

Berkshire Family Historian



*The quarterly journal of the
Berkshire Family History Society*

June 2020
Volume 43



Inside this issue:

New CD releases

From Reading to Adelaide

What price a wife?

The workhouse's impact on the life of inmates

Berkshire Family History Society

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Publisher: Berkshire Family History Society. Registered charity No.: 283010

Printer: *Joshua Horgan Print & Design, Unit 2 Glenmore Business Park, Range Road, Witney, Oxon OX29 0AA*

Non-deliveries should be returned to: *Berkshire Family History Society, The Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ*

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ISSN: 1468-1080

Submissions to the editorial panel

All submissions to the editorial panel will be considered to be offered for publication in the magazine and on the society's website, unless accompanied by a clear statement to the contrary. If the written piece asks for a response from readers, permission to publish contact details will be assumed.

Copy deadlines are 24 December for the March issue, 24 March for the June issue, 24 June for the September issue and 24 September for the December issue.

Front cover image

River Kennet in Reading by Mark Aparcar.

Berkshire Family Historian

The quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society

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(excluding living people, authors of sources, royalty, corporate names, glancing reference to famous people and members' interests).

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to your *Berkshire Family Historian* for June. This issue contains important information regarding the Society's Annual General Meeting, as well as members' personal stories and a round-up from the branches. It also brings news of two new CDs.

The COVID-19 situation has resulted in a number of changes to our normal content. No forthcoming Fairs and Events section – sadly most have now been cancelled through to the late summer. No back pages devoted to Branch meetings, the website remains the best source for these. Normally this edition brings news of the society's AGM, and the Branches' Annual Meetings. The latter will now take place almost certainly online in July and August, the former will now take place in September. See page three for more details and look out for further updates in the society's website and newsletters.

The *Historian* is but one of the society's vehicles to keep you informed, alongside newsletters. Find out more in the Webmaster's Update and in

the inside back cover. Don't also forget to make use of the society's forum on the website. It is an excellent way of exchanging hints and tips, discovering new records and getting and giving help to solve those annoying blocks we all find at some point when researching our family histories. Its usefulness will have been fully demonstrated through this period of social isolation.

As always, we welcome articles from our readers, and are always grateful for the effort. Please send anything you feel would be of interest to others to us at editor@berksfhs.org.uk. Long or short articles, it doesn't matter, they all count and are welcomed.

Vicki Chesterman
editor@berksfhs.org.uk

Chairman's Corner



In recent months, we have been living through uncertain times and I hope that you are all keeping healthy and safe. Thank you for your unflinching support through these troubled times and your kind comments in response to our efforts to keep

the society proactively supporting you and maintaining the momentum we have worked so hard to achieve. Please do continue to support the society by renewing your membership.

As I write, The Centre for Heritage and Family History remains closed and the activities which usually take place there have been largely moved online. As have, temporarily, the society's subscriptions to Findmypast Worldwide and The Genealogist. Face to face Branch Meetings are

also on hold, however increasing numbers are now moving online so please refer to the society's website for up to date details. The society's newsletter, which only began fairly recently, is currently weekly to support you with content and changes. Achieving these transformations in such a short period of time has taken considerable effort from our team of volunteers - thank you all for your efforts and creativity on behalf of all of our membership.

Whilst we miss the face to face contact, the society's recent technological transformation has brought many benefits, not least because more of our activities and benefits are now available to more members, regardless of where they live. Whatever the new "normal" may look like ahead, we will undoubtedly want to retain as many of the positives from this experience as we can.

Keep safe.

Catherine Sampson
chairman@berksfhs.org.uk

Society Annual General Meeting and election of officers and trustees

It is with regret that we must inform you that the Annual General Meeting planned for Thursday 4th June 2020 at Wokingham Town Hall, has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions on gatherings.

We are looking to set a new date in September 2020. Details will be published on the website and in the regular electronic newsletter by mid-August. Please ensure that your contact details and contact preferences are kept up to date, so

that you can be informed of developments when they occur. This can be easily done on the website **help > communication preferences**.

Members who have no internet access or email who wish to be involved in the AGM should write to the Secretary (address on the inside front cover) with your membership number and stamped addressed envelope, so that AGM details can be sent to you.

Membership Renewal 2020

As part of our digital transformation, we were already planning to update the way we handle 2020 membership renewals. Previously, this was a manual process that required enormous effort from our volunteer Membership Secretary. The new process provides a speedy online renewal facility, which will make Bob Plumridge's task far easier. Payments are handled by the Stripe Payment Gateway which is quick and secure. We do not store your card details on our site.

Please renew online this year, if at all possible, for everyone's safety.

Coronavirus Covid-19, however, has made the need for a more automated membership process even more important this year for everyone's safety. So please would you renew online, if at all possible, rather than by sending in a cheque. For some members, renewal by cheque will be their only option and we completely understand that. But if we can keep cheques to the minimum, we will reduce the number of journeys substantially during these difficult times.

When should you renew online?

Some of you have already renewed. Thank you. If you haven't then, to smooth the flow of transactions through our system please would you follow this timetable

Surname begins	Renewal window
A - E	1st - 7th June
F - L	8th - 14th June
M - Z	15th - 21st June

Paper Renewal Forms

This edition of the Historian may be coming to you online or in physical form, depending on the situation at time of press. If online, a renewal form will be available on the internet to print off, should you be unable to renew online. This will also be posted to members who have no email address and those who have never opened any of our newsletters, so may no longer have access to the internet. Please do, however, only renew by cheque if you cannot renew online.

Standing Orders

Last quarter, we asked those who paid by standing order to inform their bank of the new amount in good time. Hopefully you have done that, if you haven't yet, please also consider swapping to online renewal to reduce the administrative burden on our Membership Secretary.

Late renewal

Please do renew on time so that you can continue enjoying your membership benefits –there is no grace period.

Thank you for your continued support.

From Reading to Adelaide

Dennis Grover follows his paternal great-grandfather Fred Grover's journey to Australia

Fred was born in Reading, Berkshire on May 2nd 1855 to parents James Grover (1827-1914) and Sarah Grover, nee Butler (1833-1892). From a near-on unreadable entry on his birth certificate it reads, to me, that he was born at 7 Minster Cottages, Reading. Fred was the eldest of eight children. He was baptised in the church of Saint Mary (The Minster) Reading on May 2nd 1858 with his two following male born siblings. Fred's siblings were: - William James Grover (1856-1952), John Grover (1858-1934), Emily Grover (1860-1952), Harry Grover (1863-1940), Sarah Annie Grover (1867-1959), Lucy Grover (1869-1949) and Miriam Elizabeth Grover (1874-1936).

The 1861 census has Fred living with family in Chatham Street, Reading, being six years of age and a scholar. There is a family story that at the age of twelve Fred's father gave him a small magnifying glass in a brass case and which had a brass chain. Indeed, there is a photo of Fred later in life in Queensland, Australia, showing the magnifying glass with the chain looped from a



Fred Grover

buttonhole to a top pocket in his jacket. The 1871 census, which was the last one taken before Fred emigrated to Australia, has the family living in Leopold Road, Reading, with Fred being sixteen years of age and employed as a smith.

For unknown reasons Fred registered to emigrate to Australia. He is recorded on the passenger list of the "Ramsey" and being nineteen years of age. The "Ramsey" is reported sailing past The Lizard on March 8th 1874, crossing the equator on March 29th 1874, and arrived at Moreton Bay, Queensland on June 8th 1874. The voyage was recorded as being uneventful and fast. Upon arrival the ship's crew and passengers were held in quarantine for six days as several children were suspected of having measles. When the passengers were released from quarantine they were highly sought after. The Australian newspapers of the time reported, "*the men are of great commercial value*" and that "*suitable immigrants have all been engaged – single men at wages from £35 to £40 per annum, and married couples from £45 to £60 with rations*".

Fred settled in Ipswich, 30 kms south-west of Brisbane, where he worked in a mine named "Coal Pit Gully". Following a short residence in Ipswich he moved 40 kms inland to the town of Laidley where he worked as an agricultural labourer working with sheep and cattle. With a minor medical problem Fred had need to attend the local hospital.

There he met the hospital domestic, Janet Bromley Kirkwood (1860-1949), his future wife. Janet was the daughter of George Bromley Kirkwood (alias Samuel Bromley) (c1825-1898) a "Ticket-of-Leave" convict, originally from Cheshire, England and Agnes Kirkwood (nee Johnstone) (1836-1890) originally from Kinross-shire, Scotland. Fred and Janet married in Ipswich, at her parent's residence, on June 23rd 1879. They settled in North Ipswich and had four children: - Agnes Cecilia Grover (1880-1972), James Grover (1885-1945), Sarah Elizabeth Grover (1886-1964) and Alan Frederick Grover (1889-1976).

Records have been found that by early 1890s the family were living in the gold-fields town of



Janet Grover (nee Kirkwood)

Charters Towers which is approximately 1,070 kms north-west of Brisbane.

Around this time Charters Towers was experiencing a gold rush and was rightly known as “a wealthy town and a place to get wealth”. Fred and Janet purchased a house and land in Stubbley Street, Charters Towers. Although they were not involved in mining they did have, as most people, a Homestead Gold Mining Licence, which enabled them to claim any gold found on their property. This relocation might not have been a wise decision as Fred began suffering severe asthma attacks. Fred worked as a drover and later as a house painter and Janet worked as a domestic for several of the local families. Fred’s health deteriorated and he passed away at home on July 2nd 1902 at the recorded age of forty-seven. He was buried in the Charters Towers Cemetery the next day. The death certificate states the cause of death was “Enlargement of the liver, waxy dropsy and chronic gastric catarrh”.

A month after Fred’s passing Janet was encouraged by her eldest daughter to relocate to Western Australia. Janet agreed and auctioned the property and most of the family possessions.

On August 21st 1902 Janet and her children are recorded embarking on the “SS Allinga” in Townsville, Queensland for a twenty-two-day voyage to Albany, Western Australia.

In Western Australia, Janet and children settled in Katanning, approximately 250 kms south-east of the capital city of Perth. Janet was involved in successfully owning several boarding and eating establishments until her retirement in 1919. On retirement she moved to Subiaco, a suburb of Perth. Janet passed away on November 4th 1949, after a serious fall at home.

Following Janet’s death, the family found numerous items of interest, including her diary, Fred’s magnifying glass, photos of Fred and Janet, photos of Janet’s parents, and what is believed to be photos of Fred’s parents and siblings from Reading. Yes! ... the same old problem no name or comments on the back, just the studio name and logo on the front. Another interesting find was a damaged white china milk jug. The family story associated with this is that Fred brought it out from England and Janet treasured it. On Janet’s passing it was placed at the foot of her gravesite, where it remains.

In early 1907, Fred and Janet’s eldest son, James decided to travel to other states of Australia. His first venture from Western Australia was to Tasmania which included a stop-over in Yongala and Adelaide, South Australia. After exploring the state of Tasmania for ten months he made the decision to return to Adelaide, where he went into business as a saddle and harness maker. Three years later he married Elsie Effield Cullinan (1884-1940). They had one child, Howard Bromley Grover (1917-1994) who married Ella Elizabeth Skeer (1917-2009) - my parents. Howard and Ella lived their lives in Adelaide, South Australia.

Events from the Centre for Heritage and Family History

June - September 2020

The coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic led to the postponing, cancelling or the adaptation into online webinars of all of our quarter two events. At the time of writing this update The Centre remains closed and the situation ahead remains very uncertain.

As we prepared this update, all the indications suggest that there will be a need to continue social distancing for some time into the future. As a consequence, we have once again reviewed our planned event programme and moved as much online as possible. The great news is that this means that our events are available to everyone, if the time zone allows, where ever in the world you live. So please do take advantage of this, and remember that most society events are available at a discount to members. In this quarter's update, we also bring you news of a new ten week course in quarter four for which bookings are already being taken.

The society is using Zoom to deliver its webinars. The software and link required to attend each event is sent to delegates by email in advance, so pre-booking is required. No software purchase is required by attendees. To access Zoom, you will need a computer device such as a laptop or tablet which has a microphone, speakers and preferably a camera (latter not essential however). There are comprehensive guidance notes on the society's website **Help > Webinar Help Guides**.

Please do continue to regularly check the website, as changes may occur and new events are regularly added. If the society has to cancel an event, we will always try to offer an alternative date, if possible, and also a full refund to everyone booked if any substitute date is not convenient.

Book and pay online at <https://berksfhs.org>. To claim your member discount - simply select the member ticket option.

Natter Group - Online and FREE	
June - Tuesday 2nd	Informal discussion group facilitated by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. Topics are chosen by the group on a monthly basis. Past discussions have included migration, census, birth registration and wills. Pre-booking required. 6.45pm for 7.00pm start.
July - Tuesday 7th	
August - Tuesday 4th	
September - Tuesday 1st	

Course - Online (advanced notice for quarter 4)	
TICKETS £125 (members £115) Places limited, pre-booking required.	
October - 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th November - 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th December - 4th Fridays, 2.00 - 4.00pm	Victorian Sources for Historians Course: <i>with Dr Margaret Simons</i> Build your knowledge of Victorian sources in this ten week course. The nineteenth century is a treasure trove of documents relating to the lives of our Victorian forebears. A selection of these sources will be used to provide context and a sense of period, whilst developing our knowledge of what is available from museums, archives, libraries and record offices. During the course we will consider the type of sources available and using a themed approach uncover what life was like in the 19th century, a period that witnessed profound change and development. There will also be an opportunity to apply learning in a small project.

Social History Talks - Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking is required. Book all five talks in the 'Second World War' series, which starts August 2020, for the price of four.

<p>June – Saturday 6th 12.00 – 1.00pm 'Royalty' Final talk in series</p>	<p>Resisting the Virgin Queen: <i>with Tony Hadland</i> During her long reign, Queen Elizabeth I faced continued resistance from the dwindling but still significant minority of her subjects who remained loyal to Roman Catholicism. This talk describes the very different strategies adopted by three notable Catholics, with homes close to Reading: one of Mary Tudor's strongest supporters, Francis Englefield of Englefield House; the celebrated Elizabethan lawyer Edmund Plowden of Shiplake; and William Wollascott, a lawyer who lived at Tidmarsh. But who was the most successful at resisting the Virgin Queen?</p>
<p>August - Thursday 6th 2.00 – 3.00pm 'Second World War' 1st talk in series</p>	<p>Reading in the Second World War: <i>with Stuart Hylton</i> Based upon the speaker's book <i>Reading at War</i>, this talk will explore how the war affected Reading and its citizens. From the victims of war, both military and civilian, the privations and shortages; examples of heroism and self-sacrifice; and in contrast, the black market and war-related crime. It will look at the relationship between the townspeople and the 25,000 or so evacuees visited on them in September 1939; it will be illustrated by examples of wartime advertising and with the ethos of make do and mend, as the public struggled to cope with the lack of things to buy.</p>
<p>August – Thursday 13th 2.00 – 3.00pm 'Second World War' 2nd talk in series</p>	<p>Reading's Home Guard: <i>with Mike Cooper</i> Formed in 1940, the Home Guard was part of a long list of voluntary and part-time formations raised for local defence. Despite the bumbling image created by the BBC classic "Dad's Army", the force emerged as a well-trained, well equipped and highly motivated part of Britain's defences. Find out about Reading's Home Guard in this fascinating talk.</p>
<p>August – Saturday 22nd 12.00 – 1.00pm 'Second World War' 3rd talk in series</p>	<p>The Battle of Britain: <i>with Richard Marks</i> In 1940, Britain stood alone following the fall of France. With the German army poised across the channel, only the RAF could prevent the Luftwaffe from gaining the air supremacy needed to successfully mount the expected invasion. Historian Richard Marks will look at how the RAF's systems and equipment allowed them to prevent the invasion.</p>
<p>September - Thursday 3rd 2.00 – 3.00pm 'Second World War' 4th talk in series</p>	<p>Women in World War Two: <i>with Bill King</i> Discover how the talents of women were integrated into the British war effort on the Home Front, in industry and in the Armed Services at every level during World War Two. Bill is a popular speaker and his talks are meticulously researched.</p>
<p>September – Thursday 24th 2.00 – 3.00pm 'Second World War' 5th talk in series</p>	<p>The Changing Army: The British Army 1939 - 1945: <i>with Mike Cooper</i> The Second World War mobilised British society in a way no other had and this was reflected in the changing composition of the Army. The Army also adapted to different conditions, environments and technology. Discover how the Army was structured, recruited and supported and how this changed during the War. What "being in the Army" meant could vary enormously from being a pay clerk in Manchester, to a tank crewman in Rangoon. A must for anyone with ancestors who fought in the war.</p>

DNA Interest Group - Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

This is a member priority event. Special interest discussion group for those wanting to get the most out of their DNA results, facilitated by international DNA expert, Debbie Kennett. Meets quarterly. Pre-booking required.

July - Saturday 25th
2.30 - 4.30pm

All welcome.

Workshops - Online

TICKETS £10 (members £9)

Places limited, pre-booking required.

June - Saturday 20th
12.30 - 2.30pm

Merchant Navy Records *Tutor: Tony Wright*

Attendees will discover what records are available and how and where to find them. The workshop will also look at the Seaman's Certificate of Continuous Discharge, Crew Lists, Ship's Logs, Lloyds Register of Shipping, Ship's Movement cards, and some online resources for finding more information.

July - Thursday 16th
2.00 - 4.00pm

Parish Registers *Tutor: Catherine Sampson*

Increase your chances of success with family historians' core resource. Better understand what registers can provide for you, where to find them, how Church of England and non-conformist registers differ, and how to interpret them. Also, indexes and transcripts, their benefits and pitfalls.

August - Saturday 15th
11.00am - 2.00pm
includes break for lunch

Where there's a will, there's a relative *Tutor: Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens*

This workshop will look at wills, pre and post 1858, plus other probate documents, such as inventories, administrations and death duties. Find out their benefits for family historians and where to locate them.

Walks and Tours

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Places are limited, pre-booking required. Please check the website for full details and to see if these will be able to proceed.

August - Thursday 6th
7.30 - 8.30pm

Greyfriars Church Tour
with Malcolm Summers

August - Tuesday 25th
2.00 - 3.00pm

Caversham Court Tour
with Friends of Caversham Court

September - Sunday 6th
2.00 - 3.30pm

Eastern Whiteknights, Reading Walk
with Friends of Reading University

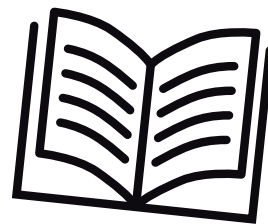
September - Sunday 26th
2.00 - 3.30pm

UoR London Road Campus Walk
with Friends of Reading University

Book Review

Filth, Nuisances and Waste of Wallingford (The Workers and Their Families)

Christina Eke, 176 pages, perfect bound, £12.99, printed privately. Available at Wallingford Bookshop, Town Information Centre and from the Author (Plus £2.00 postage and packing) (chrisdeke@btinternet.com)



This book is about Wallingford people (generally men) who carry out 'dirty' jobs. In the introductory chapter, the author's interest in the workers' social situations are discussed. She describes the living conditions of the labouring classes and the poor in the 17th and 18th centuries: the difficulty of getting about; the lack of decent clothing; the fact that most people did not own their own homes and were tenants or leaseholders. All these things impacted on the tough times of the workers.

The various dirty jobs (trades) are discussed in separate chapters. Each chapter begins with a brief history of the trade set in the context of both central and local government policies and responsibilities. The work done, or functions carried out by each trade, is briefly described so that the reader has some understanding of the circumstance in which the worker must work.

The most interesting and the major part of the book has the listings of the trades together with the names of the workers that have been identified as working in that particular trade. For each of the 200 or so workers found, there are other facts and information about them and their families, such as may be found in censuses and parish registers. Other sources may include newspapers, court reports, wills, leases, trade directories, Acts of Parliament, etc. In the case of Charles Webb, for example, we learn about his father, his uncle, his marriage, some of his addresses, and his children. There are clues about other sources that could be investigated to glean further facts about him.

There is a concluding chapter, 'Finally...' where the author draws comparisons between the circumstance of the 17th and 18th centuries and the present time. Several examples are given of how rubbish and waste is now dealt with including the newer waste management schemes and recycling. The author ends this chapter with an exhortation that the proportion of our waste that is recycled be increased.

There several appendices supplying more background information. These include an Historical Timeline; a Glossary; Notes on [the] Chapters; Other Sources; Further Reading and – most importantly – an Index of Names.

This is a well-researched and interesting book with the background to many of the people of Wallingford and is especially name rich which makes it particularly valuable for family historians with ancestors from Wallingford.

About the Author

The author is a local social historian particularly interested in the less well-off people of Wallingford and their families. Other titles by the author include: *The History of Angie's Almshouses Wallingford (2007)*; *Wallingford's Forgotten Neighbours (Clapcot and All Hallows) (2010)* published by Pie Powder Press; *Public House Families of Wallingford (2015)* (with Lynne Thorpe) and *Local Carriers and their families around Wallingford Area (2019)*.

Ivan Dickason

The workhouse's impact on the life of inmates

Gillian Hazell tells us of her grandmothers' life

My grandmother, Frances Ellen Marshall was born in 1894 to single mother, Elizabeth Marshall, an inmate of Wokingham workhouse, situated in Barkham Road. Two other children were born to Elizabeth in the workhouse, Ida Elizabeth born 1891 and Walter (Wally) Edwin born 1900. For all these three children no father names are entered on their birth certificates. Sadly, Ida Elizabeth died in 1895. There are few records existing from Wokingham workhouse but from what we have seen we think Elizabeth lived at the workhouse almost continually from 1891 to 1930 when it closed. With no obvious answer in the records to explain why Elizabeth should spend so long in the workhouse we had to look at what we did know to build up a picture of her situation.

Her only sister Martha was in service in London, her mother Ellen Marshall (of Hurst, Berks) had died aged 29 years of a lung disease and her grandparents (Richard and Sarah Marshall of Hurst), who had taken her and Martha in after their mothers death, had both passed away. So Elizabeth was alone in the days when there was no social care and none of the wider family seemed to have stepped up. It is also



Frances Ellen Marshall, aged about 18

my suspicion that she may have had a thyroid disorder, we know this disorder has passed down through the family from the Marshall line and untreated, as it could have been at that time, she would have long-term illness and possibly be prone to symptoms of 'madness'. Elizabeth passed away in 1935 soon after the workhouse closed; she was residing at 41 Barkham Road, so she hadn't moved far!

In the 1901 census we find that Frances Ellen has been taken from the workhouse and her mother and placed in a school for paupers, she is aged six. At this time it was considered better for children to be removed from the workhouse wherever possible so that they were not exposed to the bad influences of some of the other inmates. Imagine having no proper roots and then being taken from your mother at six years old to be placed in the paupers' school, a building which was the old workhouse and was now deemed too dilapidated to serve as a workhouse anymore. Wally, still a baby is listed with his mother. It was noted in the workhouse records of 1901 that Frances Ellen was an orphan.

Soon after 1901 Frances Ellen and Wally were fostered by Granny Keen. The problem here is that we didn't know who Granny Keen was or where she lived. This was a huge brick wall for us until my Dad suddenly remembered that Granny Keen's son worked at Broadmoor Hospital. We soon learned from the archivist at Broadmoor that William Gordon Keen and his sister Twissie Grace Keen had both worked at Broadmoor hospital and lived in Reading. We were then able to look at the 1911 census to find Wally living with Mary Ann Keen his foster mother, now aged 10 years and listed as 'adopted'. Meanwhile, Frances Ellen was 16 years old and a housemaid working for a Mr Alfred Jones in Finchampstead, Berks.

Still curious about the circumstances whereby Frances Ellen and Wally should be taken into foster care when they had a living mother, I spoke to Peter Higginbotham who specialises in workhouse history. He explained to me that the authorities at this time actively sought out foster parents for children with no prospects in the workhouses, the foster parents would be paid a small sum on a regular basis for their keep.



Frances Ellen in later life

It would seem that any living parent would be asked for their consent, however it does make you wonder if in reality this really happened. From what I know Frances Ellen and Wally did not know that their mother was still alive and genuinely thought they were orphans, however by all accounts Granny Keen was a kind and loving guardian to both children. My father is

named Gordon after Granny Keen's son and he can remember visiting Granny Keen as a small child so I feel that the relationship between my grandmother and Granny Keen was a good one. It is so sad that Frances Ellen and Wally had a living mother with whom they could have had a relationship.

Frances Ellen met and married my grandfather, Thomas Edward Humphrey, in 1916 at Lingfield, Surrey where Frances was still working in service. At this time Thomas was serving in the army but after the war they moved to Handcross in Sussex where they raised five children. Frances Ellen died aged 47 after years of poor health and is buried in Coulsdon, Surrey. Wally joined the Royal Navy and served during the WW1 and died soon after from tuberculosis.

This is a part of family history which saddened my whole family to the core, my father didn't have a good relationship with his mother (Frances Ellen), he left home to join the Royal Marines when he was fifteen because of his unhappy life at home. As a child he spent every possible moment with his beloved paternal grandparents on their farm, it's only since we have found out more about his mother's early life that he has been able to reflect and understand why she was so difficult.

I would just like to ask that if anyone can add any information or has any comments about my story to please contact me via editor@berksfhs.org.uk

The truth?

Richard Brown shares an example of why you should verify all the stories you've been told

In the March Berkshire Family Historian, the article 'Genealogy Top Tips', tip no. 5 says 'Pick the Brains of family and old family friends while you can and then don't presume that everything they say is true'. To illustrate the point, I came across this in the archives of the Tadley and District History Society (TADS) who live just over the county border in Hampshire:

Samuel (Stan) Stanley 1923 - 1997

Many of you who knew Stan (and his dog) from Stephens Road who died last December may be wondering how the TADS research into his military career is coming along. Stan used to spin many yarns about his exploits with the Paras during the last war. Sadly, none of his stories appear to be true. The Paratroop Regiment in Aldershot could not find his name(s) in any of

their records. Stan, we have since been told, did his National Service as an Army driver. However, something good has come out of our research. In trying to find a possible daughter we did find his sister, brother, and his estranged partner Audrey and in the near future the family will be visiting Tadley to arrange for a memorial to be placed on his grave in the Town Council cemetery near to St Peters Church. Incidentally, the twist to the story was that **Samuel Stanley** was in fact **Stanley Samuel Stanaway**; this came to light when his birth certificate and a passport were found in his house some 6 months after his death even though the Borough Council did a search of his papers at the time of his death! From these it only took our TADS researcher a couple of days to find his sister, who in turn led us to his brother.

The Centre for Heritage and Family History

2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BQ

<https://berksfhs.org.uk> 0118 950 9553 researchcentre@berksfhs.org.uk



Gain a new perspective on your research from the Centre

Update

At the time of preparing this edition of the Historian, the Research Centre remains shut due to the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic. Please check the website for up to date details of the situation.

Whilst the Centre remains closed, the society has successfully negotiated new access arrangements to two of its subscription websites, Findmypast Worldwide and The Genealogist, which allows access to them by all of our members, wherever you are in the world. This is a great opportunity to access new records and extend your family research whilst staying safe and secure in your own home. And it's another great benefit of being a member of Berkshire Family History Society.

Limits and conditions apply – please see the website for more details and for access details (Info / Temporary access to subscription sites). To enable as many of our members as possible access to these subscription accounts, access codes, where needed, will be changed weekly.

Normal opening hours (please check before making a long journey)

Mondays	11.00 to 16.00
Tuesdays	10.30 to 16.00 and 18.45 to 21.00
Saturdays	10.30 to 14.30
And last Thursday in the month	10.30 to 16.00

Main features of the research zone (when we're open).

- **FREE admission** for everyone
- **FREE of charge access to burgeoning online datasets** of Findmypast Worldwide, The 1939 Register, The British Newspaper Archive, Ancestry Worldwide edition and The Genealogist.
- **Research assistants** — society volunteers provide expert advice and support where needed.
- **Printing and photocopying** available for a nominal charge A3 and A4, B&W and colour
- **Dedicated PC preloaded with Berkshire data** (including baptisms, marriages, burials, probate records and trade directories). Data from many other English counties too, including the National Burial Index, 3rd edition.
- **Reference library** containing an extensive collection of primary and secondary source material such as Berkshire trade directories. You can also copy material, subject to provisions of UK copyright law.
- **Microfiche data** available on most English counties.
- **Complementary resources** — Reading's top-class local studies library adjoins the Centre.
- **Quarterly exhibitions** to inspire your research.
- **The Bookshop** with society publications, and a range of products in electronic and print formats. These include transcriptions, indexes, general and local guides for family historians, maps and a selection of local history books for Berkshire and adjoining counties. Browse and purchase at the Centre (credit and debit card payments accepted).
- **Refreshments** - tea and coffee, at just £1.00 a cup.
- **Lockers** to ensure that your personal possessions and valuables stay secure at all times.

Assisting family historians at a distance

The society recognises that not everyone can take up the research benefits of the Centre straight away. Keep in mind that the website, discussion list, and social media like Twitter and Facebook still offer you the means to benefit from the collective expertise and experience of fellow researchers.

In addition, the society offers an established postal /online search service of Berkshire names based on:

- **Berkshire baptisms**
- **Berkshire marriages**
- **Berkshire burials**
- **Berkshire probate index**

Simply nominate a surname (or several surnames) to access information. The detail supplied for each entry will vary depending on the particular database, and the content of any individual record within it. You can request searches online or by post.

Current charges are:

- **Individual database search: £3 per surname per database.** You will receive full details, to a maximum of 25 entries. Where there are more than 25 entries (likely for more commonly encountered Berkshire surnames), the society will let you know what the extra cost would be for supplying them all.
- **Search of all available databases: £6 per specified surname.** You will receive full details, to a maximum of 25 entries per database. Again, the society will advise the extra cost if there are more entries than this.

To obtain an estimate of likely costs for any searches that you are considering, or to resolve any other query, contact berksnamesearch@berksfhs.org.uk

For postal requests, you need to enclose a large A4 self-addressed envelope and stamps to cover return cost. (UK Large Letter size, First Class £1.15, Second Class 88p; Overseas postage costs will be between £2.97 and £3.82 according to country. Prices correct at April 2020). Please note that there may be a long delay with the postal service, until the Centre re-opens, so please use the email contact system if at all possible.

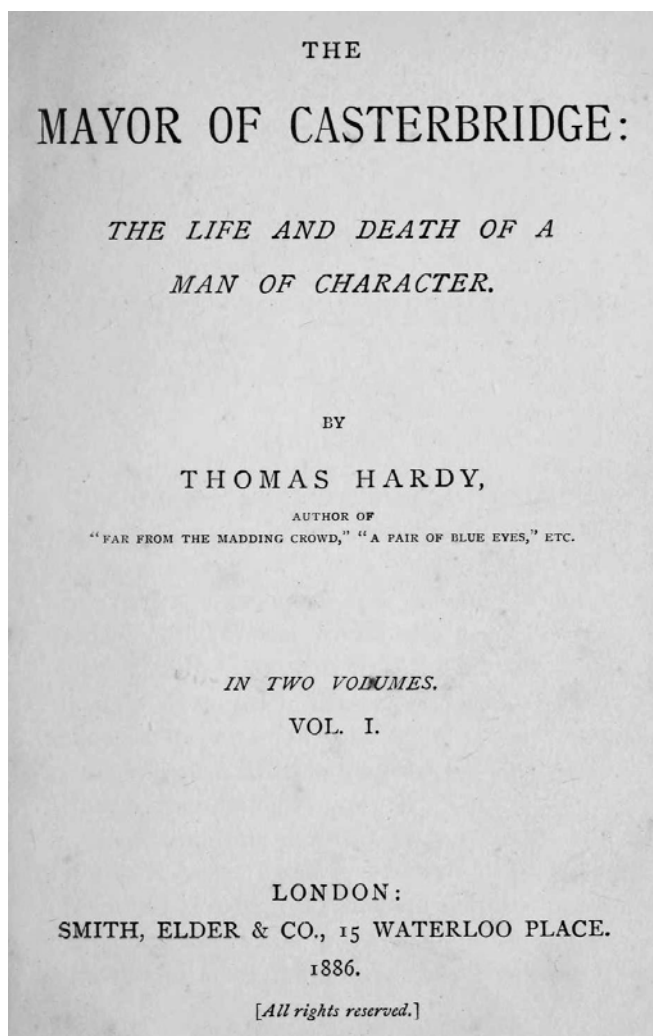
In case of any queries, it is helpful to provide a UK phone number too.

What price a wife?

Penny Stokes takes a look at a long gone substitute for divorce

“For my part I don’t see why men who have got wives and don’t want ’em, shouldn’t get rid of ’em as these gipsy fellows do their old horses,” said the man in the tent. “Why shouldn’t they put ’em up and sell ’em by auction to men who are in need of such articles?”

This speech, from the opening chapter of Thomas Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge* leads on to literature’s most famous wife sale: Michael Henchard sells his wife Susan and their daughter to a sailor for five guineas.



Title page of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886)
Thomas Hardy [public domain]

Whether contracted by church service or by handfasting [a ritual that signifies the marriage between two people with the binding of the hands of the bride and groom], marriage was for life. Divorce required an Act of Parliament, so was unobtainable for all but a tiny, wealthy minority, and bigamy had been a capital offence since 1604.

So how might an unhappy couple be free of each other? According to historians E P Thompson and Lawrence Stone, wife-selling was recognised as the commoner’s only means of escape from marital misery. Wife sales were not recognised in law, but they were widely accepted within the community of ordinary people.

Curiously, the most noteworthy example in west Berkshire involved an aristocrat, Henry Brydges (1708-71), son of the Duke of Chandos, around 1740. There are no surviving primary sources, but the story appeared in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of 1832. It surfaced again in 1870 (in *Notes & Queries*), with slightly different details, claiming to be based on a first-hand witness account. More than 150 years after the event it surfaced again from the pen of Walter Money, the Newbury historian, in his *Popular History of Newbury*, 1905.

The *Gentleman’s Magazine* identifies the vendor as an ostler who is beating his wife, and quotes her sale price as half-a-crown, but it does not name the sale location; in *Notes & Queries* the wife is named as Ann Wells, a chambermaid at the Pelican Inn, Speenhamland, to which she is led for sale, and where Brydges is smitten by her beauty and makes his bid. Neither of these accounts dates the event, and there is uncertainty as to whether or not Brydges was himself a widower at the time. Walter Money asserts that the event took place in Marlborough rather than Newbury, where Brydges had stopped en route from Bath, although he names the abused wife as Ann Jefferies née Wells of Newbury. He claims both she and Brydges were married at the time, but that after being freed by the deaths of their spouses, they married in December 1744.

Earlier in that same year Brydges’ father had died, so the dukedom of Chandos passed to his son. Thus, on marriage, the former chambermaid instantly became the Duchess of Chandos and, says Money, “filled her position to admiration”.

One possibly relevant fact which seems to have been overlooked by all accounts is that the first Duke of Chandos owned Shaw House, the Tudor mansion on the north-eastern edge of Newbury, and that from 1727 to 1744 Henry Brydges held this house in tenancy from his father. The house is an easy walk from the Pelican Inn which, furthermore, belonged to the Shaw House estate.



Shaw House (Penny Stokes)

The story was further embroidered in several later versions but, sadly, there seems to be no authenticated first-hand account against which to validate the ever-burgeoning detail. This is typical of reports of wife sales: they tend to consist of secondary middle-class commentaries on the distant shenanigans of the “lower orders”, comical or disgraceful according to perspective.

“There is something going on here, however, is there not?”

“Ay. ’Tis Fair Day. Though what you hear now is little more than the clatter and scurry of getting away the money o’ children and fools...”

Wife sales (whether or not they were auctions) were almost always conducted in some kind of public forum, witnesses being the element that conferred validity on the transaction. In that sense it was the logical counterpoint to the self-marriage of handfasting: self-divorce. Susan Henchard was sold at a fair, but markets and inns could also provide the required environment. The future Duchess of Chandos was sold in the yard of one of the busiest coaching inns on the Bath Road.

The conversation took a high turn, as it often does on such occasions. The ruin of good men by bad wives, and, more particularly, the frustration of many a promising youth’s high aims and hopes and the extinction of his energies by an early imprudent marriage, was the theme.

Hardy makes Michael Henchard’s decision sound impulsive (after a considerable amount

of alcohol), although his wife had heard such talk before. In the *Gentleman’s Magazine* it is implied that Henry Brydges offered to buy the ostler’s wife to rescue her from a beating. Violence is not reported in *Notes and Queries*: rather, a premeditated sale is implied by the husband leading his wife to the yard with a halter around her neck.

The halter is a persistent feature of reported wife sales, presumably emphasising that the wife is no more than livestock owned by her husband and may be disposed of as such. Indeed, Smithfield meat market was a favoured location for wife-sales in London. Susan Henchard undergoes an insulting assessment of her physical condition by idle male bystanders. There is a strong element of comedic theatre involved, in which men found it gratifying to watch female degradation.

“’Tis quite on the understanding that the young woman is willing,” said the sailor blandly. “I wouldn’t hurt her feelings for the world.”

To what extent were wife sales consensual? Susan Henchard clearly is not consenting in the early stages of her auction, but the fact that her husband so publicly wants rid of her seems to sway her from objection to indifference. Ann Wells apparently displayed “patient acquiescence”.

Male historians have taken a more sanguine view. E P Thompson examined records of 123 cases in England between 1760 and 1880 and concluded that the consent of the wife was

probably necessary for the process to go through. Wikipedia blithely defines wife sale as “a way of ending an unsatisfactory marriage by mutual agreement”, and there is no doubt that many of these transactions were sought equally by both parties. However, the alternative to being sold would likely be abandonment and destitution, so women would have had little choice but to comply, particularly if they had children to support. The child in Casterbridge appears to be little more than incidental baggage at the time of the auction, although she becomes more significant later in the story. Ann Wells is later recorded as having a daughter, Augusta Ann, but it is by no means clear which marriage produced this child.

“I haven’t more than fifteen shillings in the world, and yet I am a good experienced hand in my line. I’d challenge England to beat me in the fodder business; and if I were a free man again I’d be worth a thousand pound before I’d done o’t.”

Michael Henchard blames his wife for having prevented him from making more success of his life. Ann Wells’ husband’s motives are unstated. However, in many other cases adultery was the key, and indeed there are instances of cuckolded husbands selling wives to their lovers, with approval all round.

Until the 1880s, under the law of coverture, a husband owned all his wife’s property and earnings, but he was also liable for her debts. Whilst the courts did not recognise that selling her would release him from this, the community at large did. Conversely, a sold wife might become free of her husband’s claim on her possessions or earnings.

Amongst humbler people the buyer would normally be considered the de facto new husband, although this would never be upheld by the courts. The second Duke of Chandos had an elevated social position to maintain, and the nineteenth-century accounts emphasise that he did not marry Ann Wells until 1744, when they were both free so to do. His father’s death earlier that year may also have been significant: such a marriage would have been unlikely to have had aristocratic parental approval.

Research has traced around 400 wife-sales in English records between 1750, when it was considered to be on the increase, and 1850.



Wife Sale by Thomas Rowlandson [public domain]

(Thompson also traced five or six cases of the reverse – husband selling – all of which were nineteenth century).

But in the nineteenth century attitudes were changing. The parallel of wife sales with slavery was by now uncomfortable, and the courts began to crack down. Joseph Toomer, mayor of Newbury in 1814, noted disapprovingly in his diary reports of a wife sold for a guinea at the Cooper’s Arms. Had it not been for the wife’s failure to appear in court, the husband might well have been jailed by the mayor as magistrate.

Nonetheless a legal exit from unhappy marriage was urgently needed, not only for the common people amongst whom wife sale had been practised, but for the growing middle classes who wanted to stay on the right side of the law. Legal divorce became available in 1857.

All italicised quotes are from Thomas Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, originally published 1886, currently available as eBook on: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/143/143-h/143-h.htm>.

References

1. *The Contrast*, by the Author of “Yes and no”, Gentleman’s Magazine, 102: 347, April 1832
2. Notes & Queries 1870 4th series, vol 6, p179
3. E P Thompson. *Customs in Common* (New Press, 1993)
4. Lawrence Stone. *Road to Divorce 1530-1987* (OUP)
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6. Wikipedia on *Wife Selling, Husband Selling*

Website Update

Paul Barrett, *Society Webmaster*, brings us up to date with the latest developments

Digital Newsletters

We launched the Newsletter in December with a little trepidation, not knowing what appetite there would be among our members for paperless communication. We had no idea what level of take-up there would be.

As it happens, our membership showed no reluctance at all and we soon soared past the average number of readers for a charitable organisation of 46% - our rate consistently exceeds 70% - an extraordinary achievement given our demographic. Thank you, everyone! If you haven't seen one of our Newsletters yet, check your email inbox and spam folders because everyone who has consented to email contact is sent a copy.

The reading rate took an uptick when lockdown arrived, and members suddenly had more time on their hands. We have increased the frequency of the newsletter and focused on content that can help people make the most of this enforced downtime - a great opportunity to have another go at that brick wall.

We've seen a definite link between the promotional articles in the Newsletter and orders in the Shop or bookings in the Events system - a direct result of getting news to you of events and products as soon as they are released.

Events

The online Events programme has benefited from significant presentational improvements with our new Events system but we had some feedback from you that when you want to book multiple events (and we're delighted that a lot of you do), the booking process was a little cumbersome, requiring you to enter your card details multiple times. So, on March 8th we implemented a major upgrade to allow you to add tickets to a shopping cart and checkout and pay in one transaction at the end.

Of course, the Events Team has had to completely rebuild the Events programme to convert as much of it as possible from face-to-face meetings to online webinars but, again, the membership has shown a willingness to adapt to the new medium and events have sold out quickly. To help you identify upcoming webinars we've created a new section on the What's On page, which places the webinars front and centre.

Free Family Tree Application

A couple of members have asked the same question, "My family tree is on paper. I want to put it on computer, but I don't know where to start. What software should I buy?"

There are lots of possibilities but, if you have a Windows 10 computer there's a useful and **FREE** option available for you to try out so you can see some of the advantages of using software without any financial commitment. If you like the experience and your needs outgrow a free app you can export the content to a more full-featured paid-for app such as Family Tree Maker.

The app is called **My Family Tree** and it's available from the Microsoft Store.

1. Press the Windows key or click the Windows icon in the bottom left corner of your screen and type **Store**.
2. Choose the Microsoft Store app that displays at the top of the box.
3. In the search bar, type **My Family Tree**.
4. When prompted, install the application, and you're ready to start.

Projects and Publications Update

As I write this, we are entering a three week extension to the initial partial lockdown period in the UK. The Berkshire Record Office has now been closed for almost four weeks which means no checking or transcribing using original registers at present. However, fortuitously, we did manage to complete some register scanning just before the doors closed. This has, so far, kept many of our volunteers busy, but from home. We are also taking the opportunity to prepare some more of the old ad hoc datasets for publication in the Members' Area of the website. Monumental inscription recording remains on hold, for obvious reasons. We hope to resume once the situation improves, but safety comes first. In the meantime, there is still much being done from home in preparing data and cemetery plans.

Just before lockdown occurred, we also removed some of the society's CD duplicating materials from the office at The Centre for Heritage and Family History, ensuring that CD duplication can continue from home. This has allowed a new Parish Registers CD for Childrey St Mary to be completed, which we hope will be followed

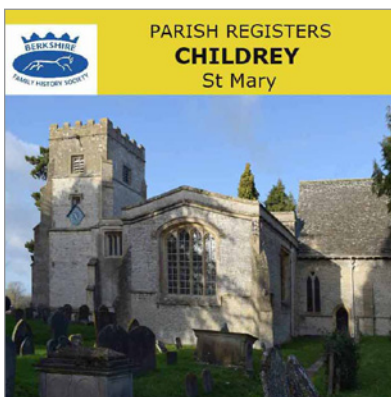
imminently by that of the registers of Peasemore St Barnabas. Most significantly, Berkshire Baptisms Third Edition has also been completed and published with a weighty 150,000 plus new entries from the second edition and now containing over 400,000 baptism entries and almost 1.3 million names. See the new products section for more details.

Over the last few months, we have made good progress in our work on making data downloads available to purchase. Some of the technical issues have now been resolved and we hope to make the first downloads available fairly soon. Keep an eye on the society's newsletter and website for the first new products.

Finally thanks to all of our trusty team of volunteers across the world. If you have any queries or are willing to get involved, please contact us at projects@berksfhs.org.uk

Catherine Sampson
Projects Co-ordinator

New in the Bookshop



Childrey St Mary Parish Registers 1558 - 1928 (CD)

This CD contains a full transcription of the parish registers and is fully indexed. Coverage is Baptisms 1558-1927, Banns 1755-1912, Marriages 1558-1928 and Burials 1558-1883.

Shop: £8.00 / Members: 7.20

See centre pages for postal rates.



Berkshire Baptisms Third Edition (CD)

This CD contains transcriptions of over 400,000 births and baptisms from 156 parish and non-parochial registers from the pre-1974 county of Berkshire. Dates range from 1538-2006. The CD contains three finding aids: Name index, Name by Date and Officiating Ministers.

Shop: £20.00 / Members: 18.00

Upgrade from Second Edition: £5.00 / Members: £4.50

Upgrade from First Edition: £10.00 / Members: £9.00

See centre pages for postal rates.

Coverage of Berkshire Baptisms Third Edition

The following table gives the coverage of Berkshire Baptisms Third Edition. The number of baptisms and the number of names is shown for each place/church, together with the first and last year covered. Parish names in bold indicate they are new to this edition. From or To in bold italics indicate that the coverage has been extended.

Place Name	Church Name	Baptisms	Names	From	To
Abbotts Wittenham	See <i>Little Wittenham</i>				
Abingdon	Independent Lower Meeting House	335	1,432	1758	1837
Abingdon	St Nicolas	349	1,381	1813	1835
Aldermaston	St Mary	4,041	11,671	1559	1852
Aldworth	St Mary	806	3,137	1813	1891
Appleford	St Peter & St Paul	1,684	5,552	1563	1927
Appleton	St Laurence	1,871	5,472	1570 1802	1709 1858
Arborfield	Independent Chapel	280	818	1759	1897
Arborfield	St Bartholomew	795	3,167	1860	1937
Ardington	Holy Trinity	806	2,759	1607 1786 1873	1673 1815 1901
Ashampstead	St Clement	1,378	4,903	1813	1980
Ashbury	St Mary	1,611	6,286	1813	1882
Aston Tirrold	St Michael	1,858	6,122	1607	1903
Avington	St Mark & St Luke	561	2,257	1726	1965
Barkham	St James	3,026	8,668	1539	1986
Basildon	St Bartholomew	1,424	4,202	1727	1812
Bearwood	St Catherine	1,601	4,740	1846	1949
Beech Hill	St Mary	677	3,477	1868	1995
Beedon	St Nicholas	778	2,293	1732	1812
Beenham	St Mary	204	467	1574	1622
Besselsleigh	St Lawrence	595	1,711	1690	1812
Binfield	All Saints	10,606	34,598	1551	1979
Bisham	All Saints	2,369	9,412	1813	1986
Blewbury	St Michael	812	3,189	1813	1837
Boxford	St Andrew	2,733	8,244	1558 1799	1755 1861
Bracknell	Holy Trinity	800	3,174	1886	1901
Bradfield	St Andrew	9,222	26,171	1539	1962
Bradfield	Tutts Clump (Methodists)	525	2,093	1877	2002
Bray	St Michael	12,550	45,691	1763	1920

Place Name	Church Name	Baptisms	Names	From	To
Braywood	All Saints	1,277	3,777	1867	1961
Brightwell	St Agatha	1,561	4,603	1691	1812
Brimpton	St Peter	3,027	11,483	1678	1982
Bucklebury	St Mary	1,599	4,751	1813	1865
Burghfield	St Mary	7,182	19,831	1562	1913
Buscot	St Mary	364	1,090	1799	1831
Catmore	St Margaret	301	876	1724	1850
Challow	<i>See East Challow and West Challow</i>				
Charney Bassett	St Peter	722	1,678	1642	1786
Chieveley	St Mary	2,375	6,544	1560	1700
Childrey	St Mary	3,836	13,283	1558	1927
Chilton	All Saints	1,846	6,250	1584	1932
Cholsey	St Mary	4,981	13,444	1541	1851
Clewer	St Andrew	8,211	22,652	1607	1860
Coleshill	All Saints	787	1,845	1675	1752
				1782	1812
Combe	St Swithun	1,144	3,334	1560	1871
Compton	St Mary & St Nicholas	3,843	10,910	1553	1925
Compton Beauchamp	St Swithun	380	979	1551	1776
Coxwell, Little	See Little Coxwell				
Cumnor	St Michael	793	3,115	1813	1838
Denford	Holy Trinity	173	519	1832	1920
Earley	St Bartholomew	1,601	6,368	1877	1898
Earley	St Peter	2,387	9,481	1854	1909
East Challow	St Nicholas	274	805	1607	1711
East Ilsley	St Mary	5,246	15,823	1608	2003
East Lockinge	All Saints	1,519	4,171	1546	1787
East Shefford	Holy Innocents	231	678	1603	1734
				1779	1811
Eastbury	St James	625	2,482	1867	2006
Easthampstead	St Michael & St Mary Magdalene	9,562	40,795	1558	1981
Easthampstead	Union Workhouse	209	338	1849	1914
Eaton Hastings		436	1,259	1725	1812
Englefield	St Mark	761	3,023	1813	1866
Faringdon	All Saints	5,858	17,240	1653	1780
Farnborough	All Saints	1,468	4,307	1607	2004
Fawley	St Mary	2,207	7,151	1540	1987
Fernham	St John the Evangelist	476	1,867	1860	1994

Place Name	Church Name	Baptisms	Names	From	To
Fernham	See also Longcot with Fernham				
Grazeley	Holy Trinity	1,600	4,743	1850	1963
Great Shefford	Primitive Methodist Chapel	35	140	1831	1837
Great Shefford	St Mary	1,234	4,423	1779	1860
Greenham	St Mary	1,602	6,322	1813	1872
Harwell	St Matthew	4,519	12,748	1558	1844
Hatford	Holy Trinity	658	1,739	1540	1811
Hinksey	See <i>North Hinksey and South Hinksey</i>				
Hurst	St Nicholas	2,417	7,189	1890	2004
Inkpen	St Michael	800	2,311	1813	1850
Ilsley	See <i>East Ilsley and West Ilsley</i>				
Kingston Bagpuize	St John Baptist	73	219	1806	1812
Kintbury	St Mary	12,423	39,048	1558	1953
Lambourn	St Michael & All Angels	3,092	12,007	1813	1856
Lambourn Woodlands	St Mary	799	3,149	1837	1913
Letcombe Bassett	St Michael	314	932	1776	1812
Letcombe Regis	St Andrew	803	3,177	1813	1873
Little Coxwell	St Mary	468	973	1582	1703
Little Wittenham	St Peter	1,369	4,118	1538	1991
Littleworth	The Holy Ascension	443	1,733	1839	1883
Lockinge	See <i>East Lockinge</i>				
Longcot	See <i>Longcot with Fernham</i>				
Longcot with Fernham	St Mary	1,241	3,734	1646	1775
Lyford	St Mary	392	1,553	1845	1978
Maidenhead	All Saints (Boyne Hill)	830	3,282	1857	1872
Maidenhead	St Luke	801	3,129	1866	1875
Milton	St Blaise	45	118	1605	1638
Mortimer West End	St Saviour	441	894	1615	1680
Moreton, North	See North Moreton				
Moulsford	St John Baptist	59	173	1772	1791
Newbury	St Nicolas	15,482	56,627	1538 1646 1813	1617 1646 1865
New Windsor	Holy Trinity	803	3,519	1844	1853
North Hinksey	St Lawrence	231	613	1607	1731
North Moreton	All Saints	918	2,355	1558	1736
Padworth	St John Baptist	208	556	1608	1724
Pangbourne	United Reform Church	1	4	1984	1984
Peasmore	St Barnabas	2,322	6,887	1538	1990

Place Name	Church Name	Baptisms	Names	From	To
Purley	St Mary	2,209	10,458	1607	1985
Pusey	All Saints	39	93	1607	1635
Reading	All Saints (Downshire Square)	1,598	7,143	1904	1948
Reading	Baptist (Church Lane)	522	1,562	1735	1819
Reading	Greyfriars	5,599	16,630	1864	1957
Reading	Independent Chapel (Ebenezer, Oxford Road)	7	28	1820	1829
Reading	Independent Chapel (London Street)	6	24	1821	1824
Reading	St Agnes	932	2,711	1904	1937
Reading	St Giles	45,072	126,823	1563	1990
Reading	St Laurence	15,651	45,128	1654	1834
Reading	St Luke	3,202	9,502	1878	1919
Reading	St Mark	4,045	18,687	1904	1975
Reading	St Mary (Castle Street)	1,588	4,728	1884	1947
Reading	St Mary (The Minster)	33,566	99,473	1813	1954
Reading	St Michael and All Angels	1,033	3,454	1901	1946
Reading	St Saviour	2,055	9,481	1922	1985
Reading	St Stephen	2,382	7,095	1865	1905
Remenham	St Nicholas	2,576	7,503	1605	1948
Shefford	<i>See East Shefford and Great Shefford</i>				
Shippon	St Mary Magdalene	622	2,499	1856	1957
Shottesbrook	St John Baptist	607	2,419	1813	1974
Shrivenham	St Andrew	1,115	3,294	1733	1781
South Hinksey	St Laurence	178	362	1607	1668
Sparsholt	Holy Cross	3,498	10,090	1559	1944
Speenhamland	St Mary	5,202	20,380	1831	1971
Stanford Dingley	St Denys	690	1,471	1539	1756
Stanford in the Vale	St Denys	799	3,151	1813	1837
Steventon	St Michael & All Angels	1,041	3,093	1742	1812
Stratfield Mortimer	St John	236	934	1896	1913
Sulham	St Nicholas	1,549	6,333	1607	1980
Sulhampstead Banister	St Michael	800	3,185	1813	1937
Sunningdale	Holy Trinity	651	2,584	1841	1873
Sunningwell	St Leonard	516	1,066	1543	1653
Sutton Courtenay	All Saints	835	2,479	1696	1728
				1770	1775
Swallowfield	All Saints	7,298	20,008	1607	1928
Thatcham	Independent Chapel	96	379	1807	1836

Place Name	Church Name	Baptisms	Names	From	To
Theale	Holy Trinity	2,016	6,003	1832	1947
Tidmarsh	St Laurence	1,153	4,129	1608	1980
Tilehurst	St Michael	12,590	35,388	1559	1946
Twyford	Congregational Church	14	52	1898	1924
Ufton Nervet	St Michael	1,028	2,715	1607 1813	1743 1837
Wallingford	Baptist Church	195	1,001	1833	1838
Wallingford	Independent Chapel (Market Place)	241	963	1788	1837
Wallingford	Primitive Methodist Chapel	8	40	1833	1837
Wallingford	St Leonard	2,026	6,717	1711	1848
Wallingford	St Mary the More	5,799	18,935	1638 1813	1796 1892
Wallingford	St Peter	1,778	6,011	1711	1881
Wantage	Independent Chapel (Back Street)	2	8	1833	1834
Wantage	Wesleyan Methodist Circuit	25	148	1829	1837
Warfield	St Michael the Archangel	56	112	1568	1571
Wargrave	St Mary	13,551	39,238	1538	2003
Wasing	St Nicholas	382	1,518	1814	1993
Welford	St Gregory	789	3,108	1813	1836
West Challow	St Laurence	45	130	1607	1638
West Ilsley	All Saints	2,088	5,994	1558	1870
White Waltham	St Mary	2,794	9,664	1621 1813	1726 1878
Windsor	Wesleyan Methodist Chapel	71	405	1823	1837
Windsor, New	See <i>New Windsor</i>				
Winkfield	St Mary	1,841	5,403	1720	1778
Winnersh	St Mary	329	1,852	1966	2001
Wittenham	See <i>Little Wittenham</i>				
Wittenham Abbots	See <i>Little Wittenham</i>				
Wokingham	All Saints	11,607	32,427	1589	1831
Wokingham	St Paul	800	3,151	1864	1880
Wokingham	Union Hospital	234	814	1904	1962
Woodley	Lodge	72	213	1802	1869
Wootton	St Peter	998	3,758	1786	1883
Yattendon	St Peter & St Paul	802	2,393	1813	1914
	Total	409,131	1,294,794		



News from the Berkshire Record Office

Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist at the Berkshire Record Office

So, I write this from home as things have changed somewhat since the last article. The BRO is now closed to visitors and staff. My colleagues and I miss not being there - not being able to have visitors or access the collections is very difficult when this is at the heart of all that we do.

Staff are working from home typing up old catalogues that are handwritten or typed on a typewriter. In the long run, we hope to upload them onto our CALM database and make them available online. Some collections will need work to bring them up to current standards, but it will be useful as it should make more information available online. It also helps to keep us busy!

Like many organisations, we cannot offer the same services that we normally do and have had to adapt. We're trying to maintain contact with users through our social media feeds on Twitter (*@berksarchives* - <https://twitter.com/BerksArchives>) and Facebook (*The Berkshire Record Office* - www.facebook.com/berkshirerecordoffice/). If anyone has a query, they can direct message (DM) us on Twitter or messenger us on Facebook. We'll do the best we can to try and help.

Whilst the BRO is closed, our website isn't, so please do use it – it's packed with information on family and local history such as the parish register lists, the wills index, source guides, our newsletter and online catalogue: <https://berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk>.

On behalf of everyone at the BRO, I offer best wishes to everyone in these uncertain times and hope that you all stay well and stay safe.

What's new to the archives?

There are various Anglican parish registers now available: Aldermaston marriages, 1965-2008; banns, 1918-2009 (D/P3); Aldworth marriages, 2005-2015; banns, 1913-2008 (D/P4); Bucklebury marriages, 1942-2015 (D/P28); Cumnor baptisms, 1958-1972; marriages, 1948-1968; banns, 1943-1982 (D/P45); Earley St Peter baptisms, 1931-2013; marriages, 1940-2009; burials, 1916-1996; Marcham marriages, 1959-2012; banns, 1945-2004 (D/P84); Reading Greyfriars baptisms, 1957-1965, marriages, 2009-2017; banns, 1965-2004 (D/P163); Shippon baptisms, 1957-1973; marriages, 1975-2011; banns, 1938-2004 (D/P1C) and White Waltham marriages, 1998-2003; burials, 1937-2008 (D/P142).

Other records which may be of interest are those of Hon Mrs Ernest Guinness (nee Marie Clotilde Russell of Swallowfield Park), 1870s- 1910s (D/EX2410); the Webb family of Tilehurst, 1656-1855, (R/D206); the Arrowsmith and Bannard families of Littlewick, 1863-1980, (D/EZ192); the Reading Branch (formerly Berkshire Branch) of the Embroiderers' Guild, 1948-2013, (D/EX2482); the Women's Institutes of Twyford and Ruscombe, 1919-2008 (D/EX2647); and

Warfield and the Pang Valley Group, 1942-2014 (D/EX1925) and the records of Victor Barton of Reading, 1942-1949 (D/EX2742).

The business records of the solicitors James and William Richard Hall of Hungerford, 1807-1833, and Broome Pinniger of Newbury, 1826-1851, (D/

EPG) are now available as are marriage registers, 1873-1982, of the Wesley Methodist Church, Reading (D/MS60). We have also listed the coroners' inquest papers for Abingdon district, 1901-1904, 1927-1944 (COR/A), and Wantage district, 1947-1951 (COR/WT).

What's going on at the BRO?

We hope that events in June (the How to Read Old Handwriting Workshop 15th June 2020, and the Behind the Scenes at the BRO 22nd June 2020) will still be able to go ahead. We also hope to reschedule the postponed World War Two exhibition to later this year. Please keep an eye on our website for details nearer the time as the lockdown will affect all events: www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/events.

How to Read Old Handwriting Workshop

15th June 2020

Time 10:15 to 14:45

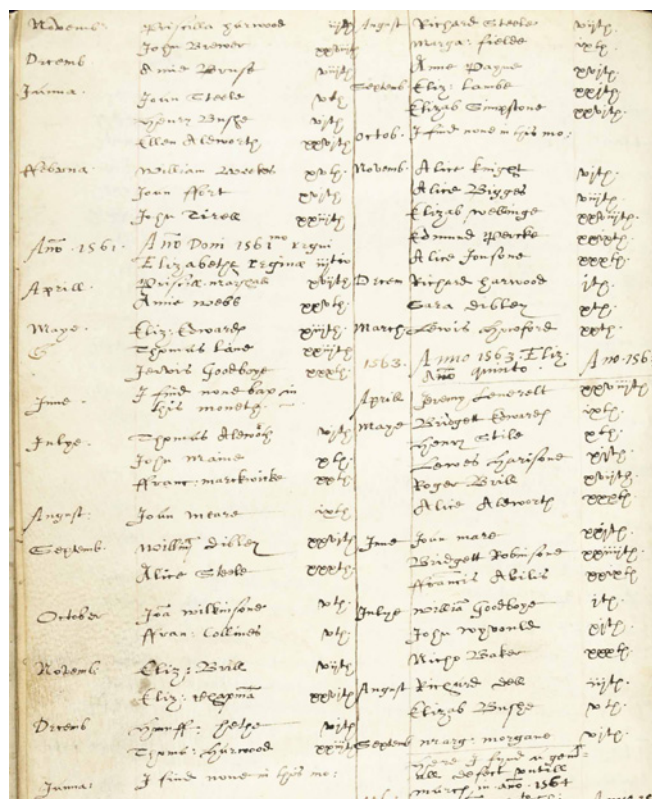
Always wanted to know how to read old handwriting, but don't know how? Then come along to our workshop! It will be held at the Berkshire Record Office where we will look at samples from 16th to 18th century documents held here. Cost is £20 per person. There are 10 places available and booking is essential. Please email: arch@reading.gov.uk or call 0118 937 5132.

Behind the Scenes at the BRO

22nd June 2020

Time 10:30 to 11:30

Ever wanted to know what goes on behind the scenes at the BRO? Then come along and find out! You will be shown some historical documents, where we store them and given an insight into how our conservator repairs them. It's FREE and there are 12 spaces available. Booking is essential. Please email: arch@reading.gov.uk or call 0118 937 5132.



Learn how to read this type of document at the 'How to Read Old Handwriting Workshop'

The Berkshire Record Office
9 Coley Avenue
Reading
RG1 6AF

arch@reading.gov.uk

0118 937 5132

www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk



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William Watkins Waite and his travelling family

Fred Waite tells the story of a much-travelled ancestor

A cousin, John Waite, asked if I could research the travels of this family. The only leads were that Ellen Wilson Waite, who had lived in Australia and had subsequently come to England in 1914, said that she was born within the sound of the Niagara Falls in Canada. It has taken about 20 years to put this story together.



William Watkin Waite painted by his father, also William Watkin Waite

William was born on September 8th 1811 in Abingdon, Berkshire. His parents were William Watkins Waite and Martha Edgington. They were Congregationalists and William's birth was registered at the Meeting House in Kings Road, Reading. William Snr. was an artist and owner of a stationer's shop in Abingdon marketplace.

Nothing is known of William's early life but on June 15th 1841, he married Emily Wilson, the daughter of William Wilson, at The Old Meeting House, Beacondale, Norwich. William describes himself as a bookseller. The witnesses to the marriage included Phillipa and William Colman, members of the well-known family of Mustard manufacturers. Phillipa was Emily's sister. It is not known why William was living in Norwich, if indeed he was. Did he have a shop there or was he a travelling salesman working for his father? In

1843, William's brother Richard married Emily's sister Martha.

Their first child, a daughter Ellen Mary, was born on June 20th 1842 and it must have been shortly after this that the family sailed to Canada. It is not known from which port they left, or which ship they sailed on. Their probable port of entry would have been Quebec, which would have meant a journey averaging 46 days but on occasions this journey could take 70 days. From here they would have transferred onto a steamer that would have taken them along the St. Lawrence River as far as Montreal. This journey of 180 miles was probably completed overnight. The fare from England to Quebec, Cabin Class, in 1847, would have been between £15 and £20 [£1200 - £1600 in modern money] and the transfer to Montreal would have cost 5/0s [25p]. Further progress into Canada was by means of barges towed by steam tugs.

The journey to Kingston took about 6 days and then steamers made further transfers from Kingston to Toronto and then onto Niagara. From there William and his family continued onto Pelham Township where they settled. Despite the obvious hazards of journeying to Canada in those times the number of emigrants was considerable. The numbers arriving at Quebec were: 44,692 in 1842; 21,807 in 1843; and, 20,245 in 1845.

An early settler, Henry Giles, formerly of Norwich, wrote a number of letters to his family and friends at home, one of whom was William. Some of these letters have been published in a book, Mute Words, Living Voices by the Pelham Historical Society. These letters often mention William and his family and it would appear that they were encouraged to emigrate to Canada by Henry's passionate descriptions. In a letter announcing the intention of William to arrive in Pelham in early May, Henry says,

"Although he may, and doubtless will, meet with many things not according with his English feelings and habits. Of one thing I feel assured that he will admire the country in which we live and, I trust will find a 'cottage of content' within the romantic range of the 'short hills'. By walking up the mountain about 1½ miles we can see mostly the spray of the great Falls and it's awful voice is often distinctly audible at our door."



Ontario, Canada in 1857 (Colton [public domain])

This of course refers to the Niagara Falls. The letters mention William's arrival on May 1st 1843 and later the concern that young Ellen Mary has whooping cough together with teething problems. William had consulted a doctor and, in his absence, had been lancing Ellen's gums himself. It may be that the strenuous journey weakened Ellen for she died soon afterwards on June 7th. Ellen was buried in the cemetery of the North Pelham First Presbyterian Church; she was just under two years old. Her grave is recorded as plot 21-05 in the survey carried out by the Ontario Genealogical Society.

Upon his arrival in Canada, William set out on an exploratory trip to Toronto, which induced Henry to comment,

"The principal (perhaps the only inducement) to settle in the vicinity of Toronto in preference to Pelham would be that of enjoying better society."

William returned, having been "as far west as W. Alger's at Brantford and three times to Toronto."

Henry goes on to say,

"I do hope we shall be able to find them a suitable farm near at hand. After all farming is in this country the most pleasant and independent a life a man can lead to say nothing about its healthfulness. I feel assured that thou wouldst enjoy better health without half the anxiety by just dropping the Starch and purchasing a farm in Canada. For £150 or £200 thou couldst purchase a beautiful little estate quite as much as thou wouldst require."

William must have taken this advice for he is said to have purchased a small farm of 15 acres from a Hicksite preacher (a branch of the Quakers) situated close to the Meeting House.

Nothing more is known of William's life in Canada, but a letter report appears in the *Niagara Chronicle* of October 5th 1848 is signed W.W.W. Township of Thorold [near Fonthill]. Could this be William? The report is of the First Annual School Celebration of the Niagara District. The

letter criticises the editor for failing to attend the meeting and write his own article. The report is very descriptive, as was the manner in those days without recourse to photographs and says that the parade started from Fonthill and included the schools in Pelham. Banners were carried and there was music and verse. The main address was by Rev. Dr Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Schools for Upper Canada, who spoke on "The System of Free Schools". It is known that William had a keen interest in schooling and there cannot have been many people in that area with the initials W.W.W.

The family are found in the 1851 census living in Stamford Township, Welland County. They are shown to be living in a single-story brick house and their religion is Congregationalist. William is listed as a farmer. Four children were born in Canada - Ellen Wilson on May 29th 1844, Edward Benham in 1846, Henry Watkin on June 21st 1849 and William Claxton on January 15th 1851. Ellen told her family that she was born within the sound of the Niagara Falls. Henry Giles stated that the falls could be heard in Pelham. Henry Watkin Waite, when an adult, recorded that he had been born in Fonthill, Pelham, but unfortunately no record can be found of the children's baptisms. The dates of birth have been taken from employment records.

It is not known when the family left Canada or which route they took but they must have journeyed back to England because on August 14th 1857 they left London Docks on board the *Bosworth* bound for New Zealand. By now there was a faster route from Ontario to New York via Rochester. This entailed the use of steamers and the railroad. This journey, probably from Port Robinson on the Welland Canal, took 6 to 7 days at a cost of £1 9s 7 ½p [£87].

How long they stayed in England or whether they met their family is not yet known. The *Bosworth* was a ship of over 600 tons built at Sunderland in 1855 and commanded by Captain Turnbull. An advertisement in *The Times* for Willis & Co. Lines described it as "A fine full-poop ship of 1,100 tons burden". At the end of a voyage of 102 days, costing £70 to £100 [£4,100 - £5900], they arrived at Port Chalmers, Dunedin, Otago on November 26th. The journey was not uneventful as it is recorded that two of the crew attempted to set fire to the ship in mid-ocean. They were put in irons and stood trial in Dunedin. Three deaths occurred during the voyage, one adult and two children. I have not yet been able to find any report of the trial of the arsonists but a passenger on the *Bosworth*, Miss Annie Tarlton, some years

later wrote an account of the incident:

"The chief events of the voyage were caused partly by the sailors getting to the drink in the hold. There were several Spaniards amongst them; two of them quarrelled and one of them felled the other with a marlin spike. The one who was assaulted out of revenge set the ship on fire, he started his dastardly work late at night by removing the companion ladder, which connected the main deck with the 2nd class cabins and placed tar barrels filled with oakum. That night there were several inches of snow lying on the deck and the passengers had been playing snowballs. The nearest land was Kergulins (sic) Island in the Southern Ocean and the ship was 1000 miles from that barren island. A sailor said it was the presence of mind of a passenger which saved the ship. He rushed on deck and saw the flames 10 feet high above dense smoke from the tar barrels. The sailors on deck and others appeared petrified but this passenger shouted 'Man the buckets' the sailors sprang into line and in a short time extinguished the fire. The Spaniard was put in chains and lest, he might be liberated by his mates, he was brought down to the 1st class cabins where he was kept to the end of the voyage. He made the remark to some that he did not mind the danger of losing his own life if only he could have his revenge on his enemy. Then there was a mutiny of nearly all the sailors. So, for the 6 weeks before we reached Dunedin the passengers had to assist in the working of the ship. Fortunately, we had two passengers who were Captains so we had 3 nautical capables; other passengers had to take places as watchmen day and night. It can easily be imagined that all were most thankful when early in December to be landed in Dunedin."*

Note: The *Bosworth* landed on the 25th November. * The location of Kerguelen Island is 70 degrees East, 50 degrees South.

To be continued

Abingdon Branch

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'Was your Ancestor a Gypsy?' was our first talk of 2020. It was given by Beverley Walker, who is the current chairperson of the Romany Family History Society. The word Gypsy is a corruption from the word Egyptian. They originated in North West India and started to migrate west about 1100 through Asia Minor and Eastern Europe.

Gypsies had an in-depth knowledge of the countryside and rural crafts and were respected within the countryside communities. They provided remedies for livestock and casual labour on farms. Travelling enabled them to sell the baskets, chairs and pegs they made to the communities they passed through. However, a few did not travel and would just sell their crafts in local settlements, especially in the New Forest.

The Gypsy language is not a written language and therefore there are no incorrect spellings so in Parish Records they would be recorded as the clergyman felt fit. Beverly suggested consulting the Romany FHS website for surname list, although she stressed that you cannot tell just by the surname if the family were Gypsies but the combination of first, surname and occupation does help to identify a Gypsy family.

Most children were baptised but were not registered. They did not always formally marry so there may not be a record. They may have also married a long time after having children. You will normally find a death registration but they may not have been buried where they died, but taken to somewhere where there was a family connection. It is also worth checking if there is a will. Newspapers are also another good source of information.

There was no requirement for enumerators to record Gypsies on the census other than in number form. Anyone who lived in boats, barges, in sheds, barns or tents were not enumerated. In 1861, they were recorded not where they were found, but at the end of the district. In 1871, they were recorded where they were found. Because Gypsies were quite often charged with minor offences, they can appear in criminal records. Gypsies had to have a pedlar's licence costing 5 shillings a year to sell their goods. They would have to apply to the constabulary for these. Some of these books have survived and can be found in

archives, along with constable's diaries.

Liverpool University has a collection of Gypsyologist Diaries which contain details about travelling families in the early 19th Century. There is also a collection in Leeds and the Romany FHS have a collection in the Museum of English Rural Life. Archives for fairground and circus families, many of which were from Gypsy descent, are in Sheffield University.

Simon Burbidge gave our February talk, which was called 'Bob's War'. The subject being his mother's late partner, who was christened Cyril Raymond Spalding but always known as Bob.

Inspired by an air display, Bob signed up with the RAF on 19th May 1939. He opted to be an engine fitter and completed his training by Christmas that year. Initially, Bob was posted to 151 Fighter Squadron, based at North Weald, but in 1943, he transferred to aircrew as a Flight Engineer and underwent further training. In May 1944, he joined his crew. This was a bit like modern speed dating because a number of men from each trade would be put in a large room and would have to form themselves into crews. He and his crew were trained on Lancasters and at the start of August 1944 were posted to 9 Squadron at Bardney in Lincolnshire.

9 Squadron together with 617 Squadron, the Dambusters, were tasked with sinking the Tirpitz, which was anchored at Altafjord in Northern Norway. It was too far for the aircraft to fly there and back in one flight, so crews went via Yagodnik (Archangel), in Russia. The initial raid, on 15th September, was only partially successful, and afterwards Bob's plane, low on fuel, only made it home because Bob had bribed the Russian tanker driver with 40 cigarettes to give them 200 extra gallons. Eventually, on the third attempt, the Tirpitz was sunk.

Bob's crew completed 34 ops in all and, although several times they came back with flak holes, he never had problems with their engines. Completing such a 'tour' was quite an achievement because nearly 60% of Bomber Command aircrew either died, were wounded or captured. After the war, Bob joined British European Airways as an engineer servicing jet engines. He was killed on Guy Fawkes Day 1996 whilst riding his motorbike home from the golf club.

Around the Branches

Please check the Society's website for up to date details of meetings

The Coronavirus outbreak unfortunately led to the postponement of the March meeting. The next currently scheduled meeting: 21st September - Open evening - Unusual and interesting occupations.

Simon Burbidge

Bracknell & Wokingham Branch

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'Open Evening – Discoveries' was the title of our January meeting. We started with 'The story my sister told me' by Peter Beaven. It related to a family tale about how a couple met when a mother and daughter, who were travelling by coach to Budleigh Salterton, stayed overnight in Salisbury.

Stuart Ingram told us the story of how on researching the Burgess family, the 1939 Register had Lily Burgess's married name as Bachelier. His cousins told him that her husband was Victor Bachelier, a Frenchman, who had previously been married to Lily's aunt, Harriett French. Both marriages took place in Paris. Stuart explained the wealth of information he had found in the French records.

Lastly, Michael Rea told us about the usual will of Henry Lea, 1822-1890, who had stipulated that the estate be distributed equally between all the issues of his four grandchildren living at the time of the death of the last grandchild irrespective of which generation they belonged. The last survivor was Michael's great grandfather William G Hunter who died in 1907, by which time there were 81 beneficiaries who each received £37.

After the break, Bryan Pledger gave his Anniversaries 2019 Quiz.

Our February talk was given by Peter Must and entitled 'Wokingham's Leading Families'. Peter started by telling us about the Mountague family who have a house in Broad Street, Wokingham named after Henry Mountague who was a schoolmaster in 1654. Records in the BRO relating to the family go back to 1538.

Then we heard about the Heelas family starting with William Heelas born in 1776. In 1798, he lived in Market Place having linen and woollen items for sale. By 1828, the store is listed as

William Heelas and Sons. In 1926, the store became just Heelas Ltd and was sold to John Lewis in 1953 becoming John Lewis in 2001.

The talk concluded with the Walters family. John Walter I started The Times newspaper in January 1788. His son John Walter II took over its running in 1804. The Times was sold to Lord Hinchcliffe in 1908.

Sandra Barkwith and Brian Pledger

Newbury Branch

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In the first three months of 2020, we pulled off a hat-trick of record attendances. Our January talk, from Ellie Thorne of the BRO, on the old Newbury firm of Plenty and Son attracted many former employees, who enjoyed the opportunity for a reunion and the exchange of memories. In February, society member Chris Singleton led us through the intricacies of heraldry, using family data supplied by two branch members. At our March meeting, squeezed in just before the lockdown, we again had to lay out extra chairs for the many visitors who came to see and hear Nick Young's pictorial presentation of old Newbury.

Shortly afterwards, it became clear that no April meeting would be possible and, like all branches, our programme going forward is currently on hold. We hope to run with some of these later this year. Library outreach has stopped for the time being, but moves are afoot to offer an email service to enquirers if access to the subscription services can be arranged.

The branch committee plans to meet online via Zoom in April, and this may allow for further Zoom meetings if face to face ones remain impossible.

Penny Stokes

Reading Branch

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In January, Reading branch welcomed Simon Burbidge who spoke on the subject of 'Victorian divorce'. Please see previous branch reports for a write up of this talk. In February, Guy Grannum told us about 'A Caribbean Journey: experiences of researching Barbadian ancestors from the UK'.

Around the Branches

Please check the Society's website for up to date details of meetings

Guy gave an interesting talk on how he came to research his Barbadian roots and the types of documents that can aid with Barbadian ancestry. As Barbados was a British colony, and now an independent state within the Commonwealth, many of their records have a British base. The hardest thing is to work out where the records are held and what the access is to them.

Our March meeting was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we hope to resume meetings as soon as practicable. Please keep an eye on the society website for up to date information.

Graham Vockins

Windsor, Slough & Maidenhead Branch

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The start of 2020 saw a members meeting filled with fun, followed by an educational talk on Heraldry, but then marred by world events with the advent of the coronavirus pandemic. In more detail:

Jan 2020: 'Ancestral Dinner Party' by members. Members were invited to tell us which ancestors they would invite to dinner and why – specifically what questions they would ask them.

Most members would invite their grandparents or great-grandparents, because if we were lucky enough to have met them, perhaps we were too young to have been keen family historians at the time. Common questions would have been what their life was like and why did they travel so much, some from different countries; some moving across England. Less common questions were “Did you desert the Russian Army?” and “Did you ever marry before having your 10 children?” delivered with tactful diplomacy, of course.

Feb 2020: 'Heraldry is Fun' by Les Mitchinson. The talk started with Les explaining about the knight's shield and some of the protective clothing worn. He then described how they would build up the shield with different designs and colours. The Herald would enter the battlefield and record, very quickly, the shields of the fallen knights. Today Heraldry is all around us. Many towns, companies and institutions have their own Coat of Arms.

Mar 2020. Sadly, due to the novel coronavirus and Covid-19, we were forced to cancel our March meeting, which was due to be John Owen Smith speaking on Bringing Local History to Life. We hope to reschedule this for later in the year.

Leigh Dworkin



Newbury branch members and plenty of retirees at Shaw Church Hall in January

Around the Branches

Please check the Society's website for up to date details of meetings

Woodley (Computer) Branch

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The Computer Branch is going to live up to its name and is going online for its meetings for the foreseeable future using Zoom. It is very easy to use on a desktop PC or laptop (the larger the screen the better) plus it can also be used on a tablet though not all the features are supported. You do need to have a microphone and ideally a webcam (these are usually built into laptops and tablets but you may want to add one if you are using a desktop PC. More information can be found on the society website – <https://berksfhs.org> > **Help** > **Webinar Help Guides**. For anybody that has not yet used Zoom we will be organising some practice sessions.

Programme ahead

20th May 2020: Post 1858 Wills (this is the postponed talk from March 2020). Accessing Probate calendars on the government web site and subscription websites, together with purchasing copies of Wills and Grants. There will also be time to look at the genealogically valuable Death Duty records at the National Archives.

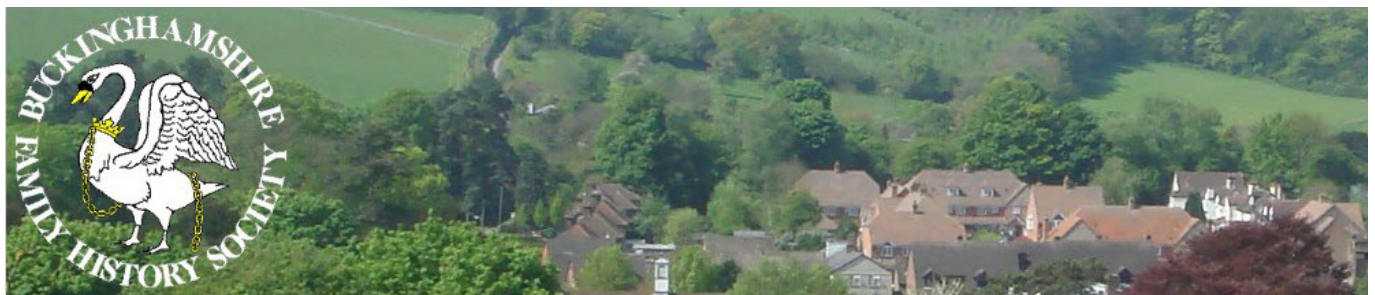
17th June 2020: Do you glaze over with Windows. Family History programs and applications for Microsoft Windows? Plus your questions.

16th September 2020: Finding Living Relatives (this is the postponed talk from April). Detailing some of the websites you can use, plus, a story which uses many of these to solve an heir hunting puzzle with a final reward.

Something NEW to read?

Dispersed families are not a modern phenomenon - while Berkshire may be our main focus, we all have ancestors who hail from different counties and countries.

With this in mind we have entered into an agreement with other Family History Societies to exchange-publish our journals for members only so we can gain some insights into the places from whence they came - or went. The first two have given us their most recent journals – Buckinghamshire FHS and Herefordshire FHS.



HEREFORDSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

To access the current journals from these two societies please log in to the Berks FHS website and visit **Info > Journals** on our website. You can only access them when signed in.

We will add more as we reach exchange agreements with other societies.

Breaking a brick wall

Richard Croker explains why he joined Berkshire Family History Society

Several years ago, my wife and I decided to continue our family history research on a more formal basis. We had several paper charts and files of data. In those days there was dial up internet and very little data online. We used free Family Origins v4 software to keep a searchable electronic database (we're now up to RootsMagic v7 – and soon it will be v8). This was now into the early 2000s.

Our main sources at the time were the FamilySearch (International Genealogical Index (IGI)) web pages and CDs (we bought the Vital Records Index (VRI) and 1881 census from IGI in Birmingham), FreeBMD web pages (mainly information from the 1800s), various, mainly private, organisations, and some family history societies enquiries. We also visited several Record Offices.

We checked that the data we had gleaned from family was in fact correct by using more than one source and buying certificates (lots of them!). Too often we find that grandparents and earlier could be in error.

We worked back from the living, as one should, using these resources to help us with dates and places so that we could buy certified copy certificates.

My wife's father was Gordon Goddard and we were told his father was Frank William Goddard (born 1896 and died 1945) and his father, Frank Goddard (born Aug 1871 and died 1933).

We also knew that Frank William Goddard married in 1921 and had a father, Frank. This information came from his widow, Elsie who was still alive.

We were given a marriage certificate which had the following information:

1921 Islington

GODDARD Frank William, 25: with his father Frank as a Provisions Assistant (indicating Frank William was born about 1896)

Married: PERRY Elsie Mildred, 25

We knew Frank William died in 1945 in Chelmsford and bought his death certificate. It stated:

GODDARD Frank William, aged 48 (meaning Frank William was born about 1897)

All of this confirmed what we thought we knew.

We therefore bought his birth certificate (using FreeBMD or IGI for reference information).

GODDARD Frank William born 1896 at 40 Moscow Rd (Paddington) with father, Frank as a Poulterers Assistant and mother, Agnes Emily formerly WALKER.

We then bought a marriage certificate for Frank William's parents from 1892 (again using FreeBMD or IGI for reference). It told us:

GODDARD Frank 21 as a poulterer (of 20 Temple St Bethnal Green) with father, John, deceased, Shoemaker

Married: WALKER Agnes Emily

Confirming that Frank was born about 1871.

The 1881 Census became available from the LDS (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) store in the form of CDs, so we bought it. It showed the following:

Hackney, 4 Grove Lane

John: head, 45, a shoemaker, born Berksh (sic) Reading

Ann E: wife, 40, born Middx Reading

George: son, 15, born Middx Reading

Frank: son, 9, born Middx Reading (birth calculated as about 1871 – confirming other information)

As George is 15, it implies the marriage was probably before 1866.

The family were all shown as born in MIDDX. READING – strange.

There is a Reading Lane near the address given in the census, so were they born there? More than likely this is an error in copying. John was therefore born about 1836.

We bought the birth certificate for Frank (again using the IGI for reference). It told us:

GODDARD Frank born 1871 at 4 Grove Lane Hackney, with father John a Shoemaker and mother Ann E formerly KENDALL

Using this information, and utilising FreeBMD or the IGI for reference, we bought a marriage certificate from 1860. It stated:

GODDARD John, of full age, a Shoemaker of

*East St., with father, John Goddard a Shoemaker
Married: KENDALL Ann E in Hoxton*

With all this information we therefore needed to find a birth or Baptism for GODDARD John in about 1836 in Reading.

There was one possible on the IGI, but there were no details, so we needed to see the original. I made enquiries and found that there was a flourishing Berkshire Family History Society. We did not know we would find Berkshire ancestors which, I suppose, is why we never thought to look locally. I went along to their Research Centre, paid my money and spent a long time upstairs going through microfiches.

We were on the right track. I found John Goddard christened May 10th 1835 but with a father named George and mother, Maria. But our John had a father JOHN on his marriage certificate.

Then I found it.

John Goddard christened July 2nd 1837 in St Mary (The Minster). Parents John, Shoemaker of Alfred Street and Maria.

This looked better.

I decided, then, to join the Society and it has yielded information a hundredfold! We then realised that the Society has access to records “everywhere” which has been most useful. Years later as the censuses came online (not in chronological order) we were able to have a continuous check to confirm our findings.

What about Ann E Goddard who was born Middx., Reading (according to the 1881 census)?

Later released censuses show that she and her children were born in Hackney.

Family History Wordsearch

t o p o n y m a r l r e t h g u a d f b g a w e
n b y t n e c r c r y r d e c n a t i r e h n i
c p g c n c e r t i f i c a t e m p m g m f t c
n w h u s b a n d s p o g u m i v e s e m e l r
o d r t a m e t a t s e t n i a g r u n n w m m
i b k c d m i l b a p t i s m a a f o e i a b y
t d y k s c r e h e p s b d i i w l e r s l a g
a e s p t f w b f b o a u r u s c i n a u r s o
p s l n k n o s d a a e r s u p i n i t o o t l
u c e h y n e s w b m a n p a v u e u i c o a a
c e w y f e f i w c m i r b p o h a g o l p r e
c n b d y s n o w o h o l y y s e g n n g l d n
o d w y p r h f b w t b m y i w y e a w n c y e
u a s y e f h h w a n i l r h y k m s c n m s g
b n v r t c a d t e l w a o v i g s n h h u l u
o t n t a c i s p i r p p p o c s g o l c b g p
m s l s r u e m t a b i c p p d e t c m d c s e
d u e e g t k a y g r r h d p r l e o m n m i c
k s y c i p r i s n k e e s y s o i r r a m o r
o n n n m y k r p y o p n v k p e b n g y m g o
o e d a m v a k v a b r p t u r o k a e i h d v
t c b p i l a i r u b h t t a i e g k t m d h i
t y a n g t l f k e r y r a n g n b g s e m e d
i u e m i g r a t e f n s l p o e b f h i d t p

ancestry
baptism
bastardy
berkshire
bloodline
burial
census
certificate
consanguineous
cousin
daughter
descendant
divorce
dna
emigrate
family history
genealogy
generation
husband
inheritance
intestate
lineage
marriage
military
occupation
parentage
parish
patronymic
pedigree
poor law
probate
son
testator
toponym
wife

Members' Surname Interests

Compiled by Bob Plumridge *memsec@berksfhs.org.uk*

Members submitting their interests:

6470	CORRY	Mrs A.	61 Montrose Road, Waihi 3610, NEW ZEALAND	<i>ann.anncor.corry@gmail.com</i>
8046	CORNWALL	Ms M.		<i>marie.cornwall@gmail.com</i>
8289	RUMENS	Mr D.	3 Flecker Close, Thatcham, RG18 3BA	<i>dave.rumens@btinternet.com</i>
8293	HAWKINS	Mr P.	35 Greenway, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3UG	<i>paul.hawkins@live.co.uk</i>
8294	CLAY	Mrs L.	Flat 3, 92 Old Tiverton Road, Exeter, EX4 6LQ	<i>laura1@mailfence.com</i>
8299	WILLIAMS	Mr R.	Bay Tree House, The Drive, Dawlish, EX7 9JB	<i>bevray@outlook.com</i>
8300	TUTTLE	Mrs J.	10 Kersey Crescent, Newbury, RG14 1SY	<i>jotuttleuk@yahoo.co.uk</i>
8301	WINKWORTH	Mr J.	1266 Ontario Street, Cobourg, ON K9A 3C9 CANADA	<i>jwinkworth1@cogeco.ca</i>
8302	HILL	Mrs S.		<i>ceriseblack@btinternet.com</i>
8303	BIDMEAD	Mr C.	103 Fareham Park Road, Fareham, PO15 6LN	<i>chrisbidmead@ntlworld.com</i>
8304	WEBB	Mr J.	163 Appleby Road, Stafford Heights, Brisbane, QLD 4053, AUSTRALIA	<i>webbjp@optusnet.com.au</i>
8305	BROCKHURST	Mr N.		<i>nickbrockhurst@gmail.com</i>

8302	BANNING	Froxfield	WIL	1821-1861
8302	BANNING	Newbury	BRK	1821-1861
8302	BANNING	Thatcham	BRK	1821-1861
8303	BIDMEAD	Any	BRK	All
8305	BIRD	Newbury	BRK	1750-1850
8303	BITMEAD	Any	BRK	ALL
8299	BODMAN	Twyford	BRK	1900-1961
6470	BRADLEY	Wolverhampton	STS	1600-1800
8300	BURRY	Woolwich	LND	ALL
8046	CARTER	Hampstead Marshal	BRK	1800-1860
6470	DANIELS	Any	GLS	1600-1800
8305	DEANE	Woolhampton	BRK	1750-1850
8293	EGGLETON	Chieveley	BRK	up to 1900
8293	EGGLETON	Newbury	BRK	1860 on
8293	GALLAWAY	Kintbury	BRK	up to 1900
8299	GEORGE	Reading	BRK	1900-1955
8294	GILES	Hungerford	BRK	up to 1900
8294	GILES	Woolstone	BRK	up to 1900
8302	GROVE	Newbury	BRK	1821-1861
8300	HARDCASTLE	Woolwich	LND	up to 1960
8294	HIDE	Kintbury	BRK	up to 1900
8294	HILL	Kintbury	BRK	up to 1900

6470	HODGETTS	Any	STS	1700-1800
8294	HOPSON	Welford	BRK	up to 1900
6470	JACKSON	Any	GLS	1600-1800
8294	JENNINGS	Kintbury	BRK	up to 1900
6470	LANE	Any	GLS	1600-1800
6470	LANE	Any	WIL	1600-1800
8294	NEW	Newbury	BRK	up to 1900
6470	NEWMAN	Any	GLS	1600-1800
6470	NEWMAN	Any	WIL	1600-1800
8294	PLUMB	Kintbury	BRK	up to 1900
8294	RANDALL	Kintbury	BRK	up to 1900
8289	RUMENS	Any	KEN	1500-2000
8289	RUMENS	Any	SSX	1500-2000
8289	RUMENS	Europe		1500-1700
8289	RUMENS	London	LND	1500-2000
8289	RUMMENS	Any	KEN	1500-1800
8289	RUMMENS	Any	SSX	1500-1800
8289	RUMMINS	Any	KEN	1500-1800
8289	RUMMINS	Any	SSX	1500-1800
6470	SHAW	Any	OXF	1500-1800
6470	SHAW	Windsor	BRK	1500-1800
8299	SMART	Burchetts Green	BRK	1870-1920
8299	SMART	Twyford	BRK	1900-1973
8293	STROUD	Froxfield	WIL	up to 1900
8294	TEAL	Newbury	BRK	up to 1900
8294	TEEL	Newbury	BRK	up to 1900
8300	TUTTLE	Hungerford	BRK	ALL
8304	WEBB	Reading	BRK	Any
8294	WILD	Enborne	BRK	up to 1900
8294	WILD	Welford	BRK	up to 1900
8294	WILDER	Enborne	BRK	up to 1900
8294	WILDER	Welford	BRK	up to 1900
8300	WILLMORE	Bexley	KEN	ALL
8301	WINKWORTH	Blewbury	BRK	1735
8301	WINKWORTH	Brightwalton	BRK	1700
8301	WINKWORTH	Chieveley	BRK	1790
8301	WINKWORTH	Hungerford	BRK	1570
8301	WINKWORTH	Leckhampstead	BRK	1790
8301	WINKWORTH	Reading	BRK	1939
8301	WINKWORTH	Welford	BRK	1670
8293	WITHERS	Newbury	BRK	ALL
6470	WOODSTOCK	Any	GLS	1600-1800
8293	WOOF	Newbury	BRK	up to 1900
6470	WOOLFORD	Any	BRK	1700-1800

From the Society's Newsletters

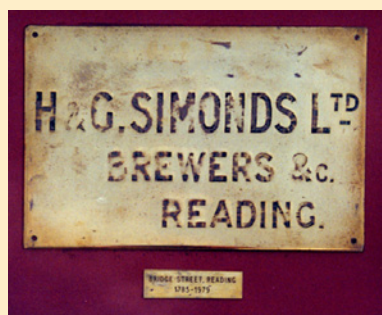
Here are snippets of some recent content - in case you missed them.

FindMyPast Discount Offer!

Findmypast have increased the discount offered to members of Berkshire Family History Society. From now until 30th June 2020, members can gain a 20% discount on any 12 month subscriptions that they take out. See the society website for more details.

Digital Bodleian (digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

The Bodleian Library's digitized collections are open to users from around the world for personal enjoyment and research. Check out their website to explore the 914,000 plus freely available digital objects on offer, including Corbett's Parliamentary History, maps, ancient manuscripts, and much more. The Bodleian Library is the main research library of the University of Oxford, one of the oldest libraries in Europe, and the second largest library in Britain after the British Library.



H & G Simonds Brewery of Reading (<https://simondsfamily.me.uk/>)

Those with family interests in Simonds Brewery of Reading, or its many regional breweries and pubs and hotels across the South East of England, may be interested to know a new website celebrating the company's history has been launched. The site is not only rich with information and images of the brewery, but also sets out the history of the Simonds family, and includes many family photographs and biographies.

News from The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

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, Merchant Navy medals and Second World War Shipping movement cards, records of women who served in the Army Auxiliary Corps and Royal Navy and Air Force, and Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) probate records 1348-1858. 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.

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 and "Where there's a will, there's a relative" with Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens on 15th August.

If you aren't receiving newsletters, and you would like to, make sure you have given the society your up to date email address and permission to contact you via email. If you have, first check your SPAM box to check they are not lurking there, and then contact our webmaster using the website contact us forms. Back copies of newsletters are available on the society's website under INFO.

Benefits of being a Berkshire Family History Society Member

Your membership is valuable to us, and we are always working hard to look for ways to give you extra benefits as part of that membership.

Here is a reminder of the benefits currently available:

- **Free access to key online resources and physical resources** in the Research Zone at the Centre for Heritage and Family History.
- **Free entry** to most meetings and reduced admission prices when a fee is charged.
- **Member discounts** when buying society products, publications, research and services. **10%** discount on society publications and up to **20%** discount on events.
- **Quarterly magazine** – The award-winning ***Berkshire Family Historian*** packed with news, reviews and features, and a publications list.
- **Regular electronic newsletter** keeping you up to date with society and national developments.
- **20% discount** on a 12-month subscription to Findmypast, if taken out by 30th June 2020.
- **Member only content on the website** – access to some invaluable Berkshire data not online elsewhere.
- **Forum** – very useful if you live out of county or out of country. Seek advice and ask questions on **any topic** (not just on things related to Berkshire) and benefits from the collective expertise of fellow members – **worldwide**. The society is on social media too.
- **Being a part** of a thriving and supportive community, which encourages family history research in Berkshire.
- **Borrow books** on local and family history from branch libraries.
- **Shared information** – Share pedigree charts and surname interests.
- **Projects** – Your chance to **join with others in society project work** – on site, at the Berkshire Record Office, in your own home – wherever you live in the world. It's your chance to give something back to family history – for researchers of tomorrow.