages 1839-1860, burials 1784-1865 and church minute book 1696-1734. 48pp. £3.55 posted in UK, £5.40 airmail.

The introduction gives a brief history of this Independent Church, founded by Rev Benjamin Woodbridge in 1684 after he was ejected from his living. It had village stations at Echinswell, Hants, and East Woodhay, Weston and Hamstead Marshall, all in Berks. Apart from marriage and baptism registers, the minute book lists members with additional notes about many of them.

Newbury Upper Meeting Presbyterian Church: baptisms 1763-1837 and burials 1784-1837. 24pp. £2.55 posted in UK, £3.70 airmail.

This church was also founded in 1686 as a distinct congregation from the Independents mentioned above. The church register deposited with the Registrar General is indexed on the IGI, but this transcript includes all the extra details.

The people of Wallingford. Volumes One and Two. 48pp. Each vol £3.55 posted in UK, £4.50 airmail.

Both booklets contain the entry for Wallingford in Dutton, Allen & Co's *Directory and Gazetteer of Berkshire 1863* and an outline street map. Indexed contents include (in Vol 1) money for the poor 1673, St Peter's churchwardens' rates 1724, register of elections of freemen 1686-1764, inhabitants of Angier's Almshouse 1686-1764, subscribers to St Peter's Church building fund 1763, St Mary the More poor rate and abstracts from the overseer's disbursements 1777, licensed victuallers 1784, 1838 and 1871, St Leonard poor rate 1810, *Pigot & Co's Directory* 1823/4 and the muster roll of the 11th Volunteer Corps of Berkshire Rifles 1862. Vol 2 contains abstracts

from the borough minutes books 1648-1668 (including mayoral elections, licensed alehouse keepers and boys apprenticed under Archbishop Laud's Charity), St Peter's churchwardens' rate 1734/5, St Mary the More poor rate 1774, list of commoners 1778, licensed victuallers 1794, 1816 & 1861, St Leonard's highway rate 1798, abstracts from St Peter's vestry minutes 1828-1835, burgess roll 1835, *Kelly's Directory* 1848 and the nominal roll of the 11th Berkshire Rifle Volunteers 1872.

LOCAL HISTORY – BERKSHIRE

Victorian artists of Wallingford, a tale of two dynasties: the Hayllar and Leslie families. Anthony Wilder (Pie Powder Press, 2006) ISBN 0-948598-16-6 210mm x 120mm flexiback. 122pp. Prices on application.

The author, a professional artist and teacher with an interest in family history, has combined these skills to produce an excellent referenced account of these two families, well illustrated with colour examples of their work, black and white photographs and family trees.

St Lawrence's Church, Waltham St Lawrence: a short history and guide, Margaret Railton. (2006) A5 flexiback. 20pp. £3.55 posted in UK, £4.50 airmail.

This is a nicely written guide by an experienced researcher and author. Illustrated with colour and black and white photos, drawings and plans, it includes details of the memorials inside the church and a list of vicars from 1439 to today.

Former mayors of Wokingham from 1885 to 1946. Jim Bell (Jim Bell and the Wokingham Society, 2007) A4 flexiback. 52pp. £4.5 posted in UK, £5.00 airmail.

Wokingham was granted a charter of incorporation in 1885 and the town became a municipal borough with an elected mayor. The details of each mayor's civic career and personal life are arranged chronologically by their mayoral years and illustrated with a small portrait.

Members' interests

compiled by Bob Plumridge

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.

6194	ALLUM	Wantage	BRK	All	6236	JACKSON	London	LND	All
6323	BARNES	Wokingham	BRK	1850-1915	6194	KIRBY	Chesterton	OXF	1700-1820
6194	BATT	Poole	DOR	1840-1950	6321	LIDDIARD	Newbury	BRK	1772?
6194	BATT	Boscombe	HAM	1870-1950	5745	LOVELOCK	Yattendon	BRK	All
6236	BROWN	Reading	BRK	pre 1857	5745	LOVELOCK	Streatley	BRK	All
6194	BROWN	Wantage	BRK	1700-1850	5745	LOVELOCK	Aldworth	BRK	All
6321	CANNINS(S)	Newbury	BRK	1772	6299	MAYERS	Stratfield Saye	HAM	1750-1800
6300	CARTER	Watchfield	BRK	1600-1900	6236	MUNN	Reading	BRK	All
6299	CLARK	Swallowfield	BRK	1750-1800	6194	OAKFORD	Didmarton	GLS	1700-1900
5745	COMLEY	Streatley	BRK	All	6194	PAINTING	Wantage	BRK	1750-1850
5745	COMLEY	Yattendon	BRK	All	6236	POUND	Ireland	IRE	pre 1913
5745	COMLEY	Aldworth	BRK	All	6236	POUND	Reading	BRK	pre 1913
6323	COOPER	Hurst	BRK	1775-1875	6299	PRIEST	Swallowfield	BRK	1820s
6236	COX	Reading	BRK	All	5024	REDWORTH	Hillingdom	MDX	1800-1900
6278	DORMOR	All	All	All	6274	SLADE	Henley	OXF	1650-1750
6278	DUMBELTON	All	All	All	6194	SMITH	Stratton	WIL	All
6299	FRAPE	Bradley	HAM	1840s	6321	SMITH	Speen	BRK	1809?
6236	FROUD	Reading	BRK	All	6299	SMITHER	All	All	-1779
6194	FROUD	Hanney	BRK	1800-1930	6274	SUTTON	Hedgerley	BKM	pre 1700
6323	GODDARD	Hurst	BRK	1775-1875	6194	TEAGLE	Didmarton	GLS	1700-1850
6194	GREENAWAY	Didmarton	GLS	1700-1900	6284	WAKEFIELD	All	BRK	1750-1900
6282	HEADACH	Bradfield	BRK	pre 1800	6284	WARE	Chesham	BKM	1700-1900
6282	HEADACH	Hamstead Norris	BRK	pre 1800	6284	WARE	Ashampstead	BRK	1900-1930
6282	HEADACH	Shaw cum Donnington	BRK	pre 1800	6194	WENHAM	Wantage	BRK	1700-1850
6282	HEADACH	Bucklebury	BRK	pre 1800	6194	WILKINS	Wantage	BRK	1800+
6282	HERRIDGE	Bucklebury	BRK	pre 1800	6194	WILKINS	E Challow	BRK	All
6282	HERRIDGE	Bradfield	BRK	pre 1800	6194	WILLIAMS	Wantage	BRK	1700-1800
6282	HERRIDGE	Hamstead Norris	BRK	pre 1800	6284	WILLOUGHBY	All	BRK	1750-1900
6282	HERRIDGE	Shaw cum Donnington	BRK	pre 1800	6102	WILLOUGHBY	Gt / Little Bedwyn	WIL	1700-1900
6194	HODGES	Wantage	BRK	1750-1850	6102	WILLOUGHBY	Marlborough	WIL	1700-1900
6236	HOVELL	St Pancras	LND	pre 1915	6274	WILTSHIRE	Hungerford	BRK	1700-1800
6284	HULCUP	All	BRK	1700-1900	6236	WISE	Reading	BRK	All
					6236	WISE	Newbury	BRK	All

Members' services

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

The Research Centre comprises two floors, with books, films and microfiche on the first floor in the library, and the administration, signing-in desk and the computer suite on the ground floor. The centre is open to members and the general public as follows:

Tuesdays

10.00 - 16.00, 19.00 - 21.30

Wednesdays and Thursdays

10.00 - 16.00

2nd and 4th Sundays each month

11.00 - 16.00

All staff on duty are volunteers who help researchers in the centre, but they do not carry out research for the visitors. Visitors can join the society when in the centre or through the website.

The computer suite includes three computers set up specifically for the Ancestry Library edition, for which a nominal charge of £1.00 per hour is made. This gives access to all the the census returns from 1841 to 1901 plus anything and everything else available through Ancestry. These are topped up by some other counties' census returns dated 1861, 1871 and 1891 and the 1881 census returns for the whole of the UK, including the Channel Isles and the Royal Navy, on all the computers. Also held electronically are the Vital Records Indexes for the UK and some other parts of Europe, the National Burial Index and the more up-to-date Berkshire Burial Index, and much other material by county, either in the memory or accessed by inserting the relevant CD-ROMs. The Berkshire Name Index is available on all the computers.

In the reference library are held copies of almost every England and Wales 1851 census return transcribed and issued as indexes (booklet or fiche), together with the Berkshire census returns for 1851 to 1881 on film. All other England and Wales county fiche holdings, such as parish register transcriptions, are in the reference library, together with books covering every county, plus much on Scotland, Ireland, the Commonwealth and north American countries. The library catalogue can be browsed online.

Research Centre tours 2007

The next tour is to held be on 15 September 2007.

Change of details

Please advise any changes of address, phone number etc to the membership secretary, Berkshire FHS at the Reading address at the top of this page.

How to find us

We are close to the centre of Reading, next door to the Berkshire Record Office and in the same building as the Reading Register Office. The station is a 15-minute walk away, and we are on more than one bus route. There is good parking; follow the signs to the Berkshire Record Office.

BerksFHS Bookshop

The bookshop is on the ground floor, and is always open during centre opening hours. Purchases can be made and paid for by cash or cheque backed up by a cheque card. The bookshop is also available for purchases on our website, which lists the most popular publications. Publications for sale include those for beginners as well as for more established family historians. We hold publications on Berkshire family and local history, particularly those published by local societies, whether in print, fiche or electronic format.

The Berkshire Name Search (BNS)

This is the master index for all the following indexes. To search this 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.

The BNS consists of the following:

Berkshire censuses and indexes

- 1851 census transcription, fully checked, of the 173,748 persons within Berkshire on the night of 30 March.
- 1861 census transcription and index includes most individuals (the town of Reading is the major exception).
- 1871 census transcription and index is complete and mainly checked.
- 1881 census transcription and index is complete and fully checked.

Printouts can be made as required from all these transcriptions.

Berkshire Marriage Index

Work is in progress transcribing and checking all pre-1837 parish registers, with over 95,000 entries now available. Note that the early register entries only give dates and names of the groom and bride. Later entries include their parish if applicable, and whether married by licence.

Berkshire Burial Index

Work continues transcribing all Berkshire burial registers, with over 497,000 entries to date. Some 50 per cent of the entries show all the data available. The rest show (where available) name, age, relationship, occupation and title together with a note indicating if there is further information such as date, place or cause of death in the original record. The fifth edition of the index is available on CD-ROM from the bookshop.

Berkshire Strays Index

This dataset includes 20,500 people recorded in events taking place outside Berkshire if the person has some reference to Berkshire. 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.

Postal search

Please address your envelope with the initials relating to your enquiry as underlined below:

Berkshire Name Search: BNS

other county census indexes searches: OCCI

Strays index: Strays

to Berkshire FHS, at the address on page 34, with these initials preceding the society title. Please supply your email address, and enclose a bankers' draft or sterling cheque drawn on a London clearing bank to the value of £2.00, and an A5 (240 x 165mm) self-addressed envelope, stamped if a UK return address, or an envelope of any size and two IRCs if an overseas return address.

Charges

To search the BNS 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 costs if more entries are found) send:

- £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 pre- and post-1974), please send them by post to the address on page 34 or by email to <miscindex@berksfhs.org.uk>.

Birth Briefs

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 Birth Briefs Index, currently standing at 34,100 names, on <www.berksfhs.org.uk/birthbriefs/index.htm> or you can order a search by post for £2.

If you have an interest in a name on a Birth Brief you can order a copy (on paper, or as a digital file in either PAF Pedigree or GEDCOM) for £2.

Please post search requests and orders for copies to Berks FHS (BB), Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ. Enclose a sterling cheque, drawn on a UK bank, your email address and a self-addressed envelope, either stamped or containing 2 x IRCs.

Alternatively you may wish to contact the submitter. If, on the Birth Briefs Index pages, the BB ID is immediately followed by *post* the submitter can be contacted by mail. Write to the society marking your envelope BB. Please supply the BB name and ID number (from the website or postal search) that you are interested in, and your email address. You should also enclose

- a short introductory letter to the member
- a blank envelope for your message to be posted to the member concerned
- a self-addressed (unstamped) envelope for a reply from the member
- 3 stamps or 3 x IRCs (one for the letter to the member, one for a reply from the member and one as a donation to the society for this service).

Your letter will be forwarded. If the submitter is no longer a member, or cannot be contacted, one stamp/IRC will be returned to you. The only option then is to order a copy of the Birth Brief as above. If you do not receive a reply to your request within four weeks (eight weeks if the submitter does not live in the UK) please advise <membercontact@berksfhs.org.uk>.

West Berkshire Museum

A resource for local family history

Go beyond the genealogy and learn about the places your ancestors lived, worked and played.

Come and use our maps, photographs, pictures, directories, publications, reference files, and local knowledge.



Open: 10am to 5pm, Tuesday to Saturday and Bank Holidays.
The Wharf, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5AS Tel: (01635) 30511
E-mail: museum@westberks.gov.uk Website: www.westberkshireremuseum.org.uk