

# Berkshire Family Historian

*the quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society*

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June 2014

vol 37

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## Family names appearing in this issue:

*excluding living people, authors of sources and members' interests*

|                  |              |             |              |             |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Archibald 19     | Dyke 17      | Hudson 29   | Phillips 28  | Walters 29  |
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| Ballard 14       | Fosbery 19   | Johnson 14  | Purton 29    | Whately 29  |
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| Bayliss 19       | Goldsbey 18  | Kimber 18   | Renshaw 19   | Wood 28     |
| Bond 30          | Goodall 29   | Langford 29 | Robinson 29  | Wyles 29    |
| Brain 23         | Grey 18      | Lloyd 14    | Rolfe 29     |             |
| Brindley 23+     | Hadland 19   | Marshall 28 | Sampson 29   |             |
| Brown 29         | Hamblin 29   | Martin 30   | Seymour 29   |             |
| Chillingworth 26 | Harber 23+   | Nelson 24   | Shorter 27   |             |
| Clark 27         | Harrell 14   | North 28    | Simpson 28   |             |
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# Notice of Annual General Meeting and election of officers and trustees

**The 39th Annual General Meeting of the Berkshire Family History Society, will be held on Friday 20 June 2014 at 7.30pm, before the Bracknell and Wokingham Branch meeting at the Priestwood Community Centre, Priestwood Court Road, Bracknell RG42 1TU, the meeting chairman to be nominated by those trustees present.**

The main business of the meeting will be to receive a brief report from the secretary on the past year's activities, to receive from the treasurer the independently examined accounts for the year ending 30 April 2014 for acceptance and approval, and to elect for the year 2014-15 the society's president\*, vice-presidents, officers and trustees.

Officers and trustees form the society's Executive Committee. Of its current membership, Derek Trinder will retire under the five-year rule, and Penny Stokes has indicated her wish to step down. Additionally Vanessa Chappell, Ian Ward and Graham Vockins have indicated that they wish to step down as the representatives of Vale of the White Horse, Newbury and Reading branches. The Executive Committee seeks to fill these vacancies and in addition to restore trustee numbers to their permitted maximum (16).

The following are willing to stand again as trustees:

|                  |                  |                   |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Richard Ashberry | Sandra Barkwith‡ | Ken Houghton‡     |
| Judith Mitchell  | Tony Roberts     | Catherine Sampson |
| Gillian Stevens‡ | Tony Wright      |                   |

*‡subject to nomination at branch meetings*

If you would like to nominate a member to the Executive please let the secretary know, in writing, by email or post not later than Friday 6 June 2014. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Research Centre, the secretary, at branch meetings or downloaded from the website at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk). Please ensure that the person you nominate is prepared to sit on the Executive Committee and to be a trustee of the charity. Nominations should include names and membership numbers of nominee, proposer and seconder and, for written nominations, the signatures of all three members.

Information about being a trustee of a charity and what it entails can be found on the Charity Commission website at [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk) (publication CC3). Certain people are disqualified by law from acting as trustees, including anyone described in sections 178 to 180 of the Charities Act 2011. This includes:

- Persons under the age of 18;
- Anyone convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty unless the conviction is spent;
- Anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt;
- Anyone who has been removed from the trusteeship of a charity by the Court or the Commission for misconduct or mismanagement;
- Anyone who is disqualified from being a company director;
- Anyone who has entered into a composition or arrangement with their creditors which includes an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA), and is currently on the Insolvency Service Register;
- Any other person described in sections 178 to 180 of the Charities Act 2011.

*\*Members attending the 2013 AGM gave unanimous support to a resolution that the incoming Executive Committee be granted authority to appoint a society president, such power to expire at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the society after the passing of this resolution (unless previously renewed, amended or revoked in a general meeting) and on the understanding that any president so appointed should be nominated for re-election by society members at the Annual General Meeting in 2014 in the normal way. At the date of the publication of this notice the committee has not made such an appointment.*

## from the editor

An item on the BBC 1 News at 10 (South) on 21 April featured the efforts of a Hampshire village, Grayshott, in researching the lives of the names on its war memorial. The news presentation implied that this was an innovative and singular project, which may have rankled slightly with the dozens of volunteers here in Berkshire who are doing or have completed such projects in their own parishes, but didn't regard their efforts as potential TV news. Nonetheless, there is perhaps a lesson for us here, to make the most of the society's activities whilst family history keeps its high media profile.

### Members' surname interests

Those readers who make it through to the end of their *Historians*\* may have noticed a recent decline in published Members' Surname Interests. Since January 2013 some 186 new membership numbers have been issued; in the same period just 25 members have registered their surname interests.

This is a sorry state of affairs, exemplified in this issue by the fact that just one member has registered surname interests. No doubt online alternatives have diverted the flow of new names, but there is no reason not to use the society's directory as well. It is free, and it is worldwide in its coverage. Not only may it enable you to link up with unknown relatives; it may even help those researching house histories. Some years ago I spotted the surname of someone I knew had once lived in

my house, and I was able to find out considerably more about him from his descendants in Australia (yes, he was transported).

So, if you are one of the 161 recent members who haven't submitted surname interests, please consider doing so now. Information can be emailed to [memsec@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:memsec@berksfhs.org.uk), but take a moment first to read the guidance on [www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Search-Services/Members-Surname-Interests/](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Search-Services/Members-Surname-Interests/), which tells you how to format your submission.

### Conference

The society's ground-breaking conference, *The early twentieth century: conflict and change*, at Theale Green School on 18 October is well publicised in these pages, so I shall say no more than to exhort you to book now, if you haven't done so already.

### Membership renewal

The subscription year ends with this issue and if you haven't renewed already, you will find a form enclosed with this *Historian*. Please act on it now; membership administration, like every other aspect of the society's work, is done entirely by volunteers, and tardy renewals can cause extra work and expense.

**Penny Stokes (2961)**  
Editor

*\*On page 36 there's an item dedicated to the society's volunteers who labour in churchyards transcribing MIs.*

## Dates for your diary

|                             |  |   |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| 10.00 - 13.00<br>Tue 3 Jun  | <i>Moving on: immigration, emigration and transportation</i><br>Surrey History Centre workshop | Surrey History Centre<br>130 Goldsworth Rd<br>Woking GU21 6ND | £12<br>Book on 01483 518737   |
| 10.00 - 15.30<br>Sat 21 Jun | Wiltshire FHS Open Day   | Civic Centre,<br>Trowbridge BA14 8AH                          | <a href="http://www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk">www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk</a>      |
| Sat 28 Jun                  | <i>Pip, Squeak and Wilfred: the record legacy of 1914-18</i>                                   | Marlborough School<br>Woodstock OX20 1LP                      | <a href="http://news.ofhs.org.uk/psw/">http://news.ofhs.org.uk/psw/</a> |
| 10.00 - 16.00<br>Sat 28 Jul | Buckinghamshire FHS Open Day   | Grange School<br>Wendover Way<br>Aylesbury HP21 7NH           | <a href="http://www.bucksfhs.org.uk">www.bucksfhs.org.uk</a>            |


# The early twentieth century:



## The early twentieth century Conflict and change



A conference for family and local historians



Saturday, 18th October 2014


Theale Green School, Church Street, Theale, Berkshire, RG7 5DA

**1901** 

 **5/-** **1910** 

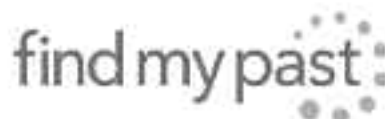
 **1920** 

 **Strike** 

**1930** 

More at [www.berksfhs.org.uk/conference](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/conference)

Pick up your programme details and booking form



Conference is organised by Berkshire Family History Society (Registered Charity No. 283010) with support from Berkshire Record Office and findmypast  
Berkshire Family History Society, Youmarty House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7TJ 0118 950 9553

# conflict and change

## THE CONFERENCE

**Bookings are coming in thick and fast for the society's conference on Saturday 18 October 2014 at Theale, which promises to be a stimulating day of talks, workshops and displays for family and local historians.**

Few periods in history have witnessed events and changes to match those of the early years of the twentieth century, and this conference provides a unique opportunity to better understand these tumultuous times. Renowned family historian, broadcaster and academic Dr Nick Barratt will open and close the conference, and will also be available to meet and talk with conference delegates.

Talk topics ranging from education and suffrage to the military and the First World War (and a whole lot more besides) will be delivered by an impressive collection of academics and genealogists who are experts in their fields. Many will also be available for one-to-one advice.

The conference cost of £37.50 per person includes refreshments throughout the day and lunch, and also access to the talks, displays and free advice. The event is being subsidised by the society as part of its ongoing commitment to growing expertise in family and personal history. The March 2014 *Historian* carried full details of the event, and further copies of the booking form can be downloaded from the society's website, together with more details of the event and speakers.

[www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Conference/the-early-twentieth-century-conflict-and-change.html](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Conference/the-early-twentieth-century-conflict-and-change.html). Early booking is highly recommended.



Nick Barratt

## VISITS

In the months leading up to the Theale conference the society takes to the road with visits to nine venues linked to early twentieth-century research. Like the conference, these are open to members and non-members of the society. Three visits have already taken place – more on two of these overleaf – and below are those which are coming up next:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Thursday 19 June</b>    | <b>St George's Chapel, Windsor and Archives SL4 1NJ</b>                                  |
| <b>Saturday 5 July</b>     | <b>Brock Barracks, Reading RG30 1HW</b>  |
| <b>Wednesday 16 July</b>   | <b>English Heritage Archive, Swindon SN2 2EH</b>   |
| <b>Sunday 3 August</b>     | <b>Halton House and Trenchard Museum, RAF Halton HP22 5PG</b>                            |
| <b>Saturday 16 August</b>  | <b>Weald and Downland Open Air Museum PO18 0EU</b><br>(plus steam festival the same day) |
| <b>Friday 12 September</b> | <b>Milestones, Basingstoke RG22 6PG</b>  |
| <b>Monday 20 October</b>   | <b>Behind-the-scenes tour at Berkshire Record Office RG1 6AF</b>                         |

Full details and the visits booking form can be found at [www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/images/stories/conf/visitsleaflet.pdf](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/images/stories/conf/visitsleaflet.pdf)

## VISITS TO DATE

### ***Behind-the-scenes tour of the Berkshire Record Office, 17 February 2014***

The Berkshire Record Office is one of the two official sponsors of *The early twentieth century: conflict and change* programme, and so it was appropriate that they hosted our first visit with a special behind-the-scenes tour.

Senior conservator Sue Hourigan opened proceedings with a short talk on preserving old documents, richly illustrated by many examples that she has rescued from such perils as insect infestation, mould and foxing. She was full of helpful tips and advice. Next followed an introduction to the public search room by archivist Lisa Spurrier, and a behind-the-scenes tour.

Returning to the public search room the group had the opportunity to look in more detail at an array of early twentieth-century documents, including fire insurance maps, a school log book, First World War pamphlets and a yearly photographic record produced by *The Berkshire Chronicle*.

Our tour of the BRO finished up in the conservation room, where Sue showed the group some of the types of documents she was currently working on, and talked about the processes used to restore them.

Next the group moved over to the Berkshire Family History Society's Research Centre, where research centre volunteers Julia and John Varey welcomed the group and gave them a brief tour of the computer suite and its services. Then it was up to the library, where tea and coffee were waiting and some delicious home-made cake: a great ending to an enjoyable and informative afternoon.

A second behind-the-scenes tour takes place on Monday 20 October at 2pm.

**Catherine Sampson**



*Sue Hourigan demonstrates document conservation*

### ***The National Archives, 4 April 2014***

Our trip to The National Archives took place on Friday 4 April, with more than 20 people making their way to Kew from all directions. For some it was their first outing to the archives, while for others the TNA is a second home. It was good to come together as a group and meet other enthusiastic genealogists. For our novices the procedure of locating a locker and placing research material in a clear plastic bag (TNA has strict guidelines on what is allowed in the reading rooms, hence they supply the bags) came first, followed closely and most importantly by locating the coffee shop.

It was then time to take the group to the first floor and show them the full extent of the facilities: scores of computers (internet access is free); the library; the help desks; and much



Some group members enjoy the scenery

more. For those of us who needed a reader's ticket the next port of call was on the second floor, where these are issued. You need to prove who you are and where you live (the TNA has an extensive list of the ID you can use), the mandatory photograph is then taken and your reader's ticket is issued.

The time had then arrived for everyone to begin their own journey through the archives, ordering records dating back to the 1500s (you certainly need Latin for this) or perhaps war diaries that may contain your grandfather's name; everyone had their own agenda. At lunch it was great to hear the

discoveries that had been made from looking at tithe maps, OS maps, service records or railway employment records. Surprise was expressed at the size of some of the records and also, on occasion, the useful information that can be found written in the margins of documents.

During the remainder of the day more information was uncovered. I personally discovered war records from the Royal Flying Corps for my grandfather, and I found within them some details of his actual appearance. We finished our day at the bookshop, which has a very extensive stock covering all aspects of family and general history. For those who have not visited The National Archives the size of the building and the extent of the records are quite inspiring, and it is free, so it is definitely worth a visit.

Fiona Ranger

## BERKSHIRE and LONDON

*(all of England & Wales for 19th and  
20th centuries)*

Experienced and affordable  
researcher. I am a member of  
the Society of Genealogists. No  
task too small. Please contact  
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initial consultation is free.

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**Chestnut Tree**  
**Genealogy**

9, Leighton Road, Ealing,  
London, W13 9EL

Email:  
info@chestnut-tree-genealogy.co.uk

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FALL DUE ON 1ST JULY 2014

**IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY  
PAID, YOUR HISTORIAN WILL  
HAVE COME WITH A RENEWAL  
FORM ENCLOSED**

## PLEASE RENEW NOW

**PROMPT RENEWALS  
SAVE VOLUNTEER TIME**

**IF YOU HAVE LOST YOUR FORM GO TO**  
**www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/  
membership/how-to-renew-your-  
membership.html**

**AND EITHER RENEW ONLINE OR  
DOWNLOAD ANOTHER COPY OF THE  
FORM**



# Around the branches

**Newbury Branch**  
**[newbury@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:newbury@berksfhs.org.uk)**  
Nick Prince

At our March meeting Tom Doig challenged us to rethink our assumptions about literacy in earlier centuries, as he explored some of the roles undertaken by women in the late Georgian and early Victorian era.

Some of us helped at the society's stand at the Harwell heritage event in late March. This was well attended, especially on the Saturday, and several people expressed interest in our talk on researching Scottish ancestry in April.

Attendance at meetings has begun to pick up following the floods which greatly restricted travel in West Berkshire, and we all hope for a dry summer.

By the time you read this we shall have our 2014 committee in place, and we look forward to working to support and develop branch activities. I'd like to offer special thanks to Ann Rutt and Yvonne Brick, who are stepping down as programme secretary and branch treasurer respectively, after many years' service, and to Ian Ward, who has been our Executive member since 2010 and who also steps down from that role this year.

**Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch**  
**[windsor@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:windsor@berksfhs.org.uk)**  
Ken Houghton

At our February meeting we met Roger Kershaw from The National Archives (TNA). His talk, entitled *The National Archives in situ or online*, updated us on the latest developments online and at Kew. Roger has been with TNA for 27 years, and he gave a polished performance, illustrating and demonstrating what we can now find in the archives. We learnt of the services provided, such as guidance on the creation and preservation of records, online exhibitions and free access to records on site. There are constant additions to the website, such records of the Household Cavalry, security services and more war diaries which are coming soon. There are regular talks at Kew and information on these can be found on the website.

It was pointed out that not all records are kept at Kew, and some stocks, such as photographs, are rather limited. There are, however, records from overseas, mainly former colonies and outposts of the British empire.

John Hurley has had a long association with the Wiltshire Family History Society and travelled from Devizes to present *Crime in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* for our March meeting. What is considered to be a serious crime today might have been acceptable in the eighteenth century and, conversely, some crimes then would not be considered an issue today. Showing photos of original handwritten documents, John explained the three levels of justice: Assize Court, Quarter Sessions and Justices.

Cases highlighted included a woman who had been assaulted, with the guilty party ordered to pay compensation to her husband. We also learnt of another husband who was jailed for three months after advertising his wife for sale. Other jail sentences included two months for breaking a window, and for three months for avoiding a toll. Then there was the case of a man found guilty of fathering a child; he was recommended by the judge to marry the mother, although it wasn't established whether or not he had fathered her other six children.





### **Vale of the White Horse Branch**

**vale@berksfhs.org.uk**

*Vanessa Chappell*

February's branch meeting talk was on Victorian divorce by Simon Burbidge, one of our branch committee members. This subject came about following a problem which Simon had encountered in his own research. He explained the laws involved, and how they were changed to allow women more rights concerning children and finances. Finding this information had allowed him to break down a brick wall in his research.

We had a lively presentation in March by Bruce Smith on Welsh drove routes in the south Midlands. How was meat transported around the country before the existence of the railways? This was explained by Bruce, along with the life of a drover. He had photographs of some existing routes, and told us how to recognise them, and of the significance of fir trees by public houses.

The branch represented the society at a clubs and societies day in the Abingdon Guildhall on 29 March, a bi-annual event organised by the local council. We had a busy time and spoke to many people, some with interesting family stories. Plenty of leaflets were handed out, and we hope that some of those we met will come along to our branch meetings.

April will see our branch general meeting taking place. We're sorry to be losing Sarah Matthews from our committee this year, and we'd like to thank her for her contributions to the running of our branch and outreach events. Following the election of our new branch committee we'll be holding a members' question time, with a "panel of experts" to come up with some answers.

### **Bracknell and Wokingham Branch**

**bracknell@berksfhs.org.uk**

*Fiona Ranger*

In February Richard Heaton talked on tracing unusual resources. This encompassed many records that were new or hardly known to many members. Richard explained what information could be found in these records and where they could be found. It was a very informative and entertaining evening.

Kathy Chater returned in March to talk on coroners' inquests. These can give us an insight into the deceased, but how do you find out whether or not there was an inquest following your ancestor's death? Kathy suggested checking newspapers and certificates (if there is an inquest the coroner will have signed it).

The first evidence of a coroner dates back to 1194. Prior to this they were called crowners, and they ensured that the king received any monies which were due from a dead person. The jurisdictions, the witness depositions and verdicts were all covered in this instructive and engaging talk.

Our monthly drop-in sessions at Bracknell and Wokingham libraries are still well attended.



# UPDATE Projects and publications

Following the hiatus in CD production since last summer, I'm pleased to report that we've now produced our first parish CD of the year – Fawley St Mary – and I hope that by the time you read this *Berkshire marriages edition 3* will also in the bookshop. We've also released further tranches of transcriptions of *Berkshire marriages* and *Berkshire burials* and the first tranche of *Berkshire baptisms* to [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk). These will be available on a pay-per-view basis, and each access generates a small income to the society. More data has also been added to the Members' Area of the website.

Transcribing and checking remains ongoing for *Berkshire burials edition 12* and *Berkshire baptisms edition 2*, plus a number of planned individual and cluster-parish CDs. Our aim for *Berkshire baptisms edition 2* is to extend coverage across the county, and hopefully to pass the 100-parish milestone. We'll be including registers such as Wokingham Union Hospital baptisms, which have not been deposited at the Berkshire Record Office and are therefore more difficult to consult, and a number which are not available on the IGI, such as Chilton All Saints,

Kintbury St Mary, West (Great) Shefford St Mary and Wallingford St Mary le More.

As ever the volume of transcriptions we can publish remains dependent on the number of volunteers prepared to give up regular chunks of their time to check transcriptions against the original registers. If you live within commuting distance of Reading or Chippenham and may be able to help in this task, please do get in contact with me via the projects mailbox.

Brian Wilcock's article in the December 2013 *Historian* described the pleasures of recording monumental inscriptions, and also the pressing need to act quickly in what really can be "rescue" family history. Now that our churchyards are drying out after the inclement weather of January and February, work begins once again on recording and photographing monuments. We currently have active projects at Boxford St Andrew, Burghfield St Mary, Sulhampstead Abbots St Mary, Woodley St John and Wokingham St Sebastian. If this work appeals to you, please do contact us at [projects@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:projects@berksfhs.org.uk).

**Catherine Sampson (6979)**  
**Projects co-ordinator**

## *New this quarter and now in the bookshop*

### **Fawley, St Mary\* Parish Registers 1540–1987 (CD)**

***Baptisms 1540-1987***  
***Banns 1754-1923***  
***Marriages 1545-1984***  
***Burials 1550-1987***

Contains a brief history of the parish and is fully indexed

\*Fawley is not included in the IGI

Shop £7.50, UK £9.23, airmail £11.98



# The view from next door

**Mark Stevens**

of the Berkshire Record Office  
muses upon power and its symbols

If you distil archives down to their purest state, when only their base materials are still apparent, can they be seen simply to be about power?

This philosophical question isn't the sort of thing I spend days agonising over, but it does arise for me now because we are having a display at the BRO over the spring and summer called *Small objects of power*. The small objects in question are the impressions of various medieval seals, now permanently patterned into red and green wax made centuries ago. These impressions were made by people who had quite a lot of power.

All the seals were appended to documents to authenticate them. The possession of a seal therefore meant that you had some rights to exercise and, by default, some privileges that you could wield over your fellow men and women. What your seal gave to one person it may well have taken away from others.

The seals we have on display include those of some of the most powerful men (and one woman) in medieval England: the King; the Pope; the Archbishop of Canterbury; religious houses and orders, great noble families; even the town guilds that were springing up through the merchant class. These small objects had some serious wealth behind them.

So: archives as power? Well, I've looked up the word, and the dictionary expands a bit on what power means. It includes, amongst other things, the ability to influence behaviour or the course of events; it suggests also a form of social control. Maybe that is what our ancestors were subject to, when their names were written down on parchment leaves in books that would never be destroyed.

Of course, the creation of parish registers – the family historian's friend – was the result of just such control. It is generally accepted that these registers were created in 1538 to allow government some insight into local populations, whether for taxation or other policy purposes. Their designer was Thomas Cromwell, that well-known social engineer.

Think of wills too. In the church courts lay the power to grant the living the possession of the goods of the dead. If no will survives there is potentially no control over the course of an inheritance, while a proved will is a pretty oppressive document for anyone who does not agree with it.



On the other hand, what power do family letters or photographs contain? There is nothing obvious; no action that they wished to enforce, nor control that they sought to exercise. They don't seem to fit the theory that power defines archives.

I think that is because with things like that, the nature of their power is somewhat different. It is emotional rather than legal. And it is power delayed: not a power that was employed at the time of their creation, but one that is experienced now, many years afterwards.

We react to them as we do to any voice or picture from the past. They make us feel cross, or sympathetic; they make us feel curious. Whatever the power that an archive once contained, there is this residual power to affect researchers, and that is a power that goes on through time. If anything it does not diminish, but grows stronger.

In that case, I might conclude that the proposition is correct: that an archive in its purest state includes an element of power. Just not quite the power I began thinking of, and not quite the power that is symbolised by a medieval seal.

# Events



*Bracknell Family History Fair, January 2014*

The society attends many different events during the course of the year, taking items to sell and information that we hold to share with other people. Much of our time is spent talking to visitors, explaining what we have, discussing the society, our projects and CDs, the research centre, and encouraging them to join the society if they have Berkshire interests or live in Berkshire. We start in January at the Bracknell Family History Fair on the last Sunday of the month, swiftly followed by the big one, *WDYTYA?Live* at Olympia in February, lasting three days.

*WhoDoYouThinkYouAre?Live, February 2014*

We're now in a bit of a gap before the Buckinghamshire FHS Open Day on 26 July at Wendover School in Aylesbury. Then we go to Woodstock on Saturday 5 October for the Oxfordshire event, followed by Hampshire at a new venue, the Everest Community Academy in Basingstoke, on Sunday 12 October, just the weekend before our conference on 18 October. The final neighbouring FHS open day of the year is the West Surrey, in Woking in the first weekend in November.



We don't limit our attendance to fairs or open days of neighbouring FH societies;

we also go to local history events, supporting people who are highlighting the history of their area. At the end of March we attended a village hall heritage event in Harwell, taking our usual display of selected books and CDs. We met many people and talked to them about starting their own history, writing their own personal stories, and reminding them that they are the only person who knows it. We also go to local libraries, clubs and societies to meet and talk to people and explain how to find out about their family history.



*Harwell heritage weekend, March 2014*

If your local area is holding an open day and would like us to attend, or if you are able to offer your services at any event please contact

[events@berksfhs](mailto:events@berksfhs).

***Margaret Crook (2334)***  
***Joint events co-ordinator***

**Berkshire Family Historian**

# Why didn't great-granddad fight in the First World War?

**Brian Dray (7237) offers some possible explanations**

Many of us have ancestors who fought in the First World War and yet, despite the advent of conscription in 1916, some men avoided military service altogether. My own grandfather did not fight in the First World War because he was profoundly deaf and declared medically unfit. However, there are many other reasons why an ancestor did not fight in the First World War.

The Military Service Act of 27 January 1916 brought conscription into effect for the first time in the war. It applied to British males ordinarily resident in Great Britain on 15 August 1915 and who had attained the age of 19, but not yet 41. Conscription was extended to all who were, on 2 November 1915, unmarried or widowed without dependent children (with certain exceptions) or who had attained the age of 41 years before the appointed date. A third Act in 1918 extended the upper age limit to 51 years. (Conscription did not extend to Ireland, for fear of further inflaming domestic troubles there.) Men were encouraged to enlist voluntarily under the Group System or Derby Scheme before the Act came into place.

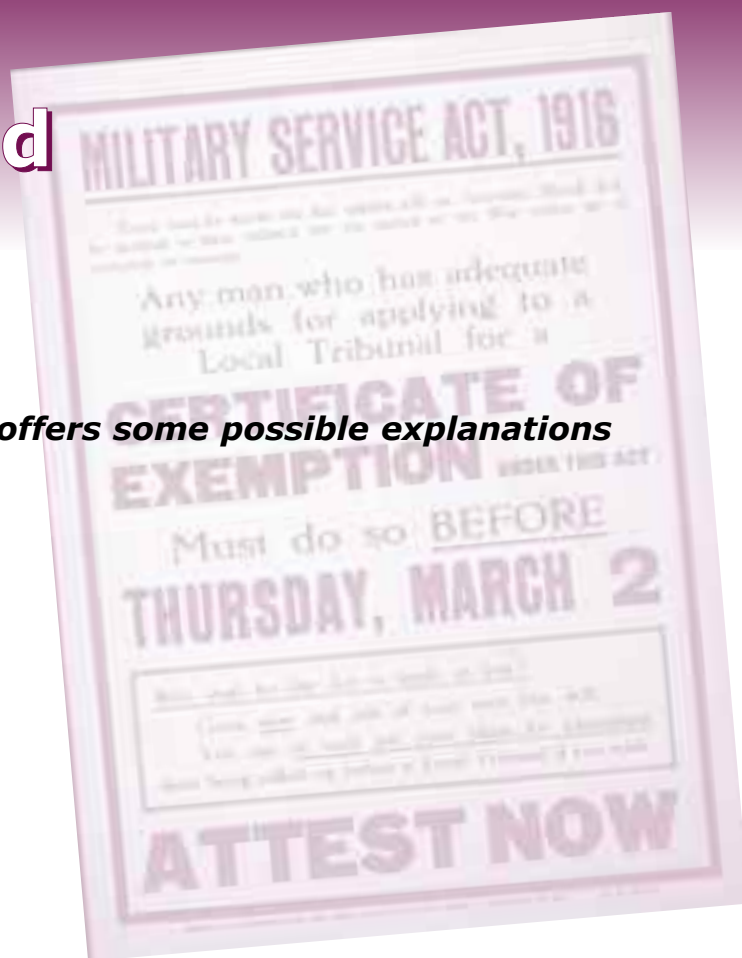
The Act provided for certain persons to be exempt from conscription. These included: regular ministers of any religious denomination; those previously discharged from the army or navy on grounds of ill-health or prior termination of service; and those normally resident abroad, or only resident in Britain for some other special purpose (for example, education).

Individuals could however apply to a local military tribunal for exemption. There were four grounds for exemption: first, that it was in the national interest that a person should be engaged in other work; second, that serious hardship would ensue owing to a person's financial or domestic position or business obligations; third, ill-health or infirmity; or fourth, conscientious objection to the undertaking of combatant service. Certificates of

exemption were issued to men or classes or bodies of men in their employ, that is to say civil servants, without having to apply to a local tribunal.

Clearly, to support the war effort there were significant numbers of reserved occupations which might provide an exemption from military service. A look through *The Times* for 1915 and 1916 reveals notices from the government specifying trades and occupations which provided exemption. The list for 20 December 1915 specified occupations like rope manufacture, the wholesale meat trade, hide, skin and bone factories and, perhaps surprisingly, carpet manufacture. The grocery and food trade had a number of exemptions, as well as chemists, food preservers and slaughtermen. Those involved in coal or iron mining were also exempt. Bakers became exempt in November 1915 on fears of extreme shortages of bread.

An exemption certificate could be absolute, conditional or temporary. Exemptions for continued education or training and those on financial hardship grounds could only be temporary. If the conditions under which an exemption was granted changed, it was the duty of the person to inform the authorities. A fine of up to £50 could be applied if he did not do so. False



statements or misrepresentation at time of application for exemption could lead to imprisonment with hard labour for up to six months.

A system of local, appeal and central tribunals was arranged. Each registration district as defined in the National Registration Act 1915 would have a local tribunal, consisting of between five and 25 members each. There would also be appeal and central tribunals with members appointed by the Crown. Any person aggrieved by the decision of a local tribunal could make an appeal.

About 16,500 men obtained exemption certificates from tribunals, but many applications, especially from those claiming conscientious objection, failed. Over 16,000 men made an application to a tribunal on grounds of conscientious objection. Only a handful received full exemption, and many were denied any form of exemption at all. Whilst some might be allocated to non-combatant roles, in many cases applications were turned down altogether, which meant that the men were liable for call-up as ordinary soldiers. These unwilling conscripts could be arrested and handed over to the military; if they disobeyed military orders they would be court-martialled and sent to prison.

Most tribunal records were destroyed, but some survive in county record offices. The records of the Middlesex Appeals Tribunal were retained at The National Archives in series MH47. Some tribunal cases were also reported in local newspapers many of which can now be searched on the internet. The MH47 series contains up to 11,000 case papers from the Middlesex Appeals Tribunal which, between 1916 and 1918, heard appeals from men who had previously applied to a local tribunal for exemption from compulsory military service. The reasons provided by applicants are varied, with applications made on moral grounds (conscientious objectors), on medical grounds (disability), on family grounds (looking after dependants) and on economic grounds (preserving a business). The vast majority of cases relate to the impact of war on a man's family or their

business interests, and the papers reveal some fascinating and tragic stories.

Some people tried to escape military service by lying to the tribunals about their occupations. Market gardeners were exempt because of their role in supplying food. However, the *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser* reported on 19 April 1916 that *Berkshire magistrates on Tuesday fined Harry W Johnson £5 and handed him over to a military escort for making false statements to the local tribunal. He said he was a market gardener, but when the police visited his holding they found only four pigs, 16 fowls, and few cabbage plants.*

*The Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle* reports in its edition of 1 September 1916 on a sitting of the Berkshire Appeals Tribunal, which dealt with a number of cases:

*The Wantage Urban Tribunal refused to allow any time to F H Lloyd, 29, wheelwright, and against this an appeal was brought by the man's employer, Mr L J Lloyd. The appeal was dismissed.*

*Y J Underwood, 40, innkeeper had been granted until October 1st by the Faringdon Tribunal. The military representative appealed, but agreed to conditional exemption being granted the man, as he is now engaged in shell work.*

*W E Ballard, 37, hotel proprietor, has been similarly dealt with by the Faringdon Tribunal and the appeal was by the military representative. A like course was taken in this case.*

Newspaper reports also show the difficulties employers encountered when male staff were conscripted. *The Western Daily Press* reported on 7 April 1916 that *the military authorities sent her a one-legged soldier to drive her tractor, said a woman farmer, Mrs Harrell of Leckhampstead, at Berkshire Appeals Tribunal, yesterday. His one leg went wrong, and he had to return to his depot, so she asked for the exemption of a carter which was granted.*

Therefore, if you are pondering why you cannot find a military record of an ancestor old enough to fight in the First World War, it may be that he was granted an exemption.

# Returning to Kintbury roots

**Family history has a habit of  
turning full circle.**

**Grace Gillions (7431)  
discovers that her husband's  
fondness for Kintbury has  
unsuspected genealogical roots**

Jane Austen used to stay with friends in the Berkshire village of Kintbury. Thriller writer Robert Harris lives there. So did my father-in-law and my great-great-grandmother. These facts have nothing whatsoever to do with each other, except for the fact that Kintbury does seem to crop up in my history rather more than one might expect for someone who has lived her entire life in a different county.

Although aware that my mother's family has roots in Kintbury from at least the eighteenth century, I had no other link with the place apart from my husband's fondness for canal-boating on the Kennet and Avon, one of his favourite stretches of inland waterway. It never occurred to us that this preference could have anything hereditary about it, until a remarkable coincidence occurred. I ordered the birth certificate for my late father-in-law Bill, and under *Where born* was the entry *Foxley Lodge, Kintbury*. So it appeared that my husband, like me born and bred in Hertfordshire, nevertheless had Kintbury in his DNA and canal water running through his veins.

This coincidence put Kintbury high on my list of research priorities, and once I had investigated my own line I turned to my husband's in the hope of establishing where the village fitted in to his personal history. What little I was able to find is due to the help of two books published by the Kintbury Volunteer Group (*Kintbury through the ages* and *Kintbury: a century remembered*, both available from the Berkshire Family History Society's bookshop), staff at the Reading Records Office and Colonel Charles Talbot Walmsley DSO, who decided to put his home up for sale in 1928.

My father-in-law Bill was born in 1920, the third of six brothers and the first to be born in

Kintbury. His father Harry, who had enlisted with the Royal Berkshires in the First World War only to be medically discharged in 1916 with an eyesight problem before any active service, was employed on the Inglewood estate, then owned by Colonel Walmsley, and comprising a large number of local farms and other properties. These facts emerged when I contacted the Berkshire Record Office in an attempt to trace Foxley Lodge. The archivist emailed back to say that she had found Harry's name in the sale papers for the estate.

It is not absolutely clear what Harry did in the colonel's employ: in the sale particulars he is simply described as an estate servant. Before the war he had been a gardener, and that he kept this up afterwards is shown on the birth certificates of his two eldest sons, but by the time baby Bill comes along Harry's occupation is given as electrical engineer and fitter. Electricity had not reached many parts of Kintbury in the 1920s, so it is probable that he was tending the estate flower beds and perhaps tinkering with the farm machinery in his spare time.

Whatever his duties, he seems to have fallen on his feet, living rent-free with his wife Isabel and his growing family in a three-bedroomed semi-detached cottage complete with a modern grate in the sitting room. The sale particulars for the auction held in November 1928 (much



*Stanley William "Bill" Gillions,  
the author's late father-in-law*



top: Foxley Cottages in 1928, and below: not so very different in 2014, albeit now all one house

of the property having failed to sell at the previous one in June) contain a photograph of Foxley Cottages – lots 13 and 14 – showing a handsome half-timbered building set in woodland, with neat curtains at the windows and smoke billowing from one of the many chimney pots. I have no firm date for the family’s arrival in Kintbury, although presumably they moved there between the birth in Chobham of second son Chris in 1918 and Bill’s appearance two years later.

The older boys would have attended one of the local schools, maybe even have gone to one of the Sunday schools and joined in what Heather Turner describes in *A century remembered* as the incentives of summer outings and Christmas tea parties. (Heather’s comment that some children opportunistically changed faiths in order to take full advantage of these treats struck a chord, as my husband did exactly the same thing when he was a boy; having moved on from the cub troop run by his Uncle John to join the Scouts, he temporarily became a Methodist so that he could go the mixed youth club, which was much more fun.)

Doubtless the lads also enjoyed the entertainment laid on by Colonel Walmsley and others at the flower

shows held in a field adjoining Inglewood House. According to the poster for the 1924 show, reproduced in *A century remembered*, they could have witnessed a military display, participated in sports (which included children’s races of every imaginable description) and watched the ladies of the parish chasing a pig.

Their life in Kintbury might have come to a sudden end. The sale particulars for the June 1928 auction, which are reproduced in full in the Hungerford Virtual Museum online ([www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk/Places/Great\\_Estates/Inglewood\\_House/inglewood\\_house.html](http://www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk/Places/Great_Estates/Inglewood_House/inglewood_house.html)), state that Foxley Cottages (listed as lot 4 this time) were “in service occupation” but that “vacant possession would be given on completion of the purchase”. This raises the question: was Harry evicted? Thanks to Joan Vinall from the Berkshire FHS, I know that there are no records at Reading as to what happened to the family at this time. They could have set up a new tenancy agreement with the purchaser, but there is nothing to confirm this. It is not even clear who their new landlord might have been.

Inglewood House itself was bought by the De La Salle Brothers, a religious order, for £7,000 and developed into a training college. The order was not rich; according to Victor Feehan in his book *Inglewood: the story of a Berkshire mansion* (De La Salle Publications, Oxford, 1995) the Brothers were quite relieved when some of their young trainees decided to return home. “If they had all stayed,” he quotes the college director as saying, “we could never have fed them.” So it is unlikely that they would have had any money spare for buying other properties or paying the salary of a live-in gardener.

There is a six-year gap in the family history until 1934 when Harry appears in *Kelly’s directory* for St Albans. The town subsequently witnessed five of his sons’ marriages. Harry and Isabel died there within two months of each other in 1965, and four of their boys lived the remainder of their lives there. The link with Kintbury was thus broken until my husband cruised through it at three miles an hour nearly 80 years later.



# Abingdon and the First World War

**Bob Frampton,**  
a retired history teacher, volunteers at  
Abingdon Museum, and since December 2012  
he has been working on a book about the  
town and its people during the First World  
War. Entitled *Abingdon in the Great War*, it is  
expected to be published by the museum in  
time for Abingdon's Great War exhibition in  
August 2014. Here he gives a foretaste of its  
contents.

In common with the rest of the country, Abingdon experienced great changes during the First World War. One fifth of its young men went off to fight, and the women picked up the workload in agriculture, commerce and industry. The town experienced black-outs in fear of Zeppelin attacks, there were higher prices for all commodities, and rationing was introduced. Most of the horses, used in all aspects of life until that point – for transport and for heavy work, in agriculture and in commerce – were taken to war, and mechanisation became more common.

The local recruiting office was based first at 71 The Vineyard, and then moved to the county hall. In 1914 the town's population was just over 6,800. Twenty per cent of this total, 1,336, eventually went off to the war. Two hundred and five men were killed, and 360 injured; others were taken prisoner or listed as missing. The town's total casualty rate was 42 per cent. By comparison, Wantage lost 89 men or 2.4 per cent from its population of 3,700, and Banbury lost 41 of its population of 11,500. The differences in losses may be explained by differences in catchment areas, age profiles or occupation, but this will be the focus of a separate piece of research.

Sixty of Abingdon's men received gallantry awards, and there was at least one near-miss. Gunner Arthur J Dyke of the Royal Field Artillery was fighting in Gallipoli when a Turkish shell went right through one side of his dugout and buried itself in the opposite wall, failing to explode.

Local factories produced uniforms and equipment from leather and from wool, and these jobs provided good work and good wages, something of a novelty for the women. There was a Red Cross military convalescence hospital at Tesdale House, 22 Marcham Road, largely staffed by local volunteer nurses, and it helped around 1,000 men back to health. There were

others at Milton and in Burcot.

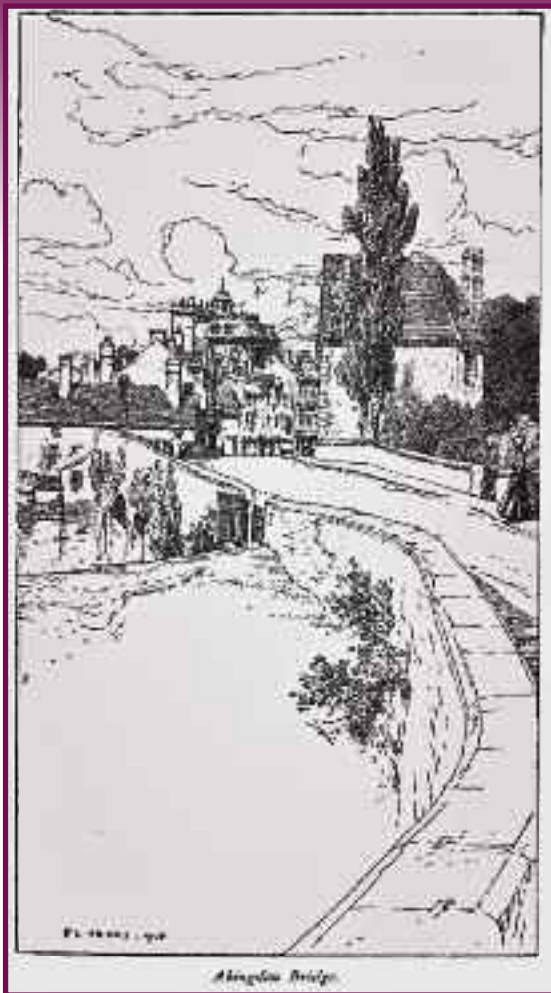
Increasingly as the war dragged on women took the place of men in work to an ever-greater degree. (Abingdon GWR station was the first in the country to deal with its shortage of male staff by permitting women clerks to work in the booking office.) Women found a freedom and a confidence which changed attitudes permanently, and which would eventually lead to women's suffrage and the vote.

Women also worked for their men who were away, and there were several ladies' groups in Abingdon which planned to send a parcel to every Abingdon soldier every five days. Whether this came about is unknown.

During 1915 the town found accommodation for 350 men of the 341 Motor Transport Troop Army Service Corps, and in 1916 for 450 men of the 31st Battalion Royal Fusiliers. Their stay left its mark in the parish marriage and birth registers. These men and the local reservists of the Berkshire Volunteers trained and drilled in the town parks and at the Abingdon Common rifle ranges at the west end of the town on Abingdon Common. The townspeople, in return, were entertained by patriotic musical concerts and sports events led by the soldiers.

The town also found room for dozens of Belgian refugees, and many of these helped replace the missing men both on the land and in the factories. The better-off ones might have been mildly disconcerted to find that their first accommodation was the Abingdon Union Workhouse, until they were later dispersed to hotels and private houses.

Materials were very hard to get and repairing roads, for example, meant applying to several different government departments for the right permits. Costs rose all through the war; horse hire, for example, went up in 1917 by 2s 6d per day



(equivalent to £28 now) over the previous year. Several council workers went on strike for higher wages. Their bluff was called; they were fired and their places taken by “girls, who gave every satisfaction”.

A memorable event occurred in 1917. The government was concerned that its supply of aconite, needed to propel artillery shells, was running out. Aconite had been obtained from the USA, which now needed her own supplies, having entered the war in 1917. A government scientist discovered that aconite could be extracted from horse-chestnuts, so every school in the country was asked to collect these. They were passed by the army to laboratories. Abingdon schools collected 8¼ tons, and received in return 7s 6d per cwt. It can be truly said that local schoolchildren helped to “conker” the Kaiser.

The Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, famously said “The lights are going out all over Europe” when he watched the lamp-lighters igniting the gaslights of St James’ Park on the evening of 4 August 1914. Just as in the Second World War, there were strict rules about putting out lights, although not all citizens were observant of them. Away from the coast and industrial cities, blackout

rules were a matter for local authorities to decide. In rural districts it was entirely possible for one town to be dark and another lit. North Berkshire was a perfect example.

The lack of logic was made clear by a letter to the *Herald*, which asked: *Is Abingdon asking for trouble in a Zeppelin Raid? Due to a lack of leadership the town lighting rules need to be enforced. It seems that some towns enforce them and others not. Surely it is futile for one town to be dark and another lit? In Abingdon, High Street and Stert Street are too well lit from private lamps.* But the writer also observed that she had been informed that *from February 10th at 8pm the whole town will, at last, be plunged into darkness. Is this correct?* It was.

Mr Kimber of Victoria Road was seen showing unshaded house-lights at 10pm. When told by the constable to either douse them or be reported and fined, he replied “You can do what you like!” but later he did cover them. At 12 Cemetery Road a light showed from a first-floor room and from the front porch; the owner was fined 10s, which was half a week’s pay for a working man. The manager of Abingdon’s Picture Palace in Stert Street, Mr Frank Goldsby, was summonsed for allowing an unshaded light to illuminate the yard of his establishment. He had made a very poor attempt to shade it and had ignored several warnings, but he had no excuse and was fined 10s. (His son, Corporal Cyril Goldsby, received his sixth wound in October 1917.)

Abingdon Borough Council published a roll of service of every local man who wore service uniform in 1914-18, along with military formations and personal details. A copy list is available in Abingdon library and online.

It is difficult now to assess exactly how the town adapted at the end of the war. It is highly likely that, in common with the rest of the country, there were huge problems in coming to terms with the losses and changes, as well as in coping with the damaged men and raised expectations of the women. Children had grown up without fathers, and the fabric of the town had been repaired only as strictly necessary. The amount of work that needed doing in 1918 must have been daunting; it took until 1921 to erect the war memorial that stands in the square to commemorate those Abingdon men who gave their lives.

# Setting up home in the austerity years **Part II**

*In the March Historian*

**Tony Hadland**

*pictured his parents' lifestyle*

*in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, based on household bills from the time.*

*He continues here with more telling details of their day-to-day domestic matters*

January 1948 started with a summons to John Hadland to do jury service at Reading Quarter Sessions at the Sessions House in Valpy Street. In May 1952 he was again called on for jury service, this time at the Assize Courts.

## **HEALTH AND INSURANCE**

One of the first things the Hadlands had to do on setting up home was to register with a local doctor and dentist. In February 1947 Dr Fosbery, of the Fosbery, Barnardo and Williams practice at 66 Westwood Road, confirmed in writing that he had signed their insurance cards and forwarded them to the newly established National Health Insurance office in Gun Street, Reading. The Hadlands registered with the dental practice of Messrs Ellingham and Archibald at Kendrick View, London Road, a house where the author Mary Russell Mitford once lived. Terry Hadland signed up with W R J Renshaw Ltd, ophthalmic opticians, in Friar Street and paid £3 5s for a pair of "best form softlite lenses" in May 1948.

Wise householders, then as now, insured their house contents, and the Hadlands used the services of Atlas Assurance Company, which had a branch office in Station Road. Comprehensive cover of £550 worth of contents cost £1 7s 6d a year for 1949.

## **NEWSPAPERS**

The Hadlands, like almost everybody else in those days, had a daily newspaper delivered to them: *The Daily Mail* on weekdays and the *Sunday Dispatch* on the Sabbath, plus the *Radio Times* on Thursday, and on Friday *The Berkshire Chronicle* and the Catholic weekly *The Universe*. Their newsagent was F A Bayliss of 18 Norcot Road, whose bills were presented on stationery provided by *The Times*. How many Tilehurst residents bought *The Times Review of Industry* as a result of seeing it advertised on the heading of Mr Bayliss' newspaper bills one can only guess.

## **GARDENING**

My mother, Terry Hadland, was a keen gardener, and much work was needed to turn the small and oddly shaped corner plot garden into something she could be proud of. A garden hose was essential, but this incurred an extra water charge of £1 17s 6d in 1949. Although Reading was famous for Sutton's Seeds, and there was a local nursery in Victoria Road, Terry bought some bulbs by mail order from Elsoms of Spalding.



*Terry Hadland in her front garden, circa 1950*

## DIY DECORATING

Working for Simonds the brewers had the fringe benefit not only of discounted alcoholic drinks but also of discounts on some other domestic products, such as electrical appliances, wallpaper and paint – items needed for the furnishing and upkeep of pubs, which the brewery bought at wholesale prices. Autumn 1950 saw John in decorating overdrive, and he bought almost £7 worth of wallpaper, paint, paste and size through the brewery. John's father had been a professional painter, decorator and handyman, and John had acquired all the necessary skills from him.

## HOLIDAYS AND TRANSPORT

In July 1950, the Hadlands managed to afford a holiday away from home for a week, not something that they were to achieve every year. For a week in the Kilburn Hall Private Hotel, Torquay, they paid £14 8s 9d full board. By that time I was starting to walk, so just before the holiday my parents bought a child harness from Hills. The following year the family also managed a week by the sea, this time at St Winifred's Private Hotel, Boscombe Chine. They did not own a car, so presumably travelled by train or borrowed or hired a car. A policeman friend who lived in Tilehurst occasionally lent John a car.

On his return to England from war service in India, John Hadland had tried to order a car. We know this because six years later, in April 1952, Gowring's Limited of London Road, Reading wrote to him at the behest of the Ford Motor Company Limited with a questionnaire to ascertain the position regarding unexecuted orders placed in 1946. Gowrings pointed out that *the data will provide the manufacturers with a true picture of the situation, which is now difficult to assess, due to the constantly changing circumstances involved in the distribution of the very few cars available on the home market.* John had accepted "a very good offer" for a new car from Gowrings, but on the basis of it being delivered in the autumn of 1952. However, it transpired that he would have to collect it almost immediately, several months earlier than planned, and he was unable to afford this.

So, far from acquiring a new Ford, John did not buy his own car until two or three years later. That was an ancient 1928 Wolseley Hornet, nicknamed Buzz, which consumed petrol at a prodigious rate. Buzz was soon replaced with a more economical 1939 Hillman Minx, known as Minnie, at about the time of the Suez Crisis.



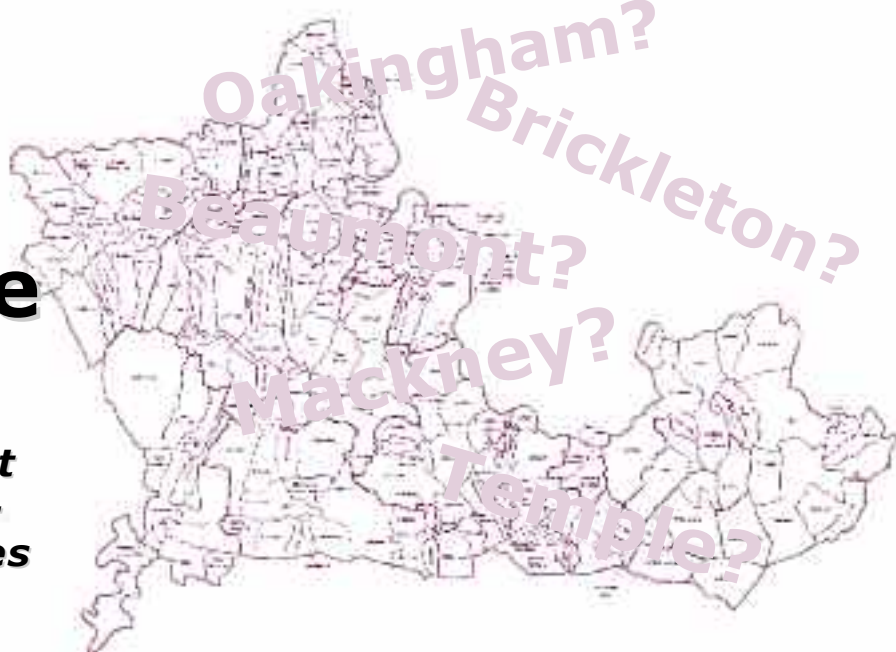
*John and Terry on holiday in Torquay in July 1950. Their miserable-looking son is wearing what became known as his "bull face".*

### Author's note

For comparison purposes it's useful to have an idea of what the pound sterling was worth in relation to present-day values. In terms of average earnings, £1 in 1947 equated to £88 pounds today, whereas on the basis of the Retail Price Index (RPI), it was worth £33. If we split the difference, we can say that £1 in 1947 was worth somewhere around £60 today.

# A virtual guide to Berkshire

**tracking down past and present place-names and parishes**



Roughly half the membership of Berkshire Family History Society does not live in or close to Berkshire, and nearly 10 per cent do not even live in the UK. The easy familiarity with Berkshire geography which the other half takes for granted is not a given for them. Place-names which turn up in family legend or even official records can be baffling, particularly if they are obsolete or refer to tiny settlements. Where, then, might an overseas family historian, particularly one new to research and perhaps with no prospect of visiting Berkshire, begin to find information about the area from which his or her ancestors came? This article aims to help those unfamiliar with the territory by pointing to a few websites which may aid navigation.

**[www.berksfhs.org.uk/genuki/BRK/Names/A.shtml](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/genuki/BRK/Names/A.shtml)**

is by far the most comprehensive a A-Z listing of Berkshire place-names (including obsolete and alternative spellings), which will tell you the status of the place, be it parish, chapelry, tything, liberty, hamlet or simply “part of...” In all cases the place is identified within its ecclesiastical parish, which is usually the starting point for family history research. Links take you to a transcribed entry from *The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland* (1868), which gives you a thumbnail portrait of the parish at that time: its location, topography, population, churches and schools. Below this are listed various links to historical sources and, in particular, the name of the relevant Poor Law Union – relevant if your ancestors fell on hard times.

**PLACE OR PARISH?**

**[www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/berkshire](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/berkshire)**

describes volumes I to V of the Berkshire opus. The key volumes III and IV (first published 1923-24) are posted in full, and they contain articles on every ecclesiastical Berkshire parish. Manorial history may not be of prime interest to the family historian, but the detailed descriptions of churches may help to visualise where your ancestors were hatched, matched and despatched. The arrangement is by hundred, and the index is not online, so you should either first check the relevant hundred from the Genuki website above, or scan through the contents list of both volumes to find your parish.

**PARISH DESCRIPTIONS**

**[www.berksfhs.org.uk/genuki/Maps/BerkshireParishes.gif](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/genuki/Maps/BerkshireParishes.gif)**

maps the layout of Berkshire’s nineteenth-century ecclesiastical parishes, enabling you to identify neighbouring parishes. This can be helpful when searching for “missing” register entries; the most likely place for an untraced baptism, marriage or burial is the next-door parish.

**OLD MAPS** [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~genmaps/genfiles/COU\\_Pages/ENG\\_pages/brk.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~genmaps/genfiles/COU_Pages/ENG_pages/brk.htm)

offers free access to a wide choice of Berkshire maps dating from the early seventeenth century.

**PARISH RECORDS** [www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/family-history/parish-register-guide](http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/family-history/parish-register-guide)

will tell you the BRO holdings of parish records, both Anglican and other. Berkshire had 141 ecclesiastical parishes in 1831, a number which rose to 202 by 1891. The Genuki guide (first URL in this article) will tell you if the parochial status of your sought place-name altered over time, and will thus guide you in searching for registers.

[www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/About-Berkshire/berkshire-baptisms.html](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/About-Berkshire/berkshire-baptisms.html)

[www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Bookshop/berkshire-marriages.html](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Bookshop/berkshire-marriages.html)

[www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/About-Berkshire/bbi9.html](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/About-Berkshire/bbi9.html).

will tell you if the parish records you are looking for are covered by the current editions of the society's published CDs, *Berkshire baptisms*, *Berkshire marriages* and *Berkshire burials* respectively. Check also the online bookshop for single-parish register CDs.

**CIVIL REGISTRATION** [www.ukbmd.org.uk/genuki/reg/brk.html](http://www.ukbmd.org.uk/genuki/reg/brk.html)

lists Berkshire (and a few neighbouring county) registration districts from 1837 to the present day, indicating changes over the period. It does not include an index of smaller place-names; you will need to guess a likely RD and click on that link to check its coverage of civil parishes and unparished areas.

**LOCAL HISTORY SOURCES** <http://en.wikipedia.org>

contains numerous entries for Berkshire place names. The quantity and quality of content varies widely, being dependent on the enthusiasm of contributors.

[www.visionofbritain.org.uk](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk)

aims to depict British places from 1801 to the present day through extracts from historical travel writing and gazetteers, statistics and historical maps. The search engine can be unhelpful, but if you succeed in homing in on your chosen location and persevere with the links you will find a wealth of material.

[www.berkshirehistory.com/villages/index.html](http://www.berkshirehistory.com/villages/index.html)

is an old-established site detailing local Berkshire history through around 140 place-name articles. It majors on popular stories rather than referenced facts.

<http://books.google.co.uk>

is for the hardcore enthusiast, because effective searching takes a little practice. Enter your place-name as a search term, and use the *Advanced search* facility to enter parameters that will limit redundant returns. Here, if you are lucky, you may turn up descriptive references in Victorian travel writing.

And, of course, most Berkshire parishes now have their own excellent websites, many with strong family history content.

# Don't believe all you read

**Australian member  
Neville Lee (4677)  
had his hopes raised  
and then dashed  
when he came to England  
in pursuit of his ancestry**

My interest in my genealogical heritage was whetted in the 1980s after reading a 13-page life story written by my mother following my father's death. The names Baldock, Harber and Brain (her maiden name) were quoted, and I learnt that, together with my maternal great-grandfather, they had arrived in Australia in the 1850s, but she included only scant information on their lives before they left England. Coachbuilding in Reading, Berkshire, together with gamekeeping and shipbuilding somewhere else were mentioned, but with no more detail. She was unable to add any further information.

Having exhausted all Australian BMDs in the quest, I set out for London. This was 1997, before the online resources now available for the Down Under genealogist. A London cousin from my father's side had earlier told me in a letter that birth records were all filed at St Catherine's House, and that she had researched some of our mutual Lee ancestors there.

At St Catherine's House I discovered that the records had been relocated to the Family Records Centre in Clerkenwell. There, I found that they also held the census records, so I began with the 1851 census, where I found my great-great-grandfather, Thomas Henry Brain, aged 48, a coachbuilder at 4 Friar Street, Reading, employing some 12 persons – obviously a relatively successful businessman. There was no record in the census of either my

great-great-grandmother, or my great-grandfather, although in the Friar Street home there was a housekeeper and her son. So, if he was alive on 31 March, I could search for the record of his death starting with the 1851 second-quarter index volume.

I located the heavy index books. No luck with the second or third quarters, so more heavy lifting. And so my day continued, quarter after quarter, until I reached 1900. Disbelieving that he could have lived to the ripe old age of 98, and concluding that I had been careless, I began working backwards until finally I reached the volume with which I had started. In despair I continued back, and opened the first quarter, and here was the registration of his death: 31 March, the actual date of the census. Obviously the census-taker had visited the house some time before the 31 March, well before the official date.

I applied for a copy certificate, which told me that not only had he died aged just 48, but of *delirium tremens*: so my ancestor had been an alcoholic. But a successful coachbuilder would have left a will. When this arrived I was able to read details of the disposal of his estate. Shock, horror: I learnt that he had entered into a deed of separation from my great-great-grandmother 15 years previously, having fathered an illegitimate son. The housekeeper was his mistress. Oh dear, a drunkard and a philanderer; no wonder my great-grandfather hadn't talked much about his life before arriving in Australia.

But what did I know about another great-great-grandfather, William Harber? Very



*Thomas Henry Brain*

little: only Worcestershire and gamekeeping had featured in family conversations. I checked on the map, which showed only one mansion which might warrant a gamekeeper: Hanbury Hall. I discovered that it was in National Trust ownership, and would be open that next weekend. At the county record office in Worcester, I learnt that William Harber (1759 - 1828) had been employed from the age of 24 as head gamekeeper to the Earl of Essex at Hanbury Hall from 1783 to 1828. I visited the mansion, and was enthusiastically welcomed when I spoke of my association. I was even given a personally conducted tour, ending with a cup of tea in the kitchen.

Now on to the Baldocks and shipbuilding. Through records at the Family History Centre, I was able to track down a family of Baldocks who were related to the shipbuilding brothers Brindley. Some pretty basic research established that my great-grandfather Frederick Brindley Baldock (1832-86) was the grandson of Thomas Brindley. It didn't take long to find extensive references to Joseph and Thomas Brindley in a copy of *Shipbuilders of the Thames and Medway* by Philip Banbury. One of the references said that they were related to Lord Nelson. This was astonishing: I was related to one of the most famous names in English history!

Not only did the Brindleys build ships on the Medway in Kent, but they also had a yard on the Wash in Norfolk. We were heading back from Scotland where I had been researching some of my wife's forebears, so Norfolk was our next stop. There was surprisingly little information on the Brindleys at King's Lynn, but I did learn that Joseph's firstborn was baptised there and named Joseph Nelson Brindley. We were some 20 miles from Burnham Thorpe, home of Lord Nelson's family and a Nelson museum. Many family names were recorded there, but



*In family history pedestals are probably best avoided.*

there were no references to the Brindleys.

Details of the Brindleys' activities on the Medway in Kent were easily researched at the county record office in Strood, Kent. Both Joseph and Thomas served All Saints, Frindsbury, as churchwardens, vestry members and overseers for the poor. I further discovered that another great-great-great-grandfather, Daniel Baldock, had also served on that vestry. Clearly it was through that association that my great-great-grandparents Susan Brindley and Daniel Baldock had met. At the record office I read *Merrily to Frindsbury* by Derek Barnard, which had several chapters on the Brindleys. This included the statement that they were nephews of Lord Nelson (p77).

My final discovery at Strood was a deed of assignment in 1824, when Joseph and Thomas descended into bankruptcy. I returned to Australia a little chastened, although satisfied with my ancestral discoveries; after all, I was still related to Lord Nelson. As I entered my new discoveries into my genealogy program I resolved to flesh out the Brindley/Nelson relationship. Nothing turned up on the several online resources I checked, so I decided to write to the present Lord Nelson. "Never heard of them" was the essence of his blunt reply.

Where to now? The Berkshire FHS Discussion List resolves many members' questions about forebears: I wondered if there was one run by the Norfolk Family History Society? Yes, there was, and within a few days I received a reply from a member of the Norfolk society. His reply came accompanied with extracts from diaries and complete genealogical detail. His relationship to Lord Nelson was the same, and as vague, as Joseph Brindley's. Joseph had married a Mary Nelson whose three-times-great-grandfather Edmund Nelson first married a Joan, then second married an Alice. Edmund was Lord Nelson's great-great-grandfather. However Horatio was descended from Alice and Joseph Brindley's wife Mary from Joan, the first wife. So Joseph's wife Mary was Horatio's half third cousin twice removed. Not a very close relationship and certainly no relationship to his brother, my ancestor Thomas.

How are the mighty fallen. Believing all that you read can be a trap for the unwary.



# Face value

John Gurnett (303)

muses on some heritable facial features



How often do we wish, with hindsight, that we had taken the time to look through family photographs with our parents and grandparents, to identify relations, to name guests at family weddings, making notes of names, dates and places on the reverse of photographs? Can those of us who have failed to carry out this simple act still glean

valuable information from old family photographs when family members are no longer with us?

When a new baby arrives the first remark from grandparents is often: "Isn't he or she just like our cousin/aunt/uncle?" We often inherit height, hair, eye and skin colour directly from our parents, but perhaps other less obvious traits may help us to distinguish one family from another.

Look, for example, at the shape of ears. Some ear lobes are connected to the side of the head; in others the lobe hangs down from the point of attachment. These are often described as "free lobes". Some people can even have one attached and one free lobe. Like many facial attributes, ear lobe attachment and shape are inherited traits.

Another attribute is the philtrum, a groove in the middle of the upper lip running from the nose to the top lip. You may be surprised to learn that it has no known function, but it leads to Cupid's bow, a feature whereby the double curve of the upper lip resembles the bow of Cupid.

Then there's the shape of the nose. The snub nose, sometimes with a lift at the end like a pixie, is often described as a celestial nose. The Greek or aquiline nose is straight with no curves. A hawk nose is convex, thin and sharp.

Dimples are usually small indentations in the cheeks, on one or both sides. Sometimes they appear at birth and then disappear in adulthood;

others are developed later in life. In all cases they are highly inheritable. A cleft chin, or a chin dimple, is another inherited characteristic, the result of an incomplete fusion of the right and left parts of the jaw bone during fetal development.

A single trait is not sufficient to make a single judgment call, but two or more may provide potential clues of a family link when all we have to go on is a photograph.

The Wellcome Trust has been funding a study in the inherited variation of facial features. Part of this research is aimed at identifying genes behind particular facial features. This report can be seen on <http://royalsociety.org/news/genes-behind-our-faces>. Remember, though, that this study is a scientific analysis, whereas what we are discussing here – trying to identify families through facial and other features using old photographs – is not a science and is not for purists. However, perusing old family photographs may give us an improved picture, and provide an interesting exercise for the family historian.



# Readers write

*your pictures  
your stories  
your queries*

*Send them in to  
editor@berksfhs.org.uk*

## PAYZE

*from*  
**Tom Hine**  
**(2096)**  
*tomhine@hotmail.com*

On reading Judith Thomas' article in the March *Historian* listing names of fatalities from Newbury Grammar School, my eye settled on numbers 26 and 46, Robert Archer Payze and Percy Owen Payze (junior). I recognised the surname as that of Percy Owen Payze (senior) as having appeared in my dozen or more years of researching Berkshire's water mills and millers.

I have on file Percy as married and milling at Tidmarsh Mill in 1877. He was originally from Essex, having been born in Leytonstone around 1853. He served an apprenticeship at Stockton-on-Tees, then became an improver apprentice at Hambledon Mill, Henley. The next mill I have him working at was Whitchurch Mill, just across the Thames at Pangbourne in 1881-82. He had married Charlotte Chillingworth of Elm Farm, Bradfield, in 1878 whilst he was at Tidmarsh. Charlotte died in 1886, but he remarried in 1889 and went on to father at least seven children.

A few years later Percy had sold the mill to an electric lighting company, and for a short while he became a brewer at Mortimer, but still retaining an interest in the electricity

generating business, and then he took over Marsh Mills at Medmenham.

Brewing attracted several millers suffering from the downturn in milling arising from the repeal of the Corn Laws, which allowed cheaper foreign wheat from the plains of Canada, Ukraine and India to come into the country. It was unloaded from ships straight into the dockside mills for speedier roller-mill grinding. The inland millers were vitrually finished, as roller-milling was around 16 times faster than traditional stone grinding.

However, Percy Payze seems to have prospered. About 1910 he is residing at Shiplake, and a few years later at Selsdon, 68 St Mark's Road, Henley. In 1920 he sold Marsh Mills to Samuel Kidd & Co Ltd. He eventually died at home in Henley in 1929.



*Hamstead Mill on  
the river Kennet*

Both his sons had emigrated to farm in Canada after finishing their schooling in Newbury, only to return a little later with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Sadly, both died during the war: Percy junior died aged 36 and Archer Robert died of wounds aged 31 in France. Both are buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium. I am indebted to Judith's article, and pleased that I can add a little more to the story.

(I knew that the school had photographs of the Payze boys, but I believed that their names had been unaccountably left off the memorial. However Judith has now confirmed to me that Archer Robert Payze's name has been found on the memorial.)

My interest stems from the fact that my own

family were millers in the Newbury area from the 1600s, milling at both mills in Brimpton: one on the Kennet, and Hyde End Mill on the river Enborne. They were also at Woolhampton and Donnington mills, West Mills in Newbury and Hamstead Marshall Mill near Kintbury.

Sadly, there is not one working mill left in Berkshire. There were, over the centuries, around 160 in total, and also some 40 or so windmills. I spend one day a week at the National Mills Archive in Watlington Street, Reading. If any members have information, documents or photos which could add further history to Berkshire mills and millers I would be pleased to receive it.

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## JAMES SHORTER – CONFUSED IDENTITY

In the year 1797, two baby boys were baptised in Berkshire, England. Both were named James Shorter. One was born in Drayton, the illegitimate child of Susannah Shorter and James Jarvis; the other was born in Wokingham to William and Flora (Watts) Shorter.

*from*  
**Jill Connolly (7257)**  
*jill.connolly906@gmail.com*

Unfortunately the two boys have become victims of faulty research, and several public trees appear on ancestry.com asserting that James Shorter was born in Drayton to William and Flora Shorter.

My great-great-grandfather, James Shorter, was the bastard born in Drayton. He was baptised at St Peter's, Drayton on 19 February 1797. The bishop's transcript gives his parents as Susannah Shorter and James Jarvis. Documents concerning the bastardy bond confirm that his parents were Susannah and James. James, son of William and Flora Shorter, was baptised on 14 May, 1797 at All Saints, Wokingham.

Both boys appear to have had a rural upbringing. At some point James (son of Susannah) returned to Letcombe Regis, where his mother was born, and lived with his grandfather. He took the name Shorter, not Jarvis. His writings tell of an early religious experience at age 10 which occurred while he was "keeping sheep", so obviously he had an agricultural background. According to the 1841 England census, the Wokingham James was an agricultural labourer. The similarities between the two boys end here.

By 1841 James (son of Susannah) was married to Ann Clack and had five children: Daniel (c1822), Mary (c1824), James (c1827), Caroline (c1832) and Naomi (c1836). He had become a Baptist pastor, and his ministry took him to Broad Blunsdon, Stratton St Margaret, and finally Wilderness Row, London. He died in Islington in 1861 from prostate enlargement causing ischuria, and he is buried in Abney Park Cemetery.

I feel frustrated at being unable to correct misinformation on ancestry.com. I submit this in the hope that it will challenge Shorter family researchers to reassess their work.

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## MYSTERY PHOTOS

*from* My cousin has found some old family photos which we can't identify, and anyone who might recognise them has long since passed away. They are all probably from Wokingham or Finchampstead. I know it's a long shot, but I am hoping someone else may recognise them.

**Graham Price**  
**(7565)**  
*grahamwilliamprice*  
*@gmail.com*

This photo has "4 Generations" on the back, which is all we know. From their dresses it looks late 1890s to early 1900s. Are they in mourning? I can only really fit the three youngest in my tree if they are:  
Mary Ann Phillips, born 1834,  
Emma Simpson, born 1856,  
and Edith North, born 1879,  
all in Wokingham.



This nineteenth-century man could be a Marshall from Wokingham or Finchampstead. The photo was taken by F W Wood Ltd of 347a and 349 Edgware Road, London.

This sailor is an RN rating from *HMS Hampshire*, which was sunk in 1916 with only 12 survivors. There are three Marshalls in the list of dead and survivors, but none fits. He could be a Marshall from Wokingham.





Bess, 19, photographed by W S Wyles of Kings Road, Reading, c1866 or 1879. She could be a Marshall from Wokingham or Finchampstead.

**If you think you know who any of these people are please contact Graham on the address opposite.**

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## **EXHIBITION TO COMMEMORATE GREAT SHEFFORD'S WAR DEAD**

As a tribute to those from Great Shefford who died while serving during both world wars, an exhibition to commemorate them will be held in Great Shefford village hall on 13 and 14 September this year. The war memorial in St Mary's churchyard has 27 names.

### *First World War*

**Ernest Brown**  
**William Brown**  
**Albert Brown**  
**Brice and William Elijah Brown (brothers)**  
**Frank Davis**  
**Tom Goodall**  
**Jesse Hamblin**  
**George Harris**  
**Alfred Hobbs**  
**Arthur and Thomas Hudson (brothers)**

### *Second World War*

**Edwin Brown**  
**Charles Pike**  
**Fred Purton**

**Stewart Langford**  
**Albert Perris**  
**Edward Pike**  
**Sidney Purton**  
**Stanley Robinson**  
**James Rolfe**  
**Arthur and Edwin Sampson (brothers)**  
**Ernest Seymour**  
**Frederick Walters**

**Leslie Weeks**  
**Timothy Whatley**

Families of these men have scattered far and wide. The organisers are trying to contact as many of them as possible to learn more about the men who died. In particular, they hope to include a photograph of each one. Do you know a relative of one of the men? Do you know the surnames of any sisters or daughters who married? Do you know where families went when they moved away? If you think you might have any useful information, or want to know more, please email [exhibition@sheffordarchives.co.uk](mailto:exhibition@sheffordarchives.co.uk).

*from*  
**Liz Saunders,**  
*parish archivist of*  
*Great Shefford*  
*exhibition@*  
*sheffordarchives.co.uk*

## BREAD FOR THE TROOPS

from  
**Janet Welch**  
(7664)  
bakerboytom@  
gmail.com

My great-grandfather, Thomas Martin, was born on 28 January 1882 to George and Rebecca (née Clark) Martin in Forest Road, Wokingham. Son of a general labourer, he lived and worked in this area until he joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment at the age of 15, listing his trade as baker. He went on to have a good career in the army, transferring to the Army Service Corps (ASC) in 1901, and rising through the ranks to sergeant major quartermaster.

Whilst in Gibraltar with the Royal Berkshires he met my great-grandmother, Victoria Redman, a local girl of Anglo-Spanish descent. She died on a posting to South Africa, bleeding to death from an ectopic pregnancy, leaving my great-grandfather with six young children.

When the First World War broke out he was at the front within three days, and stayed there for the duration of the war. In 1916 he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), a military decoration second only to the Victoria Cross, awarded to other ranks and non-commissioned personnel. His was one of only 335 awarded to the ASC. His citation reads: *For continuous good services throughout the campaign as Master Baker in charge of a bakery. He displayed conspicuous ability and resource in starting the bakery, and its success has been largely owing to his energy and capacity for hard work.*

A military expert at The National Archives at *WhoDoYouThinkYouAre?Live* 2014 told me that there is very little known material on bakeries in the First World War. I was urged to undertake the ground-breaking research necessary to uncover the bakers' stories. Since then I have met with the curator of the Royal Logistics Museum and, with his support, I am embarking on this research. Can you help? I am looking for names and details of:

- Men who were bakers when they enlisted;
- Men who were employed in the field bakeries during the war;
- Any mention of baking or bread in letters or postcards home or war diaries/journals;
- Any women who volunteered and worked in the field bakeries.

I would also like to know what happened back at home. Did any of your ancestors work in the bakeries back at home? Do you have any information about bread back at home, rationing or community baking?

I would love to hear any information, however small, and it will be greatly appreciated. Please send your information or any further questions to me at [bakerboytom@gmail.com](mailto:bakerboytom@gmail.com).

---

## SEEKING PTE E BOND

from  
**Monica  
Thompson**  
(Swindon FHS)  
monthompson@  
btinternet.com

My quest is to find the owners of a medal which was in my husband's grandfather's belongings when he died. We thought it might have been his, but on looking on the side of the medal it reads:

**Pte E Bond 37803 R Berks R**

I've been in touch with the regimental museum in Salisbury, but they were unable to help, although they would like the medal for the museum. It would be nice to return it to the family, especially for the centenary.

*Tony Wright (6776) subsequently traced on Ancestry an image of Pte Bond's WW1 medal card, which shows that he received the Victory and British medals, and that he was in two regiments:*

*Royal Berkshire Regiment, number 37803*

*Royal Warwickshire Regiment, number 44811.*

Tony could not find a service record or pension record under either number.

# Members' surname interests

*directory maintained by Bob Plumridge  
memsec@berksfhs.org.uk*

## Additions this quarter

### 7661 W Witchard

61 Dower Walk, Gossops Green, Crawley RH11 8HX  
billw61@blueyonder.co.uk

|      |          |     |     |          |
|------|----------|-----|-----|----------|
| 7661 | ATTWATER | All | ALL | pre 1700 |
| 7661 | BRADLEY  | All | ALL | pre 1800 |
| 7661 | ELSEY    | All | SRY | pre 1700 |
| 7661 | GODSMARK | All | SSX | pre 1500 |
| 7661 | HOPKINS  | All | ALL | pre 1850 |
| 7661 | VARNEY   | All | ALL | pre 1800 |
| 7661 | WITCHARD | All | ALL | pre 1800 |
| 7661 | WHITCHER | All | ALL | pre 1800 |

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## PRACTICAL FAMILY HISTORY

### *The family historian's enquire within* 6th edition

Janet Few (The Family History Partnership, 2014), paperback, 18 x 25cm, 293pp  
Shop £12.95, UK £16.66, airmail £24.98

In the days before Google, libraries would keep a shelf of essential reference works behind the enquiry desk to answer Frequently Asked Questions. This shelf would hold a bus and train timetable, various encyclopaedias and directories, *Who's Who*, some well-thumbed lists of authors and a couple of street maps. If the library was a local history centre, the librarian would probably also have made room for a copy of *The family historian's enquire within*.

This invaluable book was first published more than 28 years ago, and this is the first reprint since the fifth edition came out in 1995. With the internet driving such huge changes in family history research in the intervening years it was high time for an overhaul, although as editor, Janet Few acknowledges in her introduction, *Enquire within* still had its part to play.

"It is a tribute to the volume's usefulness," she writes "that, despite the many innovations since it was produced, the last edition was still the one book I would turn to when asked to man a family history help desk."

*Enquire within* is not a glossary, nor a how-to manual, nor a bibliography; it manages to be all three at once, and a lot more besides. Dr Few and her team have attempted to include "everything that most family historians will require" so the

chances are that they have covered topics you never even knew you needed. It is worth buying just for the relationship chart on page 237, but you will also find definitions of obscure terms alongside an explanation of internet podcasts, exhaustive booklists on anything from gunmakers to Roman Catholicism, and helpful website addresses. Major topics like military ancestors, civil registration, overseas records and domestic servants rub shoulders with paragraphs about fan makers, remittance men and the history of hockey.

Here and there a quirky little fact will emerge: "Folklore has it that if the first fire fighters to reach the scene were rivals of the company who insured the property... they were most likely to leave the fire burning." For the most part, however, the contributors concentrate on making sure that if they can't give you the answer, at least they can point you in the direction of someone who can.

Useful as it is, this book is not without fault. Two or three glaring typographical errors might create doubts as to its accuracy elsewhere, and some entries are so sketchy they will send readers running to *Wikipedia* for more information. There are inconsistencies in the cross-referencing and, although declaring itself to be more than a beginners' guide, it still includes a few surprisingly basic definitions.

There is also the problem that, with the best will in the world, any reference book is likely to be overtaken by events (and the internet) before it has left the publisher. However, your reviewer benefited from it so much that she bought her own copy.

**Grace Gillions**



***Putting your ancestors in their place: a guide to one-place studies***

Janet Few (The Family History Partnership, 2014), A5, perfect bound, 96pp  
Shop £ 7.95, UK £10.12, airmail £14.00.

The author is a well-known and experienced historical interpreter, lecturer, family, social and community historian. She works as a historical interpreter, spending time living in the seventeenth-century as Mistress Agnes. Her recent works include *The family historian's enquire within* (2014) and *Coffers, clysters, comfrey and coifs: the lives of our seventeenth-century ancestors* (2012).

The sub-title of this book, *A guide to one-place studies*, may suggest that it holds only limited interest for family historians, but the book is just as valuable to family and local historians as it is to students of the history of one place, as researches into these three historical branches frequently overlap and support each other. The author's experienced style means the main text of the book is clear and well written.

The author has divided the twelve chapters of the book into three parts: *Setting the scene*; *Sources for one-place studies*; and *Pulling it all together*.

The first part of the book, of three chapters, describes how to choose your location: understand its boundaries and route ways, and get to know its past and present inhabitants. The next seven chapters comprise the second part, and they look at the main research sources available, century by century, highlighting the most useful sources for each period. The final part deals with putting the gathered information together, making connections through kinship webs, occupations and residential histories. Dr Few rounds off her book with example one-place study websites, and references to relevant magazines, societies and courses.

The main text of the book comprises short articles, often including website sources of information. Frequently scattered throughout the book are the project "homework" articles on each topic, together with practical advice on completing the

project task. The latter often give added clarity to the main text articles preceding them, although some readers may find their inclusion disrupting to the flow of the main text.

While this book is principally concerned with one-place studies, it does nonetheless provide a wealth of useful information to family historians, particularly for those who need to find less usual sources of information on their ancestors or wish to flesh out the times and social contexts of their forebears. As such this interesting and readable book can be thoroughly recommended to family historians.

**Tony Roberts**

***Methodist records for family historians***

Richard Ratcliffe (The Family History Partnership, 2014), A5, stapled, 32pp  
Shop £4.95, UK £5.87, air mail £7.85

The author was part-time archivist at Westminster Central Hall for seven years. This book is a revised and enlarged edition of his earlier *Basic facts about...* booklet.

The book is divided into 17 short chapters. The first four comprise a brief history of Methodism from 1739 to 1932 and describe how Methodism is organised. There are three chapters setting out the basis of record keeping within the Methodist movement and a useful listing of *Other printed sources*.

The recent establishment of the Methodist Heritage group is described. This group is "to conserve and make available to visitors Methodist artefacts, archive, historic sites, and listed chapels." The principal locations of the records identified by Methodist Heritage are listed.

The locations of Methodist records in Wales, Scotland and Ireland are identified. The booklet concludes with listing of important printed sources and a select bibliography.

This booklet is like a Tardis: much more detailed information is inside the booklet than could be imagined by its modest size.

**Ivan Dickason**

# Berkshire FHS Research Centre

## *what's in it for you?*



**Yeomanry House,  
131 Castle Hill  
Reading  
Berkshire RG1 7TJ  
0118 950 9553**

**<researchcentre@berksfhs.org.uk>**

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

Admission 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).

### **Opening hours are:**

**Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays: 10.00 to 16.00**

Tuesday evening opening is currently under review: see website for announcement

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

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 baptisms**
- Berkshire miscellaneous index**
- Berkshire probate**
- 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.

Ground floor: reception area, computer suite with **seven PCs** with internet access, **bookshop**, refreshment facilities and cloakrooms  
First floor: **library** (see below), fiche readers, magazine archive

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**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:

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- Berkshire probate
- 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 5,000 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](http://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:** 39 volumes from 1975 to the present day

- **£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](mailto: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 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 top left.

# *If Gray had had to write his elegy in the cemetery of Spoon River instead of in that of Stoke Poges*

*A thought, perhaps, for those who toil for the society in churchyards, sent in by **Paul Wilkins (7670)**. This parody was written by Sir John Collings Squire in the 1930s, presumably for an American readership, given the references to the whippoorwill, the Spoon river and a bull-moose. If anybody knows who Clafin's Moll was, the editor would like to know.*

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The whippoorwill salutes the rising moon,  
And wanly glimmer in her gentle ray,  
The sinuous windings of the turbid Spoon.

Here where the flattering and mendacious swarm  
Of lying epitaphs their secrets keep,  
At last incapable of further harm  
The lewd forefathers of the village sleep.

The earliest drug of half-awakened morn,  
Cocaine or hashish, strychnine; poppy-seeds  
Or fiery produce of fermented corn  
No more shall start them on the day's misdeeds.

For them no more the whetstone's cheerful noise,  
No more the sun upon his daily course  
Shall watch them savouring the genial joys,  
Of murder, bigamy, arson and divorce.

Here they all lie; and, as the hour is late,  
O stranger, o'er their tombstones cease to stoop,  
But bow thine ear to me and contemplate  
The unexpurgated annals of the group.

There are two hundred only: yet of these  
Some thirty died of drowning in the river,  
Sixteen went mad, ten others had DTs,  
And twenty-eight cirrhosis of the liver.

Several by absent-minded friends were shot,  
Still more blew out their own exhausted brains,  
One died of a mysterious inward rot,  
Three fell off roofs, and five were hit by trains.

One was harpooned, one gored by a bull-moose,  
Four on the Fourth fell victims to lock-jaw,  
Ten in electric chair or hempen noose  
Suffered the last exaction of the law.

Stranger, you quail, and seem inclined to run;  
But, timid stranger, do not be unnerved;  
I can assure you that there was not one  
Who got a tithe of what he had deserved.

Full many a vice is born to thrive unseen,  
Full many a crime the world does not discuss,  
Full many a pervert lives to reach a green  
Replete old age, and so it was with us.

Here lies a parson who would often make  
Clandestine rendezvous with Clafin's Moll,  
And 'neath the druggist's counter creep to take  
A sip of surreptitious alcohol.

And here a doctor, who had seven wives,  
And, fearing this ménage might seem grotesque,  
Persuaded six of them to spend their lives  
Locked in a drawer of his private desk.

And others here there sleep who, given scope,  
Had writ their names large on the Scrolls of Crime,  
Men who, with half a chance, might haply cope  
With the first miscreants of recorded time.

Doubtless in this neglected spot is laid  
Some village Nero who has missed his due,  
Some Bluebeard who dissected many a maid,  
And all for naught, since no one ever knew.

Some poor bucolic Borgia here may rest,  
Whose poisons sent whole families to their doom  
Some hayseed Herod who, within his breast,  
Concealed the sites of many an infant's tomb.

Types that the Muse of Masefield might have  
stirred,  
Or waked to ecstasy Gaboriau,  
Each in his narrow cell at last interred,  
All, all are sleeping peacefully below.

Enough, enough! But stranger, ere we part,  
Glancing farewell to each nefarious bier,  
This warning I would beg you take to heart,  
"There is an end to even the worst career!"