

Berkshire Family Historian

the quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society

Contents

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News

Chairman's corner by Derek Trinder	2
New society publications	3
Your new Executive Committee for 2012-13	4
AGM report	6
Around the branches	8
The Berkshire Probate Index reviewed by Debbie Kennett	10
More new resources at the Research Centre	12
Dates for your diary	12
The view from next door by Mark Stevens	13

Features

A fire at Denchworth by Gill Watkins	14
The Seymour family of Poughley Rivers, East Garston by Tim Seymour	16
Was your ancestor a churchwarden? by Penny Stokes	18
Wartime letters from a Reading housewife by Richard Brown	19
The Silvester family of Radley by Christine Wootton	20
Family history in the clouds by Lionel Carter	22

Regulars

Write now	24
Gleanings from exchange magazines	28
Members' interests	30
Berkshire FHS Research Centre	32
Bookends	34

Family names appearing in this issue:

excluding living people, authors of sources and members' interests

Absolom 25	Church 18	Frogley 15	Lambert 26	Rolfe 26
Aldsworth 20	Clarke 26	Fry 25	Lovelock 24	Seymour 16+
Beale 17	Coles 24	Garrard 16+	Mace 14	Silvester 20+
Belcher 14+	Crockford 26	Gibbons 25	Millard 14	Sloggett 21
Booker 14+	Death 26	Goddard 18	Mills 24	Taylor 25
Bowness 24	Dockar-Drysdale	Green 15	North 18	Timms 21
Bowyer 21	21	Haines 15	Page 17	Timms 24
Bristow 20	Dumper 26	Hall 15	Pearce 26	Vermuyden 29
Brooker 18	Ellis 26	Hancock 27	Rawlins 15	Walker 15
Caine 28	Evans 20	Harding 19	Read 26	Walker 21
Church 14+	Friend 19	Hill 26	Roddy 28	Walter 26

Chairman's corner

BERKSHIRE'S FOREMOST FACILITY FOR FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

You will find news of some exciting developments at the society's Research Centre in this latest *Historian*. At Yeomanry House in Reading you can now access all four principal subscription websites: Findmypast, Origins (with its National Wills Index), the British Newspaper Archive and Ancestry (worldwide version, complete with family trees).

Members and the public often ask "Which online provider is best for me to use?" to which the answer is: it depends on your particular areas of interest, the kinds of searches that you need to make and the quality of information that you expect and that meets your standards. Here is an illustration. Research suggests that just one family historian in six bothers to look routinely at images of census pages online. The other five appear content to take transcribers' efforts at face value. We all know that some transcribers are much more reliable than others, but they all make mistakes! And that helps to underline the importance and value of the society's Research Centre: it is set up so that you do not have to compromise in your research. It allows you to cross-search online resources until you are satisfied that you have the right details for the right person for whom you are searching. And where you need access to other datasets, or informed help and advice, those options are there for you at Yeomanry House too.

CALLING YOU IT EXPERTS OUT THERE

IT is a key driver of growth and innovation for charities like Berkshire Family History Society as much as it is for private and public sector organisations. It also represents a potential route to efficiencies across many parts of the society's operations. Are you a potential volunteer with the computing skills and expertise to step forward and help? Could you be the one to build the next easy-to-search CD



publication? Do you have the programming skills to enhance members' online experiences when visiting the website? Maybe your particular skills are in e-marketing? If you (or someone you know) could help in these areas, do get in touch with me.

DID YOU RENEW ON TIME? OR IS YOUR PAYMENT OVERDUE?

First, the good news. By the start of July, more members had renewed their membership than at the same time last year. Since then, many more of you have renewed, and as long as you did so before the mailing database is compiled, you will find your new 2012/2013 membership card enclosed with your magazine. Thank you for your continued support of the society.

On the debit side, a small number of members persist in a belief that they can continue to enjoy benefits of membership without meeting their obligations to renew it. If you have received a Final Reminder with this *Historian*, you are one of those whose renewal was outstanding when your magazine was mailed – so adding to administrative costs. Your membership brings you many valuable benefits, and is certainly valued by the society. So, do keep them! Renew now, by posting back your form and payment or do it online.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thank you to everyone who on 26 June made their way from Berkshire and beyond to the

society's 37th AGM, hosted by Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead branch. After elections at the meeting, we welcomed four new trustees to the Executive Committee: Richard Ashberry (treasurer), Sandra Barkwith, Tony Roberts and Tony Wright. You will find the meeting report elsewhere in your magazine.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE SOCIETY IN AN INTERNET AGE

Finally, may I invite you to join an initiative to make more family historians aware of the benefits of joining Berkshire Family History Society? Too few of today's armchair researchers have any grasp of the impact that membership of a responsive and effective society can have on their research. The collective aim is to make many more people

aware of all that the society can do for them and explain the benefits of the products and services that it provides.

To heighten such awareness you need to bring people with you to meetings and events. You need to encourage researchers to visit the Research Centre in Reading and to explore all of its resources, not just the computers! You need to publicise what your society has to offer, from its meetings and publications to online data and advice. And you need to use every medium available to you – from advertising, printed material and posters to the tweets, blogs and posts of emergent electronic and social media – to do it. What kind of advocate will you be for your society?

Derek Trinder
<chairman@berksfhs.org.uk>

New society publications

NOW ON SALE

Speenhamland St Mary parish registers CD (1831 - 1972)

Baptisms (1831 - 1971), banns (1847 - 1963), marriages (1847 - 1972) and burials (1831 - 1881, 1953 - 1971). The church was built in 1830 and parish register records begin in 1831. In 1973 the church was declared redundant and subsequently demolished. The CD also includes a short history of Speenhamland and a list of the vicars and curates of St Mary's. Fully indexed. Shop £5.00, UK £6.50, airmail £9.30

Shaw-cum-Donnington monumental inscriptions CD (1686 - 2011)

Transcriptions of the extant memorial inscriptions, an introduction to the church and a map of the burial ground. Shop £5.00, UK £6.50, airmail £9.30

Crowthorne St John monumental inscriptions CD (1683 - 2011)

Transcriptions and many colour photographs of the extant memorial inscriptions based on an interactive plan, an introduction to the church and details of many memorials in the churchyard to burials in the hospital at Broadmoor.

Shop £7.50, UK £9.00, airmail £11.80

Monumental and memorial inscriptions volume 1

Transcriptions of the extant memorial inscriptions and maps of the burial grounds of the churchyards of: Aldworth St Mary; Ashampstead St Clement; Lower Basildon St Bartholomew; Midgham Park; Reading St Laurence; Remenham St Nicholas; Shippon St Mary Magdalene, and Woolhampton St Peter.

Shop £7.50, UK £9.00, airmail £11.80

COMING SOON Fawley St Mary parish registers CD

Your new Executive Committee for 2012-13

The society's Executive Committee, which meets every two months, consists of around 15 members who are also the society's trustees. The chairman, vice-chairman*, treasurer and secretary* are automatically members. Each of the six branches elects a representative at the branch AGM, often but not always the chairman. Other office-holders within the society and volunteers are elected to the Exec at the society's AGM.

After five years' service Exec members must stand down, and one year must elapse before they are eligible to stand again.

**The posts of vice-chairman and secretary are currently vacant, as is that of minutes secretary to the Exec. Volunteers will continue to be sought throughout the year and, when found, can be co-opted onto the Exec pending election at the next AGM.*

Richard Ashberry (5694)

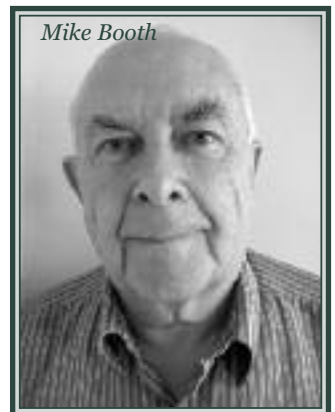
Richard joins the Exec as treasurer this year. He will work alongside the retiring treasurer, Gordon Spencer, for a short while. He has been a member since 2004-05, and is on the committee of Windsor Branch.

Sandra Barkwith (3550)

Sandra joins the Exec as the representative and secretary of Bracknell and Wokingham Branch, for which she was formerly programme secretary. However she is no stranger to Exec meetings, having formerly been the committee's minutes secretary. She has been a member of the society since 1998.

Mike Booth (5662)

Mike has served on the Exec as the chairman and representative of Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch since 2009. His interest in family history dates from the release of the 1901 census in 2002, but he did not pursue his ancestors in earnest until 2004, when he joined the society and attended meetings in Windsor and Bracknell. Since 2006 he has been responsible for preparing the society's submission to HMRC to reclaim tax based on members' Gift Aid declarations.



Mike Booth

Vanessa Chappell (6075)

Vanessa has chaired the Vale of the White Horse Branch and been an Exec trustee since May 2011, and has been a member since 2006.



Vanessa Chappell

Margaret Crook (2334)

Margaret is the chairman and Exec representative of Reading Branch, having served on the branch committee for many years. Since joining in the early 1990s she has helped with 1881 census transcriptions and the paper indexes. More recently she has been involved with transcribing and checking parish register transcriptions in the BRO.

Chad Hanna (382)

Chad attends Exec meetings in his capacity as one of the society's vice-presidents. Currently IT manager and webmaster, he has served in many of the major offices of the society, including the chairmanship.



Margaret Crook

Jean Herbert (3880)

Jean has been the society's librarian for many years, and stepped into the breach when the post of Research Centre manager fell vacant.

Judith Mitchell (4279)

Judith became a committee member of Windsor Branch in 2011, having previously been involved in a couple of projects. A member since 1989, she is on the Research Centre committee, manages the Strays Index, and regularly writes for the *Berkshire Family Historian*.

Tony Roberts (7118)

Tony joins the Exec for the first time this year, having been a Research Centre assistant. He has been a member since 2010.

Catherine Sampson (6979)

Catherine has been projects co-ordinator and an Exec trustee since October 2011 and chairs the Projects and Publications sub-committee. She joined the society in 2009-10, and was initially involved in writing parish histories for our CDs.

Penny Stokes (2961)

Penny has been a member since 1994, but took no active role in the society until becoming editor of the *Berkshire Family Historian* in 2006. She contributes parish profiles to the website, and is involved with Newbury Branch outreach. She joined the Exec in 2011.

Derek Trinder (4369)

Derek has been chairman of the society since 2009, and this is his ninth year as a trustee. Between 2003 and 2008 he chaired the society's Bracknell and Wokingham branch, representing them on the Executive Committee. In 2007 he led the group that revised the society's constitution. He has transcribed MIs, run public events in Bracknell and Wokingham, talked to local groups on family history and worked on the society's stand at shows like *WDYT YA? Live* and at family history fairs. Since 2009 he has also been a member of the team developing and managing the website, and has appeared regularly on local radio programmes featuring family history and associated themes.

Ian Ward (6907)

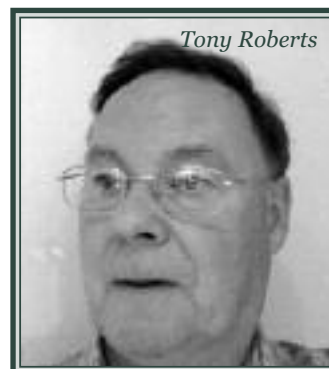
Ian represents Newbury Branch on the Exec. He has been a member since 2009-10.

Tony Wright (6776)

Tony joins the Exec to represent the Computer Branch. He has been on the Computer Branch committee for about two years, and is a key figure on the technical side of producing the society's CD publications, as well as giving advice at the Tuesday evening RC sessions and at library surgeries. He writes Gleanings for the *Berkshire Family Historian*, and has given branch talks on maritime history and FH software. He has been a member since 2009-10.



Judith Mitchell



Tony Roberts

AGM report

The 37th annual general meeting of the Society took place on Tuesday 26 June 2012, hosted by the Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch. Forty-six members and one visitor attended. Apologies for absence were received from 10 further members.

Minutes of the 36th AGM were circulated and accepted unanimously. There were no matters arising.

The chairman provided a comprehensive written report on society activities and achievements in the year ending 30 April 2012 and he briefly highlighted these points from it:

- good membership numbers in difficult economic times;
- online publication of the society's parish register transcriptions on the Findmypast website;
- the active outreach programme across all of pre-1974 Berkshire;
- a busy projects programme that allowed the society to produce publications that set new standards for others to follow;
- the excellent performance of the Enterprises company;
- a small but valuable increase in numbers using the Research Centre in Reading;
- and an overall solid financial performance.

He then moved on to consider developments in family history research – the changing horizons and expectations of today's family historians, shaped in part by their consumer experiences, and what those changes might mean for Berkshire Family History Society and other societies. Technologies, digital communications, e-commerce, service standards and social networking are altering perspectives for all researchers, whatever their ages and levels of experience. He explained that the society must develop its future strategy to take into account the numerous changes in its operating environment, without losing sight of its charitable objectives and the needs of members and the wider public. All members are invited to join in that strategic debate and to add their ideas on what the society can do better, where it can make a real difference to benefit researchers and how those things might best be achieved.

The chairman's theme turned next to society volunteers. While a number of new faces had stepped forward to take on important roles for the society and its members, he regretted that several trustees had chosen to stand down before completing a full term in office. The hard work of the learning curve would thus not now deliver the returns expected – neither for individuals nor for the society. Extra pairs of hands are vital if the society is to continue to meet its operational and statutory obligations. Going into 2012-13, the society is short of at least five key post-holders, and he called on all members to ask themselves whether they could be one of those to come forward to make a difference.

He expressed the society's thanks to its outgoing president, Sir William Benyon, to the vice-presidents and those Executive Committee members who would be standing down after the AGM. The chairman ended by thanking all society volunteers, adding that without their commitment and enthusiasm, Berkshire Family History Society would be a pale imitation of the society that it is today, and unable to deliver the products and services that benefit its members and the wider public.

The treasurer's report showed incoming resources improved by 23 per cent over the previous year. The increase reflected a number of factors, among them revenue generated by the Berkshire Marriages CD and other society publications, additional royalties earned and donations. Resources expended had been contained for a third successive year, principally through a valuable and significant saving secured by Penny Stokes on magazine publication, even though the magazine now contains additional pages. He explained provisions in place to meet anticipated costs that will arise at the conclusion of the existing Research Centre lease and also the decision to establish a fund to underpin future educational events and initiatives. The net result was that the society showed an operating surplus of £18,177 on the year. The independently examined accounts for the year ending 30 April 2012 were received and approved unanimously.

The meeting gave unanimous support to a resolution granting the incoming Executive Committee an interim authority to appoint a successor to Sir William Benyon as society president before the AGM in 2013, at which anyone so appointed would be nominated for re-election in the normal way.

Vice-presidents Dr Peter Durrant and Chad Hanna and the new Executive Committee for 2012/2013 were next re-elected by the members present, with four new trustees joining eight who had agreed to serve for a further year.

Well-deserved honorary memberships were awarded to Ivan Dickason and David Watkins, who received those awards from the chairman. Unfortunately Valerie Storie was unable to attend the AGM and will receive her award at a future Windsor Branch meeting.

The 38th AGM of Berkshire Family History Society will be hosted by the Vale of the White Horse Branch (Abingdon), and is provisionally scheduled for Monday 17 June 2013 at 7.30 pm. Nearer to the date, notice of the meeting will be provided to all current members of the society and will be placed on <www.berksfhs.org.uk>.

The appointment of Mr E G Phillips as independent examiner of accounts for 2012/2013 was endorsed, and there was no further business to be transacted. The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Following the AGM, Captain Graham Bandy gave a fascinating explanation of how photographs and memorabilia could be used in military family history. Using photographs and a formidable array of militaria, including battledress, weapons and medals, as well as documents, he gave

many extra clues and highlighted obvious pitfalls, equipping members present to go away and re-examine their own military photograph collections and, almost certainly, now revise some of the long-held myths attached to them.

The society's annual report and accounts for the year ending 30 April 2012 will be available on the Charity Commission website <<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk>>.

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Around the branches

Bracknell and Wokingham Branch

<bracknell@berksfhs.org.uk> Fiona Ranger

At the branch annual meeting the 2011-12 chairman David Wooldridge stood down, as did two other committee members, John Feast and Jayne Thorne. The new chairman is Fiona Ranger, and the branch representative on the Executive Committee is Sandra Barkwith, who is also the branch secretary. The rest of the committee is Christine Cox (treasurer), Jennifer Luffrum (programme secretary), Jacqui Brown, Carl Kneale, David Romaine and Linda Wood.

Recent speakers at branch meetings included Ian Currie, an enthusiastic meteorologist, on *Frosts, freezes and fairs*, in which he described the history of these events on the River Thames. In May Katy Chater gave advice on tracing Huguenot ancestors. The term covers all nonconformist Protestants fleeing from France, the Netherlands and Flanders from 1550 to 1750, many of

whom formed enclaves in England, Ireland and Scotland. John Chapman visited in June to discourse on *The Great Western comes to the Thames Valley*, which covered how the railway was built, the problems that were experienced, and how these were resolved by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Drop-in sessions at Wokingham and Bracknell libraries are still running on the last Tuesday of the month. Finchampstead Library has asked for a talk from the branch in the autumn. It will explain how to start tracing your family history, followed by a question and answer session.

Bracknell branch will join with Windsor in manning a stand again this year at the Ascot Retirement Fair on 15 August in the racecourse grandstand.

Computer Branch

<computerbranch@berksfhs.org.uk> Gillian Stevens

Gillian Stevens continues to chair the branch, but has stood down from the Executive Committee under the five-year rule. Tony Wright has agreed to act as branch representative on the Exec. Tony was also the speaker at the May meeting, his topic being the *Sinking of the Meriones*.

Unexpected dry weather prompted a change of plan in June, with members convening in the churchyard of Woodley St John to photograph inscriptions. Much of the volunteers' time was taken up with preliminary strimming to enable the stones to be photographed.

Other activities of the last quarter have included our

regular library sessions at Woodley and Lower Earley, and participation in the Museum of English Rural Life summer fete on Saturday 8 June. Here, four or five branch members were kept busy with a constant stream of enquiries. Two laptops had the Berkshire Name Suite and access to FMP, and one also had the 1881 Surname Mapping CD, which was extremely popular. A total of £20.40 was collected for look-ups and print-outs. Two CDs and one book were sold.

About 50 packs of society leaflets were handed out, and the event was considered to have been highly successful.

Newbury Branch

<newbury@berksfhs.org.uk> Nick Prince

Newbury Branch committee is unchanged for 2012-13, with Nick Prince in the chair and Ian Ward as representative on the Exec.

David Peacock addressed the May meeting on *Tudor Newbury*, a topic which he covers well in his recent book on the history of Newbury (available from BerksFHS Books). Our June meeting welcomed Eve McLaughlin for a lively account of schooling for ordinary children over the centuries. The branch has no meetings in July or August.

The outreach programme is expanding, with keen interest being expressed by West Berkshire Libraries for advice sessions. Potential venues are numerous in this branch: Hungerford and Newbury Libraries have had visits and would like repeats; they now been joined by Lambourn, which will have had three busy sessions by the time that this issue comes into print. Volunteers for Pangbourne, on the eastern edge of the district, are proving harder to raise, but a session is planned for Wash Common Library.

Reading Branch

<reading@berksfhs.org.uk> Margaret Crook

The May meeting talk by Ian Waller was on the subject of *Upstairs, downstairs*, highlighting domestic service. The June branch meeting featured a question-and-answer session, with a few questions submitted in advance; some examples (with answers in brackets) are shown below.

Birth of a British person in nineteenth-century Belgium (UK Overseas BMDs)

BMD records for Newfoundland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Canadian /Newfoundland FHS)

Nineteenth-century orphanages in Scotland (ScotlandsPeople)

Records of early nineteenth-century master mariners (TNA, using online indexes first)

Records of staff of HM Customs and Excise in the early nineteenth centuries (TNA)

How to differentiate two girls of the same name, born to two different parents in a small Berkshire parish about seven years apart. (Try tracing both families forward, in the hope that one could be eliminated.)

Was it possible to find a great-aunt who emigrated in the early twentieth century? (Jocie showed the importance of “killing off” people or eliminating them from your research.)

Mortimer Library advice sessions continue to draw two or three new people each month. The monthly session in Goring-on-Thames is in some doubt as to its continuance after the summer.

Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch

<windsor@berksfhs.org.uk> Mike Booth

At the branch annual meeting in May Mike Booth agreed to continue as chairman and branch representative on the Exec, Judith Mitchell was elected secretary (following Valerie Storie's wish to stand down), Helen Conchar remains treasurer, Olwen Mundye and Ken Houghton were re-elected as committee members, and Richard Ashberry was elected to the committee, replacing Pauline Hodges, who stood down after more than 10 years' service. Following this John Dunne spoke on the subject of Irish ancestry.

In June the branch hosted the society's AGM, at

which attendance may have been depleted by the unexpected closure of the car park which visitors had been advised to use. One visitor however came after seeing a flyer in Eton Wick library, and joined the society. Official business was followed by a talk on military family history by Captain Graham Bandy.

A FH advice session was held at Cox Green Library in May, attracting six visitors and, once again, the branch will take a stand (with Bracknell Branch) at the Ascot Retirement Fair on 15 August. Drops-ins are planned for Eton Wick in September and October.

Vale of the White Horse Branch

<vale@berksfhs.org.uk> Vanessa Chappell

At the branch meeting in April the following were elected: chairperson Vanessa Chappell; secretary Jo Lent; treasurer Margaret McAlpin; programme secretary Sue Matthews; and general committee members Gordon Radburn, Sarah Matthews, Simon Burbidge and Keith Holloway. This was followed by a cheese and wine evening.

In May the first library surgery was held at Faringdon, which has a small archive of local papers and maps, also open during the morning. Nine people, all of whom had pre-booked a half-hour session, were seen. The library was extremely pleased with the morning and

the branch has been asked to go back later in the year.

In June a small group visited the Science Museum's Library and Archive at Wroughton, near Swindon, which holds original scientific, engineering and technology material from the last 500 years and a large collection of personal papers, company records and manuscripts. The group was fascinated to see a notebook containing Barnes Wallis' handwritten thesis, and Charles Babbage's notebooks. This facility is well worth a visit especially if you have an ancestor who worked in science, engineering, medicine or industry.

The Berkshire Probate Index *reviewed*

The new Berkshire Probate Index CD provides an easy way for researchers anywhere in the world to find out if their Berkshire ancestors left a will or other probate document, and gives all the details necessary for the researcher to order the records from the BRO.

Wills are one of the most valuable resources for family history researchers, and are particularly important once the research progresses back into the parish registers, and we no longer have the censuses to provide confirmation of family groupings. The Berkshire Record Office (BRO) holds a very large collection of wills, but the records have previously been difficult to access for anyone not living locally because the only available finding aids were typed indexes which had to be consulted at the BRO. A printed index to some of the very early Berkshire wills was published back in 1893, but is now of little use because it was compiled before the probate records were transferred to the BRO, and therefore does not include the necessary BRO references.

Anyone wishing to visit the BRO in person can now compile a list of the records they wish to consult in advance, so that they do not waste valuable research time locating the appropriate references.

The Berkshire Probate Index CD is the result of a four-year collaborative project between the Berkshire Record Office, the Berkshire Family History Society, the Berkshire Local History Association, the Berkshire Record Society and the Oxfordshire Family History Society, all of whom provided both practical and financial support. The project also received assistance from the Marc Fitch Fund. A team of dedicated volunteers has contributed thousands of hours of their free time to compile the index. Significant errors were found in the original printed indexes, and it was necessary to start from scratch and create an entirely new index for the years 1480 to 1652. The later typewritten indexes were found to be more accurate, but a considerable amount of checking was

Debbie Kennett (5278)

*introduces the society's latest
major CD publication*

still required, and there was also a huge amount of work involved in inputting the data into a fully searchable database.

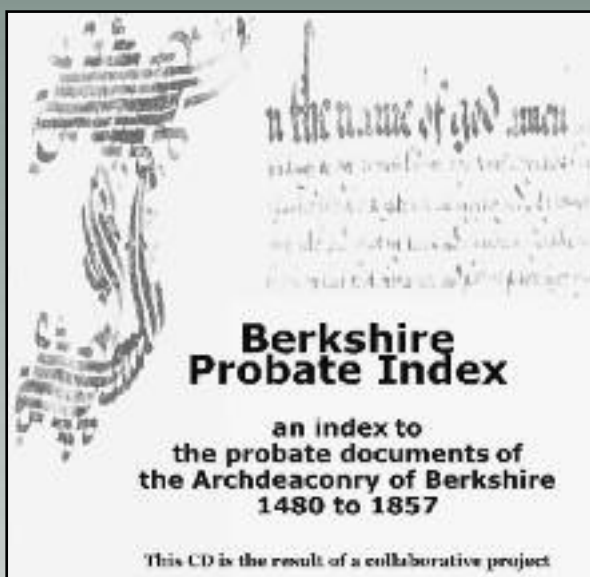
The CD provides an index to the probate records of the Archdeaconry of Berkshire, which constitute the majority of probate documents held at the BRO. The earliest indexed document is the will of John Hornehurst of Wallingford St Mary, which dates from 1480, and the index goes right through to 1857, the last year in which probate came under the jurisdiction of the church courts. From 1858 onwards probate became the responsibility of the state, and these records are now handled by the Probate Service.

Over 39,000 individual records have been indexed, including over 23,000 wills and more than 10,000 grants of administration, as well as many other lesser-known records such as tuition bonds, court papers, and excommunications. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries wills were often accompanied by inventories, which give a detailed

The new Berkshire Probate Index CD provides an easy way for researchers anywhere in the world to find out if their Berkshire ancestors left a will or other probate document, and gives all the details necessary for the researcher to order the records from the BRO.

account of the deceased's belongings, and can provide a fascinating insight into the lives of our ancestors. The Berkshire Record Office has a particularly rich collection of inventory records, and these are also included in the index.

The CD provides details of the name of the deceased, the occupation, the parish, the year that probate was granted, the types of document available, and the full BRO reference. There is also a column of additional notes on the status of the deceased, such as alias names and whether a woman was a spinster or widow. The index can be searched in a variety of different ways including by surname, by parish (both old and modern names), by occupation and by date. It is also possible to search for probate records which are accompanied by inventories or by probate accounts. These latter finding aids will be particularly appreciated by local historians and social historians.



Prior to 1858 there was a three-tier system of church courts. The Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York mostly handled the probate affairs of the richest members of society who had property spread across different jurisdictions, though these wills can also include the records of mariners, those who died at sea and ordinary individuals who just happened to own property in a different county. The diocesan or consistory courts were the middle tier and dealt with the probate records of individuals who owned property in more than one archdeaconry. The archdeaconry courts were the lowest tier, and dealt with the middling ranks of society who owned property within a single archdeaconry.

Not surprisingly, a large number of the wills indexed on the CD relate to individuals who are identified as yeomen, husbandmen or farmers, and especially so in the earlier centuries, but there are also wills for tradesmen and craftsmen including wheelwrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, millers, innkeepers, cordwainers and tailors. There are also a few wills for the more humble members of society such as labourers and bricklayers, and even a solitary will for a postboy. Amongst the more interesting occupations I found an umbrella maker, a prison keeper, a mole catcher, a language professor, a gingerbread baker, a hair weaver, and a peruke (wig) maker.

The Archdeaconry of Berkshire corresponds almost exactly to the boundaries of the pre-1974 county of Berkshire, and includes the parishes of north Berkshire and the Vale of the White Horse. Although the bulk of the records in the collection

relate to Berkshire, there are also some records from the surrounding counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire, as well as a few references to probate records from more distant counties as far away as Devon, Somerset, Lancashire and Denbighshire. There is even an 1836 will from Buffalo, USA, and an 1845 will from Flanders.

A small number of Berkshire parishes fell outside the jurisdiction of the archdeaconry and were included in the courts of exempt jurisdictions known as “peculiars”. There were three peculiars in Berkshire: the peculiar of Faringdon, including Little Coxwell; the peculiar of the Dean and Canons of Windsor, comprising Hungerford, Shalbourne and Wantage; and the peculiar of the Dean of Salisbury, which covered Arborfield, Blewbury (including Aston Upthorpe and Upton), Hurst, Ruscombe, Sandhurst, Sonning and Wokingham. Probate records proved in these peculiars are not included on the CD, though a number of wills for people in these parishes were proved in the archdeacon’s court and are included in the collection.

The probate records for the Peculiar of Faringdon are held by the Berkshire Record Office. A free index to the Faringdon records covering the period from 1547 to 1853 can be downloaded from the BRO website at <www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/family-history/wills-probate>. Details of the locations of Berkshire wills held at other repositories can be found on the probate page on Genuki Berkshire at <www.berksfhs.org.uk/genuki/BRK/#Probate>.

The Berkshire Probate Index CD is an essential purchase for anyone who has ancestry from Berkshire, and will serve as a gateway to some of the most important records for family history research which can help to put the flesh on the bones of your ancestors. All proceeds from the sale of the CD go to the partners who sponsored this important project.

Berkshire Probate Index: an index to the probate documents of the Archdeaconry of Berkshire 1480 to 1857 (CD)

£25 from the bookshop; posted UK £27.10; airmail £29.90

More new resources at the Research Centre...

... have made Yeomanry House the number-one, one-stop shop for family history research in Berkshire. New subscriptions mean that members may now consult and cross-check between:

- Ancestry worldwide data – and you can now search family trees too
- Origins – many specialised databases, particularly strong on Ireland, and with the National Wills Index
- British Newspaper Archive – millions of stories in dozens of local and regional newspapers: news, letters, BMD announcements, obituaries and adverts
- Findmypast – the most complete collection of census, BMD records, indexed parish registers dating from 1538 (to which Berkshire FHS has contributed), travel and migration records, armed forces records, education and work records

There is nowhere else in the county where you can access this range of data on one site – and for just £1 an hour.

Dates for your diary

*asterisk indicates that Berkshire FHS is planning to attend

Thu 6, Fri 7, Sat 8, Sun 9 Sept	Heritage Open Days	all over the county	< www.heritageopendays.org.uk >
18.00 - 20.00 Wed 12 Sept	Berkshire Record Office Open Evening with Berkshire FHS*	9 Coley Ave Reading RG1 6AF	0118 9375132 < arch@reading.gov.uk >
10.00 - 16.30 Sun 23 Sept	West Middlesex FHS Open Day	White House Community Centre 45 The Ave, Hampton TW12 3RN	< www.west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk >
10.00 - 16.00 Sun 30 Sept	Hampshire Genealogical Soc Open Day	Technology College Merchistoun Road Horndean	< www.hgs-online.org.uk/open-day.htm >
10.00 - 16.00 Sat 6 Oct	Oxfordshire FHS Open Day*	Marlborough School just outside Woodstock	< www.ofhs.org.uk/OpenDay.html >
10.00 - 16.30 Sat 3 Nov	West Surrey FHS Open Day*	Woking Leisure Centre, Kingfield Rd, Woking GU22 9BA	< www.wsfhs.org/pages/openday.php >



The view from next door

In his regular column from the Berkshire Record Office, where he is senior archivist, Mark Stevens puts the county and its history into perspective

This autumn will see the publication of a new edition of the **Historical Atlas of Berkshire**, first published by the Berkshire Record Society in 1998.

The new, expanded atlas contains 74 articles on different aspects of the county's history, all illustrated with colour maps explaining more about the rich tapestry of life that Berkshire folk have woven down the ages.

It is always quite humbling to realise just how much history has been lived in a place, and how many people have gone before you. You think about the great events that Berkshire has experienced, such as the Conquest and the Civil War, events which must have reverberated for decades across the county. Then there are dramatic upheavals such as the Black Death, the Reformation or the passing of an older, rural life for one punctuated by the iron horses of the railway, all of which must have had such great effect on people's day-to-day lives.

It is difficult to single out one thing as being that which changed the county most. Anyway, if asked to do so, we tend towards the changes that are closer to living memory, because we find it easier to empathise with circumstances that remind us more of our own. But all those momentous happenings put our current Berkshire into perspective, and make us realise that we are temporary custodians of the county

rather than anything more permanent.

What the atlas manages to achieve is a sample of this breadth of experience with which Berkshire has wrestled. There are tasters on the major episodes as well as more subtle stories: the growth of banking, for example, or the high point of the woollen trade. In piecing all these things together the atlas celebrates the contribution that Berkshire has made to life in England over the centuries.

Nearer to home, we hope that our own small part in the Berkshire story is going to continue for a few more years yet. When the county council folded in 1998 we were given 15 years to continue as the county archives service. Those 15 years are nearly up. However, all the Berkshire districts have agreed in principle that we can have another 15 to carry on looking after our collections and providing public access to them.

We take this as a compliment. In the context of the work we do, 15 years passes in the blink of an eye, but in the current climate it provides a level of stability that we could easily have been left without. It makes planning the long-term needs of the collections easier, as well as giving us more space for partnership working with organisations such as the Berkshire FHS. Like the county itself, we look forward to what the future will bring.

A fire at Denchworth

Gill Watkins (5047)
trawls through The Reading Mercury
for an account of
arson and incompetence that cost
her distant cousin her house

The online historical newspapers at the British Newspaper Archive* have given me some interesting insights into events that took place in the village of Denchworth, Berkshire: in particular, an article relating to a fire that took place there.

The Reading Mercury
Saturday, October 1, 1864

ARSON. On Thursday last a fire was discovered in some out-buildings of a farm of Mr. B. Booker, at Denchworth. The circumstance and facts of the case will be gleaned from the following evidence taken at the magisterial enquiry. We believe the property is only partially insured, and Mr. Booker, and also the cottagers, will therefore be great losers. It is much to be regretted that measures had not been taken to prevent the author of all this mischief from committing so rash an act:

Benjamin Booker, on his oath, said: I am a farmer living at Denchworth. On the 22nd inst., about three o'clock in the afternoon, when I returned home to Denchworth, my dwelling-house, stable, barn and out-houses were burnt to the ground. In the barn there were about 100 sacks of wheat, and about 85 sacks of them were burnt. Two sacks and a bushel of vetches, five sacks of barley, and other farm produce were also burnt. My dwelling-house and premises are almost close to the cottage of the prisoner, and my woodhouse almost touched some part belonging to the cottage of Henry Church, the husband of the prisoner.

Alice Church deposed: I am a single woman residing at Denchworth, and have had the care of the prisoner, who is my aunt, for the last three months. On the 22nd inst., about half-past one o'clock, I was standing at the front door of the house talking to Prudence Belcher and Alice Mace when I saw my aunt go out of the back door, and I followed her out to watch her. She went into the privy. I came back to the front

door, and in about a minute I went to look for her and met her coming, and she said "I have been and put her house on fire." I said what house, and she said "Mrs. Booker's house." Before I spoke to my aunt and as soon as I got out at the back door to look for her, I saw the roof of the privy on fire, and also Mrs. Booker's wood-house. I ran through the house and told Mrs. Booker's daughter that her house was on fire. I went back again to my aunt, and she said "Alice, what have I done?" and I replied, "Oh aunt, what have you done?" She said "It was only with one match." There was a box of matches on the ledge on the oven. My aunt has said since and before the fire that Mrs. Booker was one of her bitterest enemies. I have had the care of my aunt because she is not right in her mind, and is not capable of taking care of herself.

Alice Mace deposed: I am 15 years of age and am living with my sister at Denchworth. On the 22nd inst., about half-past one in the afternoon, I was standing at Henry Church's door talking to Alice Church. I saw the prisoner go out at the back door, and Alice Church went after her and watched her. In about a minute afterwards she came running back and said "Mrs. Booker's house is all on fire." When Hannah Church, the prisoner, came in she said, "I have been and set her house on fire." She had some water in a mug and said she could "dout it".

Benjamin Millard, Superintendent of Police, sworn, said: Between two and three o'clock I went to Denchworth, on the 22nd inst., and found the dwelling-house and farm buildings of Benjamin Booker on fire, and five or six other cottages, and also a large stable belonging to other persons, all of which were consumed. I

apprehended the prisoner the same afternoon, and told her she was charged with setting fire to Benjamin Booker's premises. She asked "Is it all burnt down?" I said "Mrs. Booker's premises are all burned down." She said "it was with one match, I had it from the oven; I did not like Mrs Booker." Some time after she said, "Is Mr. Walker's ricks burnt?" I said "no." She said, "I didn't want them burnt; I wanted Mrs. Booker's burnt a little."

Prisoner was then committed to take her trial at the Assizes.

From Fraser Rawlins, Denchworth Vicarage, 28 September 1864 to the editor of *The Reading Mercury*:

The following facts will speak for themselves, and I beg to send them to you for publication, not merely for the purpose of exposing what, in my opinion, ought to be exposed, but also to warn any of your readers who may live in the neighbourhood of Wantage, against placing the smallest dependence whatever upon the fire engine there.

Immediately on the discovery of the terrible fire, which took place here last Thursday, a messenger was despatched on horseback for the Wantage engine. This village is not more than three and a half miles distant, and yet nearly two hours elapsed before the engine came. At length it arrived in charge of a man named Green. Whether this person was too ignorant for his work, I will not say. Suffice it to say, he took up some half hour or forty minutes after his arrival, in blundering considerably, and vulgarly joking as he was getting his engine into play, and behaved with insolence to any one who attempted to remonstrate with him. As a specimen of the man's general conduct, I will quote a reply which I myself received from him. Feeling indignant at the dilatory and careless manner in which he was going to work, and being ready, in common with others, to pay him well for any real service he might render, I told him he would not be paid for working as he then was. His answer, which I believe I give verbatim, was this, "Oh! I don't

want to be paid, not I; I only came to please the people." The engine when at length it was got into action, played upon the fire for about ten minutes. Mr. Green then stopped work, and I myself saw him going in the direction of the nearest public house. Be it remembered that at this time, there were five houses, a barn, a large farm stable, and a variety of smaller buildings all on fire, as well as a number of surrounding houses continually catching, and only saved by the utmost exertions on the part of others. Out of all this, the engine neither put out, nor in reality tried to put out a single fire that was then burning: it neither saved, nor attempted to save any buildings around from firing; and finally, about six o'clock, when it was growing dark, and the fire was still in more than a half burning state, the engine was taken home, and the lives and remaining property of the village were left for the night to the mercy of any change or rise of the wind that might happen to occur. I was not present when this crowning piece of gross conduct took place, or I most certainly should have urged its being resisted by force.

It is untrue to say there was no water: there was not an abundance of it, but there was water, which the engine left unused.

Ann Booker was my great-great-aunt. She was married three times: to Frederick Hall (1838), William Frogley (1841), and finally Benjamin Booker (1859). Benjamin was her first cousin once removed (common ancestors John Booker and Hannah Haines) and also her second cousin (common ancestors William and Mary Belcher). That makes him my second cousin three and four times removed!

Hannah Church was subsequently certified as insane, and moved to Littlemore Asylum. Does anyone know the site of the fire, and is there any evidence of it today?

**Gill Watkins can be contacted on
<camley14gill@yahoo.co.uk>**

**The British Newspaper Archive can now be consulted at the Berkshire FHS Research Centre in Reading.*

The Seymour family of Poughley Rivers, East Garston

Tim Seymour (7154)
uncovers the story of a bitter family dispute in the seventeenth century

When I was going through some family papers last year, I hardly expected to stumble across a seventeenth-century tale of trickery and skulduggery. Let me explain.

I was born in South Africa, came to England in 1970 in my early 20s and settled in London. My late father told me that our Seymour family came from East Garston. Before I left home he gave me a rather scrappy file of letters and photocopied papers should I ever wish to look further.

Last year, 40 years later, I finally dusted off my father's file and found to my surprise extensive information about the main lineage of our Seymour family, going back 11 generations, from me to the sixteenth-century. The records are based on an 1860 handwritten sheaf of papers entitled "Seymour Pedigree", produced by my great-grandfather, George Seymour (1837 - 1905), who emigrated to South Africa in about 1870. George was obviously an avid collector of family data, and his handwritten records contain names and dates of his direct forebears. One was a Thomas Seymour (1664 - c1729) who owned a property of about 100 acres called Poughley Rivers near East Garston, where the church, All Souls, has a Seymour Chapel, and Seymours are buried in the churchyard. The file also contained some extensive Seymour family research commissioned in 1975 by a cousin from a professional firm of genealogists called Heenen and Mount in Canterbury.

And this is where the story really begins. Thomas Seymour had inherited Poughley Rivers in 1664, the year of his birth, as his father had died the same year. Heenan and Mount found, in the *Victoria County History for Berkshire (VCH)*, that in 1697 Thomas Seymour had agreed to sell Poughley Rivers to a Thomas Garrard, member of a wealthy local royalist landowning family. However the ownership of Poughley Rivers was claimed, "apparently with success" said the *VCH*, by a William Seymour, a mortgagee of the property. A footnote in the *VCH* referred to Chancery

proceedings. They sounded interesting.

After a little research and asking around, it appeared that The National Archives at Kew could be the place to start my search for the Chancery proceedings. So I set out on a cold, sunny day early in December last year to Kew without, I have to admit, much expectation of success. In the reading room I told a friendly and efficient lady at the enquiries desk what I wanted, and after a half a minute on her computer she said "Ah yes...Thomas Seymour and Thomas Garrard...1697 Chancery proceedings...sit over there and we will have it for you in half an hour." Wow! Expecting something like a few yellowing A4-like pages, I was presented with an ancient roll of sheets of vellum, with flowery illegible handwriting, held together with what was clearly an equally ancient piece of string.

Unfortunately, when I unrolled the vellum (carefully with the white gloves provided) there were a number of thick black smudges horizontally across the vellum sheets, rendering much of the writing illegible. I enquired again, and was told "Don't worry about that, it's only a couple of hundred years of dust." Indubitably I was the first person in 300 years to have looked at the documents. An expert was summoned, and she cleaned the vellum. I was able to have the documents copied and sent to me on a disk in digital format. I then taught myself to read the old script with its strange lettering and assorted oddities like no punctuation and apparently arbitrary use of capital letters.

The Chancery case shed a fascinating light on a 300-year-old family feud. The 6,000-word document described the dispute, which must have incurred great legal expense, in great detail. It was an attempted injunction, sought by Thomas Seymour, heard before the High Chancellor, Lord Somers of Evesham, to restrain one William Seymour of nearby Lambourne Woodlands from



taking possession of Thomas's property, Poughley Rivers. William was owed money by Thomas, secured by a mortgage on Poughley Rivers. William had pursued Thomas in the Westminster Court of Common Pleas to recover this debt. However, Thomas alleged that the debt had been fraudulently obtained.

Apparently, about three years before the Chancery proceedings commenced, the villainous William had hatched a plot with a bailiff called Page, the local sheriff and an attorney called Beale. A writ was taken out against Thomas, and he was detained by bailiff Page and held in custody at a public house near "Newberry" where the bailiff lived. There Thomas, who was described in the Chancery proceedings as a "weak man easily made drunk", was plied with "wine, brandy and other liquors". The sheriff then turned up and threatened to send Thomas to gaol unless he paid a large bail, which he could not afford. Thomas appeared to be in serious trouble.

Bailiff Page then did the good cop/bad cop routine, and "pretended great kindness" to Thomas, offering him immediate release if he would just sign a piece of paper, prepared by attorney Beale, absolving bailiff Page and the sheriff of any misdeeds which, Page said, was usual in such cases. Thomas, despite his drunken state, was reluctant to sign, so he was plied with more alcohol over a period of several days, all the while still in the custody of bailiff Page in his "Newberry" public house. Finally, thoroughly and completely drunk, Thomas signed the document

placed before him by attorney Beale. Thomas claimed in his injunction that he did not know what he was signing.

Inevitably, the document Thomas signed was not the said indemnity for bailiff Page and the sheriff, but a "Warrant of Attorney...confessing a judgement for one thousand pounds". This was an acknowledgement that Thomas now owed William another £1,000 on top of his existing debt to him.

Shortly after his release Thomas, presumably ignorant of the "Warrant of Attorney", decided to sell Poughley Rivers to raise some capital. He agreed a sale with the local landowner Thomas Garrard. William immediately sought to block the sale by pursuing, in the Westminster Court of Common Pleas, the now very large debt allegedly owed him by Thomas, and to take possession of his security, the Poughley Rivers property. Thomas' injunction sought to restrain William.

Sadly for Thomas, his attempt to injunct William appears to have failed. A wooden plaque in the Seymour Chapel in All Souls, East Garston, reads as follows:

Near this place lies interred the body of William Seymour of East Garston Woodlands, Gent, who departed this life March 6th 1731 aged 68 years...[who] left by will dated May 22nd 1729 for poor widows or such that do not receive monthly pay, £1 per annum, and £4 per annum for putting poor children to school – for ever. To be paid out of Poughley Estate, East Garston Woodlands.

Did William Seymour, the gentleman benefactor, acquire his money by ungentlemanly means? We will never know!

Tim Seymour would be interested in any information on the Seymour family from, in particular, East Garston or Poughley Rivers, and would be happy to share what he has on this branch of the family. His email address is <tandmseymour@btinternet.com>.

Was your ancestor a churchwarden?

**Penny Stokes (2961)
has been trawling through
an under-valued resource**

The office of churchwarden required men who could command respect in the parish, so they tended to be drawn from among the more senior members of the community, often yeoman or larger tenant farmers. It wasn't always a popular job but, with no ban on repeat service, the same names tended to recur year after year.

The office dates from the thirteenth century, although records surviving from earlier than the seventeenth century are rare. Two were elected or nominated each year, usually around Easter, and charged with the upkeep of church property. They were also specifically bound to report on the morality of the parish: adulterers, fornicators, those married within prohibited degrees, cohabitants outside marriage, bastardy, drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, Catholics and non-payers of the church rate were to be reported to the archdeacon in the annual churchwardens' presentments.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century this responsibility was taken seriously, but how did such matters come to the churchwardens' attention? It seems that in these early days there was a vigorous tradition of snitching on neighbours, not to mention a tempting opportunity for score-settling.

Chilton in 1724: Ann Brooker doth lie under a common name of fornication and there may be common swearers more than we know how to name... and in 1813 ... George Church an inhabitant has caused a board to be erected on one the Pews by which the other inhabitants are annoyed.

Non-payment of the church rate usually denoted militant Catholic or nonconformist villagers. Clewer presented several dozen non-payers in 1690, and this recurred in successive decades, suggesting perhaps an unresolved boundary dispute; parishioners would not pay rates twice. Failure to baptise a child generally indicated principled resistance to Anglican supremacy.

How many of these sinners were sent on to be arraigned in the archdeacon's court (known for good

reason as the bawdy court)? Chilton's churchwardens had low expectations of their archdeacon, in 1725 lamenting: "We may have some poor offenders in our parish but if we present them you take no notice of them ...". Perhaps naming and shaming within the community was considered sufficient in most cases.

Churchwardens also had a (rarely exercised) responsibility for reporting if the parson was failing in his duty. In Chilton in 1716 Richard North and William Goddard reported that the minister "hath not constantly read ye litany on Weds or Fris" but they did admit that this was probably for "want of a congregation". Absenteeism from church was obviously on a scale that had defeated the churchwardens.

Around 1730 printed forms began to come into use for churchwardens' presentments, and this seems to have encouraged laxity in reporting. Some parishes simply reported "omnia bene" (all is well) year after year. The appetite for finger-pointing at one's neighbours waned, and by the mid-nineteenth century the presentments were scarcely bothered with. For around 150 years, however, these reports were presented and filed, and if your ancestor was a regular churchwarden you may observe his influence on a parish over several years – and it's always a thrill for family historians to see an ancestor's actual signature on an original document. At the other end of the social scale these presentments can reveal personal names of the kind that might not normally appear outside vital records. If you can face the prospect of finding a fornicator, blasphemer, drunkard or sabbath-breaker in your family tree, take a look through the churchwardens' presentments for your ancestor's village.

Churchwardens' presentments for Berkshire are to be found A-Z by parish, in bound volumes in the BRO. A few are in the record offices of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. Cumnor is a rare example of a transcription available online. Berkshire FHS Library holds transcripts of presentments for Abingdon St Helens, Uffington, Baulking and Woolstone.



Churchwardens' pipes are characterised by a long stem. According to Wikipedia they were so named because churchwardens favoured them for smoking in church – they could poke the long stem out of the window.

Wartime Christmas letters from a Reading housewife

Richard Brown (6632)

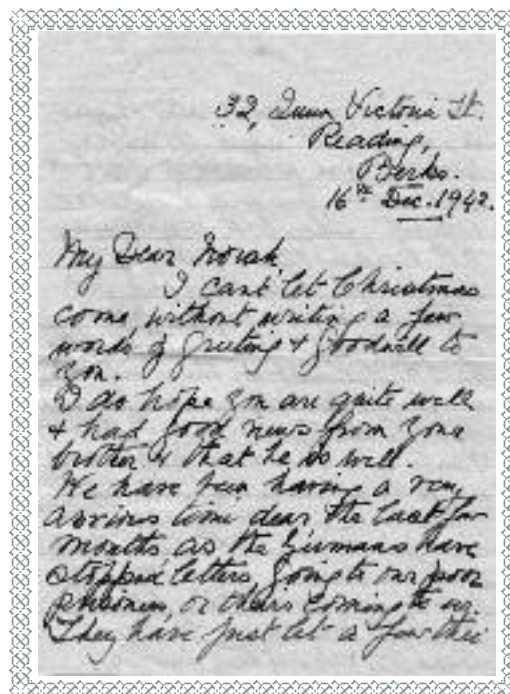
Many of us write letters to our friends at Christmas telling them how the past year has been. Mrs Edith Friend was just such a person, and her letters to her friend Norah Harding of Monk Sherborne, near Basingstoke, dated 1937, 1942 and 1944, are typical. What makes them exceptional today is that they provide a vivid illustration of the effect of the Second World War on a family from Reading.

In late December 1937 Mrs Friend is living at 139 Mayfield Drive, Caversham, and writes that she has just come home from hospital and is in recuperation. She is very glad to be home, and most of the letter is general chat.

By Christmas 1942 she and her husband have moved to 32 Queen Victoria Street, Reading, and it is the middle of the war. Mrs Friend has plenty to worry about. Her eldest son George is serving aboard *HMS Penelope*, which had been on escort duty with the Malta convoys. (The ship earned the nickname *HMS Peppercot* from the amount of damage she had sustained.) Her younger sons Hal and Ron are prisoners of war in Germany. Ron is being forced to work in a coalmine. Mrs Friend has only just heard from them after the Germans had stopped letters to and from prisoners for four months. There is also news of other serving relatives. One survived the sinking of the *Ark Royal*.

Her health is not good, but her prayers are for "the end of this terrible war, and all mothers' sons return".

1944 was a terrible year for Mrs Friend. Eldest son George went down with *HMS Penelope* in February. The ship was torpedoed while on passage between Naples and Anzio, after the allied landings at Anzio. News of Hal and Ron, the two prisoners, has been fragmented, but she has just learned they are both being moved through eastern Germany and Poland ahead of the advancing Russians.



Her youngest sister's house was hit by a flying bomb and, to cap it all, her mother died aged 85 in May. Unsurprisingly Mrs Friend is seeing the doctor with heart problems.

The stoicism revealed in the letters is amazing, particularly in comparison with the outpouring of grief, real or otherwise, that is commonplace today.

I learned all this because I was asked through my membership of the Tadley and District History Society to help find a suitable depository for the letters, which had been found by Norah Harding's daughter. I showed them to Sabina Sutherland at the BRO, who recommended they might be of interest to the Imperial War Museum. The IWM were delighted to take them for their Home Front collection.

It would be great if I could now pass copies and transcripts to descendants of Mrs Friend. Can anybody help?

**Richard Brown can be reached at
<anything@ilexind.plus.com>**

The Silvester family of Radley

Christine Wootton

highlights another family from her book on Radley

The Silvester family played a prominent role in the Radley community for many years, and it would have been a very familiar name to many until relatively recently. Although there were Silvesters living in the village in the sixteenth century, the family I was interested in came to Radley from Sunningwell.

The first known member of the family was Henry, who was born in about 1679. His 3 x great-grandson, George, appeared to be the first to reside in Radley, in about 1844, and was the village blacksmith and postmaster, living at the post office, which used to be opposite Radley Church on the corner of Church Road and Whites Lane. His smithy was to the side of the church, and the remains of it can just be seen in the footpath leading to the church room, with the stones from it forming the wall around the churchyard.



The house on Church Road

George served his apprenticeship while living at the home of James Aldsworth in Wootton, Berkshire (now Oxfordshire), and remained a blacksmith all his life. Despite having this occupation and that of postmaster, he was still in receipt of three pounds of beef in 1849 and 1850 from the Bowyer charity in the village. In 1881, the year she was widowed, his wife, Harriet, received a gift from the Martha Bristow charity, which gave out blankets and shawls to



The smithy by the churchyard

the needy. Following George's death in 1881 from tetanus, his wife continued as postmistress and his son, Dennis, continued at the forge.

In about 1897 the forge was demolished in order to extend the graveyard, and the vicar found Dennis a temporary shed until a new one could be built. He later moved to Lower Radley and lived at Walnut Cottage, using the smithy opposite. Dennis had five siblings, the eldest of whom was Jethro.

Jethro became the landlord of Radley's Bowyer Arms public house in about 1891, after having worked in the village as a blacksmith. He had married Harriet Evans, whose sister Martha had married his brother Dennis. Along with the pub Jethro had a coal, coke and gravel merchant's business, as well as a cartage contractor's business. He was the licensee of the Bowyer Arms until about 1920, and was always happy to take anyone's money for alcohol, even from children. He set up his carting business, housing his horses in stables by the pub and

renting fields nearby for fodder. He was in an especially good position being next to the railway station to transport people and goods to and from Radley College and elsewhere.

Jethro became a member of the first parish council in Radley in 1894, and one of his tasks was to try to get an improvement in the village's roads. In January 1897 the vicar wrote in the church magazine:

It has been said that there is one thing we can claim to be ahead of other places, that is, in having the worst roads in Berkshire. Now it is not a good thing to be too proud, so let us give our best wishes to Mr J Silvester that he may take away the boast.

One month later there was a comment in the magazine that the village had not yet recovered from seeing a steam-roller puffing round the church. The words, "Well, well, civilisation and progress!" were added.

Jethro also appeared to do catering, as he prepared an excellent meal in Mr Walker's barn (Neat Home Farm in Lower Radley) for the third Berkshire Friendly Club of Radley feast held on Whit Monday 1896.

As time went by, Jethro was able to buy from Mary Bowyer about two acres of land across the road from the Bowyer Arms, where he built a house called Fairfield, which is now next door to the village shop. It was so named because this is where the Radley Fair used to be held until the outbreak of the First World War. The Bowyer Arms brewed ginger beer especially for the visitors to the entertainment, which lasted a week.

According to a Women's Institute programme of 1926, the year in which Jethro died, Radley WI purchased a bath chair for less than £10, and this was kept at the Bowyer Arms. The cost of its hire was 6d for a whole day and 3d for half a day. Members of the WI and their husbands could use it free of charge.

Jethro's son, George Kenneth, was married on the 16 June 1910 to Rosa Phoebe Timms of Culham, and on 5 October 1911 he and his father signed a tenancy agreement for Sugworth Farm with Josephine Dockar-Drysdale, who owned much of the village. In 1921 they were able to buy the farm, with the help of a mortgage from the vendor,

for £4,750. They repaid this mortgage in 1923, but promptly took out another one.

George Kenneth died in Oxford Isolation Hospital in 1930 at the age of 44. His widow, his sisters and their husbands were involved

at various times as trustees, but the farm was generally run by son Jethro, who supplemented his income by having a cattle dealing and cattle haulage business.

Jethro Silvester junior was born at Sugworth, and had a reputation for being rather broad and rustic. He was very strong, and could put a sack of wheat under his arm as though it were a bag of feathers. There is a story told of Jethro that someone once called at his home to tell him that a bull was loose in the road near the house. He opened his window, stuck his gun out and said, "Leave 'im alone and 'e'll go back to where 'e come from." With Badcock's Farm, Sugworth Farm held the last of the traditional beef herds in this area where the bull and cows were left in the field together.

While Jethro's mother, Rosa Phoebe, was alive he was not allowed to marry his lady friend, who lived in the cottages next door to Sugworth Farm, but as soon as his mother died, Phyllis Marjorie Sloggett became his wife. Jethro was 44 and Phyllis was 42.

Jethro died in 1974, the last of his line of Radley Silvesters.

More information about the Silvesters can be found in Radley History Club's publication, Radley farms and families, 1600 - 2011, available from Berkshire FHS bookshop.



The Bowyer Arms



The Silvester wedding

*In the fourth article of his series,
Lionel Carter (6136)
explains another useful IT tool
for family historians*

Family history in the clouds

WHAT IS CLOUD COMPUTING?

When a website is posted on the internet, readers do not access it by connecting to the owner's computer; the site is stored and held on a provider's system, and the owner of the website does not know precisely where it is. Cloud computing is a term developed to indicate that any sort of data, not just websites, are stored somewhere on the internet in addition to being on your PC. Different cloud computing systems offer different facilities, and they open up useful possibilities to family historians.

Cloud computing is significant for two reasons. The first is that the copy of the data being held "in the clouds" can be regarded as a backup. A normal backup onto another disk or CD can still be lost or destroyed, but the advantage of a cloud backup is that it remains, regardless of what happens to your physical computer system.

The second implication of cloud computing is that the data can be retrieved by any PC having access to the passwords. The implication of this for family historians is that the data on your main PC which has been copied to the cloud can also be accessed on your laptop during your field or research trips. Any new information can be added to the cloud via your laptop, so that when you return home your main computer is already up to date.

Keeping the cloud copy updated with local changes made on your PC is called synchronising. It is usually done automatically when you close the application and/or when the PC is first turned on and connected to the internet.

There are now several applications that draw upon the advantages of cloud computing. This article will outline two systems that the author uses:

Dropbox and **Evernote**, although there are others with similar features. One that is currently receiving a lot of publicity, having just been introduced by Google, is **Google Drive**, and is similar in principle to Dropbox.

DROPBOX

Dropbox acts like a normal folder on your PC but a copy is also held "in the clouds". This is a useful safeguard if your PC or hard drive fails. Data stored by your family history program and other family history files can, in effect, be automatically backed up "in the clouds" without you having to make any special provision. But an additional benefit is that, because the copy is "in the clouds", you can access your latest version of the data on any of your other PCs, such as a laptop used away from home. This eliminates the need to transfer and reconcile information added on your laptop during a field trip with the information on your main PC when you return.

A free Dropbox version is available, limited to 2Gb of file space. I have found this is quite adequate. For example, I have 320 persons in my Legacy program, and my Dropbox folder is only using 250Mb of space. This includes several Legacy backups and other files, 41 files in total.

Other family history files you might want to refer to while on a field trip can usefully be kept in the Dropbox folder.

When you set up Dropbox the only change you will notice is that an additional folder is created on your computer. It is called Dropbox, and will appear listed with the Documents, Downloads and similar folders, together with its own icon. You treat it like any other folder, creating sub-folders, dragging and dropping files or copying and pasting files etc. If you have set Dropbox up on another PC you will find the files present in that Dropbox folder are automatically the same.



Another application that syncs your data in the clouds can best be described as a note filing system. As with Dropbox, the data in Evernote is available on any computer on which you have it installed.

Evernote comprises a series of folders which you create, so I have a folder in Evernote named Family History. By having that folder active any screen clips that I capture go into that folder. The use of Evernote is best shown by the following example, illustrated below.

If a new one is used it is automatically added to the list. In the section of tags shown you can see I have tags for Sarah, Sarah Blay, Sarah Fairweather, Sarah Josephine and Sarah Martha. Against each tag there is a number showing how many clips have this tag.

Tagging is a very useful way of bringing together similar or connected material that might have quite different titles. If a number against a tag becomes large, then this is a good indication that the entries could probably be subdivided into more specific groups by adding extra tags, such as in the above case where a single tag for Sarah would contain too many different people. Lastly any note can be printed or copied to the clipboard and pasted into other programs.

[illegible]

Write now

*your pictures, letters,
queries and stories
keep sending them in
to <editor
@berksfhs.org.uk>*



from Penny Wolswinkel (1945) <periwinkle9@activ8.net.au>

Whilst celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in Australia (and her son's twenty-first birthday) Penny came across this photo taken of the Coronation party held at the end of Albert Road (back of Elliott's) in Newbury in 1937. She has identified her dad Tony Lovelock seated far right, Cyril Coles (her cousin) seated third right, and friends and neighbours Cyril Timms, Elsie Timms, Elsie Mills, Cyril and Roy Bowness. If anyone can identify anyone else please contact her.



from Stuart Eagles (2242)

This is the shop at 74 Albany Road, Reading in 1924 that was run by Stuart's great-grand parents, William Taylor (1879 - 1947) and his wife, Maria (known as Marie) née Absolom (1884 - 1940). The girls pictured are their daughters, Doris Mary Taylor (1913 - 2003) (his grand-mother) and Hilda Winifred Taylor (1920 - 2012). Readers might like to see how many familiar products they can identify in the window and on advertising posters. Hilda, who was known in the family as "Bubbles" was so called because she earned a reputation locally for making bubbles from the soapsuds as she played outside the shop as a little girl. Since the 1940s the property has been an unremarkable residence on the terraced row.



from Jill Wohlgemuth (4689) <Jill.Wohlgemuth@yahoo.co.uk>

This photo was found by Jill's cousin Nova in an album belonging to her late mother. The page is headed *Lambourn 1930* and the people are named (left to right) George Fry, Dolly Gibbons and Henry Taylor (Nova's dad, born in Lambourn, but at the time of the photo living in London). Nova and Jill are researching the history of the Taylor family from Lambourn, but neither has any idea who George and Dolly are, and whether they are Lambourn residents or visitors. If you know, she'd like to hear from you.



from Jane Barrett (5612)

<janembarrett@me.com>

This photo was taken at Newbury station on 11 July 1939. It shows, left to right, Leonard Walter, Rolfe, Pearce, Clarke, Hill and Lambert. Len Walter was Jane's father and this was his twenty-first birthday.

On 26 May 1939 the Military Training Act 1939 had been passed in preparation for the anticipated war. It applied to men aged 20 and 21; they were to be called up for six months of full-time military training and then transferred to the Reserve.

However due to the declaration of war on

3 September Len Walter didn't return home until he was demobilised in 1946. He started his training in Oswestry, and was then sent to Dunfermline to serve with the anti-aircraft division. When it was discovered in 1940 that he had kept pigeons in civilian life he was transferred as a non-commissioned officer to the Pigeon Service (pigeons were vital for war communications). He left the UK for Egypt in 1942, and served for most of the war in the Middle East in the Royal Corps of Signals.

Does anyone know of the other men in the photo? The caption in the album states "A Day that will always be Remembered" Indeed!



"Mrs Dumper late Emma Death of Reading"

from Mervyn Sellick

<mervynsellick@btconnect.com>

I have a couple of photos of Lucy Emma Death, known as Emma. I suspect she may have been a friend of my family, but I would like to find out more, or give copies to interested members.

She was born on 4 April 1868 in Camden, London, to James Death (from Suffolk) and Julia Crockford (from Winchester). They moved to 74 Hosier Street in Reading, appearing on the 1881 and 1891 censuses. Lucy Emma Death married Albert Edward Dumper in Reading in 1899, and they moved to Winchester (before 1901), where she died in 1946.

The only vague connection with my family is that my great-great-grandfather, the Rev Thomas Ellis, an independent minister who was born in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire and lived most of his life and died in Devon, married Susannah Read (from Wiltshire) also in Reading, at

the Broad Street Meeting House on 28 May 1894. He was 70, and Susannah was just 32. In 1891 he was resident in Devon, but in 1901 he was in Ramsgate (not too far from where the photo right was taken). Why he married in Reading is a total mystery, but it is the only connection I can find in my family's history as to why we would have photographs of Emma Death.

Can anyone shed some light on this?

"Emma Death" Sandgate photocard





from Paula Atherton (3374)

This picture was taken outside the Prince Albert that was in King Street, Maidenhead. It was owned by Paula's grandparents, Karolina and John Westbrook Hancock. She is not sure when they went there, but it was sold on 12 February 1925 (and is no longer there).

Note that every man wears a hat, even for a summer jaunt. "AOD Lodge" stands for the Ancient Order of Druids, a fraternal organisation founded in 1781 and which still exists today. It is not a religious organisation; rather, its members are expected to "preserve and practice the main principles attributed to the early Druids, particularly those of justice, benevolence and friendship." Wikipedia has more information on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Order_of_Druids.

If you have an interesting photo or perhaps one with a mystery attached to it, do please send it in to the Historian with the story behind it. If your story or caption invites readers to respond, it will be assumed that you are happy to have your contact details published.

Remember that the size of reproduction on the page will be limited by the number of pixels contained in the photo: the AOD picture above, for example, is 1,735 x 1,381. A photo which is, say, 200 x 300 pixels will not enlarge successfully in print.

If pixels are a mystery with which you prefer not to engage, you can post your photo to the editor at the address on the inside front page, and it can be scanned, and then returned to you.

Gleanings

from exchange magazines

compiled by Tony Wright <gleanings@berksfhs.org.uk>

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, Berkshire 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.

Early days in the Isle of Man: extract from My story by Hall Caine

Sir Hall Caine was a Victorian author who wrote a book called *My Story*. This is an extract of the book recounting the author's childhood in the Isle of Man.

Isle of Man FHS (54), vol 34, May 2012, p64-66

Tynwald Day (by One of the Crowd)

The Tynwald is now the only open-air Parliament. It is the oldest continuous Parliament in the world, having been in existence for over 1,000 years. This account of Tynwald Day comes from 1895.

Isle of Man FHS (54), vol 34, May 2012, p67-69

A town unearthed

Summary of a talk given by Dr Andrew Richardson of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust on the work being done on the Roman villa at East Cliff.

The Kentish Connection Folkestone & District FHS (22), vol 25, March 2012, p83-85

Irish school records with particular discussion of those held at PRONI

Topics covered include: pre-1831 education, beginning with an Act of 1570 establishing a free grammar school in every diocese in Ireland; National education, which was founded in 1831; private, model, agricultural and

industrial schools; private papers; curriculum; tertiary education; photographs; school buildings and inspections; and a guide to records. *Descent Society of Australian Genealogists* (64), vol 42, March 2012, p14-24

Tough justice

Catherine Roddy gets nine months' hard-labour for allegedly stealing some bed linen and a teapot. Many pregnant mothers gave birth in prison, which may be recorded in a baptism register as "in carcere".

Journal Northumberland & Durham FHS (37), vol 37, Spring 2012, p30-32

Poor-relief records

If your family tree contains paupers, rejoice! Invariably this means that there will be a wealth of records for you to scour. This article is a summary of a talk given by Gavin Bell. *Aberdeen & North Scotland FHS* (58), May 2012, p6-7

Edinburgh Group Report: old documents and handwriting

Summary of a talk given by Margaret McBryde of the National Records of Scotland, which was followed by a practical workshop. Worth reading by anyone who makes use of old documents; that would be all of you – right? *Aberdeen & North Scotland FHS* (58), May 2012, p8-9

The High Wycombe furniture industry lock out/strike of 1913/14

Famous furniture makers such as Parker-Knoll and Ercol were based in and around High Wycombe, where 31 firms formed the High Wycombe & District Furniture Manufacturers Federation in 1913. Up to this point relations between workers and manufacturers had been good, but in late 1913 it all started going wrong.

Origins Buckinghamshire FHS (4), June 2012, p100-105

Bevin Boys: my life as a hewer of coal 1944-48

48,000 young men in their late teens were put to work in the coalmines of South Wales between 1943 and 1948. Known as the Bevin Boys, their existence has only recently been acknowledged.

Origins Buckinghamshire FHS (4), June 2012, p106-113

(untitled)

Extract from depositions taken in 1650 and 1651 concerning riots over the draining of the Isle of Axholme by Cornelius Vermuyden. The area was mainly fen and mere, and rich in fish, game and deer, and most residents were against the drainage scheme.

The Islonian The Journal of the Isle of Axholme FHS (28), vol 17, April 2012, p20-22

Alkborough baptisms 1537 to 1961 and Alkborough marriages 1537 to 1765: transcription report

A summary of the registers of Alkborough
The Islonian The Journal of the Isle of Axholme FHS (28), vol 17, April 2012, p24-25

Castle Bromwich: the incomparable "Shadow Factory"

The "Shadow Factory" was involved in the

production and flight-testing of Supermarine Spitfire and Avro Lancaster bombers during the Second World War. The factory built 12,000 Spitfires and 300 Lancasters before closing in 1945.

The Midland Ancestor Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry (2), vol 17, June 2012, p276-277

Curiosities of parish registers XXXVII

Examples of weather reports which can be found in parish registers

The Midland Ancestor Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry (2), vol 17, June 2012, p282-285

Some reminiscences from the 1920s

A report of life in the 1920s of a mother and four children living on 28s a week: the daily and weekly household routines are outlined.

The Midland Ancestor Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry (2), vol 17, June 2012, p298-300

Northampton's forgotten massacre

Five thousand peasants were dispossessed by enclosure of their land, and they became known as the Levellers. They would uproot hedges and try to restore access to what was previously common land. Obviously the authorities could not allow this to go on. One problem was that the militia was almost entirely manned by "common folk" in sympathy with the Levellers.

Footprints Northamptonshire FHS (36), vol 34, May 2012, p17-19

Weekley and Warkton: parish profiles

History of these two villages to the north of Kettering

Footprints Northamptonshire FHS (36), vol 34, May 2012, p43-46

Members' interests

directory maintained by Bob Plumridge <memsec@berksfhs.org.uk>

You may update your surname interests at any time via
<www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Members-Surname-Interests>.

When contacting a member by post please always enclose an sae.

Members submitting their interests:

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7368	ADAMS	All	BRK	pre 1900	7351	DYETT	Tarrant Hinton	
7399	ANDREWS	Devizes	WIL	1700+			DOR	1600-1650
7399	ANDREWS	Urchfont	WIL	1700+	7420	EAST	West Hendred	
7351	BACON	Wincanton	SOM	1750-1800			BRK	1809-1832
7351	BATTEN	Cumnor	BRK	1650-1700	7398	EELES	Reading	BRK pre 1850
7368	BECKINSALE				7351	FAIREY	Hitchin	HRT 1700-1850
		All	BRK	pre 1900	7351	FAIREY	Sandy	BED 1550-1700
7368	BEISLEY	All	OXF	pre 1900	7399	FRENCH	All	BRK 1700+
7368	BELCHER	All	BRK	pre 1900	7398	GARDNER	Wycombe	BKM pre 1850
7351	BUDD	Witley	SRY	1700-1812	7399	GILLET	Urchfont	WIL 1700+
7368	CARTER	All	BRK	pre 1900	7368	GREEN	All	OXF pre 1900
7351	CLAYTON	Ruislip	MDX	1760-1840	7351	HALES	St Pancras	MDX 1800-1840
7351	CLEVERLEY	Overton	WLT	1750-1800	7368	HALL	All	BRK pre 1900
7398	COSTON	Stratfield Saye			7351	HAMILTON	Lynn	NFK 1730-1850
			HAM	pre 1840	7399	HAMS	Netheravon	WIL 1700+
7206	COTTERELL	Northington	HAM	1800+	7399	HAMS	Pewsey	WIL 1700+
7206	COTTERELL	Woolstone	BRK	1800-1950	7398	HARRISON	East Lockinge	
7206	COTTOROL	Uffington	BRK	1800-1950			BRK	pre 1800
7351	CROCKETT	Stepney	LDN	1780-1840	7398	HAWKINS	Hurst	BRK pre 1830
7351	CROCKETT	Lambeth	LDN	1780-1840	7420	HEATH	West Hendred	
7368	CROTON	All	BRK	pre 1900			BRK	1800-1832
7368	DEWE	All	OXF	pre 1900	7398	HICKS	Woodcote	OXF pre 1800

7368	HIGGS	All	OXF	pre 1900	7351	READ	Reading	BRK	1800-1840
7368	HIGGS	All	BRK	pre 1900	7351	ROBINS	Isleworth	MDX	1800-1850
7399	HILLIER	Bishops Cannings			7399	ROSIER	Thatcham	BRK	1700+
		WIL		1500+	7399	ROSIER	Kintbury	BRK	1700+
7250	HIVES	Hungerford	BRK	1834-1880	7351	ROWE	Henley	SFK	1600-1700
7250	HIVES	Hickling	NTT	1800-1834	7351	SEELEY	Salle	NFK	1790-1845
7398	HOLYOAK	Reading	BRK	pre 1840	7420	SHERMAN	West Hendred		
7351	HOSKINS	Silton	DUR	pre 1760				BRK	1809-1836
7351	HURRY	Norwich	NFK	1750-1842	7398	SLAYMAKER	Checkendon		
7398	JEROM	Heckfield	HAM	pre 1780				OXF	pre 1800
7398	KIMBER	Kintbury	BRK	pre 1830	7351	SMITH	Calcutt	WIL	1800-1850
7351	LAIT	Colesbourne			7368	STOCKWELL	All	OXF	pre 1900
			GLS	1750-1850	7399	STOKES	Urchfont	WIL	1700+
7351	LAIT	Soho	MDX	1750-1850	7351	TALBOT	Hungerford	BRK	1720-1820
7398	LAMBDEN	Reading	BRK	pre 1820	7399	TARRENT	Pewsey	WIL	1700+
7351	LANCASTER	Whitchurch	HAM	1745-1866	7351	THURSBY	Dropmore	IRE	1800-1840
7398	LANGFORD	Watlington	OXF	pre 1830	7351	TITCHIN	Hanover Sq	LDN	1790s
7398	LEWCOCK	Heckfield	HAM	pre 1850	7368	VARNEY	All	BKM	pre 1900
7398	LOVEGROVE				7250	WAKEFIELD	Lane End	BKM	1820-1880
		Old Basing	HAM	pre 1800	7351	WALLIGTON	Wotton under Edge		
7250	MAGGS	Reading	BRK	1829-1869				GLS	1500-1800
7250	MAGGS	Preston	SOM	1800-1829	7250	WASHBOURN			
7351	MAGUIRE	Walworth	SRV	1820-1840			Hungerford	BRK	1800-1880
7351	NALDER	Hungerford	BRK	1570-1750	7351	WEBSTER	Birmingham		
7368	PEARCE	All	BRK	pre 1900				WAR	1780-1880
7399	PHILLIMORE				7409	WHITFIELD	Oaksey	WIL	pre 1800
		Portsea	HAM	1700+	7409	WHITFIELD	All	BRK	post 1800
7399	PHILLIMORE				7409	WHITFIELD	Oaksey	WIL	post 1800
		Littlecott	WIL	1700+	7409	WHITFIELD	All	BRK	pre 1800
7399	PHILLIMORE				7351	WICKENS	Wandsworth		
		Enford	WIL	1700+				SRV	1790-1900
7351	POINTER	Horsham St Faith			7351	WILLIAMS	Shipton under Wychwood		
			NFK	1730-1850				OXF	1750-1820
7351	POLLARD	London	LDN	1850-1900	7399	WILTSHIRE	Devizes	WIL	1700+
7398	PRIOR	Basingstoke	HAM	pre 1800	7351	WISEMAN	Buston	NFK	pre 1770
7351	RAYNER	Ealing	MDX	1720-1800	7399	WITHERS	All	WIL	1700+

B I R T H

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/cms/Birth-Briefs>, 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.

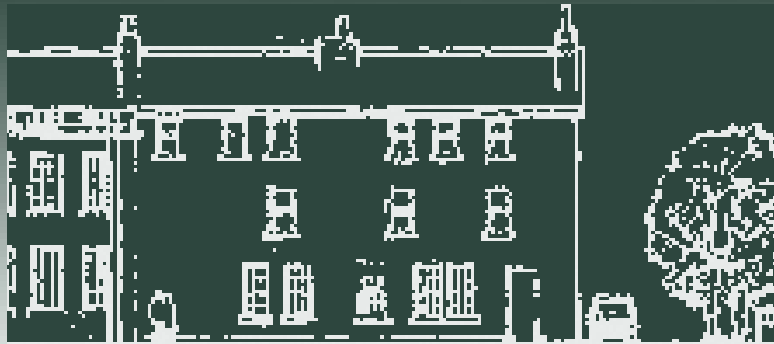
If you have an interest in a name on a Birth Brief you can order a copy by post (on paper, or as a digital file in either PAF Pedigree or GEDCOM) for £2. See full details on the website or in your Members' Handbook.

Orders for searches or copies of briefs should be posted to

Alan Brooker
6 Meadow Way
Old Windsor
Berks SL4 2NX

B R I E F S

Berkshire FHS Research Centre



where

**YEOMANRY HOUSE, 131 CASTLE HILL, READING, BERKS RG1 7TJ
0118 950 9553 <researchcentre@berksfhs.org.uk>**

- 15 minutes' walk from the centre of Reading
- next door to the Berkshire Record Office (BRO)
- in the same building as the Reading Register Office
- free car parking right outside

when

Tuesdays*: 10.00 to 16.00 and 19.00 to 21.30

Wednesdays and Thursdays: 10.00 to 16.00

2nd Sunday each month: 11.00 to 16.00 (excluding bank holiday weekends).

The Research Centre opens early, ie, from 18.00 to 21.30, in conjunction with the Open Evenings (from 18.00 to 20.00) hosted and run by society volunteers at the Berkshire Record Office.

**On most Tuesday evenings, knowledgeable helpers are available to answer your computing linked queries.*

who

Admission to the centre is free for society members.

Non-members pay a £2 temporary membership fee per visit (offset against the membership fee should the visitor join the society at that visit).

Volunteer helpers are on hand to give advice and guidance.

what

Ground floor: reception area, **seven PCs** with internet access (see opposite page), **bookshop**, refreshment facilities and cloakrooms

First floor: **library** (see opposite page), fiche readers, magazine archive

Introductory tours of the centre are available – see <www.berksfhs.org.uk> for details.

how

Society volunteers will explain anything you need to know about the centre's resources, but you do your own research at the centre. If you wish, you can print pages or photocopy them for a nominal additional charge.

Can't get to the Research Centre?

The society offers a postal/online search service of Berkshire names, based on:

Berkshire censuses and indexes for 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881

Berkshire Burials

Berkshire Marriages

Berkshire Miscellaneous Index

Berkshire Strays Index.

All you need is a surname (or a number of surnames) to access information, the extent of which will vary with the individual database. Your search of the master index will show you the total of entries of that surname in each individual database. You can then request the full details available. You can ask for a search either online or by post. The charges are:

- **£2 per surname** to search the master index. You will be advised of how many entries there are for that surname in each database. Please note that this search will not give you information from the indexed records.



Computer suite

Findmypast

Ancestry worldwide, with family trees

Origins

British Newspaper Archive

Provided that a PC is available, these subscriptions can be used for a nominal charge of £1 per hour or part hour.

All PCs are internet-linked, so that other family history websites can be searched or consulted at any time.

CDs: Four PCs contain pre-loaded CD data on Berkshire and many other English counties including:

- Berkshire Burials 10th ed
- Berkshire Marriages
- Berkshire trade directories
- National Burial Index 3rd ed

Berkshire Name Search is a master index of Berkshire names from databases including censuses, marriage and burial indexes, strays and miscellaneous datasets.

Library

The library contains over 7,000 items, about 20 per cent of which are Berkshire-related; the rest cover UK, Irish and international material.

The library catalogue can be searched at the centre and online at

<www.berksfhs.org.uk/librarycatalogue>.

CDs of Berkshire data including MIs, overseers' papers, militia lists, trade directories

Local history and genealogy books for Berkshire and for other English counties, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and some other countries

National index of parish registers:

volumes covering most English counties

Directories: biographical, trade, professional, military, clerical and school

General reference books on all aspects of family history

Published family histories/pedigrees and a large number of donated hand-written documents

Microfiche records including IGI (International Genealogical Index) 1988 for Great Britain, parish registers, census index and MI data for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and other counties

Berkshire Family Historian: 36 volumes from 1975 to the present day

Exchange magazine archive: back copies of journals of around 50 other family history societies

- • **£2 per surname** per database. With this search you will receive full details for up to a maximum of 25 entries. Should there be more than 25 entries, we will let you know the extra cost.
- **£5 per surname** to search all databases currently available. You will receive full details for up to a maximum of 25 entries per database. Again, we will let you know the extra cost if there are more than 25 entries.

Note that for online applications a 50p transaction fee will be added to the total as a contribution to the fees that the bank charges the society for the online payment service. You can contact <berksnamesearch@berksfhs.org.uk> if you have any queries or if you would like an estimate of likely cost for the searches that you need.

You can also apply by post. Postal search charges are the same as those for online searches excluding the 50p transaction fee. For a postal search you must enclose an A4 self-addressed envelope (large) with stamps (or IRC) to cover return postal costs. An alternative is to supply an email address so that results can be sent to you by email. If you don't have an email address please supply a UK phone number. Please send your request for a postal search to **Berkshire Name Search** at the address above.

Bookends

Compiled by Ivan Dickason, Tony Roberts and Mary Smith

Prices quoted are for:

a) direct sales from the bookshop at the Research Centre

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

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

Please note that from our online bookshop at <www.berksfhs.org.uk/shop>, you can pay by credit card, and you can make possible savings on p&p if you are buying more than one item.

LISTINGS

Newbury Poor Law Union workhouse births 1836 - 1909 and deaths 1868 - 1909

The Eureka Partnership (2005) 56pp, A5, soft-back

Shop £3.50, UK £5.00, airmail £7.80

This booklet contains transcriptions and indexes of the surviving births and deaths registers relating to Newbury Poor Law Union, which are held at the Berkshire Record Office. The Newbury Poor Law Union Workhouse was built in 1836 on a site south of Newbury, on the eastern side of Newtown Road. It eventually became the Sandleford Hospital, which closed in 2004. The buildings have now been demolished.

For births, the information given is: date of birth, whether male or female, names of the parents, the parish to which they belong, whether legitimate or illegitimate, when baptised, the child's given name and any remarks. (Note that some information about births has been obtained from the baptism registers of St Nicolas, Newbury.)

For deaths the information given is: date of death, name, age, from what parish admitted, where buried. The information given in this booklet will be of value to those who have ancestors from Newbury and the surrounding parishes.

Ivan Dickason

Broad Street, Reading Congregational Church, baptisms 1715 - 1884 and 1894 - 1902, burials 1787 - 1869

The Eureka Partnership, 2004, 60pp, A5, soft-back

Shop £4.00, UK £5.50, airmail £8.30

The Congregationalist church in Broad Street was founded in the seventeenth century. This booklet includes a history of the movement in Reading, and it names the ministers who officiated at the church, with a paragraph given to each one. In the case of the baptisms, the date of the baptism and child's date of birth have been included where known. The burials are listed by date, name and age of the deceased at time of death, also the parish in which they resided. Some of the entries give the actual address. For those with, or think they might have, nonconformist ancestors this will prove to be another really useful publication from Eureka. It is fully indexed.

Mary Smith

Easthampstead Union, workhouse births and deaths 1849 - 1914

The Eureka Partnership, 2005, 36pp, A5, soft-back

Shop £2.50, UK £4.00, airmail £6.80

The Easthampstead Poor Law Union was formed in 1835, and comprised the parishes of Binfield, Easthampstead, Sandhurst, Warfield and Winkfield with Ascot. This booklet will be

useful to those with ancestors born within the Easthampstead Union. It has a general introduction to the Poor Law, and a description of how it impacted on the lives of the inmates of these often feared institutions. There is a map of the Easthampstead workhouse layout based on the tithe award of 1841, and a map showing which parishes were included within the union. The register of births gives the date of birth, whether male or female, names of parents or mother, parish from which the parent was admitted, when and where baptised, name in which baptised and any remarks. The register of deaths gives the date of death, name, age, to what parish chargeable, date of burial and where buried. Both registers are indexed by surname, which makes this booklet very easy to use.

Mary Smith

Hungerford Union, workhouse births and deaths 1866 - 1914, pauper's service book 1877 - 1917

The Eureka Partnership, 2005, 44pp, A5, soft-back

Shop £3.00, UK £4.50, airmail £7.30

The Hungerford Poor Law Union was formed in 1835, and initially comprised the parishes of: Avington, East Garston, East Shefford, Inkpen, Kintbury, Lambourn, West Shefford and West Woodhay (Berkshire); Aldbourne, Baydon, Buttermere, Froxfield, Great Bedwyn, Ham, Little Bedwyn and Ramsbury (Wiltshire); and Chilton Foliat, Hungerford and Shalbourne (part-Berkshire and part-Wiltshire). Combe (Hampshire) was added in 1835, Tidcombe (Wiltshire) in 1836, and Hippinescombe (Wiltshire) in 1858. The union was renamed as Hungerford and Ramsbury Poor Law Union in 1896.

As with previous Poor Law publications from Eureka, there is a good introduction to the Poor Law and its ramifications. A map of the layout is based on the OS maps surveyed in 1878, 1884 and 1886. There is also a map

showing the parishes included within the union.

The register of births gives the date of birth, whether male or female, names of parents or mother, parish from which the parent was admitted, when and where baptised, name in which baptised and any remarks. The register of deaths gives the date of death, name, age, parish to which chargeable, date of burial and where buried.

The pauper's service book gives the name of the child, age, date of hiring or taking servant, name of master or mistress, trade or other description of master or mistress, residence of master or mistress. Most of the children, who would have been aged between eight and 18, would have been employed locally by tradesmen and farmers. With an index by surname, there is much detail to be found in this booklet which will prove very useful to those searching for ancestors in Hungerford.

Mary Smith

Berkshire militia, men enrolled 1807 and 1808

The Eureka Partnership, (2005), 32pp, A5 softback

Shop £2.50, UK £4.00, airmail £6.80

The Militia Act of 1757 established militia regiments for each county in England and Wales, and required each parish to provide a number of able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 50. As there were not enough volunteers, men could be conscripted by ballot, and lists of suitable men were drawn up. Clergy, peers, magistrates and certain other occupations, and the infirm, were exempted. An Act of 1762 amended the age range to those from 18 to 45.

This booklet gives transcriptions of those enrolled in the Berkshire militia at the start of the Peninsular War. The lists are of those men chosen by ballot to serve during November and December 1807 and January 1808, and of those who served in place of them. The listings

are by county subdivision (with Abingdon and Newbury subdivided further into hundreds). Each gives the name of the balloted man, his parish, the substitute's name and his parish, enrolment date, the bounty agreed (no figures given for Abingdon) and what was paid to the substitute. The 67 footnotes give illuminating details on individuals: non-attendance, desertion, payments transferred to family or third parties, and re-balloting. There is also a short list of men claiming bounty.

Also listed are the names of around 325 balloted men and 300 substitutes and volunteers. In all, some 500 surnames and their parishes are recorded in this publication, which could be useful to those tracing Berkshire ancestors of the period.

Tony Roberts

PRACTICAL FAMILY HISTORY

Frequently asked questions

Research Guide 14, Anglo-German Family History Society (2004) Editor Roy Bernard 96 pp, A5, softback
Shop £5.00, UK £7.10, airmail £9.90

This booklet contains 303 questions selected from enquiries received by the Anglo-German Family History Society from members and others about research into Germans in the UK and in German-speaking countries. The answers were originally written by Peter Towey, formerly chairman of the society, now a vice-president, and they have been edited for this booklet by Roy Bernard. The questions are organised into groups such as: army (both British and German), BMDs, cemeteries, census, churches (in England), civil internment (both in England and Germany), German ancestry (churches, records, hospitals, immigration, Jews/Jewish, libraries, museums, names, naturalisation), record offices (both in Germany and England), schools, wars and wills. The answers cover many locations where German-speakers have lived and worked, such

as Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Holland, Lithuania, Poland and the United States. This booklet is essential reading if you have German or German-speaking ancestors.

Ivan Dickason

Dating nineteenth-century photographs

Robert Pols (2005) 112pp, A5 hardback
Shop £5.95, UK £8.35, airmail £12.65

Robert Pols is the author of several books on old photographs. This work and its companion, *Dating twentieth-century photographs*, replace his earlier work *Dating old photographs* (FFHS 1995). In this newer book Pols brings his considerable expertise in the subject to take his readers through the various factors and details that (usually in combination) will enable them to date a Victorian era photograph to within a few years.

Commencing with a resumé of the photographic processes of the era, from the Daguerreotypes of the 1840s to the celluloid roll film and Box Brownie cameras of 1900, Pols covers the changing styles of photographic prints, their mounts, casings and frames, the various fashions in studio settings and portraiture. He then considers the photographers, their warrants and periods of activity, and finally moves on to the costume fashions of their subjects during the period for men, women and children. He also includes two chapters giving guidance on copying and caring for old photographs.

The concluding chapter reinforces the text through 36 photographic figures and 11 very useful dating charts. Overall, this is a valuable guide and tool, essential to those seeking an answer to that all too common question: when was that photo taken? The clues to look for are well described in this book.

Tony Roberts