

Berkshire Family Historian

the quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society

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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.

Chairman's note

The time has come around to elect a new Berks FHS Executive for 2009-10. This year we need to find a new chairman and a new treasurer, as well as two new committee members. If you would like to stand, or you know someone who would (please ask them first!) then fill out the nomination form which can be found on the web, at branch meetings, in the Research Centre or from our secretary will post one to you. Please return the completed form to the secretary, or hand it to a volunteer in the Research Centre by 29 May 2009.

I'd like to thank all those who helped on our stall at the Bracknell Fair and at the WDYTYA-live Fair in Olympia. In September Gillian Stevens handed in her resignation as our events co-ordinator, since when I have been organising our stall at various fairs. I cannot continue to do this as I am also your publications manager, so we urgently need two people to organise taking the Berks Name

Search, CDs and a few books to fairs. You can choose which fairs to attend – they are fun! If we don't find people to represent us at fairs then the Family History Event at the Barbican on 3 May will regrettably be the last fair at which Berks FHS will have a presence. If you'd like more information please contact me.

FamilyHistoryOnLine closed down at the end of February, and until we can persuade the Oxford diocese to allow family history societies to publish transcripts of their records on the web you will have to apply directly to our bookshop and buy our transcripts on CD, or use the Berks FHS research services, details of which are in the *Historian* and on the website.

Berkshire Record Office will again be opening its doors for our members and their friends on Tuesdays 21 April and 21 July from 18.00 to 20.00. Our own Research Centre will be open from 18.00 to 21.30 on those days. I look forward to seeing as many as possible on these evenings.

Jocie McBride
Chairman

Notice of annual general meeting

The 34th Berkshire Family History Society annual general meeting, with annual reports from the chairman and treasurer, will be held before the Computer Branch meeting, starting at 19.30 on Wednesday 17 June 2009 at the Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley RG5 4JZ.

If you would like to nominate a member to the Executive Committee please let the secretary know in writing by 29 May. 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 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, Jocie McBride and Sue Clifford have signified that they are unwilling to seek re-nomination as chairman and treasurer respectively. Carolyn Boulton and Jean Herbert have served five consecutive years and are thus not eligible for nomination.

Findmypast and FamilyHistoryOnline

By the time this issue of the *Historian* is published, the transfer of most of FamilyHistoryOnline's databases to findmypast will have been completed. The baptism, marriage, burial and census records amassed by members of the Federation of Family History Societies, and formerly available to search through FamilyHistoryOnline (FHO), will now be augmented by new data, not yet online, also from the contributing family history societies. The new database is named the Parish Records Collection, and can be accessed at <www.findmypast.com>.

Unfortunately, the Berkshire Burial Index and the Marriage Index will no longer be available online pending clarification of the rights regarding parish registers with the county archivist and the Oxford diocese. The same restriction also applies to information from the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire parish registers. Not all societies have agreed to transfer their data, for

example, the Birmingham and the Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry, and information about strays has not been transferred.

The hosting of FamilyHistoryOnline by findmypast will provide far greater visibility to this valuable information, and it will bring the data to the attention of a worldwide audience. Family history societies such as Berks FHS which own the data will receive improved revenue from use of the new, enlarged database and the higher charges.

FHO removed its £20 and £50 vouchers from sale early in the new year, but reassures voucher holders (of any denomination) that their credit will transfer to findmypast. Holders will be notified by email on how to activate these transferred credits. There will also be information about the transfer of credits on <www.FamilyHistoryOnline.net>.

1911 census – welcome but costly

Most readers will by now be aware that the 1911 census was launched online on 13 January 2009 on <www.1911census.co.uk>, but those who do not use the society's online discussion group may be unaware that Berks FHS was invited to take part in the beta trial of the site last December. Members' response was predictably prompt and lively: some were delighted but many criticised the high cost. Pay-As-You-Go is the only option, and a 60-credit purchase (for £6.95) buys only two original images from 1911, by comparison with 20 images for other censuses on findmypast. Subscriptions cannot, as yet, be used for the 1911 census.

Findmypast welcomed the society's feedback, although the tariff remains unchanged.

One discussion group member pointed out that census search results alone can yield useful information, without incurring the expense of "views". Name spellings, ages and locations can be confirmed, although at present 1911 supplies rather less detail in search results than, for example, <www.1901censusonline.com>.

Another example of privileged prior access being made available to our members was the BerkshireBMD site trial described on page 7.

Opportunities such as these generally arise at too short a notice for publication in the magazine, and are therefore publicised through the online discussion group, which also carries regular bulletins of general news in the family history world.

If you are missing out on these opportunities and updates remember that access to the online discussion group is part of your membership benefits package. All you need to do to join the group is to contact <listowner@berksfhs.org.uk>.

Berkshire Burial Index *update*

The parishes and periods which have been added to the Berkshire Burial Index since the position shown in the December 2008 issue of the *Berkshire Family Historian* are set out below. These will be included in the next update of the CD, which we aim to issue towards the end of 2009. The index now contains more than 623,000 entries.

Appleton St Laurence 1730 - 1767
Bray St Michael 1722 - 1752
Cholsey St Mary 1691 - 1746
Cumnor St Michael 1755 - 1812
East Garston All Saints 1693 - 1757
Englefield St Mark 1772 - 1812
Great Coxwell St Giles 1792 - 1812
Inkpen St Michael and All Angels 1750 - 1812
Reading London Road Cemetery (burials in consecrated ground) 1929 - 1935
Reading St Mary 1947 - 1960
Shaw cum Donnington St Mary the Virgin 1933 - 1964
Sutton Courtenay All Saints 1797 - 1812
Thatcham St Mary 1615 - 1629
Wokingham All Saints 1797 - 1812

Details of the services for researching burials in the Berkshire Burial Index are given on page 35.

David Wright

Additions to online databases

The National Archives has recently added more than 600,000 records to the searchable online service at <www.bmdregisters.co.uk>. These include:

- maternity records from the British Lying-in Hospital, Holborn 1749 - 1868
- registers of burials in Victoria Park Cemetery, Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, Bethnal Green Protestant Dissenters Burying Ground
- the archive of the Russian Orthodox Church in London 1721 - 1927, covering births, marriages, deaths, conversions and general records on the day-to-day running of the church.

The National Trust surnames website <www.nationaltrustnames.org.uk>, which maps the distribution of individual surnames in Great Britain in 1881 and 1898, promises soon to offer a world surname profiler.

Findmypast.com has added 1.8 million pre-1837 parish records for Cornwall, and the counties of Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdon, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Oxford and Sussex to the 1901 census.

In the Irish Origins section of The Origins Network site <www.originsnetwork.com> you can now view *Pigot's Commercial Directory of Ireland* for 1824 and *Slater's Commercial Directory of Ireland* for 1846.

The official Ellis Island Inc site <www.ellis-island.org> which offers free access to records of immigration through New York from 1892 to 1924 now includes an index by ship's name.

Ancestry.co.uk has launched online the UK medical registers for 1859-1959. This database contains annually published books listing all doctors who were licensed to practise in the United Kingdom and abroad from 1859 to 1959.

Can genealogy predict the sex of unborn babies?

Both *The Times* and the *Daily Record* of 11 December 2008 reported a study by Newcastle University which confirms the belief that some families are programmed to produce son after son, while others will have only daughters. Research suggests that a man's tendency to father sons could be influenced by his genes, i.e., that men can predict the sex of their children according to their own siblings.

Researcher Corry Gellatly was quoted as saying: "The study showed that whether you are likely to have a boy or a girl is inherited. Men are more likely to have sons if they have more brothers, but are more likely to have daughters if they have more sisters. In women, however, you just cannot predict it." He also suggested that an undiscovered gene could also explain why more boys than usual were born after both world wars. Families with multiple sons would have been more likely to see at least one survive, he said, and those sons would in turn have been more likely to father boys.

Foreigners who helped to fight for freedom



Since the autumn of 2007 the Royal Air Force Museum at Colindale has been collecting archival material generated by European citizens who served with the RAF during the Second World War. Part of a recent exhibition named *Island of Last Hope* was devoted to the 30,000 airmen and airwomen from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and France who escaped to this country to continue the fight after their homelands were occupied by Nazi Germany. Many settled here, and the archive of memorabilia, which includes letters, diaries and flying log books, will be of great interest to their British-born descendants.



Honour for Peter Durrant

Dr Peter Durrant, the county archivist at Berkshire Record Office, was appointed an MBE in the New Year honours for services to local government. He said: "I am very honoured by this. I believe it is really for services to archives, because that is what I do and what I have always done." Dr Durrant was born in 1948 – the same year that the Berkshire Record Office was established. He went on to gain his doctorate at Manchester University, before joining the Berkshire Records Office, where he has spent his entire career.

The Manuscripts Section reading room of the Guildhall Library will be closed for about six months from March 2009 as part of an extensive refurbishment programme at the Guildhall Library. Access will be at the reading room of London Metropolitan Archives.

Dates for your diary

date	event	venue	more details
10.00 - 17.00 Sun 1 Mar	Oxfordshire & Bucks family history fair	Exeter Hall Kidlington OX5 1AB	< www.familyhistoryfairs.com >
Sat 28 Mar	FFHS AGM & GM	TNA Kew TW9 4DU	< www.ffhs.org.uk/events >
10.00 - 17.00 Sun 19 Apr	South Coast family history fair	Worthing Pavilion Theatre BN11 3PX	< www.familyhistoryfairs.com >
18.00 - 20.00 Tue 21 Apr	BRO open evening for Berks FHS members	BRO Coley Ave, Reading	chairman's note p2
10.00 - 17.00 Sun 3 May	family history event	Exhib hall 2 Barbican London EC2Y 8DL	< www.thefhevent.com >
10.00 - 15.30 Sat 20 June	Wiltshire FHS open day and fair	New College, Swindon SN3 1AH	< www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk >
10.00 - 16.00 Sat 25 July	Buckinghamshire FHS open day	Grange School Aylesbury HP21 7NH	< www.bucksfhs.org.uk >



Open the Door & Here are the People <<http://www.openthedoor.org.uk>> is a national family and local history conference to be held at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham from 28 to 31 August 2009. Hosted by the Halsted Trust, and sponsored by the Society of Genealogists, ABM Publishing and Hague Lambert Solicitors, it will cover a broad spectrum of subjects of interest to family, local and social historians, from buildings to immigration, and from the military to industrial Britain. Speakers will come from the Galleries of Justice, King's College, London, the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, the Media Archive for Central England, National Maritime Museum, National Monuments Record, Parliamentary Archives, Royal Geographical Society, The National Archives and the Women's Library, and they will include Paul Blake, Else Churchill, John Hanson, Sharon Hintze, Maggie Loughran, Derek Palgrave, Geoff Riggs, Mary Teviot and Alec Tritton.

The Research Centre will be closed on Sunday 12 April for Easter Sunday, and on Sunday 24 May for May Bank Holiday Sunday.

Please be sure to advise any change of contact details to the membership secretary, at the address on the inside front cover. We receive many enquiries via the website, and it is much faster and more economical if we can forward them to the relevant member by email.



Berks FHS at the Bracknell Family History Fair 25 January 2009

Berkshire BMD comes online

The long-awaited Berkshire BMD project is coming to fruition. As part of the UKBMD national project, which can be seen on <www.UKBMD.org.uk> volunteers from Berks FHS have been transcribing from local register indexes, starting from 1837. At the time of going to press 42,255 births, 24,252 deaths and 7,565 marriages from the Reading area had been posted online for a beta trial offered to members of the Berks FHS online discussion group. Many took up the offer, and responded vociferously. These numbers will almost certainly have increased by the time this issue is published.

Volunteer effort has been and will continue to be the mainstay of the project. David Watkins spent many hours in the Research Centre imaging the Registry Office index books on the society's book scanner and then emailing them to volunteers who transcribed the details into spreadsheets. The results were checked against the actual registers by David and a small team on most Monday mornings. The software which checks for anomalies, and ultimately loads the finished product, has been

made available by Ian Hartas of Cheshire FHS.

The work started in mid 1995. A different approach is being undertaken in Windsor, but the rest of the county needs volunteers to come forward, in particular project leaders able to visit the various registry offices regularly. (David spends up to eight hours per week on the project.)

The great advantage of this work is that we have results based on the original registers rather than the flawed GRO records. If you have read *Comedy of Errors* by Michael Whitfield Foster you will be aware of just how flawed these are.

By the time this magazine is in circulation the initial access restrictions on the site at <www.berkshirebmd.org.uk> should have been lifted, making the database available to all. Users can check which districts have been covered to date. Certificates can be ordered from Reading Register Office, preferably by phone during working hours, but postal applications with postal orders (not cheques) are also accepted.

The consequences of murder

Murder rarely has a happy outcome, but Alan Gardener's account in the December *Historian* of the brutal death of a child at the hands of her father in Windsor has furthered the family history research of two members. Two of the neighbouring residents involved in the incident – Samuel Wilkins, who cradled the dying child in his arms, and Charles Coker, who carried her to the infirmary – were recognised as family members by readers in Welshpool and Tilehurst respectively. They are now in touch with each other, pooling their findings.

Membership statistics

In January 2009 society membership stood at 1,722, as against 1,765 in January 2008. Of these 94 (mostly individuals and a few institutions) were from overseas, Australia having the largest contingent (42) and Canada second (23).

Within the UK (1,606 individual and family members, 13 honorary and nine institutions) 1,123 have addresses in Berkshire or its six bordering counties.

Busy breeders in Bradfield

Jean Herbert (3800) wonders if there was something in the water

I have been involved in projects for a while, and seeing Beverley's article in the last *Historian* reminded of an interesting experience. I was checking the Bradfield parish register baptisms for accuracy, and now wonder if what I came across is an unusual phenomenon. During a period from 1808 to 1830 there were a number of multiple births:

1808 – boy twins in the Hutchins family

1816 – boy and girl twins in Bulger and Smith families

1821 – girl twins in the Rider family

1822 – boy twins in the Spruels family

1825 – boy and girl twins in the Beckett family

1826 – three sets of twins in the Lovelock, Wooderson and Wells families

1829 – triplets, two girls and a boy, in the Sellwood family

1830 – boy twins in the Drew family.

I was intrigued! Did they all live or die? I could not resist a quick check five years forward, and I found:

1808 – both survived

1816 – one set survived, the other died within six months

1821 – one twin survived

1822 – one twin survived

1825 – both survived

1826 – of the three sets only one child survived

1829 – two of the triplets survived

1830 – both survived.

From the registers...

spotted by Bob Burns (6252) in the Stanford-in-the-Vale register

John (baptized by the midwife) the sonn of Dionyse Conwaye and Ellenor his wife, was admitted as lawfully baptized in Goossey the XIX of June (Midwives ought not to baptize)

And from the census...

spotted by Pat Wilson on RG9/744 page for Purley in 1861

Man Eloped after the schedule was left on Saturday

Conservation of Broadmoor archives

Following last September's opening of the Broadmoor archives to the public, Mark Stevens of the BRO describes some of the challenges facing conservators

In April 2007 a conservation project to re-package, repair and stabilise the archives of Broadmoor Hospital, formerly Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum, was begun at the Berkshire Record Office (BRO). The archive includes a wide range of material covering the administration and personnel, and comprised approximately 125 boxes, 387 volumes and 110 other items. A further 239 boxes of patient medical records are also included. This project was made possible by the receipt of a grant from the Wellcome Trust's Research Resources in Medical History funding scheme.

The archive consists of both loose-leaf and bound material as well as photographs of patients and the hospital site covering the period since the hospital opened in 1863 to 2004. Prior to removal to the BRO the material had been stored in a variety of locations at Broadmoor Hospital, from the superintendent's office to the former bakery and even, at one point, the mortuary. Hence much of the material was in a poor condition. Many items were partially covered in bird droppings, and a number of items were mouldy throughout.

Preliminary preservation work, such as re-packaging and removal of staples, was undertaken by the project archivist during cataloguing, and a database was established, identifying items in need of further conservation treatment. This database was then used to survey the collection, identifying specific treatment to be undertaken.

Having established the conservation requirements of the collection, the project archivist was asked to indicate the priority and expected use of each item so that conservation work could be concentrated on the most important documents. A total of 29 volumes



D/H14 B2/2/1 A typical example of the conservation problem

were identified to be re-bound as original, and 46 volumes to be case-bound in a simpler, more cost-effective style, whilst still enabling the material to be accessed by searchers. Dry cleaning, paper repairs and re-sewing were carried out on all volumes as required, and volumes were then outsourced for re-binding in the original style, or case-bound within the conservation department.

A further grant has now been awarded by the Wellcome Trust to enable 20 boxes of patient records to be washed and repaired. On arrival at the BRO these records were found to be in such a fragile condition that researchers could not handle them safely. It is estimated that this part of the project will take a further three years to complete.

facebook

for family historians

Facebook is the fifth most popular website in the whole world, and is the second most visited website in the UK after Google¹. Although initially it was mostly used by students and school children, it is increasingly being adopted by family historians as a means of connecting with friends and relatives.

Facebook was founded in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, a student at Harvard University. Membership was initially restricted to students at the university. The new site was so popular that within the first month more than half the undergraduate population at Harvard were registered on the service.

Membership gradually expanded to include all universities in the United States and Canada. Schools were added in September 2005, followed by employees of companies such as Microsoft and Apple. In September 2006 membership was extended to include everyone worldwide aged 13 and over with an email address. By the end of 2008 the company claimed to have an astonishing 140 million users worldwide².

Of these nearly 15 million are in the UK³, representing almost 25 per cent of the population. If you are researching your family history and are trying to make contact with other people researching your surname or members of your extended family it is highly likely that you will be able to find them on Facebook.

The site is free to use, and is funded entirely by advertising. In order to be able to search for friends and relatives and send them messages it is necessary to register with the site at <www.facebook.com>. Once you have registered you are given your own personal

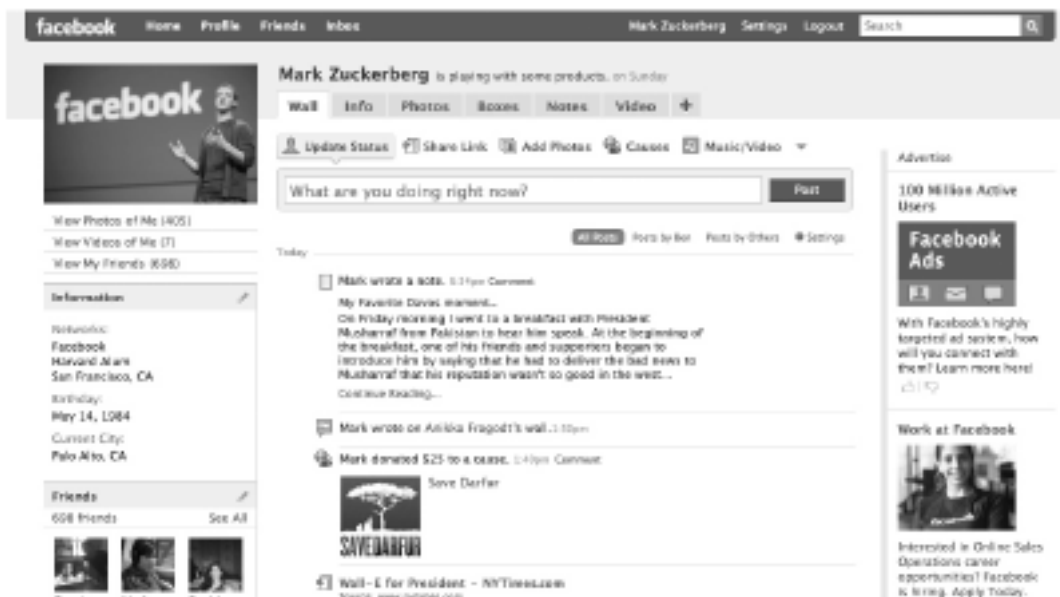
***Debbie Kennett (5278)
explains how to use the popular
social networking website for
family history research***

webpage known as a profile page. You can put as much or as little information on your profile page as you wish. You can add details about your hobbies, favourite books and films, provide links to your website, add photographs and even videos. The positions of some of the page elements can be adjusted by dragging and dropping. There are privacy controls which can be adjusted to suit individual requirements.

Your profile page is initially best set so that it is only visible to your Facebook friends (the default setting). The privacy settings can also be customised so that specific features on your profile page, such as your photos and personal information, are only available to named friends. The settings for public search results can also be adjusted.

If you wish you can even change your settings so that you can stop certain people from contacting you at all via Facebook. It is worth spending some time checking the privacy controls and also reviewing them on a regular basis.

To connect with your friends and contacts you have to become Facebook "friends". If you use one of the popular ISPs you can use the Friend Finder. You simply input your email address and password and the software will search Facebook to see how many of your friends and relatives already have accounts. You will probably find that quite a number of



your existing contacts are already on Facebook. You can then invite them to become your “friend”. Once your friends have confirmed your friendship request you will be able to view each others’ profiles. You can also search for people by name or by email address. It is also possible to send messages to other Facebook users even if you do not know them.

Messages are private communications between Facebook members. The system works in a similar way to that used by Genes Reunited. You are given your own Facebook inbox where messages are stored online, and your email address is not revealed to the recipient. As with Genes Reunited, you can opt to have copies of replies sent to your email account. The messaging facility can be particularly useful if you are researching a particular surname and want to contact other people with that surname.

However, there are spam controls, and care must be taken only to send a few messages at a time. I know of one user whose account was temporarily suspended after he enthusiastically sent messages to everyone on Facebook with his surname!

As with Genes Reunited and other contact sites, sometimes messages will remain unanswered. The messaging system is also

particularly useful for keeping in contact with people whose email address has changed or is temporarily unavailable, and it has come to my rescue on more than one occasion. If your friends are not on Facebook you can send them an email invitation.

Groups are another useful feature on Facebook. Groups have their own mini-website on Facebook, where members can post messages, photos, links and videos. Groups can either be closed, with membership controlled by an administrator and the content restricted to members, or open so that anyone can join and view the pages. There are, for instance, closed invitation-only groups on Facebook for members of the Guild of One-Name Studies and the Isle of Wight Family History Society, whereas there are open groups for the Kent Family History Society and The National Archives (UK) users.

There are numerous surname groups on Facebook. If a group does not exist for the surname you are researching it is very easy to start a group of your own. I set up my own Cruwys genealogy group, which now has 39 members. It has recently brought me into contact with two newly-found second cousins. There is a particular advantage to being the creator of a group, as it gives you the facility to

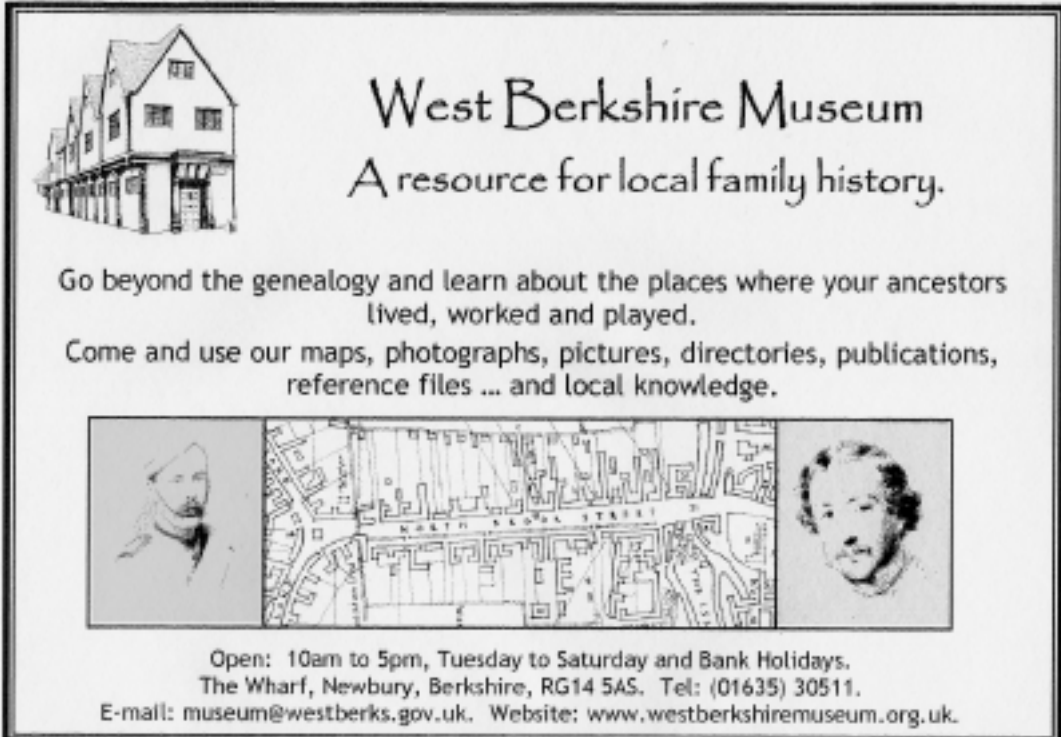
send a message to every single member of the group. Ordinary members have to resort to the laborious process of sending individual messages one at a time.

Keeping in touch with your friends on Facebook is done through your home page. You automatically receive news feeds advising you of your friends' activities. You will therefore be notified if, for instance, one of your friends posts a photo or a link, or adds a new friend. There are also numerous applications which can be added to your profile page, most of which are quite frivolous, though they can be a lot of fun. You can for example play word games with your friends, send birthday cards, participate in quizzes and even test your typing speed! The applications also send notices to your news feed, so it is a useful way of picking up ideas. The settings for applications can also be changed on the privacy controls. Until you have got used to the system it is a good idea to check your own profile page on a regular basis.

The stories which are published on your profile page are the ones which are circulated to your friends. It is very easy to delete a story manually from your profile page if you don't want it to appear.

I have been using Facebook for the last year and I now use it every day. I find it a very useful way to keep in touch with my existing genealogy friends, and have also found it an invaluable tool for making contact with other researchers. I look forward to making some new Berkshire Family History Society Facebook friends in 2009!

- 1 Traffic rankings from the web information company Alexa at <www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_site>
- 2 Facebook Statistics at <www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>
- 3 Facebook usage statistics for the year ending 2008 at <www.nickburcher.com/2008/12/facebook-usage-statistics-year-end-2008.html>



West Berkshire Museum
A resource for local family history.

Go beyond the genealogy and learn about the places where 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.westberkshitemuseum.org.uk.

Mystery visitors to Shurlock Row

Mick Henry, who lived as a youngster in Shurlock Row and last year wrote about his discovery of an old Hovis book from the village shop, sets another question for readers

I recently acquired through eBay five pictures of Shurlock Row, where I grew up from 1958 to 1963. They show a group of Dutch people – around 40 individuals, all adults, both men and women – who came to the village and camped in tents from 5 to 12 September 1947.

One of the pictures shows what is described as the “cultural centre of Shurlock Row” and is a wonderful shot of the village pub, the White Hart (shown right).

Another is entitled “The Seven Dutchmen,” and lists their names and where they were from. (My Dutch is not brilliant, so I may have made some mistakes with the names here.)



Rany Bloc	Rotterdam
Henk Stuve	Bu___im?
Emil Remy	den Haag?
Jos Huysse	Deuculn?
Ian A Vervoort	Appeldon?
Hein Nieuwenhuis	Amsterdam
Jan van Ronen	Rotterdam

Shurlock Row isn't a large place, so I'm assuming that the visit by such a contingent must have had some impact, and that maybe some readers might remember it. What were 40 Dutch people doing in a small Berkshire village in 1947? If anyone has the answer they might like contact me.

MIS

in Enborne and Hamstead Marshall

Penny Stokes

The Research Centre has recently acquired transcriptions of monumental inscriptions (MIs) in the churchyards of St Michael in Enborne and St Mary in Hamstead Marshall. Both documents were handwritten around 1930, four years after the Rev Norman Hook was appointed to both livings. However the identity of the transcriber is unknown. He or she visited Enborne on 5 June 1928, later adding “a few names on memorials erected since April 1930”. Hamstead was visited on 16 June, 30 August and 2 September 1930. The page numbering (132-197 for Enborne, 198-254 for Hamstead) suggests that other churchyards had been done before these two.

The two parishes have always enjoyed a somewhat porous border because both had, in 1930, long been in the ownership of the Craven estate, whose employees and tenant families flowed naturally from one parish to the other. A missing Hamstead ancestor may well be found being baptised, married or buried in Enborne.

MIs are of course much more limited in their coverage than parish registers; a quick count for Hamstead Marshall for the period 1837 to 1900 finds 352 burial entries, of which only 93 individual names (26 per cent) are memorialised in stone.

The entries in the transcriptions cover memorials in the churchyards and the church interiors, including First World War memorials. They are individually numbered and, although there is no map, the sequence, together with the transcriber’s descriptions, should help today’s visitors to locate specific graves in what are both fairly small

churchyards. It scarcely needs emphasising that this 1930 transcription captured much lettering that is no longer legible in the soft limestone so widely used around here.

Entries are comprehensive, using standard abbreviations (eg *I l o.* for *In loving memory of...*) and penstrokes to indicate line breaks. Where known, the stonemason’s name is given. Indexes list the names on the stones, places mentioned and the monumental masons. The index entries refer to page numbers rather than entry numbers (and users should be aware that the Hamstead index has, erroneously, two pairs of pages numbered 212-13).

Few would be so bold as to speak ill of the dead, so perhaps inscribed protestations of grief and piety should be taken with a pinch of salt. Most epitaphs are popular biblical texts. A simple *peace, perfect peace*, was often chosen by ordinary folk; *requiescat in pace* for those with a little education. Many others have verses so similar in metre and rhyming pattern that one suspects a single source of authorship. Perhaps there was a living to be made in composing gravestone verse, much as can be earned by writing greetings card couplets today.

In *Ancestral Trails* Mark Herber warns that any information in an MI may be unreliable. Ages may be wrongly guessed, places ill-remembered by those who supplied the information. Many stones accommodate several family members, and may have been inscribed and erected many years after the first interment.

Most interesting to family historians are

Epitaph in a Berkshire churchyard?

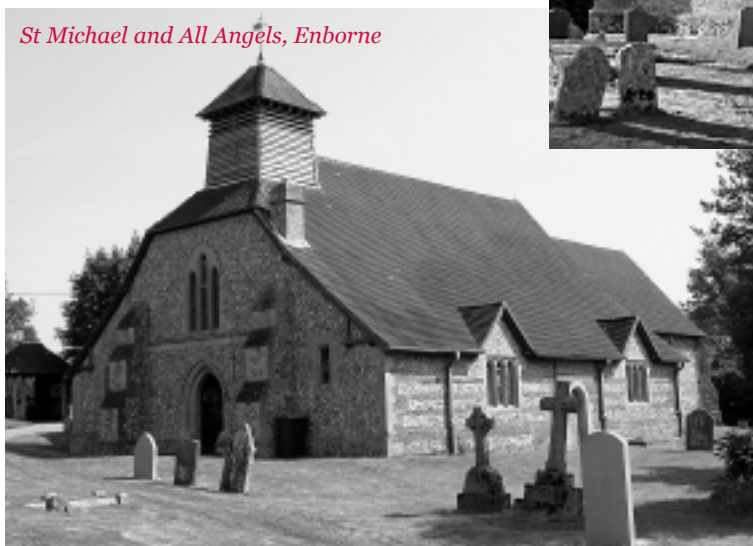
*Here lies, alas, poor Roger Norton,
Whose sudden death was oddly brought on:-
One day trying his corns to mow off,
The razor slipt and cut his toe off.
The toe, or rather what it grew to,
An inflammation quickly flew to:-
The part then took to mortifying,
That was the cause of Roger's dying.*

Alas, this charming inscription, reported in *The Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* of 27 September 1845, has never been exactly located, and is also claimed for several other counties.

St Mary the Virgin, Hamstead Marshall



St Michael and All Angels, Enborne



A favourite theme for inscriptions at Enborne and Hamstead Marshall was a finger-wagging reminder to mourners that their turn might come sooner rather than later:

*Remember man as you pass by,
As you are now so once was I,
And as I am so you must be,
Therefore prepare to follow me.*

Others remind us of the grim reality of terminal illness without modern medicine:

*No pen can write, no tongue can tell
What I endured when I was ill.
My pains were great, my pleasure short,
I prayed to the Lord this world to depart.*

those epitaphs composed specifically for the subject rather than a standard pious text. John Louis' memorial in Hamstead churchyard offers a potted cv:

A native of the West Indies from which Country He accompanied the Earl of Craven in the year 1797. And having Served the Craven family with integrity for the long space of 42 years his loss was regretted by them and all who knew him.

Others such as

Clerk of Enborne Church for 47 years

and

She was for many years housekeeper in the family of R H Valpy

could be an interesting addition to a family researcher's findings. Very occasionally cause

of death is given: few would doubt the reliability of Joseph Russ' *being accidentally killed by the fall of a tree* in 1817.

It is not customary in these parts (as, for example, in parts of Scotland) for the person who erected the memorial to be recorded, but it happens occasionally:

This stone is inscribed to her memory by her two sorrowing sisters: by whom she was most tenderly loved

This could help a researcher unaware of siblings.

The Enborne and Hamstead Marshall MI transcripts are available in the Research Centre Library, and also in West Berkshire Library and Reading Central Library.

The recording of monumental inscriptions is a race against time, because the source material is under constant threat of deterioration and even demolition. The society's transcription projects are usually organised as teamwork within branches.

If the idea of working for the good of family history outdoors on sunny afternoons in good company appeals to you, contact <projects@berksfhs.org.uk> or write to Projects at the society's address inside the front cover.

Birth briefs

Birth Briefs are five-generation ancestral charts submitted by members of the society. They contain the names and vital records (birth or christening, marriage and death or burial) of the member and up to 30 ancestors. All members are encouraged to submit and update their birth briefs, which can be very useful to other family researchers.

A form for compiling your birth brief can be downloaded from <www.berksfhs.org.uk/birthbriefs>, where you can also search the Birth Briefs Index, currently standing at 31,441 names, 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. See full details on the website or in your Members' Handbook.

Search requests and orders for copies of briefs should be emailed to

<birthbriefs@berksfhs.org.uk>

or posted to

**Alan Brooker
6 Meadow Way, Old Windsor
Berks SL4 2NX**

Early Berkshire Quakers



In the second part of his paper on religious dissenters in seventeenth-century Berkshire, Manfred Brod introduces two notably strong characters

In the first part of this article we discussed some Berkshire people of relatively humble origin who took advantage of the opportunities that seventeenth-century religion offered them to play prominent social roles that previously would have been unavailable. Most of those described were Baptists, but there were even greater opportunities available among the Quakers. All dissenters experienced persecution in the second half of the century, but the Quakers were more persecuted than the others, and hated equally by the established church and by their fellow-dissenters.

We saw that Charney Bassett, a chapelry of Longworth, already had a godly community early in the century. Members referred to each other in terms like “my well-beloved brother in Christ”. One of them was a yeoman farmer named Oliver Sansom. In later years, his grandson, bearing the same name, would be leader of the Quakers both in the Newbury region and in the Vale of White Horse.

The younger Oliver Sansom was highly literate. Some of his letters survive, and in later life he wrote his autobiography, which was published as Quaker propaganda. He was intelligent, charismatic, and even occasionally humorous. He made his frequent court appearances into an art form, in which it seemed that the magistrates were as much on trial as he was. He subtly taunted them with their use of anti-Catholic laws under a Catholic king (James II) against their fellow-protestants, and embarrassingly publicised the corrupt arrangements among the court staffs to extort exorbitant fees from the defendants. He kept himself informed of tensions among the magistrates, and was not above playing them off against each other. In Abingdon in 1683, faced with a normally pitiless persecuting mayor, he nonetheless forced him to a collusive agreement; he – Sansom – would accept being heavily fined, but his congregation would go free. On another occasion, sentenced at Newbury to a prison term in Reading when there was no one available to take him there, he put the warrant into his pocket and walked there unescorted, accompanied no doubt by a crowd of supporters. He was making a dramatic demonstration that, contrary to popular opinion, Quakers were trustworthy and law-abiding people. When he was in prison the jailers would often let him out to travel on Quaker business,

Dr Brod is a convenor for local history with the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society, and a regular speaker at local history societies. He has published a number of papers on dissent in early modern Berkshire.



A Quaker preacher, depicted by Egbert van Heemskerck, a Dutch painter at the court of Charles II, around 1680. The idea of a woman preaching would have been highly controversial at the time, and would have incited much ridicule.

Published by permission of the Library of the Religious Society of Friends

secure in the certainty that he would return at the agreed date and time. It was Sansom's leadership, helped by the organisational skills of his wife Jane, that kept the Quakers of their region as a cohesive group in spite of persecution and the ideological conflicts that developed within the sect.

Senior Quakers often travelled extensively, forging links with other Quaker communities where they existed, preaching and trying to organise new ones where they did not. Sansom with a friend made two long trips to Ireland, characteristically keeping a detailed diary. But the champion traveller in his region was his sister-in-law Joan Vokins, wife of a prosperous yeoman farmer of West Challow. Vokins was no longer young; she had six children and some ill-defined physical handicap. She was one of Sansom's earliest converts, and soon emerged as a leader in her own right, expressing her spiritual gifts in letters, preaching and publishing at least one printed tract. In 1678 she led a delegation from the Vale of White

Horse to a Quaker conference in Reading. She was defending the liberties that the Quakers allowed their womenfolk against a faction that sought to curtail these in the name of respectability. Two years later, with one female companion, she rode to Sandwich in Kent and embarked for New York. She spent several months in the American colonies, where the current wave of settlement was largely of Quaker refugees from persecution in England. Returning to New York, she took ship for Barbados. It was the hurricane season; the voyage was slow and difficult. Her fellow-passengers, whom she characterised in her letters as "mostly very wicked", didn't relish her incessant preaching, and when the ship put in at some Caribbean island, it contrived to sail away without her. She did eventually reach her destination, where she worked very hard, missionising among the workers on the sugar estates, both white and black. When she finally returned to England, it was with a sense of triumph, and feeling "better in Health than I had been for many Years".

Much of the fascination of the seventeenth century is that ideas were no longer the exclusive prerogative of élites or specialists, but could come from the lower ranks, motivated by religion and empowered by literacy and the printing press. The men and women described in these articles were certainly not the first to achieve local prominence or leadership, but they were among the earliest whose principles and beliefs have come down to us in their own words. They do not deserve the obscurity into which most of them have fallen.

In the second part of his article celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Berkshire Record Office, Mark Stevens looks at the last 30 or so years

The BRO since 1981



In 1981, the Berkshire Record Office moved with the rest of Berkshire County Council to the new Shire Hall at Shinfield Park, Reading, beside Junction 11 of the M4. County archivist Amanda Arrowsmith wrote that the new office enjoyed “ample free car parking” as well as the “Shire Hall restaurant open to visitors for meals and snacks”. More long-established searchers may remember both the restaurant and the mini-shop, the Shire Kabin. Opening hours were varied too – Monday morning openings were lost in favour of a new extended Thursday opening until 9.00pm.

The new office enjoyed new fixtures and fittings, and much greater storage and research space. For the first time all the staff and collections were together in one place. But this had come at a cost – neither the strongrooms, searchroom nor the offices had any windows. Adam Green later commented that the office had acquired “cleaner and more commodious premises in the bowels of the new Shire Hall...(but) staff were not as pleased as documents at being entirely cut off from natural light”. The office was also buried far from the entrance to the building. Visitors could easily get lost, and Amanda encouraged them to ask for help if they did.

The lack of sight lines in the strongrooms

also made some visitors feel uncomfortable.

One member of the county council’s legal team regularly reported sensing a green ghost in the smallest strongroom. Staff knew that the Ministry of Defence had occupied the site during the Second World War, so perhaps previous inhabitants had left a guest behind. Nonetheless, despite a certain reluctance to venture into the smallest strongroom alone, no one in the BRO ever saw the ghost.

Significantly for the BRO, after the move to Shire Hall it was also asked for the first time to run a modern records centre to manage the county’s current records. Readers might like to note that this innovation was supposed to kick-start the paperless office by making every department store its filing centrally. It was all very hi-tech for 1981: an electronic transport system called a Telelift (pictured right) was installed in parts of the building to deliver files and return them to the records centre, and the council set up a





The search room at Shire Hall

microfilming unit to begin providing image copies of its records.

The 1980s saw a huge growth in family history research at the BRO. Significantly, all the archdeaconry probate records, and diocesan copies of tithe maps were transferred to the office. It saw countywide parish inspections after the parochial registers and records measure, after which many parish registers were deposited in the office. Not surprisingly, visitor numbers increased enormously as many key resources for family historians were now all available under one roof.

BRO also began sustained work with the Berkshire Family History Society through the overseers project, which would result in editions of over 10,000 case papers from the old poor law in the county. Work on the project spanned 1992 to 2004. The office also sought to become more of a family history centre for local people without Berkshire relatives, acquiring the GRO index on microfiche amongst other things. A decade later many of these resources are available on the internet.

The office moved again during the Shire Hall years – from the back of the building to a space nearer the front. This new area housed the searchroom and staff offices, and two windows overlooking the bin store. It was separate from the strongrooms, and trolleys full of documents often moved back and forth gracefully amongst council staff on their way to the shop.

Much of the second half of the 1990s was taken up with the local government re-organisation, which saw Berkshire County Council abolished and the BRO start a new life as a joint service to the six Berkshire districts. Ten years on it is easy to forget how disruptive this was. Many of the county council's own more recent records had to be transferred, one by one, to the new councils. Much staff time was invested in contributing to commemorative work or to changing systems to those of Reading Borough Council, which had agreed to take the lead in managing the new service. For visitors too there was disruption after April 1998 when they found themselves visiting what was now the UK headquarters of Foster Wheeler, and no longer able to use the building as freely as before.

But local government reorganisation also delivered a big present – the promise of a new BRO from the Berkshire districts. A site was chosen in 1998 in the grounds of Yeomanry House, Reading, originally built as Castle Hill House by the Jesse family. Work began on the £5m building in 1999.

As some readers may recall, the completion of the new record office was delayed. When the searchroom at Shire Hall finally had to be surrendered to Foster Wheeler on 24 March 2000 a temporary one was established at Battle Library in West Reading until removals could begin. The new office finally opened to the public on 3 October 2000, and was officially opened by the Princess Royal on 28 February 2001. Despite its difficult genesis, the present BRO has received many favourable comments, and continues to impress new visitors with its light and roomy research space.

This was also the time when external funding began to become available for more and more project work. The websites <www.a2a.org.uk> and <www.berkshireenclosure.org.uk> date from this period, as the creation of online content was seen as an increasingly important part of archive work. External funding continues to benefit access – BRO has recently

completed the first part of its Broadmoor Hospital project, and has just begun work to revise the Phillimore index to archdeaconry probate material from 1508 to 1652.

The last few years have seen a shift of use, as researchers increasingly seek help online as a first step. BRO visitors in 1948 would recognise the searchroom layout, but not the information opportunities available to us. Our surroundings have changed too, from a room to a stand-alone, purpose-built facility. Instead of prisoners or ghosts, we now share our site with wedding parties, proud parents and their babies, and the Berkshire Family History Society's own Research Centre. We receive around 6,000 visitors each year, and have seven miles of shelving in our strongrooms.

On 10 August 2008 we celebrated our sixtieth birthday. Today we are a joint service of Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham councils, but our aim remains unchanged from 1948: to locate and preserve records relating to the county of Berkshire and its people, and to make them available for research to anyone who is interested in the county's past. We will carry this aim forward into the decades that come.

Sources:

BRO annual reports

Berkshire Family Historian summer 1981

Guidance for contributors

The editor welcomes contributions from members and from other readers of the magazine, but respectfully suggests that anyone considering writing for the Historian should take a moment to read this advice.

Articles may be of any length up to 1,200 words, but definitely no more. In the interests of fairness this limit is strictly applied to one and all. If you really feel that your subject can't be contained within 1,200 words please talk first to the editor about the possibility of a two-parter split over two issues. Shorter articles are equally welcome; amusing extracts from the registers and brief anecdotes are important to the overall balance of the magazine. Don't forget the Write Now column, in which members can post requests for information.

Subjects will usually (but not always) have direct relevance to Berkshire, or concern genealogical methodology. It's a good idea to check the journal indexes on the website to avoid repetition. If you're considering researching a new subject with a view to publication in the magazine it's wise to let the editor know, just in case someone else has had the same idea.

Pictures enhance the text, but they must be cleared for publication, either by being out of copyright, or by obtaining the permission of the copyright holder. Most internet pictures are not of sufficiently good quality for print, and they too are subject to copyright protection. Remember that the Historian is printed in black and white, with red only as a spot colour.

Articles are best emailed to the editor as Word or RTF attachments. Please send your pictures as separate files (JPEG or TIFF); images pasted into Word files cannot be extracted without degradation. If you're not a computer-user please send a typescript to the editor's address on the inside front cover. Photos and paper illustrations will be returned to you after they have been scanned.

No fees are paid to any contributors, alas, but all articles published are greatly appreciated by thousands of readers. Remember that the Historian is read not only by the society's members, but by the users of several public libraries and institutions, and it is available to the members of around 60 other FHSs through the exchange scheme. Back issues of the journal are also, after an interval, posted on the society's website.

Readers should be aware that any submissions to the editor will be considered to be offered for publication in the magazine and also on the society's website, unless the opposite is made clear.

Cloth and money

David Peacock
*describes the family whose fortune was
founded in Newbury's cloth industry in
Tudor and Stuart times*

Dolmans (also Dowlman, Doulman, Dollman, Dalman) made their money in the Tudor cloth industry, which for a short time in the sixteenth century saw Newbury achieve national prominence. The family built the Tudor mansion Shaw House just outside Newbury (shown below right in 1830, and on the front cover as it is today), processed cloth in mills at Greenham and Colthrop, owned property in the Newbury area and in Gloucestershire, and as local gentry lived at Shaw until early in the eighteenth century.

The first known reference to Thomas Dolman is in 1522, when a document lists him among “labourers and servants,” suggesting that he was an apprentice at the time. He married Elizabeth Harrison from Southampton, and their first child was born in 1538. Their son, Thomas junior, who would build Shaw House, was born in 1543.

Thomas Dolman I was among the Newbury clothiers listed in a petition organised by his nationally prominent colleague John Winchcombe II, whose life took on legendary form as “Jack of Newbury.” The petition, organised by Winchcombe around 1540, successfully brought together clothiers from six counties to petition Henry VIII for a change in the laws regulating cloth production.

Like Winchcombe, Dolman was producing woollen cloth on an industrial scale. The

account book of Thomas Gresham, a Merchant Adventurer, shows over 4,000 cloths ordered from Dolman from 1547 to 1550. This can be combined with other statistics to suggest that Dolman was producing over 2,500 kersey cloths per year. Each cloth was about a yard wide, and 17 to 18 yards long.

As a clothier Dolman was the entrepreneur who co-ordinated all the people involved in the different stages of cloth production: wool combing, spinning, weaving, fulling, dyeing and finishing. Some of the earlier parts of this process were probably carried out in the workers' own homes, but the cloth was processed in fulling mills along the River Kennet. Thomas Dolman leased two fulling mills for his cloths at Greenham Mills (a site now occupied by flats), where he also leased two corn mills. In addition, in 1557 he was granted a fulling mill at Colthrop, along with adjacent property.

His cloths were dyed before export, and his dyehouse was in Cheap Street, Newbury, where the dyer at the time of his death in 1575 was William Rigsby. The scale of Dolman's cloth-making is confirmed by one order in 1549 for nearly nine tons of his main dye, woad. This was probably delivered from London, but additional records show woad being delivered by the cartload from Southampton. Woad produced various shades of blue, his main

A regular contributor to the Newbury Weekly News on local history, Dr Peacock speaks regularly at local society meetings on Jack o' Newbury, Berkshire place names and Newbury's historic pubs.

colour. Six woad vats, two other vats, a furnace of copper and another of brass, along with other implements in the dyehouse, are all mentioned in Dolman's will.

Much of the cloth produced in and around Newbury was for export to Antwerp, where it was distributed throughout Europe. Dolman dealt with customers like Thomas Gresham, who exported the kerseys via London to Antwerp, from where they could be distributed to different parts of Europe. The 1540s was a boom time for cloth production, and the Antwerp market simply could not get enough of kerseys made in Newbury. Clothiers like Dolman became very rich.

Some of the money went towards the purchase of the manors of Shaw and Colthrop in 1554, together with additional land in both manors in 1557, which included the purchase of "two corn mills under one roof" at Shaw. In 1558 Dolman bought Frethorne manor in Childrey, and the manors of Stanton and Snowhill in Gloucestershire, and in 1568 Speen ("Churchspeen") was sold to him and his second son jointly.

Dolman also leased property in Northbrook Street, Newbury. A deed of 1543 refers to a

tenement in Northbrook Street, belonging to Donnington Priory, lately occupied by Thomas Dolman or his assigns. Another tenement in Northbrook Street is referred to in a survey of *circa* 1550. This lists Thomas Dolman as the freeholder of property on the east side of Northbrook Street in Newbury, a tenement formerly owned or occupied by John Bedford of Poole. Thomas Dolman I can also be linked to St Nicolas' Church in Newbury, where he was churchwarden in 1552.

The will of Thomas Dolman I was written on 8 January 1571, but he lived for several more years. A memorandum added in mid-November 1575 described him as sick in body, beginning: "...the seventeenth daye of November Anno dni 1575 Thomas Dollman of Nuburie in the countie of Barkes the elder beinge sicke in bodie but of verie good and perfitt remembraunce thanckes be to god..." He died shortly afterwards, with the will proved on 23 December 1575¹. According to his will, he wished to be buried inside St Nicolas' Church in Newbury: "...I will my bodie to be buried wthin the church of St Nicholas [sic] in Newburie."²

Shaw House, Newbury, in the 1830s



There has been some confusion about this burial. According to the Transactions of Newbury District Field Club “Thomas Dolman the elder was buried at Kintbury January 6th, 1575.”³ This burial appears in the Kintbury parish registers as plain Thomas Dolman, but it is a problem: the Thomas Dolman who was buried at Kintbury was buried 10 months before Thomas Dolman I was described as “sick in body.” There are procedures which can sometimes reconcile early dates which appear incompatible, but they do not seem to apply in this case. The solution to the discrepancy is simply that these are references to two different individuals of the same name.

From his will, the expectation is that Thomas Dolman I would be buried in Newbury, but there is no record of his burial there, nor is any brass or recorded inscription known from either Newbury or Kintbury.

Thomas Dolman I was probably related to the William Dolman (“Dowlman”) of Newbury (d1531), whose life suggests close links between the cloth-making Dolman and Winchcombe families. William Dolman appears in the will of John Winchcombe I (1520), where he was left forty shillings “besides all thinges of his coven[a]ntes”. According to Walter Money, from this “...we may infer he was partner, or had some interest in the business.”⁴ In his will of 1531 William Dolman appointed John Winchcombe II overseer to ensure its provisions were carried out. Thomas Dolman I may also have been related to John Dolman (“Dallman”) the fuller who leased two of the fulling mills at West Mills in Newbury and was also associated with John Winchcombe II.

Dolmans are also recorded at Westbrook, just north of Boxford. For part of the sixteenth century a fulling mill on the River Lambourn at Westbrook was run by William and Alice Dolman or Dalmon. William Dalmon or Dolman of Boxford (written “Boxworth” at the time) gives very little detail in his will of 1541⁵ beyond describing himself as a fuller, but he refers to his wife Alice and son John. The will

of Alice Dolman of Boxford in 1543⁶ is far more forthcoming, listing a range of cloth-working or finishing equipment, including four pairs of fulling shears and two winches as well as two spinning wheels.

Thomas Dolman I left the manor or estate of Shaw to his son of the same name, born in 1543. It was this Thomas Dolman who built Shaw House (completed in 1581) with the wealth from the cloth trade which he inherited on his father’s death. The fine brick mansion just north of Newbury still retains much of its Elizabethan character, especially when seen from the south. (Today it houses the West Berkshire Register Office.) Thomas Dolman II’s first wife Margaret was the daughter of William Forster of Aldermaston, from an established local family, and Thomas became one of the Berkshire county gentry, granted a coat of arms in 1587 and appointed sheriff of Berkshire in 1588, the year of the Spanish Armada. He died in 1623.

From him, Shaw House passed to his eldest son Humphrey, and then to Sir Thomas Dolman who was MP for Reading in 1661 and clerk to the Privy Council, and who died in 1697. He was succeeded in turn by his son, another Sir Thomas Dolman, who entertained Queen Anne at Shaw House in 1703. This Sir Thomas died in 1711, and that effectively ended the Dolman connection with Shaw, although it was not formally severed until the sale of Shaw House to the Duke of Chandos in the 1720s.

1 TNA PROB 11/57 (47 Pyckering) PCC will of Thomas Dolman I d1575

2 Ibid

3 *Transactions of Newbury District Field Club*, vol III, Newbury 1886 p143

4 Walter Money. *Popular history of Newbury* 1905 p30

5 BRO D/A1/2 f. 157 register copy of will of William Dalmon or Dolman 1541

6 BRO D/A1/6 f. 167 register copy of will of Alice Dolman 1543. Original, as Alys Dalmon, in BRO D/A1/61 8a with inventory.

Websites worth a glance

Below are listed a number of websites which, although not necessarily new, may not be well known to every family historian. They are all, or mostly, free. The editor would welcome suggestions from members of lesser-known websites that they have found useful.

Richard Heaton's newspaper collection

<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~dutilleul/ZOtherPapers/Index.html>>

one of the largest collections of free English and Irish newspaper transcripts on the web – about 848 searchable transcribed extracts from Georgian and early Victorian regional newspapers, with more being added regularly. All counties are covered, but the archive majors on Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, London, Lancashire, Middlesex, Surrey, Worcestershire and Wiltshire. More than 100,000 names are featured. Search by name, place or term of interest. A search on murder, for example, throws up 356 results.

See also

<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~dutilleul/ZOtherPapers/Index/PubsInnsBeer.html>>

which offers a specialised subsection for hotels, public houses, inns and beer houses in the same counties, searchable by name.

Genmaps: old and interesting maps of England Wales and Scotland

<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~genmaps/index.html>>

offers direct links to old maps, including about 60 of Berkshire published from 1607 to 1892. Many images are of fairly low resolution, and are posted for non-commercial use only, being subject to copyright. In some cases details of commercial availability are included.

Purchasing power of British pounds from 1264 to 2007

<<http://measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk>>

offers two estimates of the value of your ancestors' transactions, such as legacies, earnings and fines, in terms of present-day money. For example: what would a six-shilling fine paid in 1815 equate to in 2007? The answer is given both in terms of the retail price index (£18.67) and average earnings (£201.21), which goes to show that there are no easy answers to the question "How much would that be today?" A US site that also covers the UK and is expanding worldwide.

The proceedings of the Old Bailey 1674 - 1913

<www.oldbaileyonline.org>

(note the absence of *uk* in the address) is a fully searchable edition of the largest body of texts detailing the lives of non-elite people ever published, containing 197,745 criminal trials held at London's central criminal court. A user-wiki has been added, allowing contribution of information on people mentioned in the proceedings, historical background, related source materials, and corrections. Search by dates, names, places and keywords. Read the trial transcripts and find your ancestors in the dock or on the witness stand.

British history online

<www.british-history.ac.uk>

is a digital library containing some of the core printed sources for British medieval and modern history. Created by the Institute of Historical Research and the History of Parliament Trust, it includes the *Victoria County History for Berkshire* and other counties, maps, lists of clergy and public office-holders, to name but a few of the many archives. Some items are accessible to subscribers only, but many are open access.

The clergy of the Church of England database (CCEd)

<www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/cce/apps/>

is a scholarly relational database documenting the careers of all Church of England clergymen between 1540 and 1835, compiled by King's College London and the universities of Kent and Reading. Search under *Persons A-Z* for career details of individual clergymen, or under *Locations* (first choose diocese) to discover the rectors, vicars and some curates of a particular parish: their dates, reasons for end of tenure (death, resignation etc) with links to their *Persons* index entry. Note that the closing date of this database – 1835 – means that the whole archdeaconry of Berkshire appears under the Salisbury diocese. In addition to the incumbents of parish churches you can find the schoolmasters of parish schools, and the chaplains of workhouses and prisons. There is a separate *Bishops* index.

The London Gazette

<www.gazettesonline.co.uk/home.aspx?GeoType=London>

Search the official newspaper of record since the 1660s for announcements of public appointments, armed forces' commissions and promotions, honours and legal appointments. Search results link to facsimile pages.

Accountancy ancestors

www.icaew.com/index.cfm/route/155615/icaew_ga/en/Home/About_us/History_of_accounting/Accountancy_Ancestors

Who was who in accountancy 1874 - 1965 in England and Wales: obituaries of individuals, firms and some portraits from accountancy journals. The database does not include full text, but photocopies can be ordered by email link.

Victorian London

<www.victorianlondon.org>

supplies wide-ranging background for those with London ancestry. Topics are: advertising; architecture; buildings; charities; childhood; clothing and fashions; communications; crime; dates and event; death and dying; disease; districts; education; entertainment; finance; food and drink; health and hygiene; houses and housing; legal system; lighting; maps; markets; organisations; people; photography; police; politics; populations; prisons; professions and trades; publications; religion/spirituality; science/technology; sex; shops and shopping; Thames; transport; weather; women; words and expressions. Links are to an eclectic mix of cartoons, maps, newspaper articles and contemporary comment, all compiled by a crime writer.

Victorian London A-Z street index

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/hitch/gendocs/lon-str.html#HOME>

contains over 61,000 references, supplying location, census registration district and the date of the reference source. Remember that London place names and street numbering underwent major re-organisation in 1888. Alas, there are no links to maps; you must provide your own.

The workhouse website

<www.workhouses.org.uk>

Peter Higginbotham's excellent site contains everything about workhouses up and down the country, and life therein. Locate specific workhouses, and find their history. Learn about every aspect of workhouse life, law and administration. Numerous photos, plans and helpful links. The memories page reveals that both Charlie Chaplin and William Golding were once workhouse inmates.

Write now

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.

Reading land transactions

from **Lucile Caron** (850)

I was recently at an antiques fair in Toronto and purchased two documents because they were from Reading, Berkshire, and I thought maybe one of our members would be interested. Here is the information and the names mentioned in each document:

February 10, 1876

Conveyance of a piece of land situate on the southern side of Junction Road on the Redlands Farm estates, Reading, Berk. Mr. George Meloy, Cornelius Josha Crook, William Fox, Peter Spokes, Charles James Andrewes esq., William Sord Poulton esq., John Simonds, banker.

February 9, 1889

Conveyance in fee of a messuage and hereditaments known as number 23 Prospect Street, Reading, Berk. Mrs. Rebecca Church, William Neal, esq., John Kimber, George Church, Thomas John Church, Stephen Fullbrook, Lucy George, John Woodroffe, Henry Hope.

If any member is interested in these documents, I will be happy to transfer them over.

your queries your comments your news

Sparkes family

from **Robert E Waite** (2233)

I am researching my Sparkes ancestry, and have been successful in establishing that most come from an area which includes Wantage and south of the county around Frilsham, Welford and Wickham. The pivotal marriage is found in Wantage on 3 October 1782 between William Sparks (Welford) and Sophia Blandy (under age, and with the consent of her grandfather Major Blandy, and presumably of Wantage). All their nine children, with the exception of the first in 1783, William, were baptised in Wickham.

The current difficulty is finding where William of the 1782 marriage came from. The most likely candidate appears to be William, son of Philip and Ann Sparks, baptised in Ruscombe 30 May 1756. The only feature of a possible connection to the Wantage marriage is the use of the Christian name Philip over two generations of this marriage.

Philip Sparks and Ann Gold were married in Ruscombe on 17 August 1741, but up till now I have not found Philip's origins. I have now found a marriage between Philip Sparks and Martha Na(e)llis in Hungerford on 14 October 1712. Both, according to the parish register, came from Chaddleworth. I have not found where these two settled to have children. One of the children of Philip and Ann in Ruscombe was named Martha: coincidence or possible connection? The gap between 1712 and 1741, once it is closed, could conceivably supply the link, if one exists, between Hungerford and Ruscombe.

Viner family

from **R G Ross Viner** (4641)

I am searching for family connections to Alfred John Viner born 1858, married Mary Ann Cottrell 12 February 1881 in St Giles, Reading. They had six children: Alfred born 1881, died 1920; Edith born 1882; Florence born 1883; Albert born 1885, died January 1958; Katherine born 1887; and Ethel born 1889.

Alfred John Viner (born 1858) died in 1904 in Wallingford and is buried in Junction Cemetery with his parents John and Elizabeth née Wicks. Alfred was their eldest child and his siblings were: Ellen Jane born 1860, married Henry Whitehouse, emigrated to Canada; Alice Mary born 1864, married William Henry Wicks, emigrated to Australia; George Viner, my grand-father, lived in Reading and worked for 50 years for Huntley and Palmer, ending up as manager of the works department.

My father Reginald George Viner born 1897 married Evelyn Gwendolen Rice from Harwell. Reginald died in 1930, at which time my mother returned to Harwell with her four children Gill, Jackie, Sally and myself (Ross) to live with her father Dr Richard Rice, a well known country doctor. I came to Canada in 1947 with hardly any knowledge of the Viner family history except my grandfather George, his wife Alice née Webb and their children Elsie and Mabel.

By chance did Albert 1885 - 1958 have any children? Are there any family relatives out there? I have Viner genealogy from Australia, Canada and England and I would be happy to share it with my family.

Post script: We have discovered that a daughter of Alfred Viner married in Toronto on 28 September 1907. Her name was Florence Viner, and her husband was Thomas John Wiar. He was a mechanic and his parents were Luke and Sarah Wiar née West.

RAF Abingdon

from **David Green**

Our interest is Abingdon Airbase. We understand that a number of Canadians were posted there during the last war and would be interested to know when the last of them returned home. We are also trying to find if there is a list of names of those who served there or the names of regiments based there, as we are trying to trace the whereabouts of a Canadian serviceman, Jim Steven.

Hassell family

Dr C J Molyneux (6660)

I joined the society during the middle of this year (2008) while visiting the UK. My interest in Berkshire is from my mother's line. She was a Landon, but her mother was Laura Hassell whose family came from Speen, Newbury. Laura's dad was Samuel John Hassell, who had a shop and lived in Bartholomew Street at numbers 40, 41, and 45 from about 1870 to 1900. Laura worked in Basingstoke in London Street in 1891. She married Allan Richard Landon in 1901 and they moved to Bridlington that same year. My mother Dorothy Laura Landon was born there in 1902.

Laura had at least two brothers, Samuel John born in 1867 and Frederick George born in 1875, and two sisters, Clara born in 1866 and Alice born in 1871. Laura was born in 1869.

If anyone has done any research on the Hassell family which connects with my line, I would love to hear from them.

Gleanings from exchange magazines

Copies of these articles (paper or electronic) can be supplied on request. For paper send your request with a SAE (min 11 x 22 cm) and two loose stamps to Exchange Magazines, Berks FHS, Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ. For electronic copies apply to <gleanings@berksfhs.org.uk>. Please supply both the issue date of the Historian and full details of the title and source of the Gleaning. Copyright law requires that photocopies of articles in journals may only be made for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research. Only one article from any one issue can be supplied. All digital copies must be printed off and deleted.

Doreen and Tony Farmer

Cranham: the history of a Cotswold village

Write-up on new CD, book, DVD and maps available as a comprehensive study of the village with names past and present

(15) Gloucestershire FHS, no 118, September 2008

The babies of section "O" 1857- 1903 Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon

List of babies with no memorials, from a few minutes old to a few months old; 100 names

(19) Huntingdon FHS, no 59, March 08

A stroll around Wilby in 1900

Approximately 150 indexed names of people named in an out-of-print book about Wilby. Copies of relevant pages available to order.

(43) Suffolk Roots, vol 34, no 2, September 2008

The East End childhood of Rachelle Marks

Post-war childhood story

(29) Cockney Ancestor, no 120, Autumn 2008

National memorial card index – Oxfordshire section

38 cards listing names, date of death, age to be returned to proven descendants

(39) Oxfordshire Family Historian, vol 22, no 2, August 2008

Lincoln, Boston and Spalding Free Press 1914 - 1915

Extracts from newspapers to show bravery and to honour the memory of men

(27) Lincolnshire FHS, vol 19, no 4, November 08

The poor you have with you always

(52) East Yorkshire FHS, no 116, October 2008

Seal: history of a parish

Description of new book

(21) NW Kent FHS, vol 11, no 2, June 07

History of coalmining in Nottinghamshire

Nottingham collieries, with map, pictures and description of occupations

(38) Nottinghamshire FHS, vol 12, no 8, October 2008

Cracks with west coast farmers

Article on recorded interviews giving descriptive mixture of agricultural practices April 1917 - May 1920; 161 names, places and dates of interviews

(10A) Cumbria FHS, no 128, August 2008

Stockport market

Reminiscences of a grandfather written 35 years ago

(7) North Cheshire FHS, vol 35, no 4, November 08

Mary Appleton and the massacre at Peterloo

Article on the event

(6) Cheshire Ancestor, vol 38, no 4, June 08

Lincolnshire pawnbrokers 1828 – 1937

Names, dates and places

(27) Lincolnshire FHS, vol 19, no 4, November 08

Stoke Bruerne

Spotlight on a parish

(36) Footprints (Northamptonshire FHS), vol 31, no 2, November 08

Feature parish: Marnoch

With pictures

(58) Aberdeen & NE Scotland, no 109, November 08

Bookends

Jean Debney

Prices quoted are for:

a) mail order purchase within UK, including p&p by second class post unless stated otherwise

b) mail order purchase from overseas, including p&p airmail.

BERKSHIRE FHS PUBLICATION

Berkshire burial index, 7th edition

CD BRK 0246 (Berkshire FHS, 2008)

£16.65 UK, £18.25 airmail

Update CDs are also available for those with earlier editions: £4.70 UK and £6.35 airmail per added edition, subject to exchange with your original CD.

This latest edition contains over 612,000 burials from the registers of over 200 parishes, cemeteries and nonconformist places of worship. Full details of the places and coverage are on the website. The project, under the guidance of David Wright, will continue until all available registers have been indexed.

BERKSHIRE FINDING AIDS

Two more indexed transcriptions from Eureka Publications to help you find your ancestors in records you may not have thought of searching:

Hungerford Wesleyan Methodist Circuit

vol one: baptisms 1810-1880

vol two: baptisms 1881 - 1937

and marriages 1886 - 1897

both A5, grey flexiback, 40pp. Mail order each £3.70 UK, £5.35 airmail

Baptisms include the infant's birthdate or age, parents' names and residence. Most of the marriages include details found on a marriage certificate. All the original records are in the Berkshire Record Office, and references are listed in each booklet. The Hungerford Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, established in

1810, included places of worship in Eastbury, East Garston, Hungerford, Hungerford Newtown, Lambourn, Lambourn Woodlands, Shalbourne and Shefford Woodlands in Berkshire, plus Aldbourne, Baydon, Burbage, Chilton Foliat, Chisbury, Great Bedwyn, Marlborough, Ramsbury, Woodsend and Wilton in Wiltshire.

BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY

Berkshire old and new

(Berkshire Local History Association, 2008)

A5, flexiback, 48pp, ISBN 0264-9950. Mail order £3.75 UK, £5.25 airmail

This latest edition includes interesting articles by local historians about *Wallingford's Restoration Town Hall*, *Droving across Berkshire*, *Early nineteenth-century printers in Reading* and *Lascelles playing fields, Slough*, plus a bibliography of recent Berkshire publications.

The diocese books of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford 1845 - 1869

Transcribed and edited by Ronald and Margaret Pugh. Published jointly by Berkshire and Oxfordshire Record Societies (BRS vol 13, 2008; ORS, vol 66, 2008) flexiback, with biographical index, 432pp, ISBN 0-9548716-2-6. Mail order £30.20 UK, £35.70 airmail

This is a transcript of two bound volumes of Samuel Wilberforce's diocesan memoranda books recording information about the parishes and clergy of Oxfordshire as well as Berkshire (which transferred from the diocese

of Salisbury in 1836) and Buckinghamshire (from Lincoln). Book 1 consists mainly of jottings made at meetings with the archdeacons and rural deans of his new diocese in 1846, and written at the time by Wilberforce himself. Book 2 includes information about each parish from 1854 to the early 1860s. The original papers are now in the Oxford Record Office. Although these indexed documents are best dipped into rather than read continuously they reveal much of interest about your ancestors' parish churches and the clergy in the mid-nineteenth century.

Didcot's heroes remembered

Richard Polley and Clare Wadley (the authors, 2008) A4, flexiback, 124pp. Mail order £10.25 UK, £15.00 airmail

This detailed publication provides biographical information, and some photographs, of the men and women from Didcot who served, were taken prisoner, wounded or killed during the First and Second World Wars. After an introduction to each year there are also other war-related items, such as the weekly ration list for an adult in 1943. A great deal of research has obviously been done to compile this important publication which, sadly, has no index to the huge number of names mentioned.

Educating the Ilsleys: a history of local schools 1805 - 2008

Eric Saxton (Sigma Books, 2008) A5 flexiback, 27pp, ISBN 978-1-905291-16-8. Mail order £2.50 UK, £3.55 airmail

This is a fascinating story, illustrated with photographs, maps and architectural plans traced through many sources, of the early private schools through to the present day. En route is information about the National (and Sunday) School in East Ilsley, the West Ilsley School and today's modern single-storey school serving both parishes. The latter includes personal memories of staff and pupils.

Mortimer in the nineteenth century

(Mortimer Local History Group, 2008) A4, flexiback, 88pp. Mail order £11.25 UK, £16.00 airmail

This publication is dedicated to its founder, Colin Woodward (1921 - 2008), who was responsible for much of the society's work on old maps, photographs and documents, and for their earlier publications. *Nineteenth-century Mortimer*, the group's first, was originally published in 1980, and in the intervening 27 years much more information has become available. This new book is an improved edition using all the information gathered since. The result is a mixture of old and new text with photographs and illustrations. The centrefold is a clear sketch map of the village enabling readers to locate the sites mentioned.

The Battles of Newbury, crossroads of the English Civil War

Christopher L Scott, with a foreword by Richard Holmes. (Pen and Sword Military, 2008) flexiback, 177pp, ISBN 184415670-2. Mail order £14.05 UK, £19.00 airmail

King Charles I and Parliament fought at Newbury in 1643 and in 1644, at Wash Common and Shaw respectively. Each time the fate of England hung in the balance. This account is illustrated with detailed maps and numerous, well-captioned photographs, some overlaid with large white arrows showing troop movements and today's landscape in relation to each battle. As an experienced battlefield walker, the author guides readers round the modern streets to trace the original skirmishes and what happened in what location. Recommended particularly to those interested in Newbury's local history, the Civil War and battlefield history.

Theale in old photographs

(Theale Local History Group, 2008) A5, flexiback, 96pp, ISBN: 0-9547815-2-X. Mail order £6.70 UK, £9.45 airmail

This fascinating collection of local photographs of Theale has been collected and thematically presented by a small but very enthusiastic group of local historians. Each image has a brief note about its contents, and a clear sketch map inside the front cover is very useful for identifying buildings. Theale lies just five miles west of Reading and, although small, was a service station for stage coaches on the Great Bath Road in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

A stroll through St Paul's churchyard, Wokingham

Jim Bell (St Paul's Parish Church, Wokingham, 2008) A5 flexiback, 48pp. Mail order £3.25 UK, £4.75 airmail

This is an interesting collection of mini-biographies of some of the local residents buried in St Paul's churchyard, some illustrated, plus a sketch map to identify their location in the four sections. There are also some fascinating advertisements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This new publication combines two previous booklets, and was funded by the Wokingham Society. All proceeds are to go to the church.

Wokingham from Elizabeth I to Cromwell

(Wokingham Society Local History Group, 1995) A5 flexiback, 64pp. Mail order £4.25 UK, £6.45 airmail

This booklet was produced by a class held between 1991 and 1992 which researched, wrote and, in some cases illustrated, 17 chapters on a variety of topics, plus an introduction and appendix (a long list of transcribed wills and inventories). The result is a fascinating glimpse of Wokingham from the mid-fifteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries. Much of this information could apply to other communities in this period of time.

RESEARCH FINDING AIDS

Tracing your Jewish ancestors: a guide for family historians

Rosemary Wenzel (Pen and Sword Family History, 2008) A5, flexiback, indexed, 198pp ISBN 184415788 1. Mail order £15.25 UK, £19.60 airmail

This excellent and readable guide to researching Jewish family history includes a brief summary of Jews in Britain and many case studies. The author has published several books on aspects of this topic, but has now brought all this information together, plus today's finding aid, the internet. Recommended to anyone with Jewish ancestry and/or an interest in any aspect of Jewish history.

The British police, police forces and chief officers 1829 – 2000

Martin Stallion and David S Wall (Police History Society, 1999) A5, flexiback, 262pp. ISBN 0-9512538-4-0. Mail order £12.25 UK, £16.60 airmail

This is a comprehensive directory of all the police forces known to have existed in the UK since 1829. Each entry lists the dates of formation and abolition, its predecessor and successor, initial and final or current strength, names and dates of chief officers (with an index). There is also a good bibliography of force histories. The first chapter explains the growth of today's police forces from their beginnings to 2000, followed by sections explaining police organisation 1829 - 2000, plus alphabetical lists of police forces and chief officers. This is an important reference source for everyone who has a policeman in the family or ancestors who served in a local police force. An example entry for Berkshire Police Force (formed 1856) includes the absorption dates of Wantage, Wallingford, Newbury, Abingdon, Maidenhead and Windsor boroughs, finally becoming part of the Thames Valley Police in 1968.

Members' interests

Bob Plumridge
bob@theplumridges.com

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

6726 BAKER	S Moreton	BRK	1865+	6722 MCMULLON	All	DUR	1800+
6726 BAKER	S Moreton	BRK	1833-97	6722 POWELL	All	BKM	1800+
6726 BAKER (WELLS)				6446 PRESTON	Newhall	DBY	1800-1900
	S Moreton	BRK	1882-1970	6722 ROBINETT	All	HUN	1800+
6446 BILL	Dudley	WOR	1800-1850	6446 SALT	Aldbourne	WIL	1750-1850
6726 BIRD	Wokingham	BRK	1854+	6722 SEMMENCE	All	LIN	1800+
5580 BLACKMAN	Tilehurst	BRK	1700-1850	6722 SEMMENCE	All	NFK	1800+
5580 BLACKMAN	Caversham	OXF	1700-1850	6446 SIM(M)S	Oxford	OXF	1750-1800
6703 BOWYER	Reading	BRK	1850+	6726 SMITH	Reading	BRK	1847+
6694 BRADFIELD	Shinfield	BRK	1778-1947	6703 SMITH	N & S Moreton		
6722 BURFOOT	All	BKM	1800+			OXF	1750-1900
6726 CLAYDON SMITH				6446 SMITH	St Aldates	OXF	1800-1850
	Reading	BRK	1873-1946	6722 STRATTON	All	HUN	1800+
6703 DALTON	Caversham	OXF	1850+	6446 TAYLOR	Shifnal	SAL	1750-1850
6726 DEARLOVE	Camberwell	SRY	1852+	6726 TAYLOR	Hungerford	BRK	1862+
6446 EDGINTON	All	BRK	1800-1900	6446 TAYLOR	Barton	STS	1750-1800
6446 EDGINTON	All	OXF	1800-1900	6726 TAYLOR	Hungerford	BRK	1826-93
6703 FROST	Reading	BRK	1850+	6446 TUCK	Bethnal Green		
6516 GEORGE	Windsor	BRK	All			LDN	1750-1850
6726 GREGORY	Shalbourn	BRK	1828-1900	6726 WARE	Chesham	BKM	1833+
6726 GROVER	Chesham Boys			6703 WELLMAN	Reading	BRK	All
		BKM	1860+	6726 WELLS	Cholsey	BRK	1861+
6726 GROVER	Flaunden	HRT	1832+	6446 WHEELER	Shoreditch	LDN	1750-1850
6694 HARDING	Shinfield	BRK	1900-1930	6726 WHITE	Carlinswall	KEN	1832+
6446 HAY(E)S	All	BKM	1750-1800	6726 WHITE	Reading	BRK	1868+
6722 KNOCK	All	NFK	1800+				
6722 MARGOTSON	All	NFK	1800+				

The whole members' interests name index can be accessed online at <www.berksfhs.org.uk/members-interests/index.htm>. Currently it records over 10,500 names.

You may update your interest profile at any time by writing to <membersinterests@berksfhs.org.uk> or to the society's postal address on the inside front cover of this issue.

Please be as specific as you can; many recent submissions have omitted the county code and/or a date period. This limits the likelihood of such entries being spotted by researchers who scan by column.



Research Centre services

Berks FHS Research Centre
Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading, Berks RG1 7TJ
0118 950 9553

The Research Centre is 15 minutes' walk from the centre of Reading, next door to the Berkshire Record Office and in the same building as the Reading Register Office. Follow the signs to the Berkshire Record Office. There is ample free parking.

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

The Research Centre will be closed on Sunday 12 April for Easter Sunday, and on Sunday 24 May for May Bank Holiday Sunday.

All staff on duty are volunteers who help researchers in the centre, but they do not carry out research for visitors. 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. The Ancestry Library Edition is the .com version (much larger than .co.uk) which includes data from north American and other countries, making it much more useful to researchers.

Berkshire Name Suite (BNS)

This is the master index on the computers, comprising the following databases:

- **Berkshire censuses and indexes for 1851, 1861 and 1871** (both complete but mainly unchecked) and **1881**
- **Berkshire Marriage Index**
Over 95,000 entries from pre-1837 Berkshire parish registers. Note that the early entries only give dates and names of groom and bride. Later entries include parish if applicable, and whether married by licence.
- **Berkshire Burial Index (BBI)**
Over 623,000 entries to date. More than 80 per cent show all the data available. The rest show (as available) name, age, relationship, occupation and title plus a note indicating if there is further information such as date, place or cause of death in the original record. The seventh edition of the BBI is available on CD from the bookshop. (See mail order booklist.)
- **Berkshire Strays Index**
20,500 Berkshire people recorded in events outside the county. No further census (1841 - 1901) or WWI details are being added to this index.
- **Berkshire Miscellaneous Index**
100,279 disparate records extracted and submitted by individuals.

Other electronic databases

- **LDS Vital Records Indexes** for the UK and some other parts of Europe
- **Census returns of 1861, 1871, 1891** for some counties including the London 1891 census
- **Census return for 1881 for all UK** including the Channel Isles and the Royal Navy
- **National Burial Index** second edition
- **Local trade directories** from 1830 onwards

Library

The library's holdings total about 7,500 items. About 20 per cent of these specifically concern Berkshire, the majority of material being on other English counties, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, north America and the Antipodes.

Major items and series include:

International Genealogical Index on fiche (1988) for Great Britain

1851 census return indexes for most English and Welsh counties

CDs of **Berkshire MIs, overseers' papers, militia lists, directories**

Local history and genealogy books for other UK counties, Scotland, Ireland and some other countries

General reference section of how-to-do-it books, poor law, surnames, photographs, local history, education, poll books, National Index of Parish Registers, military

Directories: biographical, trade, professional, military, clerical and school
Published **family histories/pedigrees** and a large number of donated hand-written documents

Berkshire Family Historian from 1975 to the present day

Berkshire census returns for 1851 to 1881 on film

Exchange Magazine Archive five- to seven-year files of other family history societies' journals.

Published Berkshire parish register transcripts are listed on the website. These are mainly for

pre-1974 Berkshire and include north Berkshire (now Oxfordshire).

Research Centre tours 2009

Monday 11 May 19.30

Saturday 12 September 14.30

Monday 16 November 19.30

Tours must be pre-booked, and they are limited to 10 people. They last for about two hours, and will allow a short time to browse in the library, to buy publications and to use the computers for your family history research. They will show you what research and finding aids are available (which are not restricted to only those with Berkshire connections). For further details please contact Arthur Beech on 0118 978 4781 or <researchcentre@berksfhs.org.uk>

Search options

- Do your own search at the Research Centre and make printouts.
- Visit a Berks FHS stand at a family history fair.
- Request a postal search.

Postal searches and charges

The cost for searching one surname in the whole **Berkshire Name Suite** is currently £5. For searching one surname in one database only (from those listed on page 34) the cost is £2. These fees include the search and a print-out of up to 25 lines of results.

A search of **indexes to the 1851 census for other counties**, with print-out of results, may range from £3 to £10 according to media. Please check in the online library catalogue first to ensure that the county you want is stocked.

Please send your search request to the address on page 33 giving:

- your membership number
- email/telephone details
- a stamped, self-addressed envelope large enough for several A4 sheets (2 x IRCs if writing from overseas)
- a bank draft or sterling cheque drawn on a London clearing bank

and mark your envelope BNS or OCCI, depending upon the database you wish to search.

The Vale and Downland Museum

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3,500 sq ft of displays
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more details from
01235 771447

www.wantage.com/museum
museum@wantage.com

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