

Berkshire Family Historian



*The quarterly journal of the
Berkshire Family History Society*

June 2021
Volume 44



Inside this issue:
A pioneering nurse
A local start to local government
Ancestral tourism part 2
New downloads

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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

Binfield All Saints Church by Vicki Chesterman

Berkshire Family Historian

The quarterly journal of the Berkshire Family History Society

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Family names appearing in this issue

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

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Barker	12+	Morris	7
Bell	29	Newhook	29
Bevan	15	Nightingale	4+
Chavazinsky	26	North	12+
Dawe	4	Oconefsky	25+
Duvall	21	Osler	4+
Dymock	29	Parsons	4+
Finch	12	Peabody	5
Garth	15	Prouton	12+
Giles	29	Rance	12+
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Halpin	7	Savory	12+
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Howell	12+	Slatter	12
Jarvis	14	Sly	12+
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Editor's Notes

Welcome to your *June Berkshire Family Historian*. Time is fleeting, as a well-known song proclaims, and I can't believe we're halfway through the year already. I feel that everyone has a renewed spring in their step with the coming of much longer days, warmer weather, and, of course, the final easing of Covid restrictions.

This quarters issue covers topics from Polish ancestral tourism to musical dynasties, pioneering nurses to parish councils. Hopefully you will find something you find interesting. We have a packed list of upcoming events, as well as our Branch round-ups.

If you have anything you would like to be considered for inclusion in forthcoming issues, or if you have an idea for what you would like to see included in your journal, please let me know. It is your journal, and your input is very important to us.

Vicki Chesterman

editor@berksfhs.org.uk



Chairman's Corner

As you read this magazine, I hope that the progress in moving away from lockdown into a more familiar way of living is still on track. While we as a society have benefitted from being able to deliver many talks online, we have also been unable to complete some projects due to access issues at the Berkshire Records Office. I hope that in the summer we will be able to move that work on, and also see some of you at the Heritage Centre giving and receiving support in research, alongside a continuing online programme of activities. I would urge everyone to check the weekly newsletters to find out the latest position.

We will shortly hold our second online AGM, and if you haven't signed up please do. We will be reporting on what the society has done in the past year and give an opportunity for members to share experiences and provide feedback. We are focusing on the way we run the society rather than having a speaker as we need your input to help our planning for future years. We will also be electing the executive committee of trustees and officers. I would like to thank those who are standing down having completed their current maximum number of years of service, those who are standing for re-election, and those who have come forward to fill essential roles.

As the world changes, we will continue to adapt. Local branches will be exploring face to face meetings again, when it is possible to do so in a cost effective manner, while still holding online events alone or jointly allowing those not local to a branch to join in.

Regards.

Nick Prince

chairman@berksfhs.org.uk



Reminder: Annual General Meeting and election of officers and trustees

As published in the last edition of the *Berkshire Family Historian*, and in accordance with the society's constitution, notice is given that the 46th Annual General Meeting of the Berkshire Family History Society will be held on **Friday 18th June 2021** at **7.00pm** for a **7.30pm start**.

It will held online via Zoom, as it allows access to the Annual General Meeting for a vast majority of our members throughout the world, rather than in previous years where only those within travelling distance of that year's venue, could attend.

Please book your place on our website at <https://berksfhs.org/events/the-46th-annual-general-meeting-of-berkshire-family-history-society/>

Renewal 2021

If you joined from 1st July 2020 onwards, you can skip this article because it doesn't apply to you. You will receive an automated reminder shortly before the anniversary of the date you joined.

For everyone else, those of you who have an email address registered with us will receive automated email renewal reminders, which contains a link to the online renewal process. To smooth the transactions through our system, online members have had a small administrative change made to their renewal date, randomly allocating a date between 2nd and 31st July. This will make no material difference to your membership but it will ensure that our system doesn't send out over a thousand email reminders at once!

The first reminder will arrive two weeks* before your revised renewal date. If you haven't received a reminder by 30 June it will be because your renewal date is in the second half of July. Online members can find their new renewal date by logging into the website, selecting the menu item **Profile** and clicking on the **Subscriptions** tab.

Having an email address registered with us is important to this process but it needs to be the **correct** one. Have you changed it recently? Did you tell us? How do you know? The quickest way to find out is to try to log into the website using your email address instead of your username. If that doesn't work, we don't have your current one. It's not too late to fix that but you need to be quick. Email memsec@berksfhs.org.uk

Members who don't have an email address registered with us will find a renewal form in the June Historian.

If you haven't registered an email address with us yet, you're missing out! Some FHS's have virtually shut down their operations during Covid-19 but we have been in full swing with new products, weekly email newsletters and dozens of online events. Restrictions may be easing but the shape of our face-to-face operations will have to change and our online activities will continue to be significant so that we can continue to provide more to out-of-county members. Tell us your email address by emailing memsec@berksfhs.org.uk and we'll add you to our mailing list so you can join in.

Cheques

We're happy to accept cheques if you have no other way of paying but our preferred method is online by card because the process is fully automated, whereas cheque processing uses a lot of precious volunteer time.

Standing Orders

As advised in earlier editions of the Historian, standing orders are no longer accepted as a payment method. Any standing order payments received will be treated as donations and will not confer any membership benefits.

** In the March Historian we said they would start six weeks prior to renewal. We have since revised that down to two weeks.*

A Remarkable Lady

Jackie Blow sheds a light on a little known pioneer

Berkshire Family History Society had an enquiry from Marilyn Gendek in Australia, regarding the whereabouts of a grave of a famous nurse called Louisa Parsons. As the grave is in St. Mary's churchyard annexe in Shinfield, I was asked to assist with the enquiry as I live nearby in Spencers Wood.

I started my research with Shinfield and District Local History Society and work done by Clare Collins, a former member of the society, who, in 1983, had decided to research Louisa herself. This followed the discovery of her grave when the society was surveying the cemetery and recording inscriptions. Clare discovered through the American Embassy that Louisa was the director of the University of Maryland Nurses Training School and that they did not know where Louisa was buried in England. Naturally, I used Clare's article to start with and through my research resolved some anomalies and added more information that I received from Marilyn, who is researching Dr Osler, a prominent physician in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and who is linked to Louisa (more on him below). Margaret Bampton provided essential help in tracing Louisa's war time life.

I had heard a famous nurse once lived in the area but did not know anything about her, other than having seen her gravestone. According to the gravestone Louisa was the sister of Emma Rowe (née Parsons) of Three Mile Cross who was the wife of James Rowe. Through my research I have found that she was in fact the daughter of Emma.

She was known as Louisa, but according to her birth registration in June quarter 1855, she was Emma Amelia Louisa Parsons and baptised as that at Sidbury Devon, in 1856. She was born to Emma Parsons. The family can be found on the 1861 census, at Sidbury (part of Sidmouth), with head of the household William Parsons 58, who was a widower and agriculture labourer, Emma Parsons 27 daughter, Maria Parsons 25 daughter, Charles Parsons grandson aged 7, and Louisa granddaughter aged 5.

On the 1871 census at Fore Street Sidmouth, Louisa aged 17, was a servant to Henry Dawe, his wife Ann, and their 5 children. Henry was a wine merchant.

On the recommendations of a Miss Ross of London and Mrs Pattenhausen of Forest Hill,

Louisa entered the Nightingale Nursing School, at St. Thomas' Hospital, London, March 19th 1879 aged 24. She trained and graduated from there in June 1883 and can be seen there on the 1881 census aged 26.

St Thomas' Hospital was originally established in 1225 in Southwark, and transferred to Lambeth, opening there in 1871 with 600 beds. Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone in 1868. Some parts of the hospital in Southwark still remain, with the old operating theatre existing as a museum there. The old school at Lambeth is also a museum and, in 2020, was to be the site for celebrating the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale. It was not celebrated due to the ongoing problems with the Covid-19 virus. The school/museum now needs extensive renovations.

The school was established from public subscription, in St. Thomas' Hospital in Southwark, by Florence after the Crimean War. Twenty to thirty students were taken on for a year each year. On graduation they were called Nightingales. They could also visit Florence in her apartment in South Street. Florence kept



Gravestone of Emma, known as Louisa.

extensive notes on all the students, including their character. In fact, in the Aldershot Army Museum, a letter from Florence can be found asking after Louisa's progress. Between 1860, when the school was founded, and 1903, the school certified 1907 nurses. Many went on to be matrons or superintendents of nursing, as did Louisa.

Shortly after graduating, Louisa became a Sister in the British Army. One of her first missions was in Egypt under General Wolseley's campaign, to the fever-stricken and wounded who filled the hospitals. It was for service in these campaigns under Her Majesty's warrant she and others were decorated with the Royal Red Cross and the Egyptian Service Medal. The latter was a silver medal, which bears the veiled head of Victoria suspended from a distinctive blue and white ribbon.

The war in Egypt was started by France, Britain, India and Egypt trying to relieve Cairo and the Suez Canal from the Sudanese. The canal was an important thoroughfare to India. Britain and India secured Cairo from the Sudanese in the battle of Tel-el-Kebir and returned the capital and canal to the Egyptian ruler, the Khedive. They pushed the Dervishes (Sudanese) south using the Nile and gunboats in battle. It was the Khedive who presented Louisa with her campaign medals. The military hospitals were on the banks of the Nile with the guns on the boats protecting the banks. Before securing Cairo, the infantry would fight in a square formation protected by the numerous thorn bushes which were plentiful in the desert. In the centre of the square were the big guns and the hospital wagons where the wounded would be attended, perhaps by Louisa.

In 1885, Louisa returned to England suffering from typhoid, for two years rest and recovery. The Egyptian war continued until 1898 when Winston Churchill was involved and he wrote of his adventures in a book called *The River War*.

On September 10th 1887 Louisa sailed to Boston, America, from Liverpool, as the nurse and companion of an American woman, Louisa P Loring, who was also accompanied by her sister,



Image courtesy of Marilyn Gendek.

Katherine Loring. She stayed for the next two years, in California and the Carolinas. Louisa Putnam Loring is mentioned as an executor to administer the American side the will of Louisa (Parsons), along with Augustus Peabody Loring, a lawyer. These siblings are both of Boston, Massachusetts, but of different addresses. Augustus was a contemporary of Henry James, the writer.

Another famous name which is associated with the Peabody family name is George Peabody whose name is attached to many buildings in London and the bank of J P Morgan in the city. George was a great philanthropist; the Loring family were also. There were four siblings and two had the Peabody name as a second one taken from their mother's side.

In 1889, the Johns Hopkins Hospital was about to open its wards as the first training school for nurses in America. Louisa was appointed head nurse and interim superintendent, until the appointed candidate, Isabel Hampton, could take up the post three months later. Louisa was one of four candidates chosen for the superintendent's job. It was here that Louisa first met Professor William Osler, physician-in-chief. During this time, she demonstrated such a capacity for leadership, organisation, and knowledge of nursing that her services were sought by the University of Maryland when its training school for nurses was inaugurated. This training school has a continuing interest in Louisa and actually

houses her medals, earned in three wars, in its museum as per Louisa's will.

Dr Osler, a Canadian, was a remarkable man, who with 3 other professors of medicine inaugurated the Johns Hopkins Training school in America, which, with its organisation and training, became the most famous hospital school in the world at that time. He wrote a textbook for the use of students and advocated the clinical approach and science to medicine. He told his students that the patient would diagnose his illness and that students were to listen to the patient. Johns Hopkins was another remarkable man and his biography is interesting.

Louisa left the Johns Hopkins University Hospital in December 1889 to become the first superintendent of nurses at the University of Maryland Hospital Training School for Nurses. This was a very important time for her and had she ended her career here would have been a major achievement. She resigned from the Maryland Hospital after 22 months. The school still remembers Louisa as they have named a department after her. For a short period of time she was superintendent of nurses in a hospital in St. Paul Minnesota. Of this we know very little. Next, in August 1893, Louisa was sent by Miss Clara Barton, as the chief Red Cross representative, to the tidal flood, after the disastrous force 3 hurricane at Beaufort, South Carolina. Clara had fought in the American Civil War, had founded the American Red Cross as a self-taught nurse and was their president. This must have been a dreadful time as 2000 were drowned and more hurricanes came and devastated the East Coast up as far as New York. Beaufort was an area of aqua phosphate mining which was ruined. The Red Cross established a warehouse of food and clothing, and the area took nearly a year to return to normal. The damages totalled \$1 million at least.

Louisa was called home shortly after, owing to the illness of her mother Emma Rowe, but was soon to return to her friends the Lorings in Boston, staying there from 1895 to 1897. Then came the Spanish-American War, and Louisa was sent as a Red Cross representative, to take nursing charge of the hospital at Fort McPherson, Mississippi, as part of the USA Army hospital. The fort was established in 1867 as a Union troop fort following the 1861-65 American Civil War and played a major role as a hospital in the Spanish-American War of 1898.

Cuba struggled to gain independence from Spain and there were riots in Havana. America

was drawn into war with Spain because of her significant investment interests there. In 1898, the USA sent a battleship called the Maine, to protect their interests, and this was blown up losing 260 members of the crew. In April, Spain declared war on the USA and by July the war was over because of the USA's supremacy at sea. The Philippines was also involved as part of Spain and the USA took over the 7000 islands there. The Philippines eventually became a republic. Cuba is still a poor country.

Another medal was awarded to Louisa for service in the Spanish-American War and is held at the University of Maryland Hospital with the other medals.

A year later came the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and Louisa was recalled to England for duty in South Africa, at Bloemfontein, her last service as a military nurse. She was with Princess Christian's Army Nursing Service (Reserve) at No. 9 General Hospital there. She was awarded the Queen's medal of the South African war.

In 1866 provision was made for the appointment of nurses to all Military General Hospitals but it wasn't until 1881 that an Army Nursing Service was formed. In 1902, Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service was established by Royal Warrant under the control of Queen Alexandra who was president until her death. The service performed in World War I, in every campaign from 1939, as the Army Nursing Service and in 1949 was renamed as a corps called QARANC (Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps), currently under the patronage of the Countess of Wessex.

After the Boer War, Louisa returned to America for a time to stay with friends, until about 1910. Due to her mother's continued illness, she returned home once again to Great Lea Farm, Three Mile Cross. She can be found there on the 1911 census.

Louisa's mother, Emma, died October 18th 1912. Due to her own failing health, Louisa was unable to take an active part in nursing but during the next four years took an active interest in the local hospitals, visiting to comfort and cheer the wounded in them. Louisa helped raise funds on behalf of the refreshment buffet at Reading Station for the soldiers by holding a local Primrose Day celebration, according to the Reading Mercury. Primrose Day, April 19th, commemorates Benjamin Disraeli's death. One of the nurses at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Janet Wallace, was a witness to Louisa's will.

No longer in good health, living on the farm in Three Mile Cross near Reading, and knowing her time was near, Louisa wrote to her American friends. She was under the care of local doctors George Halpin and Dr Morris, as she was not well enough to travel to Oxford to be seen by Sir William Osler, now a Baronet and Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. He learnt that Louisa was living nearby and came to visit her several times at Great Lea farm. She had been such a highly regarded nurse of fine character. It was a great comfort to Louisa also that he came to visit her. He consulted with her doctors Halpin and Morris, for her continuing care confirming there was little he could do for her, but felt she was in good hands with them.

So it was that Louisa died on November 2nd 1916, from stomach cancer. She was given a military funeral being a member of the Reserve Nursing Staff of the Army. The coffin, draped with the Union Jack and many beautiful flowers, was drawn to St. Mary's Church Shinfield on a gun carriage in charge of a firing party, under the command of Captain Fielding Clarke. Maybe the gun carriage had been loaned by the Duke of Wellington. A company of soldiers, buglers and a firing party present, rifles were fired over the grave and the Last Post sounded by the buglers. So, this famous nurse was laid to rest with her mother Emma Rowe.

Many notable people attended including Sir William Osler, Dr. H.P. Gilbert, who Louisa first trained under, and Lieutenant, J.G. Moran. The service was conducted by Rev. H.L Rice, vicar of Shinfield, and Rev. F T. Lewarne, vicar of Spencers Wood.

One of Louisa's last bequests was that her service medals be left to the Maryland Hospital training School, America, of which she was the founder, also a legacy of \$10,000. The Maryland continues to be one of the largest nurses training schools in America, and maintains its connections with Louisa Parsons, as the nurses still wear the fluted lace cap presented to Louisa by Florence Nightingale. In 1922, a hall of residence for the nurses was named after Louisa and in 1964, the nurses Alumnae Association honoured her memory by commissioning a portrait for the School's 75th anniversary.

In 1989, a delegation of the School alumni toured England and visited Louisa Parsons' grave site, meeting with members of Shinfield and District Local History Society and a Mr and Mrs Adams, descendants of Emma and James Rowe. James and Emma had a son and daughter.

Their daughter Minnie, married Austin Adams. Austin and Minnie had 7 sons so Mr and Mrs Adams would be descended from their family. The Shinfield and District Local History Society was presented with a commemorative medal by the nurses of the School of Nursing, University of Maryland during their visit to the grave in 1989.

In 2020, a group of nurses were due to visit England as part of the celebrations of Florence Nightingale's 200th birthday and planning to visit the grave of Louisa. Due to Covid-19 this never happened although the person I have corresponded with said they still hope it will eventually happen.

In 2020, a local care home was named in honour of Louisa - Parsons Grange. So, from very humble beginnings Louisa Parsons became a very famous nurse and the tributes paid to her affirm this.

References:

- Shinfield and District Local History Society*
- Spencers Wood Local History Group*
- Marilyn Gendek*
- The Maryland University School of Nursing*
- Living Museum and Dean Krimmel Creative Museum Service/Qm2*
- Find My Past*
- Reading Mercury*
- St Thomas' Hospital*
- Nightingale Museum*
- Britannica online*
- Selected writings of Dr Osler 1849-1919 OUP 1951*
- Osler Club of London*
- Spanish World of 1898 (Library of Congress)*
- Nurses on the Veldt – medal rolls*
- Commando, A Boer Journal by Deneys Reitz. 1929*
- Galveston Flood Biography.com*
- Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing. (This was instituted with the help of Florence Nightingale)*
- Peabody Trust.org.uk*
- Historic Beverley. Loring family papers (extensive)*
- Wikipedia*
- Princess Christian's Army Nurses Service*
- Red Cross UK*
- American Red Cross*

Events organised from The Centre for Heritage and Family History

June - September 2021

Our events continue largely by Zoom until the end of September, although we hope to re-launch our popular walks programme in June. This means that all of our events remain available to everyone, if the time zone allows, wherever you live. So please do take advantage of this and the member discounts available.

The society is using Zoom to deliver its webinars. The event link is sent to attendees in advance, so pre-booking is required. To access Zoom, you need a computer device with speakers and preferably a microphone and webcam. If you haven't yet tried an online event and would like help to do so, just contact us at booking@berksfhs.org.uk

Please do check the society's website regularly, as changes may occur and new events are regularly added. For more information on all of our events, see <https://berksfhs.org>

Please do check the website often, as changes may occur and new events are regularly added.

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

Workshops - Online	
TICKETS £10 (members £9)	
Places are limited, pre-booking is required.	
July Saturday 17th 11.00am - 1.00pm	A Changing School Experience 1914 - 1960 Workshop <i>Tutor: Joan Dils</i> Schools and schooling changed profoundly in the first decades of the 20th century. Almost all children attended school for longer periods, especially if classes for teenagers were provided. The curriculum expanded well beyond the 3 Rs, especially into more practical subjects. Child health improved as medical services and school meals appeared. War provided challenges for many schools. Finally the great reform of 1944 made secondary education available for all based on age, aptitude and ability. By 1960, comprehensive school were in the offing.
August Saturday 21st 11.00am - 1.00pm	Writing up your Family History Workshop <i>Tutor: Dr Barry Jerrome</i> Have you been researching your family tree and would like to write it up as a story but don't know how to start? In this online workshop, Barry will help you get started and show you how you can structure it, so that you can write-up your family history while still continuing your research. Barry will show you the system he developed and also suggest alternative approaches and opportunities. The workshop will help if you have not started yet. Or, if you have already been writing up your family history and would like additional advice, or inspiration.
September Saturday 18th 2.00 - 4.00pm	Parish Registers Workshop <i>Tutor: Catherine Sampson</i> Increase your chances of success with family historians' core resource. Better understand what registers can provide for you and how and why they differ in content over time. Find out where to find them and how Church of England and non-conformist registers differ. Discover the codes and hidden clues which can be found in some entries and how to interpret them. Also, indexes and transcripts, their benefits and pitfalls.

Courses - Online

See website for full details. Places limited, pre-booking required.

<p>Fridays</p> <p>June - 18th & 25th July – 2nd, 9th & 18th</p> <p>2.00 - 3.45pm (all 5 sessions)</p> <p>Tickets £50 (members £45)</p>	<p>An Introduction to the Industrial Revolution in Britian <i>Tutor: Richard Marks</i></p> <p>The Industrial Revolution in Britain changed the world forever, but why did it occur in Britain first? In this five week course for family historians, we will look at why the Industrial Revolution happened in Britain and whether it really was a “revolution”.</p> <p>The course will scrutinise some of the important people who made the Industrial Revolution, and why their inventions were so important, as well as how life in the Industrial Revolution was experienced by the factory workers and its impact upon their health. We will also look at how the Trades Unions began and how the first welfare systems started (and how to find evidence of them). We will consider the experiences of women in the workplace and how this changed over time. Finally, we will explore how the Industrial Revolution can be researched by family historians seeking to trace and better understand how their ancestors lived and worked during this period of great change.</p>
<p>Saturdays</p> <p>June - 19th & 26th</p> <p>11.00am - 1.00pm (both sessions)</p> <p>Tickets £20 (members £18)</p>	<p>House Histories <i>Tutor: Dr Margaret Simons</i></p> <p>Researching the history of a house can be both exciting and rewarding, revealing fascinating stories of those that lived there before you. Do you have a house that you are interested in knowing more about, have you come up against a dead end or do you just want to know how to approach the subject?</p> <p>If so, then this short two week course will help you reveal people, dates, events and much more and will introduce you to online and offline resources.</p>
<p>Fridays</p> <p>October - 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th November - 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th December - 3rd</p> <p>2.00 - 4.00pm (all 10 sessions)</p> <p>Tickets £125 (members £115)</p>	<p>Georgian Sources for Historians <i>Tutor: Dr Margaret Simons</i></p> <p>The 18th century has been referred to as one of the most transformative periods in British history. During it, the term revolution has been used to describe both changes in agriculture and the birth of industrialisation. The population expanded and cities grew, colonialism and slavery powered the expansion in trade, which in turn fuelled the growth in consumerism. Along with the politics of the day, the royal dynasty that gave rise to the era known as the Georgians and the cultural and social changes of the period, there is an abundance of written evidence. From official manuscripts and documentation, to private papers. All can inform us at every level about life during the period. Using a themed approach, we will consider the sources available to uncover how our forebears may have lived their lives in the long 18th century.</p> <p>To help us apply what we are learning you will undertake a small project, which we will share in the final week.</p>

Natter Group - Online and FREE

<p>June - Tuesday 1st July - Tuesday 6th Aug - Tuesday 3rd Sept - Tuesday 7th</p>	<p>Informal discussion group facilitated by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. Topics are chosen by the group on a monthly basis. Free to attend, members only. Pre-booking is required.</p> <p>6.45pm for 7.00pm start - end time varies.</p>
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Social History Talks - Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking is required. Book all five talks in the 'Summer Potpourri' series for the price of four.

<p>June</p> <p>Thursday 3rd 2.00 – 3.15pm</p> <p>Final talk in 'Spring Potpourri' series</p>	<p>A Stroll through Berkshire's Graveyards <i>with Catherine Sampson</i></p> <p>Berkshire's churchyards are full of stories. About the individuals who are buried there, the communities in which they lived and the prevailing burial customs and superstitions. They reveal local industry and commerce, the impact of events – both local and national, and of course pandemics and other causes of death. This talk explores some of those stories and showcases some of the outstanding architecture of Berkshire's funerary monuments – both in its burial grounds and also inside its churches.</p>
<p>July</p> <p>Thursday 15th 7.30 - 8.45pm</p> <p>1st talk of 5 in 'Summer Potpourri' series</p>	<p>Sculls, skiffs and steamers: the history of Salter's Steamers <i>with Dr Simon Wenham</i></p> <p>Salter's Steamers (founded in Oxford in 1858 and known for much of its existence as Salter Bros Ltd) did more to popularise pleasure boating on the non-tidal river than any other Thames business. This talk traces the development of the firm and how it grew from a leading racing-boat constructor in Wandsworth to become one of the largest inland boat-builders and passenger boat operators in the country. It also describes many of the famous names associated with the business, including Lewis Carroll, William Morris and T. E. Lawrence.</p>
<p>July</p> <p>Thursday 29th 2.00 – 3.15pm</p> <p>2nd talk of 5 in 'Summer Potpourri' series</p>	<p>A Disappearing Landscape: the heathlands of the Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey borders <i>with Dr Alan Crosby</i></p> <p>Back in the early 1720s, Daniel Defoe found Bagshot Heath so terrifying that he described it as being like 'Arabia Deserta'. There were then over 100,000 acres of barren sandy waste, sprawling across three counties and touching the edges of Egham and Wokingham, Farnham and Woking. Today, only fragments of this hauntingly beautiful landscape remain. Whole towns have grown up where a few cottages were three centuries ago – Bracknell, Bagshot, Camberley, Aldershot, Farnborough – and forests have covered tracts of the wastes. Chopped up by railways and motorways, bombarded with artillery, seized for leafy estates and des res communities, the heathlands fell victim to developers. This is their story – and the story of the people who lived there.</p>
<p>August</p> <p>Thursday 12th 7.30 - 8.45pm</p> <p>3rd talk of 5 in 'Summer Potpourri' series</p>	<p>The Battle of Maiwand <i>with Dan Allen</i></p> <p>The impressive cast iron statue of a lion in Forbury Gardens, Reading has become one of the most iconic images of Reading. Built by George Blackall Simonds and unveiled in 1886, it commemorates those who died in the Battle of Maiwand. Yet few of us probably know much about the Battle and its tragic association with Berkshire. In this talk, Dan Allen, of the Victorian Military Society, tells us about the events which led to the conflict, the battle itself and its local connections.</p>
<p>August</p> <p>Thursday 26th 2.00 – 3.15pm</p> <p>4th talk of 5 in 'Summer Potpourri' series</p>	<p>Reading Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39 <i>with Mike Cooper</i></p> <p>Reading has one of the country's best regarded memorials to volunteers who served in the International Brigades, fighting in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39. In this talk, Mike Cooper, co-author of "We Cannot Park on Both Sides" a history of Reading volunteers in Spain, will look at the background to the memorial, the war, and what are now believed to be over 15 men and women with a Reading connection who served in Spain.</p>

Social History Talks continued

September

Thursday 9th
2.00 – 3.15pm

Final talk in ‘Summer
Potpourri’ series

Berkshire and the Industrial Revolution *with Richard Marks*

The Industrial Revolution, with images of cotton mills and smoke belching factories in the Midlands and the north of England, is familiar to everyone, but how was Berkshire impacted by the industrialisation of Britain in the 18th and 19th Centuries? In this talk, we will look at how a rural county was impacted by industrialisation both elsewhere and within Berkshire itself. We will examine how traditional Berkshire industries were affected, how new ones sprang up and developed over the period and what impact the railways had on Berkshire industry.

Guided Walk

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Places are limited, pre-booking is required. Please see website for full details.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and required restrictions, bookings will only open online when it seems likely that this walk will be able to go ahead.

June

Thursday 24th
2.30 - 4.00pm

Abbey Quarter

Guide: John Painter

In medieval times, Reading was the site of a great royal abbey - a religious community centred round a magnificent church - one of the largest monasteries in Europe. It was formed in 1121 by Henry I and closed in 1539 on the orders of Henry VIII. In this its 900th anniversary year, our walk will explore the rich history of the Abbey Quarter with abbey guide and expert John Painter. It will be around 90 minutes in length, and generally on flat ground.

September

Saturday 4th
2.30 - 4.00pm

Historic River Walks

Guide: David Cliffe

The walk is around 1½ miles, and again should take around 90 minutes. David will take us through land which once belonged to Reading Abbey and then in the 19th century became built up and industrial. Now much of it has been redeveloped for housing. Along the way, David will tell us of the history of the area, and show photographs of the different locations and what used to be there, so the pace will be leisurely.

DNA Interest Group - Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

All welcome. Pre-booking is required.

July

Saturday 17th
2.30 - 4.30pm

This special interest discussion group is aimed at those wanting to get the most out of their DNA results. It is facilitated by international DNA expert, Debbie Kennett. Sessions are held quarterly, but there is no obligation to attend on a regular basis and first time attendees are always welcomed. Pre-booking required.

Binfield Parish Council - The Early Days

John Harman *takes a look at the early days of local government*

There were several reforms made by Parliament between the Reform Act of 1832 and the 1894 Local Government Act, all principally seeking the improvement and extension of provisions in health, education and relief of the poor as well as seeking economies of funding. An extension of suffrage was central to much of this reform.

The Local Government Act of 1888 had established a system of elected local government in England based largely on the existing counties. The counties themselves had undergone some boundary changes in the preceding 50 years, mainly to remove enclaves and exclaves such as the one that placed a small part of Wiltshire in the Binfield area.

By the Local Government Act of 1894 each County Council eventually came to be served by District Councils (either Urban or Rural) which linked with Parish Councils. So, in 1894 secular District and Parish Councils were created, between them administering the work previously and variously undertaken by Vestry committees, Parish Church Councils, Boards of Guardians and Sanitary Authorities, thus codifying an evolving system that seems to have lasted the test of Victorian time.

The size of each council was determined by the population it served. In 1894 just under 2000 people lived in the Binfield parish entitling it to nine councillors, who were elected annually, given statutory responsibilities and the duty to hold an annual meeting. Binfield was also allotted two elected places on Easthampstead Rural District Council. There were thus election procedures at all three levels with a ballot if there were more nominations than places or if requested by an elector. A general account of the nomination process within Berkshire read:

“The meetings were for the most part well attended, but all were conducted in a business-like manner and the utmost good temper prevailed. People of all classes were nominated squires and parson, landlords and tenants, retired middle-class residents, publicans, gardeners, coachmen, tradesmen, artisans and labourers, and in many parishes the working class came off with flying colours. Very few of the clergy, comparatively speaking, were

nominated, and several of those who were did not secure the confidence of the meeting. For instance, Canon Slatter failed at Whitchurch, the Rectors of Tilehurst, Burghfield and Finchampstead were not selected, and the Vicars of Hurst, Twyford and Bray did not secure sufficient votes to put them on the Council. At Bradfield, the Rector was rejected and the Primitive Methodist minister accepted, and the curate-in-charge of Farley hill was preferred to the Vicar of Swallowfield. The Rev. R. Finch refrained from testing the feeling of his flock at Pangbourne, and in some other parishes where friction between the priest and a portion of his parishioners exists the parson has discreetly kept aloof from the meeting. Several “Squires” were deposed, and another feature of the election was the very insignificant support the Lord of the Manor of Bradfield obtained.”

Reading Observer, Saturday December 8th 1894

The Binfield nominations meeting was reported as follows:

“BINFIELD (9). A large meeting of electors took place in the Schoolroom. Thirteen nomination papers were handed to the Chairman (Mr. J. Macnabb), and on the show of hands the result was as follows :—J. Thorpe 106 votes, J. Jones 104, W. Minchin 101, J. Barker 94, H. North 93, E. Savory 87, H. Howell 84, G. Sly 80, G. Liddell 60, C. Rance 27, F. Baker 21, H. Jones 11 and J. Prouton 9.—There being more candidates than the required number, the Chairman stated that ten minutes would be allowed for any member nominated to consider whether he demanded a poll or not.—A poll was demanded by Mr. Felix Baker. —Mr. WALKER, a candidate for the District Council, heckled the various candidates on several points relating to the presence of members of the Press at the Council meetings, the hour of such meetings, the allotment question and recreation grounds.—The RECTOR (Canon Savory) thanked those present for their orderly behaviour and conduct during the meeting, stating that the two largely attended meetings that had been held respecting this momentous question augured well the future management of the Parish.”

Reading Observer, Saturday December 8th 1894

This county-wide report of the nomination meetings is interestingly revealing. From it, we can deduce the prevailing issues and concerns relating to this new way of selecting councillors and of tasking the successful candidates.

As with nearly all Parliamentary Acts, the 1894 drafting sets out to be comprehensive. Inevitably, companion guides became available. An explanation of the proposed election process in *Ryde's Local Government Act, 1894. A Manual*, states:

“The councillors will be elected every year at a parish meeting, or by a poll of the “parochial electors” which will be taken by ballot; and each “parochial elector” may give one vote and no more for each of any number of persons not exceeding the number to be elected. The first elections will be held in November, 1894; but in 1896 and subsequent years, the parish councillors will come into office on April 15, and will elect their chairman at their first meeting.”

Manuals explain a process involved, the local Press, as indicated above, is usually more interested in personalities.

These reports of the nomination meetings clearly reveal the live issues. Would the process be peaceable? Would the results be accepted? Would the introduction of the possibility of secret ballots to replace the nominations method affect the selection of candidates? Irrespective of the two differing methods of selection, would

the electorate return the establishment’s “old gang” of squires, vicars and local professionals? The nomination meetings offered hints about the nature of these outcomes. Parish priests, by and large, had seemed cautious about seeking nomination, discreetly “*keeping aloof*” from the process and many pastors who had decided to “*test the feeling of [their] flocks*” had been rejected. Furthermore, at Bradfield and Farley Hill, for example, the old, established order had been quite up-ended. Bradfield had rejected its “*Squire*”. So had other constituencies.

There is some speculation about the kind of candidate who might eventually succeed since “*people of all classes [had been] nominated – squires and parsons, landlords and tenants, retired middle-class residents, publicans, gardeners, coachmen, tradesmen, artisans and labourers....*” The nominations had already shown that “*in many parishes the working class came off with flying colours*”.

In Binfield, Mr Felix Baker demanded a ballot, and when the election followed on December 17th, Binfield did not buck the trend. The table below shows that apart from its well-founded faith in its long-standing Rector, Canon Savory, the Binfield electorate chose to ignore the “*gentry*”, electing instead “*gardeners, coachmen, tradesmen, artisans and labourers*” – nine middle-aged married men, at least six of whom had spent their working lives in Binfield or an adjacent parish.

Name / Nomination Score	Occupation	Birthplace	Age	Married	Votes	Difference
John Jones 106	Butcher/Dairyman/ Farmer	Hurst	47	Yes	141*	+35
John Barker 91	Blacksmith	Binfield	37	Yes	141*	+50
William Minchin 101	Shopkeeper/ Merchant	Binfield	41	Yes	139*	+28
Joseph Thorpe 106	Farmer	Swallowfield	51	Yes	135*	+29
Henry L. North 93	Joiner	Wokingham	35	Yes	124*	+31
Edmund Savory 87	Rector	Melksham	68	Yes	111*	+24
Henry Howell 81	Head Gardener	Minstead	37	Yes	103*	+22
George Sly 80	Farmer	Wellington	35	Yes	103*	+23
Charles Rance 27	Plasterer [Labourer]	Binfield	47	Yes	93*	+66
Felix Baker 21**	Professor of Music	Kensington	36	Yes	88	+67
Gerald Liddell 80**	Gentleman	Co. Durham		Yes	83	+3
Hardman Jones 11**	Gentleman	Leamington	54	Yes	43	+32
J. Prouton 9**	Coach Builder	Wooton	31	Yes	35	+26
** unsuccessful nominee					* elected	

All of the nominations were found valid. The Ryde manual explains the rules:

“The parish councillors must either be parochial electors of the parish, or persons who have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the election, resided in the parish or within three miles thereof; and the county council may fix the number of the parish councillors to not less than five, nor more than fifteen. Women, whether married or not, are not disqualified.”

The gap between Liddell’s 80 votes and Rance’s 27 produced a decisive choice of the top nine nominees at the nominations meeting reached by a “show of hands”. Felix Baker, an unsuccessful candidate at the nominations meeting, exerted his right to demand the secret ballot. He finished only five votes short of Charles Rance, a plasterer, who had more than tripled his support at the nominations meeting, at the same time ousting Gerald Liddell, a Gentleman, who “enjoyed” an increase of only three votes in a secret ballot. So anonymous voting might seem to enhance lower class influence.

And, as with modern elections, there were always interested activists. The Reading Mercury of Saturday December 22nd 1894, reported:

“As the Elections were by Ballot but little excitement was manifested and the proceedings passed off quietly. The results were not known until late at night, in some instances until past midnight; but even at that late hour those most interested in the elections assembled at the various places appointed for the declaration of the Poll awaited with much interest the result.”

Four years later in April 1899, the Chairman’s report of Binfield Council’s work shows that his councillors had approached their work seriously.

The Reading Observer reported on Saturday April 29th 1899:

“ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.—A long agenda paper was supplied to the members of the Council for April 21st. necessitating a long sitting.—The Clerk presented the Overseers’ balance sheet (audited), and also the audited accounts of the Parish Council for the past year, the latter showing a balance of £3 16s. 2d.—The Assistant Overseer (Mr. W. B. Webster) stated that for the next 12 months the rate would be 2d. less.—Mr. J. Jones (Chairman) addressed the meeting on the work of the past year. He said he was sure that all would be pleased to hear the very favourable account he was about to give of the Council’s work during the past year. From a financial point of view they had done the greatest

amount of work at a minimum of cost. Not a penny had been charged to the rates during the last twelve months: in fact, during the last four years the cost of the Parish Council to the ratepayers had been at the rate of two-thirds of a farthing in the £ on each rate made. That, he thought, would upset the theory prevalent in the Parish—that the Council increased the rates. The charities, under the management of the Council’s trustees, had in all cases given entire satisfaction, both to the Council and to the recipients. The allotments had this last year been in a small way an aid to the ratepayers, as a profit of 12s. 10d. had been placed to the credit of the rates. The Council had repaired several footpaths, which, he was sure, had given great satisfaction to the users of the same, and the public, too.

They had been in communication with the District Council upon several sanitary issues, and had in each case brought the same to a satisfactory termination. The drought of last summer was alleviated as much as possible by the kind act of the Vice-Chairman (Mr. W. Minchin), who sent several supplies of pure water to the north end of the parish.

It was usual to make some mention of the attendance of the members of the Council. He did not think anyone could find fault with the Binfield Parish Council in this respect as all the members had put in very good attendances. They must bear in mind that all the members. were business men. and so were not in a position to be present at every meeting. The number of meetings had been ten, and the attendances of each member as follows: Mr. J. Jones ten. Mr. W. Minchin nine. Messrs. Jarvis, Green and North eight. Messrs. Sly and King seven, Mr J. Thorp six, and Mr. J. West four. —Mr. W. Minchin followed with a report of the various charities distributed by the Council.—For the present year Mr. J. Jones and Mr. W. Minchin were elected chairman and vice-chairman respectively: overseers, Messrs. B. J. Green and W. Minchin: trustees to charities (Bowes’ and Batson’s, Stevenson’s, Howe’s, Kitcher and Randall’s, Winch’s), Messrs. W. Minchin and J. Jones: Birch’s charity, Messrs. G. B. Sly and J. Thorpe.

The Finance Committee in composed of Messrs. Jones, Minchin and Sly: the Footpaths’ Committee of Messrs. Sly, Jones and Minchin: and the allotment managers elected were Messrs. Green, North, Sly and Jones.—It was agreed that, owing to the unsatisfactory state of one allotment, the owner should not be allowed to continue his holding, but should have the option of taking a smaller plot: and that the claims

made by the allotment holders for damages sustained recently by followers of Mr. Garth's hounds "be referred to the Garth Hunt for settlement." – With reference to standing orders, the five fixed meetings of the Council were: 1899, June 23rd, Oct. 3rd, Dec. 15th; 1900, Jan. 16th, and March 30th. – There were four applications, for the apprentice money. (Wandsford's charity, the successful candidate being John Jones, son of the late Mr. David Jones. – The Clerk was instructed to make out on behalf of the Council a contribution order, to be drawn on the Overseers for £20, to carry on the Council's work."

Surprisingly the above report shows that the work and approach of the 19th century Binfield Council was similar to much that it deals with now. A sub-committee structure quickly became the norm: sub-committees for the Allotments, Footpaths and Finance were set up and the practice has endured. So too has the practice of reporting to the District Council to alert, even to badger, on some issues.

But there are differences. An earlier Annual Meeting had heard of two prosecutions of cyclists riding on a pathway - nowadays Binfield cyclists are encouraged to share some pavements with pedestrians. Nowadays, too, it would be rare to have a full Council meeting without some reference to housing development within the village whereas in the 1890s apart from seeking perpetually to maintain adequate sanitary arrangements - sewage-borne disease was still feared - housing was rarely a topic.

The explanation for the housing discrepancy is that there was little demand for new houses. During a period of nearly 20 years, it seems that there had been only four dwellings erected in Binfield. In 1917 the Parish Council received a request from central government to assess its contribution to the problem of a post-war shortage of adequate housing for the demobilised forces. The Council's response reveals a determination to limit further development.

The Reading Observer relayed this report on Saturday October 27th 1917:

"BINFIELD PARISH COUNCIL. A specially convened meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday, in response to a letter from the District Council to consider the housing problem in the village. Mr. J. Jones, the Chairman, in his opening remarks stated that any scheme approved would be supported by grants from the Imperial Exchequer. Mr. W. Minchin explained that a sub-committee composed of one member from each parish would be formed to consider

the replies received, and that the Rev. R. Bevan was elected to represent Binfield. Each matter was dealt with separately, and fully discussed before formulating the necessary reply to the effect that there was a slight decrease in the population of the parish during the war, and as far as it was possible to estimate, this would continue after the war. Some ten to fifteen houses were at present vacant and fit for habitation. No new houses in all probability would be required on the cessation of war. The Council were satisfied that the employers of labour here would erect any necessary houses for their employees. No houses reasonably unfit existed that would necessitate demolition, so far as the Council were aware. There would be an adequacy of housing in the village for some time to come."

Of course, the assurance that "*each matter was dealt with separately*" indicates that there had been a full discussion of the document that the Rev. Bevan would take to the District Council's sub-committee. But the "*necessary reply*" reveals confidence that, for Binfield, masterly inaction would suffice. The Council could report that there were between ten and fifteen currently unoccupied but habitable houses in the Parish. So taken with a perceived "*slight decrease in [the village] population no new houses in all probability would be required on the cessation of war.*" And even if there was a demand, "*the employers of labour here would erect any necessary houses for their employees.*" Different nowadays, when we are told in *Housing in the South East First Report of Session 2009-10* by the House of Commons South East Regional Committee, "*The setting of average annual targets for future house building has been a **contentious** [authors emphasis] issue in successive regional plans for the South East Region.*"

What confidence in that phrase, "*for some time to come*"! It will be interesting to examine the 1921 census when it becomes available.

This work has been made possible through access to the British Newspaper Archive, my acknowledgment and thanks.

The Centre for Heritage and Family History

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

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

As we went to print with this edition of the *Historian*, the Centre remains shut due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been working hard to reopen and hope to do in the not too distant future. Please keep an eye on our newsletters and the website for up to date details of the situation.

Whilst the Centre remains closed, the society has successfully negotiated online access for its members to two of its subscription websites, *Findmypast Worldwide* and *The Genealogist*. This is a great opportunity to access new records and extend your family research from your own home. And it's another great benefit of being a member of Berkshire Family History Society.

For full details and to access these sites see the society's website: ***Info/Temporary access to subscription sites***.

Assisting family historians at a distance

In addition, the society offers an established postal/online search service of Berkshire names based on: Berkshire baptisms, Berkshire marriages, Berkshire burials and 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. Charges start at £3 for up to 25 entries for a single surname in one database.

For full details see: <https://berksfhs.org/info/research-guides/research-services/> or refer to previous *Historians*.

Projects and Publications Update

Catherine Sampson

As I write this update, we're eagerly awaiting the reopening of the Berkshire Record Office to enable us to recommence transcribing and checking there. And of course, we hope that the further relaxing of lockdown rules will enable us to return to recording monuments within our county's burial grounds. By the time you are reading this, hopefully both will have happened and we will have been able to make the much awaited progress we hoped to achieve last summer.

Publication of Newbury St Nicolas parish registers is imminent. This has been an epic undertaking. Partly because of the size of the parish, and partly because of the condition and legibility of some of the registers. This will be the first publication of the majority of Newbury's baptism, banns, marriage and burial registers,

as the only online transcripts are those supplied by the society to Findmypast. We are aiming to produce a parish registers CD to begin with, and a series of data downloads will then follow. In due course, the new material will also be available on Findmypast.

During successive lockdowns we were able to make some progress with transcribing baptisms, marriages and burials, and that will stand us in good stead for moving these projects forward during this year.

Weather and Covid-19 permitting, we hope to be back in Berkshire's church-yards before too long. Keep an eye on the newsletters as we may need some local help over the coming months. Please do contact projects@berksfhs.org.uk if you think you might be able to help in the meantime.

New Products - Baptism Data Downloads

Following on from the successful launches of burial, monumental inscriptions and marriage downloads over the last six months, the society is delighted to now introduce baptisms this quarter.

Not all computers take CDs nowadays and many researchers have interests in specific parishes only. Data downloads have been developed to provide choice and flexibility in how you access data for Berkshire. Each download is in PDF format and your purchase is automatically fulfilled as soon as you have paid. Terms and conditions apply and these downloads are for your personal use only. Prices vary but start from just £2.00. The usual member discounts apply.

The release of Phase 1 of the baptism downloads has been staggered between May and July. A list of all of those included in Phase 1 is given below. Some baptism registers are not yet fully transcribed and checked, and these will be included in later phases as soon as we are able to.

Baptism entries are presented in date order, and there is also a “by person” finding aid to assist your use of the download. Berkshire’s baptisms are also available in CD format. If you’re interested in a number of parishes, please be aware that Berkshire Baptisms Edition Three CD may be better value. Individual Parish CDs also exist, so please check what product best meets your needs.

Place Name	Coverage	Price
Abingdon, Independent Lower Meeting House	1758 - 1837	£2.50
Aldermaston, St Mary	1559 - 1812	£4.50
Appleford, St Peter & St Paul	1563 - 1920	£4.00
Appleton, St Laurence	1570 - 1850	£4.00
Arborfield, Independent Chapel	1759 - 1897	£2.25
Ashampstead, St Clement	1813 - 1920	£3.25
Ashbury, St Mary	1813 - 1882	£3.75
Barkham, St James	1539 - 1920	£4.00
Bearwood, St Catherine	1846 - 1920	£3.25
Beech Hill, St Mary	1868 - 1920	£3.00
Binfield, All Saints	1551 - 1809	£4.50
Binfield, All Saints	1810 - 1920	£4.50
Bisham, All Saints	1813 - 1920	£3.75
Bradfield, St Andrew	1539 - 1920	£5.00
Bradfield, Tutts Clump (Methodists)	1877 - 1920	£2.50
Bray, St Michael	1763 - 1836	£4.50
Bray, St Michael	1837 - 1920	£4.50
Braywood, All Saints	1867 - 1920	£3.00

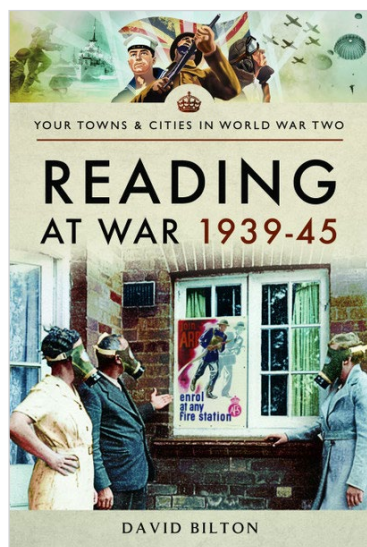
Place Name	Coverage	Price
Brimpton, St Peter	1678 - 1920	£4.25
Burghfield, St Mary	1562 - 1913	£4.50
Childrey, St Mary	1558 - 1920	£4.25
Chilton, All Saints	1584 - 1920	£4.00
Cholsey, St Mary	1541 - 1851	£4.50
Clewer, St Andrew	1607 - 1799	£4.50
Clewer, St Andrew	1800 - 1860	£4.25
Combe, St Swithun	1560 - 1871	£3.75
Compton, St Mary & St Nicholas	1553 - 1920	£4.25
Denford, Holy Trinity	1832 - 1920	£2.25
Earley, St Peter	1854 - 1909	£4.00
East Ilsley, St Mary	1608 - 1920	£4.50
Eastbury, St James	1867 - 1920	£2.25
Easthampstead, St Michael & St Mary Magdalene	1558 - 1799	£4.00
Easthampstead, St Michael & St Mary Magdalene	1800 - 1920	£4.25
Easthampstead, Union Workhouse	1849 - 1914	£2.25
Faringdon, All Saints	1700 - 1780	£4.50
Farnborough, All Saints	1607 - 1920	£3.25

Place Name	Coverage	Price
Fawley, St Mary	1540 - 1920	£4.50
Fernham, St John the Evangelist	1860 - 1920	£3.00
Grazeley, Holy Trinity	1850 - 1920	£3.25
Great Shefford, Primitive Methodist Chapel	1831 - 1837	£2.00
Harwell, St Matthew	1558 - 1812	£4.25
Hatford, Holy Trinity	1540 - 1811	£2.75
Kintbury, St Mary	1558 - 1799	£4.75
Kintbury, St Mary	1800 - 1920	£4.75
Lambourn Woodlands, St Mary	1837 - 1913	£3.00
Lambourn, St Michael & All Angels	1813 - 1856	£4.25
Little Wittenham, St Peter	1538 - 1920	£3.25
Lyford, St Mary	1845 - 1920	£3.00
Peasmore, St Barnabas	1538 - 1920	£4.00
Purley, St Mary	1607 - 1920	£3.25
Reading, All Saints (Downshire Square)	1904 - 1920	£2.50
Reading, Baptist, Church Lane	1735 - 1819	£2.75
Reading, Greyfriars	1864 - 1920	£4.25
Reading, St Agnes	1904 - 1920	£2.75
Reading, St Giles	1563 - 1667	£4.00
Reading, St Giles	1668 - 1734	£4.00
Reading, St Giles	1735 - 1801	£4.00
Reading, St Giles	1802 - 1846	£4.00
Reading, St Giles	1847 - 1880	£4.00
Reading, St Giles	1881 - 1898	£4.00
Reading, St Giles	1899 - 1920	£4.00
Reading, St Laurence	1686 - 1769	£4.50
Reading, St Laurence	1770 - 1834	£4.50
Reading, St Luke	1878 - 1919	£4.25
Reading, St Mark	1904 - 1920	£3.50
Reading, St Mary (Castle Street)	1884 - 1920	£3.25

Place Name	Coverage	Price
Reading, St Mary (The Minster)	1813 - 1843	£4.00
Reading, St Mary (The Minster)	1844 - 1868	£4.00
Reading, St Mary (The Minster)	1869 - 1886	£4.00
Reading, St Mary (The Minster)	1887 - 1902	£4.00
Reading, St Mary (The Minster)	1903 - 1920	£4.00
Reading, St Michael and All Angels	1901 - 1920	£3.00
Remenham, St Nicholas	1605 - 1920	£4.00
Shippon, St Mary Magdalene	1856 - 1920	£2.50
Sparsholt, Holy Cross	1559 - 1920	£4.25
Speenhamland, St Mary	1831 - 1920	£4.50
Sulham, St Nicholas	1607 - 1920	£3.25
Sulhampstead Bannister, St Michael	1813 - 1920	£3.00
Swallowfield, All Saints	1607 - 1920	£4.00
Thatcham, Independent Chapel	1807 - 1836	£2.00
Theale, Holy Trinity	1832 - 1920	£3.75
Tidmarsh, St Laurence	1608 - 1920	£3.25
Tilehurst, St Michael	1559 - 1920	£4.50
Twyford, Congregational Church	1898 - 1920	£2.00
Ufton Nervet, St Peter	1607 - 1837	£3.25
Wallingford, Baptist Church	1833 - 1838	£2.25
Wallingford, Independent Chapel (Market Place)	1788 - 1837	£2.25
Wantage, Wesleyan Methodist Circuit	1829 - 1837	£2.00
Wargrave, St Mary	1538 - 1779	£4.75
Wargrave, St Mary	1780 - 1920	£4.75
West Ilsley, All Saints	1558 - 1870	£4.00
Windsor, Wesleyan Methodist Chapel	1823 - 1837	£2.00
Wokingham, All Saints	1589 - 1749	£4.50
Wokingham, All Saints	1750 - 1831	£4.50
Wokingham, Union Hospital	1904 - 1920	£2.50
Woodley, Lodge	1802 - 1869	£2.00

Book Reviews

Reading at War 1939 - 45



David Bilton (Pen & Sword, 2020) 246pp, 235mm x 155mm perfect bound

Shop: £11.99 / UK: £15.19 / Airmail: £32.84

This is one of the latest volumes in the publishers' *Your Towns & Cities in World War Two* series, and covers the daily life of Reading, a town prepared for the worst, but a town that endeavoured to continue the best it could in often adverse conditions to support the war effort and maintain some semblance of normal life.

With its proximity to London, Reading was a convenient town for evacuees and also those seeking respite from the alarms and horrors of the blitz on the capital. Despite its closeness to the capital, its transport links, its airfield, and its industries, Reading was fortunate in not suffering the pulverising air raids that visited so many British cities and towns. But that is not to say that the town went unscathed from bombing damage.

This book however considers not just the occasional attack. It relates the many and varied aspects of a town and country at war, and takes the reader through the preparations for war, the changes imposed on the population and their impact on everyday life. The book draws heavily on local newspapers and histories for its content, and thus much of the text illustrates the impact of the war on the town, and contains many stories of human interest. Through these, we see at a personal or local level the effects on the town of the night-time blackout, rationing, restrictions on shops, food and material shortages, transport, evacuation, crime, air raid precautions and

raising of war funds. But we also see the efforts to celebrate Christmas, in making home grown entertainment and to supplement rationing with vegetable produce and home bred livestock, and most importantly, men and women who volunteered to support the community and local industry.

The book is divided into year chapters. Those for 1939 and 1940 account for nearly half of the text - understandably as those early years covered the principle changes in daily life imposed on the population. The later chapters deal much more with those of the town who served in the armed forces who perished, lost, taken prisoner and those who finally returned. The text is liberally illustrated, although some of the photographs are somewhat grainy having been taken from newspaper sources. At the end of the book, there is a two-page summary of the Reading area locations bombed, a two-page bibliography, and a fourteen page index of places, events, organisations and businesses. There is no name or family index, despite the very large number of named persons appearing in the text.

Local and social historians in the Reading area will find this book fascinating, and it will also appeal to family historians with strong roots in the town.

Tony Roberts

Early Independents of the Maidenhead Area

Paul Lacey (Self-published, 2021) 96pp, A4 perfect bound

The author is a well-known researcher, writer and speaker on bus and coach transport in the Thames Valley. This book is the third of a trio dealing with the early independent bus and coach operators in the Thames Valley, and covers the north-eastern part of Berkshire and the operators in that area, large and small from the earliest motors to the middle of the 20th century.

The book is laid out in alphabetical order of operators and the length of articles reflect the relative size, availability of material and lifespan of the business e.g. Carter & sons (Alpha Coaches) 22 pages, Probets's 5 pages while Hodsdon gets only half a page. The text is liberally illustrated with some 125 monochrome photographs, 5

monochrome maps, and many examples of timetables and advertisements.

Although much of the text deals with details of the vehicles, operating routes and services there is also a wealth of backstories to the families that went into the business, their activities, and some of their employees during those years of providing transport services. The history of the families and their employees is fascinating, but the real joy for the transport enthusiast is in the changes and development of the fleet vehicles. At the end of the book, there is a four-page section that details the fleet vehicles of the largest operators.

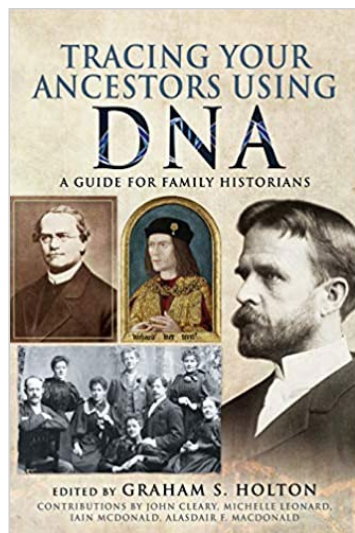
The book mentions a great many individual and family names – not simply of owners and their families but also of drivers, and other employees. However, there is no name index to the book, but anyone with family connections to the passenger road transport system of central and east Berkshire may well find some useful information for their family history research.

The book is available from the author at £15.

www.paullaceytransportbooks.co.uk

Tony Roberts

Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA - a guide for family historians



Ed. Graham Holton (Pen & Sword, 2019) 268pp perfect bound, 233mm x 157mm

Shop: £14.99 / UK: £18.19 / Airmail: £32.59

This addition to the publisher's popular *Tracing Your Ancestors* . . . series of books is a well-rounded guide to the subject and will have considerable appeal to both novice and more

experienced genealogists. It provides a clear route into the subject of DNA and DNA testing, and explains the science and techniques that can be applied by family historians to achieve an insight into their ancestry. It places the practical aspects of genetic genealogy within a wider context, and demonstrates DNA's role as a research tool and how that role can make researching your ancestors more effective.

The book is divided into eleven chapters, with the first two asking why the reader should use DNA testing for genealogy, and then followed discussing the legal and ethical aspects of genetic genealogy. This latter section deals with those issues surrounding pedigree claims, data protection, privacy and uploading of DNA data to GEDmatch. It also examines the ethics and limits in a case of DNA usage in law enforcement.

These first chapters are then followed by five more, which constitute half the total text and cover the principles of DNA testing, autosomal DNA tests, Y-DNA tests, mitochondrial-DNA tests, and of choosing between testing companies. Although there is substantial technical information in this part of the book, it is clearly explained and well illustrated through diagrams and examples. It is in these chapters where the reader is given an understanding of what each type of test can offer the family historian, and which test or tests might best suit their research needs.

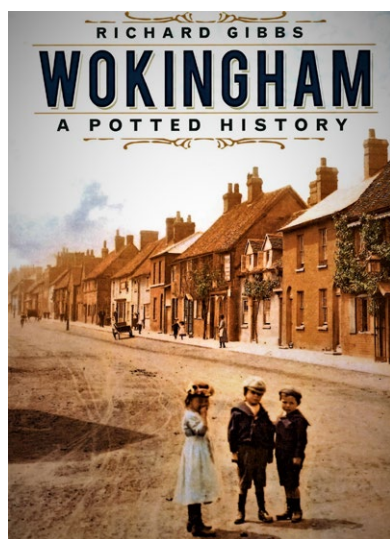
The last four chapters deal with a miscellany of items. In the chapter on projects, different forms of collaborative working are discussed, followed by a chapter on an integrated approach to DNA testing and genealogy where the researcher can tailor his use of DNA testing to maximum effect in particular circumstances. Here, examples are given of an adoptee searching for their biological father, of surnames and non-parental events, of determining how different family groups are connected, and of research into early ancestors. Whilst these examples are specific case studies of individuals, the principles involved can easily be applied to overcoming your own brick walls or proving (or disproving) particular family connections. The penultimate chapter of the book covers ancient DNA and degradation processes - and also alighting on ways to store our own DNA for the future. The final chapter asks the question on what does the future hold for DNA testing and coding.

The book has a large glossary of terms used in DNA science, and an extensive further reading section and a useful index.

While genetic genealogy will never replace traditional family history research, it does provide an important tool to assist in putting names and relationships in the right places on the ancestral tree. This book does what it says - it is a guide for family historians, and with its clarity in explaining and discussing the complex subject of DNA and genealogy, it is thoroughly recommended to all family historians.

Tony Roberts

Wokingham, A Potted History



Richard Gibbs (The History Press, 2020) 160 pp, 233 mm x 157 mm

Shop: £12.99 / UK: £14.98 / Airmail: £22.84

Wokingham is a small market town about six miles east of Reading. This book provides an interesting picture of the town from its earliest time as part of an established Bronze Age settled area through to the present day, focusing mainly on the last 1000 years.

With text only 123 pages long, this volume obviously cannot contain everything about the historic life and times of Wokingham and does not claim to. Instead, it seeks to fill a gap by providing an up-to-date history of the town in one volume. It is written in a very accessible manner which combines a historical overview with many descriptive passages bringing the town vividly to life from its early days as a small cluster of houses near the 'marshy' Emm Brook to the thriving developing modern town it is today. The whole book is full of historical facts, interspersed with many lesser known but intriguing events and people from the town's history. It is a fascinating and very readable story of the town that provides a good platform on which the more serious reader

may base further indepth study.

The book is divided into eleven chapters, well-illustrated throughout in black and white. Each covers a different aspect of life in Wokingham broken down into various topics, the history of each being discussed in turn. There is a simplified timeline of the main events in the Appendices. The only map in the book is John Norden's of 1607 which is printed over two pages. This shows the location of the town in relation to Egham, Frimley and Henley. The main layout of the centre of Wokingham today is discernible but is very tiny. A larger map featuring the main locations mentioned in the book would have been helpful to non-locals.

The subjects covered include education, work, religion and leisure amongst others. Some of the grander houses of Wokingham are discussed and there is an appendix detailing the amazingly large number of listed buildings in the town, particularly in Rose Street. A chapter on crime and punishment includes a section on Wokingham's own highwayman - the gentlemanly Claude Duvall - hanged in 1670 and buried in St Paul's church in Covent Garden with a very descriptive memorial of his attractions. Another chapter outlines some of the more unusual industries once found in the town including silk weaving and bell making. Various leisure activities are discussed with a couple of pages devoted to the sport of Bull-Baiting - Wokingham was one of the last places in England where this took place. Food and drink gets a chapter to itself along with an appendix listing pubs and inns in the town (there were over sixteen in 1580 for around 759 inhabitants). The final chapter brings Wokingham up to living memory, with anecdotes about the mother of Christine Keiler (Profumo Affair) in 1969 and the arrival of Prince William and his brother at school in the town in the 1980s. The book concludes with Appendices as mentioned earlier plus street name origins and All Saints Church ministers.

This book includes a story on the possible origin of the name of the Emm Brook and for me, this alone made it well worth the time spent. Hopefully others will get equal pleasure from different stories. It certainly contains a lot more than its subtitle 'A Potted History' would imply. For me, the contents outweigh any possible omissions and it was a very enjoyable read.

Geraldine Marsden

Around the Branches

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

Abingdon Branch

abingdon@berksfhs.org.uk

Meetings ahead:

21st June

Getting the best from Findmypast

by John Hanson (by Zoom)

20th September

Birth and Death: Discover the hidden secrets of registration

by Anthony Marr

Vanessa Chappell & Simon Burbidge

Bracknell & Wokingham Branch

bracknell@berksfhs.org.uk

We started 2021 with three very interesting and informative talks. In January, we learnt about 'Monumental Inscriptions' from Brian Wilcock. MIs are not conserved in any record office and many are deteriorating, with recording information being a race against time. The recording activity starts with a plan of the site. Each plan is broken down into sections and each grave given a number. Each plot is photographed



Bisham All Saints churchyard - inscription now only partially legible

on site with close-ups of the inscriptions. Brian related some of the problems transcribers have come across whilst working in the graveyards such as removing trees and soil in order to get to the graves. Some graves require careful cleaning as they are covered in dirt, lichen, ivy, etc, as well as describing ways of deciphering text which has faded over time.

Our talk in February was 'Searching for Dora' by Les Mitchinson. The speaker's maternal grandmother was always telling him stories about the family, leading him to take an interest in family history. Whilst doing his research Les came across a Dora in the 1901 Census who doesn't appear with the family in the 1911 Census. He related the different routes he took to try and find her. He eventually found Dora living with her grandparents in 1891 and working as a cotton weaver in the 1911 Census. After her marriage, he managed to trace where she had lived until her death many years later.

In March, we heard about 'Making the most of a Will' from John Titterton. John took example wills from his own family, pointing out the important information they contained which helped him to piece together his family tree. He also explained the meaning of the words contained in wills and how to avoid some of the pitfalls in the interpretation. Inventories can give information about the wealth and life-style of a family. Probate documents can also yield a wealth of information about a person.

Meetings ahead:

Please refer to the website.

Sandra Barkwith & Bryan Pledger

Newbury Branch

newbury@berksfhs.org.uk

We've been delighted with attendance at our Zoom meetings, and in the first quarter of 2021, it was a pleasure to welcome members not just from all corners of Berkshire, but also Vancouver and North Carolina.

In January, Chris Broom, graduate and course tutor of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, helped us in overcoming brick walls in FH research. The Q&A from this talk continued

Around the Branches

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



Statue of Mary Seacole by Martin Jennings

long after the meeting closed. In February, Dan Allen told us of the part played by women in the Victorian army, ranging from WAGs to Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale, and we learned to respect the stamina of our ancestors who married into the rigorous existence of military married life. West Berkshire Museum's treasures were unveiled to us in March by the curator Janine Fox. Just four per cent of the objects held by the museum are on regular display, so this was a privileged insight.

Zoom advantages notwithstanding, we're looking forward keenly to a return to F2F meetings. At the time of writing, September looks almost feasible. The committee is investigating several options which might make attendance more appealing to members; afternoon meetings and a switch to a town-centre venue are possibilities under consideration.

Our branch planning has been made considerably more systematic thanks to a spreadsheet compiled by our chair, Peter Corneck, detailing costs, revenue and attendance for each meeting. This enables us to see at a glance where and how effectively our budget allocation is being spent, and it gives us useful insights into patterns of attendance. If any other branch would like to know more about this, please feel free to contact Peter.

Branch meetings begin at 19.30 and are currently by Zoom.

Meetings ahead:

9th June

Organising your research with Evernote

by Phil Isherwood

See website for details of future meetings.

Penny Stokes

Reading Branch

reading@berksfhs.org.uk

In January, our meeting was on Zoom and we welcomed Chris Broom who gave a talk entitled Humour in Genealogy. This was a fun packed evening delivered in an excellent style and accompanied by clips from famous comedy sketches of yesteryear to illustrate how some family records have the correct information but sometimes not in the right order.

From Thomas Cromwell's 1538 records to the present, there is always something to amuse. Chris even located a 104 year old groom who married a 75 year old bride then passed away aged 111. Records from parish records, national censuses, newspapers, ecclesiastical courts and probate were all found to contain nuggets of wit and humour.

In our February Zoom meeting, we had the pleasure of Mark Bowman's recollection of his parents. He started by reminding his audience how important it is to have conversations with your older relatives whilst it is still possible. Such information will form a framework when you verify events recalled by them. Not all will be correct but a lot of things will fall into place. Mark broke his talk into three parts, his Dad from birth to marriage, then his Mum from birth to marriage, and finally their meeting and wedded life together. Their lives were well illustrated with slides from the family album as well as archive pictures. The highlight for me was the account of his father's WW1 journey from Liverpool to Cairo via Greenock, Gibraltar, Dakar, Freetown and Durban, all to avoid the Mediterranean conflict.

Our March meeting had members sharing the mistranscriptions they have found. Puzzles were puzzled over and writing deciphered. Tips were shared and best ways round mistranscriptions were discussed.

Around the Branches

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

Meetings ahead:

24th June

Unusual Occupations

Talks by members (by Zoom)

30th September

TBC (hopefully face to face at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)

Graham Vockins & Vicki Chesterman

Windsor, Slough & Maidenhead Branch

windsor@berksfhs.org.uk

The WSM branch closed out its 2020 with a Christmas Genealogical Quiz, with Ken Houghton - our very own Bamber Gascoigne – reading the questions. Bonus points were awarded for bringing leftover sprouts, and it got quite competitive with the branch chairman coming armed with an entire sprout tree. Still, it was all just for fun!

Our January meeting was Daniel Horowitz of MyHeritage telling us how the MyHeritage platform can help us perform UK and, more specifically, Berkshire research. He covered how the search engine works, and how it can benefit research, covering billions of records in the important repositories and databases in a single search. For those who have done a DNA test, the new Genetic Group's feature was shown to focus on the areas that ancestors may have come from.

This was followed in February by Sharon Hintze delighting us with "Keeping Up with FamilySearch", which was a review of resources available on FamilySearch, some familiar and others not. All features of the website were covered, especially search and Family Tree. The most effective way to access many digitised films



*Daniel Horowitz,
January's speaker*

which have not been indexed was demonstrated live. Finally, the use of crowdsourced trees was debated with the audience.

Attendances continue to be strong with 50 at Daniel's talk and 68 at Sharon's from all over the country and even some international visitors!

Meetings ahead:

At the time of writing in late March, we are about to welcome John Titterton who will be speaking on Autosomal DNA and One Name Studies. The talk discusses how it was possible to use the autosomal DNA evidence that four people were genetically/genealogically related through the Titterton family to make connections between several different Titterton branches.

This will be covered in more detail the next Historian, along with our other meetings in the second quarter of 2021. These include Sue Paul who will be speaking on "Breaking Down Brick Walls" in June.

Please check out the *Berkshire Family History Society* website for further details of these meetings and other WSM meetings for the rest of 2021.

Leigh Dworkin

Woodley (Computer) Branch

woodley@berksfhs.org.uk

Meetings ahead:

16th June

How we prepare and present our Family History talks - join us on our journey

July / August

No meeting but a visit to an archive may be arranged but this depends on the state of the virus and what restrictions, if any, are in place.

15th September

Edible History - how did our ancestors get their food, what did they like to eat and what utensils did they use.

Gillian Stevens

Polish Ancestral Tourism - Wolf Hunting in Womja (Lomza) - Part 2

Leigh Dworkin continues his trip in search of his ancestors

Having spent time in Warsaw and Zambrow, I next tried to visit Piatnica where my Oconefsky's were from, but it was raining so hard that I barely got out and drove on to Jedwabne. I had planned to go there the next day, so I didn't actually know where the memorial was. Nor did I find anyone who spoke English. I found lots of churches, a town square and Christian cemeteries. Annoyed with myself for the just-in-time planning, I left Jedwabne unfulfilled, vowing to do it right the day after.

It was a day to be indoors, so I decided to visit the archives in Lomza (pronounced Womja). I had the exact street address and the satnav on my phone got me straight there. At the address was an impressive red brick building that looked governmental. I was a bit scared that no-one inside spoke English. This turned out to be true; however somehow, I managed to look helpless enough to be shown through to the back door and pointed to a completely different building that looked like a portacabin. I was at the right address but in the wrong building! The real archives were much more promising, especially because there were linguists present – in particular the delightful Danuta Bzura, the chief archivist. A useful mix of English, Polish, Russian and a smattering of Hebrew from me were used over the next 4 hours to great effect.

After filling in some forms with my name and passport details in triplicate, what followed was a frenzy of photography capturing as many of the records as I could order, year by year, record by record. There were far too many to do all the records, indeed far too many to do all of my people. Instead, I focused on one name: Wolf Jelen (my triple great grandfather) and all the associated children, siblings, parents and their siblings etc. I had partially done the research before based on JRI-Poland indexes (Jewish Records Indexing – Poland found at jri-poland.org), but they are not nearly as complete as the records themselves. I quite quickly managed to distinguish between the five different Wolf Jelen's based on patronymics and confirmed which was actually the one I wanted. To be honest I'm related to the other four too, but not in a direct line, as after my Wolf died a pack of Wolves appeared as grandchildren in the usual Ashkenazi way.

Later, when I had returned to England, and with the help of JewishGen Viewmate for Polish and Russian translations (www.jewishgen.org/viewmate), I managed to go back two further generations to Szlama Jelen and his father Benjamin Jelen who must have been born circa 1750. That is my pentuple (5 times) great grandfather! I even have plans to make an assault



The fake (left) and the real (right) archives in Lomza.

on the sextuples, as I think I missed a death record of Szlama's wife Gutka from 1825. This is going to get tricky because now I need to move into the world of Jews being mixed into the Catholic records and before the time when Jews took surnames. Gulp.

When I started the trip, I believe my ancestral home was Zambrow, and that was why I had booked a hostel there. However, I now realised that the real ancestral shtetl (settlement) was Sniadowo because that was where the previous two generations had started, although you could see the movement to Zambrow from Sniadowo in the records.

So that night I drove to Sniadowo, not far from Zambrow. Due to my phone battery running low, I decided to forego the satnav and just drive, using road signs. The genealogical force was strong, and I found it easily. After all, my ancestors had no satnav. Somewhere deep in my DNA is the knowledge of how to get around the Lomza district.

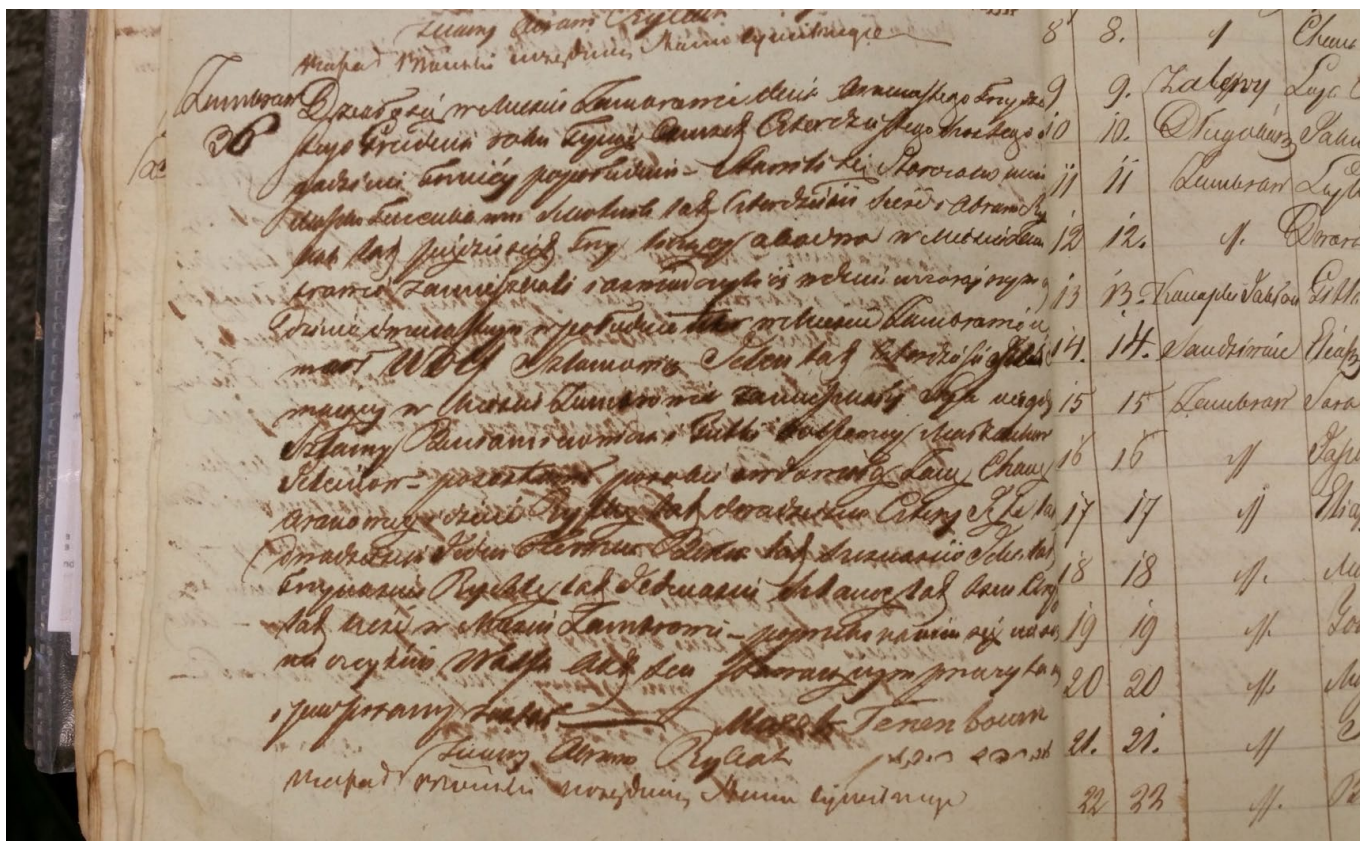
There was very little to be found in Sniadowo of a Jewish nature, but the town square was pleasant, and there were nice wooden houses to give me that 19th century feel – maybe even 18th century.

But it was just a feeling because the houses were much more modern.

My final day in Poland fixed the errors of the previous days. I found the memorial in Jedwabne (see photo on next page), and despite the rain took loads of pictures. It was well hidden, at the end of a country lane, surrounded by open fields. The memorial is a barn door set into stone. I gather it has been vandalised often because the locals don't want to be reminded. The Nazis really weren't the perpetrators.

I also took in Piatnica (Oconefsky's), Kolno (Chavazinsky's), Radzilow (Gryngras) where Moishe z'l was born. (z'l is a Jewish acronym for 'zikhrono/zikrhonah livrakha, meaning 'May his/her memory be blessed'). In all, I wandered around the central square, took in the wooden houses, and took the obligatory selfie against the road sign going into the town.

My final visit was to Grajewo, where I knew that my great grandmother Leah's older brother Solomon (or Aron Szlema) had married and had his first family. Something bad must have happened, because I can find nothing about what happened to them, except that Solomon turned up in England in the 1930s and started a second



The most amazing record found in the Lomza archives. Despite being a bit illegible in places, this death record for Wolf Jelen in 1846 from Zambrow (Akt 36) includes the names and ages of his wife and children, as well as the name of his parents with full patronymics.



The barn door memorial in Jedwabne surrounded by fields.

family with a second wife. That remains a mystery to solve in the future. I had imagined Grajewo to be a small village judging by the paucity of Jelen records I had found, but it was actually a city. So, I corrected my perception and realised that a young Solomon must have moved from his medium sized birthplace to the city to seek his fortune and marry his first wife.

It was a long drive back from Grajewo to Warsaw, made worse by my satnav running out of battery. What should have been four hours was five and a half, including getting horribly lost and not being able to find the airport. The genealogical force deserted me, but I managed to shout through the window and get directions from passing taxi drivers. Exercise is important, and the final sprint through the airport to get to my gate on time counted as just that. Choosing the last flight of the day seemed like a good idea when I booked the flight – to maximize my Polish experience

– but had I missed it by a minute rather than just catching it by a minute, I suspect my Polish adventure would have been marred.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed my 3-4 days of ancestral tourism, but 2 weeks would have been more relaxed and civilized; maybe next time. I would recommend more meticulous planning than I had time for, because the more you put in the more you will get out. It can be done without a guide, and without much Polish, but that depends on your appetite for adventure and requirement for an easy life.

If you think genealogy can be done entirely online, and from the comfort of your living room, I would urge you to consider augmenting that black and white world for the colourful experience offered by visiting the local archives, towns and villages of your ancestors to flesh out your research.

All pictures ©Leigh Dworkin, 2016.



News from the Berkshire Record Office

Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist at the Berkshire Record Office

After a year of doing the ‘pandemic hokey cokey’ of being open and closed, we are pleased to say that we are open once again. We reopened to visitors for two sessions per day from 13th April 2021. If you would like to book a session, you can find out all about bookings and what to expect when you arrive on the Visit Us pages on our website. Let’s hope we stay open for good this time!

Whilst we have been working from home, we have been typing up catalogues that were not in a compatible format for the online catalogue. We will need to edit them, but we hope to be able to have more catalogues online this year. We have also been working on maintaining our social media feeds and will be working on developing videos for our YouTube channel too. Whilst we have been closed to visitors, we continued to provide research and copying services too – so we have been pretty busy, despite the reduced access to the collections.

A project update - In 2019, we received a cataloguing grant from the ‘Archives Revealed’ programme, supported by The National Archives, The Pilgrim Trust, and the Wolfson Foundation. You can read more about the grant on our website. The aim of the project was to appraise, sort and catalogue the archive of the Thames Conservancy (the historical body responsible for the management of the river before the Environment Agency and Thames Water).

Last year, COVID got in the way of things, but our project archivist, Michaela, was able to virtually complete all the cataloguing. Sadly, we are still unable to provide a physical exhibition, but we are providing an online exhibition instead. Entitled: “Where Smooth Waters Glide: 250 years of caring for the River Thames”, it will be available online in early May 2021. A link will be made available nearer the time via our What’s On page.

Keep an eye on our website and social media feeds on *Twitter @berksarchives* and *Facebook “The Berkshire Record Office”* for all the latest information.

What’s new to the archives?

Of interest to family historians are the recently added parish registers for the following parishes:

- Brightwell: baptisms, 1860-1998; burials, 1902-2015 (D/P25).
- Sotwell: baptisms, 1813-2003; burials, 1813-2019 (D/P114).
- Steventon: baptisms, 1950-2004; banns, 1946-2011 (D/P119).
- Warfield: marriages, 2005-2012; burials, 1923-1988 (D/P144).

Of local interest are the Reading Borough deposited collections (R/D204) which include

papers relating to a Chancery lawsuit over the Castle Inn, Castle Street, Reading, 1780-1786; agreements for the holding of the Royal Agricultural Society's Annual Show at London Road Farm, Earley, in 1882; deeds for various properties, including High Bridge Wharf, 1737-1802; and the former St Giles parish workhouse, 1837.

Business account books, 1724-1840, (R/D186) include accounts for Sarah Wilson of Maidenhead; Samuel Rose of Maidenhead; Richard Giles of Newbury; John Stevens of Reading; Thomas Havell of Reading; James Siddall of Windsor and Thomas Hall of Windsor. There is also a survey book of Abraham Dymock, 1831-1845, and records of Isbury's

Almshouses (D/EX2594); records of Aldermaston Pottery, 1953-2013 (D/EX2422); a pay ledger for the Canal Goods Department, Newbury Railway Station, 1907-1921 (D/EX2406); and

the apprenticeship indenture for Henry Charles Newhook of Hungerford to Henry John Bell of Lambourn, coach builder, 1902 (D/EX2751).

To keep up to date on what collections we have, please see our online catalogue: www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/search-catalogue.

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Can you help?

Kevin Coll *has a family mystery, do you hold the answer?*

My maternal grandmother was born in Bucklebury, Berks as were her ancestors, back to around the 1700s. They were the Wigmore family and Bucklebury Churchyard has quite a lot of Wigmores there.

My grandmother, Alice Mary Wigmore, was born there on 2nd December 1892 and our family mystery concerns her sister Amelia, who was also born there on 6th January 1884. Amelia appears in the 1901 census in the parish of St Mary the More, Wallingford, at Station Rd, as a domestic servant, aged 14.

The next thing we know is that she had a baby, Edith Sarah Wigmore, on 5th September 1904 in Wallingford Union workhouse. It appears that a bastardy order was granted in the sum of 2 shillings per week.

In the *Berks and Oxon Advertiser* of 15th October 1908, she apparently says that the father has failed to keep up payments, especially in the last few months!

In Nuffield on 29th January 1908 Amelia had another child, Annie Matilda (FreeBMD listing is mistranscribed as Annie Matilda E A Wigmode).

In the 1911 census both children are with their grandparents, Daniel Wigmore and Sarah Priscilla Wigmore, née Marshal.

In 1913 my aunt Helen Amelia was born, she told us many years ago that the Amelia part of her name was for her aunt Amelia who died young - so definitely between 1908-1913!

After searching for quite a few years we have failed to find a death certificate for Amelia.

This is our family mystery, what happened to Amelia? I have traced a descendant of one of Amelia's daughters and they know nothing of Amelia. I am the third one of our family who has tried to solve this, I suppose it's fair to say that we have worked hard but got nowhere.

Can you provide a clue? Please email editor@berksfhs.org.uk if you can shed any light on this mystery.

Members' Surname Interests

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

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8454	CARR J.,	Ribston Villa, 43 Oxford Road, Abingdon, OX14 2EE	jenny45carr@gmail.com

6635	ALLNOT/ALLNOTT	All	Any
6635	ALLNUT/ALLNUTT	All	Any
6635	ALNOT/ALNOTT	All	Any
6635	ALNUT/ALNUTT	All	Any
8148	ANNS	East Hendred/Steventon/Wantage/Stanton in the Vale	
8447	BAILEY Bernard	Swallowfield	1720-1820
8447	BAILEY Charles	Swallowfield	1751-1805
8447	BAILEY Charles R. H.	Swallowfield	1786-
7347	BAKER	Burnham, Bucks	1600 on
7347	BAKER	Cookham/Waltham St Lawrence	1600 on

8425	BAKER	Newbury	pre 1830
8425	BATTEN	Enborne/Kintbury	pre 1840
8419	BATTLE	Winkfield	18 & 19C
8430	BEASLEY/BEAZLEY	London	1800s-1915
8430	BEASLEY/BEAZLEY	Reading	1800s-1915
8454	BESTWICK Mildred	Stockport	1920 on
8440	BRADLEY Sarah		1786
8419	BRANT	Easthampstead/Warfield/Windsor/Winkfield	18 & 19C
7347	BRIANT/BRYANT	Yattendon, Berks	1600 on
8435	BUCKERIDGE Richard	Pangbourne	1600s on
8435	BUCKERIDGE Thomas	Pangbourne	1600s on
8435	BUCKERIDGE William	Pangbourne	1700s on
8440	CARTER	Newbury/Reading/Wantage	1783
8406	CLIFFOARD	Chieveley/Compton/North Heath/Winterbourne	pre 1780
8406	CLIFFOORD	Chieveley/Compton/North Heath/Winterbourne	pre 1780
8406	CLIFFOR	Chieveley/Compton/North Heath/Winterbourne	pre 1780
8406	CLIFFORD/CLIFFORDE	Chieveley/Compton/North Heath/Winterbourne	pre 1780
8406	CLYFFORD	Chieveley/Compton/North Heath/Winterbourne	pre 1780
8425	COX	Fawley/Lambourn/Letcombe Regis	pre 1805
8425	COX Edward	Newbury	1841-1910
8425	COX Oliver	Greenham	1879-1907
8425	COX Oliver	Newbury	1879-1907
7347	CRIPPS	Bucklebury	1800 on
8425	CROCKER	Peasmore	pre 1840
8430	DORMER	Berkshire	1800-1930
8430	DORMER	Reading	1800-1930
7347	FINCH	East Berks	1700 on
7347	FINCH	South Bucks	1700 on
8439	FLETCHER	North Tyneside	1800 on
7347	FRYER	East Berks	1700 on
7347	FRYER	South Bucks	1700 on
7347	GARRATT/GARRETT	Sonning	1600-1800
8440	GOODING William	Froxfield	1790
8433	GRANTHAM	Mortimer/Stratfield	Before 1675
8440	HARDING William		1763
8435	LAMBDEN	Pangbourne	1600s on

8439	LAWRENCE	Abingdon/Farringdon	1800 on
8454	LEES Marion	Hyde	1908 on
8425	MASON	Enborne/Kintbury/Stratfield Mortimer	pre 1840
8430	MATTINGLEY	Reading	1800-1920
7347	MONTAGUE	Langley, Bucks	1800 on
8440	MORTON Lydia	Bucklebury	1788
7347	MOUNTAGUE	Langley, Bucks	1800 on
7347	NICHOLLS/NICKOLLS	Chalgrove, Oxon	
7347	NICHOLLS/NICKOLLS	Kidlington, Oxon	
8440	PARTRIDGE Lydia		1757
8439	PEARCH	Tonbridge, Kent	1800 on
8439	PEARCH	Tunbridge Wells, Kent	1800 on
8440	PIKE Stephen	Ramsbury	1760
8440	PORTER Ann		1784
8439	POUTON	North Tyneside	1800 on
8425	POWERS	Newbury	pre 1830
8440	REDMAN Sarah		1798
8440	RICHARDS John	Newbury	1797
8439	SCOTT	North Tyneside	1800 on
8435	SEXTON	Pangbourne	1600s on
8454	SLACK Frederick George	Manchester	1920 on
7347	SMITH	Ashampstead/Basildon/Frilsham/Yattendon	1700 on
8454	STEAD Eric William	Stockport	1909 on
7347	TARRANT	South Buckinghamshire	1700 on
8423	TARRY	Marcham	1750-60
8423	TERREY	Kingston Inn	1819-1840
8423	TERRY	Bell Bar Farm	1881
8419	TINDAL	Easthampstead/Old Windsor/Sunninghill/Winkfield	All
8435	WHICHELOE/WHICHELOW	South Moreton	1600s on
8425	WHITE	Greenham/Newbury	1881-1892
8425	WHITE William	Aston Tirrold/Eastbury	1890-1901
8416	YEATMAN	Berkshire	1700-1950

From the Society's Newsletters

More snippets from recent newsletters. Remember to look out for it each week. Back copies are available on the society's website.

Gardener Ancestors?

Many of us have professional gardeners in our family tree, perhaps not surprising given that gardening was one of the top twenty occupations for men and boys in the late 19th century. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has now produced a handy online guide to help family historians find out more about their gardening ancestors.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/library-services/researching/library-guides-publications/gardening-ancestors>



Complete WWI pensions collection now published on Fold3

A landmark project to digitise all UK First World War pension records has been completed. They include records of all servicemen who were injured in the war and subsequently received a pension, including the nature of the serviceman's injury and the percentage of disablement he was deemed to have, as well as the names and addresses of his next of kin.

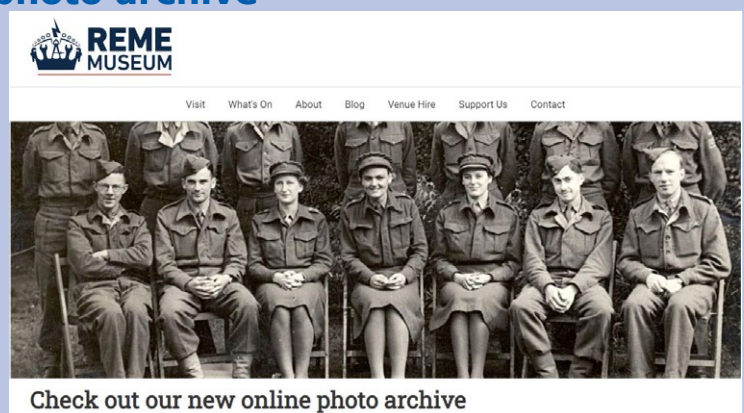
In total, there are 7,522,448 records in the collection covering the Army, Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and Royal Flying Corps. Indexes of the pension records are available for subscribers to Ancestry, while the records are free to view for members of the Western Front Association. www.fold3.com/

New Forum section dedicated to DNA

Have lots of questions and need advice from others? Or lots of answers and able to help others? The society's Forum now has a dedicated DNA section where you can post your questions. If you're very lucky, you may even find yourself on the receiving end of advice from international DNA expert, Debbie Kennett. There is already advice to peruse on topics such as the different tests available, transferring results between companies and quick and dirty family trees - so it's worth checking out and adding your questions.

REME Museum launches online photo archive

The museum of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) has launched a new online archive of images. About 1,000 photographs are already available to view online, with another 4,500 due to be added over the coming months. Images date from the 1940s through to the 1980s and can be searched by the name of those photographed as well as by location or theme. Great news if you have REME connections.

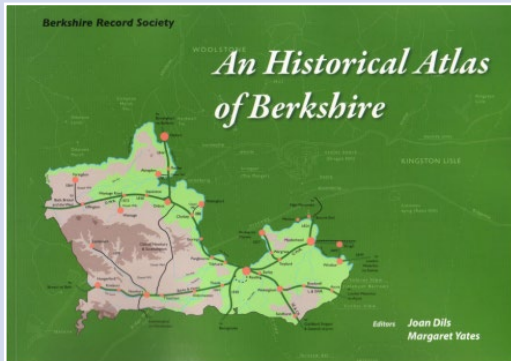


<https://rememuseum.photos/>

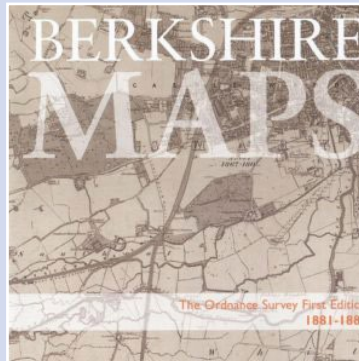
If you aren't receiving newsletters and would like to, do we have your up to date email address and permission to contact you? If yes, see the article in this Historian on missing emails. Back copies of newsletters are available on the society's website under INFO.

Discover historical maps in the Society's bookshop

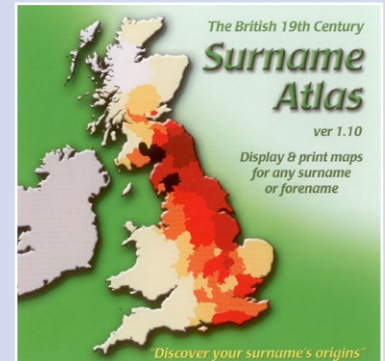
The Society's bookshop contains a comprehensive range of historic maps covering the pre-1974 county of Berkshire. You can find them on the website at <https://shop.berksfhs.org/product-category/medium/maps/>. Prices start from just 50 pence for a basic Berkshire parish maps to £20.00 for *An Historical Atlas of Berkshire*. Prices shown do not include postage – see website for full details. Here's a small selection for you:



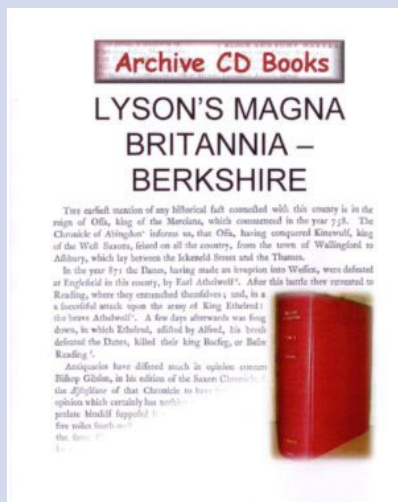
£20.00



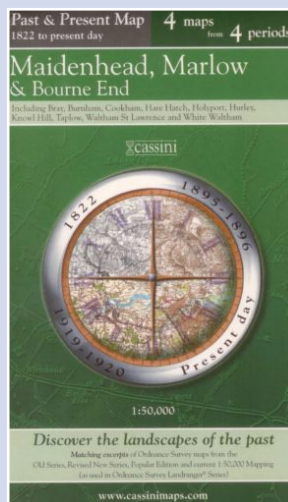
£12.50



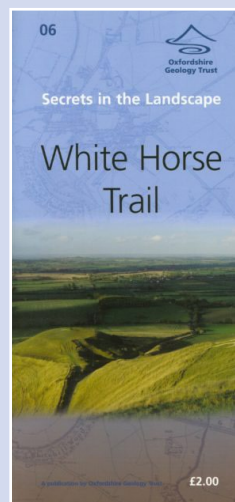
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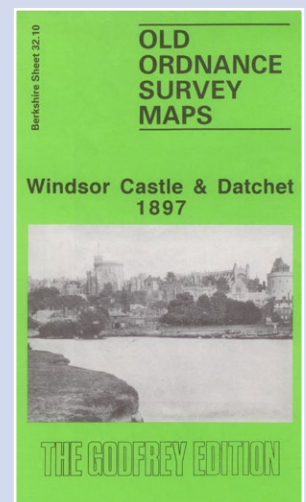
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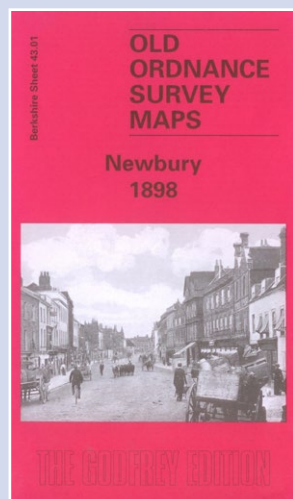
£2.00



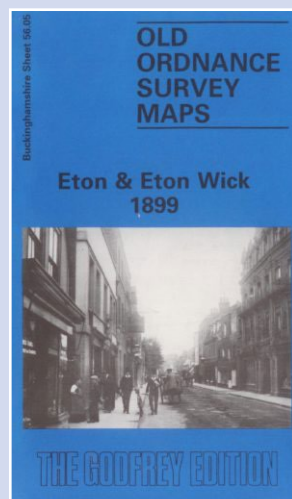
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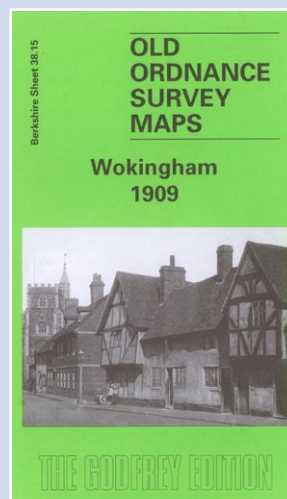
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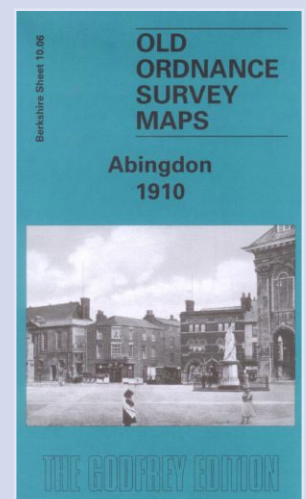
£3.00



£3.00



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£3.00