

009 1st May

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



The Maiwand Lion, Forbury Gardens, Reading commemorates Berkshire soldiers killed in the 1880 Afghan Campaign. When erected it was said to be the largest Lion Statue in the world.

[by Tom Bastin from Reading, UK](#) / [Licensed under CC 2.0](#)





Every edition of **in touch** features an image of Historic Berkshire, sourced from various online libraries.

But what about **your** library? Do you have any photos, of Berkshire landmarks, buildings, panoramas or points of interest that we could feature (with full credit given, of course)?

You **do**? Fantastic, then all you need to do is email them to:

webmaster@berksfhs.org.uk

*The images must be ones where you own the copyright.
Landscape images with a blue or broken sky are best, please.
We may crop images to suit the page layout.*



Lockdown Week # ... where are we up to now? It's all starting to get a bit hazy, and it looks as though the weather's on the change too.

However, there are still lots of family history action items to keep us busy. We've lined up another batch of sites for you to explore and a couple of new online events to help you make the best of them.

We've had some great feedback about the newsletters and how they're helping members feel connected when face-to-face meetings aren't possible. We're happy to help and it's taught **us** a thing or two about our members' willingness to embrace digital formats. The number of members who read our newsletters is more than 50% greater than is typical for charities. That's exceptional, so thank you, **everyone!**

And do, please, look have a look through your photos. Berkshire is a beautiful county - let's showcase it to our out-of-county members in our upcoming newsletters

NEWSLETTERS.



Events

Reading (Town) During the reign of Elizabeth I - Talk

If you like the Tudor period, have an interest in social history, or even have ancestors in Reading during this period, you're in for a treat with Joan Dil's talk at 2pm UK time on Thursday 21st May.

Joan's talk, on Reading during the reign of Elizabeth I, will be online, so you can listen and watch from wherever you live.

You just need an internet connected computer device with microphone, speakers and preferably a webcam. It is easy to connect – we send you the link and you click and follow the simple instructions. We even have an easy to follow guide on the society's website, under help.

Following the closure of the abbey in the 1530s, Reading's economy went into decline, such that it was bankrupt at the commencement of Elizabeth's reign. During her reign, Reading became a thriving, growing town with a population of about three thousand but it was still beset by epidemic disease and poverty.

Queen Elizabeth I paid many visits to Reading, the last of which was in 1602: she would stay at the abbey, which was still a royal palace, and attend services at St. Laurence's Church.

About Joan: Joan Dils is an experienced local historian and writer specialising in 16th and 17th century Berkshire. Her latest book, "History of Reading", was published in October 2019. She is an Honorary Visiting Fellow in History at the University of Reading and a former part-time lecturer in local history at both Reading and Oxford Universities.

The talk costs just £4 for members, and pre-booking is required. Don't miss the opportunity to secure your place

[Book Now](#)

[Ancestry](#) is offering free access to its entire UK records collection from 4 to 10 May as part of the 75th-anniversary celebrations of VE Day.

The family history website's millions of UK records include census and parish records, military records, and the [1939 Register](#), which records the civilian population of England and Wales on the eve of the Second World War.



News from The National Archives

[The National Archives \(TNA\)](#) has announced free access to its digital records for as long as its Kew facility is closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The records, which are normally available to download for £3.50 each, include First World War records and 1348-1858 wills. **To access them, family historians will need to register for a free account with Discovery, TNA's online catalogue.** They can then order and download up to 10 items at a time, with a limit of 50 items over 30 days.

Records include:

- the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) probate records - available for free for the first time.
- some of the First World War collections
 - including: 1914-1920 British Army medal index cards
 - 1914-22 war diaries, 1914-18 prisoner of war interviews
 - 1914-18 nurses' service records
 - records of women who served in the Army Auxiliary Corps and Royal Navy and Air Force
- some Merchant Navy ancestors records are also available, including
 - First and Second World War medals
 - Second World War shipping movement cards.

To help you understand and decipher these records, and find out what else may be available, **the society has some more online workshops coming up including:**

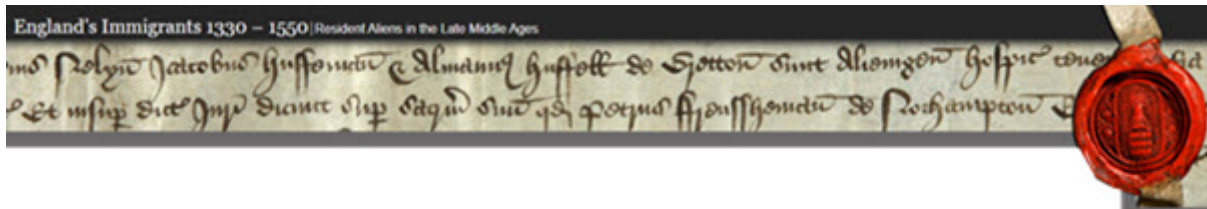


[Merchant Navy Records with Tony Wright on 20th June.](#)

Image copyright: IWM (Q 18497).



[Where there's a will, there's a relative with Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens on 15th August.](#)



England's Immigrants 1330 - 1550

For those fortunate enough to have taken their family research back beyond the start of parish registers - here's a lesser-known website which may yield important clues for you. England's Immigrants 1330-1550, is a fully-searchable database containing over 64,000 names of people known to have migrated to England during the period of the Hundred Years' War and the Black Death, the Wars of the Roses and the Reformation.

The information within this database has been drawn from a variety of published and unpublished records – taxation assessments, letters of denization and protection, and a variety of other licences and grants. **There are 671 results for Berkshire, most immigrants coming from France (79) but others deriving from Germany (38), Ireland (29), Scotland (11) and Flanders (10).**

[Visit the site](#)

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Legacies of British Slave-ownership



The Legacies of British Slave-ownership

This website has been out for a few years now, but was extensively updated earlier this year and now has updated databases and new collections and biographies. Colonial slavery shaped modern Britain and we all still live with its legacies. This website preserves the stories of both the enslaved men and women, and slave-owners.

[Visit the site](#)

CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Just launched. The CWGC's enquiry files (Efiles) are part of a collection of nearly 3,000 files which have never been made available to the public before. Nearly half have been digitised so far, alongside a previously unreleased collection of more than 16,000 photographs held in negatives in the Commission's archive. Happy hunting!

[Visit the site](#)

HM Passport Office

General Register Office

Official information on births, adoptions, marriages,
civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales

General Register Office delays!

This enforced downtime may be the golden opportunity to catch up on our

research, but Covid-19 means that the **GRO online ordering service is advising of possible delays in completing orders** within normal timescales. It also asks that people consider delaying orders to give priority to those who need copy certificates urgently (e.g. for non-family history research purposes.)

[Visit the site](#)



Berkshire Family History Society
for family history research - in Berkshire and beyond

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