

Berkshire Family Historian



*The quarterly journal of the
Berkshire Family History Society*

September 2021

Volume 45



Inside this issue:
New member launch
Scouting sadness
A musical dynasty
A Reading pugilist

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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

A scene in Windsor. Water colour by Paul Sandby, c.1760. Copyright, H.M. The King (courtesy of Reading Local Studies Illustrations Collection)

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

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to your September Berkshire Family Historian. Unfortunately, our previous designer Catherine Taylor had to step down from the role. Her input was always valuable and her changes will be seen for some time to come. So, with this issue we welcome a new graphic designer, Beth Cox, to the team, who brings youth and a fresh set of eyes to the team. We hope that this will be a collaboration that lasts for several years.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to being able to get together with our members in person, having already had a successful face to face event - a tour of Reading Abbey Quarter in June. As the future is by no means certain with regards Covid, please keep an eye on the Society's current situation with the weekly newsletters and the website.

This quarters issue brings Society updates including your new Executive Committee and a new website feature for members. Our events section is packed with new and re-visited workshops and courses. Our Branch round-ups cover our meetings and plans for the future - please do keep an eye on the website in case national circumstances change though.

As always, 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

It was lovely to see so many of you at this year's AGM. If you missed it you can view the recording of it online on the Society's website and read the summaries in this edition of the Historian.

The September Historian, being the first following the AGM, always seems to be an appropriate point to pause and thank all of the volunteers who support the Society. As ever, they have been busy across all areas of the society's operations. You can read about some of the things they have been up to in this edition, including more new member services. If you have skills which you feel may be of benefit to the society, please do get in contact – we would love to hear from you.

As we prepare this issue for publication, we are moving closer to resuming some face to face activities. Our first walk has already taken place, with another planned, and some physical branch meetings are already in the diary. We are also moving closer to reopening our Heritage Centre in Reading. We want to open again when the time is right, and that of course is not an easy thing to judge in this rapidly changing Covid environment. Moving forward, we hope to find the best combination of face to face, online, physical and virtual activities and services. However, you are able to engage with the Society, we hope you enjoy it.

Catherine Sampson

chairman@berksfhs.org.uk



46th Annual General Meeting Report

This year's AGM for the Society was, like last year, held via Zoom on Friday June 18th 2021, and 77 members attended.

All of the officers, the President, Vice-Presidents and Trustees shown on the agenda were voted in. The proposed amendment to the society Constitution regarding membership fees being due 'by the renewal date' was endorsed by those present. This is a change due to technical reasons (the software used for memberships does not allow any grace period on late payments). The appointment of an independent examiner of accounts was also endorsed by the meeting.

Tony Henty, Margaret Crook, Angela Gunn and Andrew Rice (Treasurer) stood down as Trustees and were all thanked for their time as Trustees. James Puxley was re-elected as society President

for a fourth year, and Mark Stevens and Derek Trinder returned as society Vice-Presidents. Catherine Sampson was elected as Chairman after one year's absence (due to having served her maximum time as a Trustee). Nick Prince was elected Vice-Chairman, the society's first one in several years), and Vanessa Chappell returned as Secretary. We welcomed David Wooldridge, Malcolm Gray and Chris Singleton as new Trustees and Martin Pilkington as the new Treasurer. All other Trustees were re-elected for a further term.

The meeting was formally closed by Derek Trinder, Vice-President.

This meeting was recorded and is available on the society's website.

Abridged Chairman's Report to 2021 AGM

Nick Prince

The full version of this report can be found on the society website.

Overview

The past year has been dominated by the Covid pandemic and the adoption of virtual meetings as a way to maintain as much of the society's activities as possible, as the cessation of face to face activities and closure of the Centre for Heritage and Family History were necessary. The expectation was that membership might "fall off the cliff" but this has not proved the case, in fact it has risen slightly.

The future of the society will need to be a hybrid with continued development of online events which members from across the world can join in as well as locally focussed face to face activities within the county.

The Centre for Heritage and Family History

While access has been very limited we have been able to obtain supplies to support our retail activity. Our hope is that we will be able to reopen the centre to some extent from early July. We will let everyone know as soon as we can.

Membership

Welcome to the new members who have joined in the past year. The online joining and renewal process has facilitated this. Members will be invited to renew just before the anniversary of their joining. Thank you to everyone who is renewing on time.

Members continue to receive discounts on society products and events, and are able to attend many events for free. We are grateful also to the UK taxpayers who renew their Gift Aid declarations and all who are able to make a donation.

Branch meetings and outreach activities

There was a 50% increase in online event attendances in 2020-21. Zoom will be a feature in our programmes for the future. Meeting topics have been varied, reports are available on the website.

Overall in excess of 1500 attendances have been recorded for the events which would have been held in the Centre, with the themed talks having significant attendances and all events having very solid numbers. We hope to revive outreach sessions once we can actually see people in

libraries and other venues.

Communicating with our members

The weekly electronic newsletter, *In Touch*, is now the main way to keep up to date with what is happening both in the society and with its events, and the wider family history world. This is sent each Sunday to all members who have provided an email address and given permission for us to use it. This is a lot of work for Catherine and Paul in particular and, although one volunteer has recently joined their ranks, if anyone else would be interested in helping out please let them know. The *Historian* has continued to have rich and varied content in each issue reflecting the breadth of research interests of the society's membership. Thank you to everyone who has provided articles and contributions. The editor is always looking for new articles and if you have something to share please let her know.

Website, and social media

The transformation of the society's online presence in 2019 allowed us to better adapt to the Covid world. We continue to seek ways to improve the website and the information for members and volunteers and visitors. We have seen a noticeable increase in general enquiries to the society via email, webforms and by telephone too. Maintaining the website and keeping it secure has been a big job and Paul Barrett and Dave Osborne have been real heroes with support from within the society as needed.

The society continues to make good progress in its use of social media – Twitter is actively led by Dave Osborne while the Berkshire Genealogy Facebook site, led by Eileen Schofield, now has 884 members. An increase of 30% since the last AGM.

Projects and publications including online

Now we can access the Berkshire Record Office again, we expect to bring a number of projects to fruition. Data downloads were launched in September 2020 as a new way to purchase society's transcriptions. These are in PDF format with automatic fulfilment at the point of purchase. Each release is announced via *In Touch*.

We look forward to building further on our excellent working relationship with County Archivist Mark Stevens and his team at the Berkshire Record Office.

Events, education and promotion

The society's events and education programme has continued to demonstrate our commitment to the society's objective "To advance education

of the public in research into family history and genealogy ...". This last year's programme included social history talks, family history workshops, talks and courses, advice sessions, informal natter evenings, and the DNA special interest group.

Bookshop

Berkshire Family History Society Enterprises, the society's wholly owned subsidiary, has had a successful year coping with a 200% increase in orders, and made another welcome donation from its profits back to the society. The Bookshop website now has some 1016 items available across the shop. More new products are added continually.

Services for members and the public

We continue to develop new services such as Digital Downloads. We have been exploring the possibility of hosting family trees and enabling members to collaborate more effectively, this is currently work in progress as there are a number of logistical and legal issues to address.

Work continues to complete and make available online the updated catalogue of the society's reference library holdings.

Society governance

The society is a registered charity, managed by an Executive Committee (the trustees), elected annually by members. They met six times this year online. Consideration and implementation of the society's activities is managed in detail by eight sub-committees and working groups, and the six local branches. Many of the benefits that the society offers have been laid out in this report.

What of the future?

We will explore how we best embrace a mixture of face to face and online as we go into 2022 and beyond. The future of the society lies with members who volunteer skills and talents. If you have skills, knowledge or experience that you think could benefit the society which we have not utilised please let us know.

THANK YOU to every volunteer

This is my first and last AGM as Chairman, it has been a very challenging year for everyone and I would like to thank the very many volunteers who keep us going as a society and my fellow trustees for their dedication in managing society activities. Particularly thanks to Vanessa Chappell, Society Secretary and Chair of the Abingdon Branch, who has kept us compliant and functioning as

we should as a charity, and contributed to a wide range of society activities. Special thanks go to Andrew Rice who steps down as treasurer after 5 years. He has improved our financial processes and ensured we are in a very strong position for the future. Thanks to Paul Barrett and Dave Osborne who have sustained the society's digital transformation over the past year, at a pace we never expected to have to do; and Derek Trinder for his many thoughtful contributions to our

deliberations over the past year. And finally, I would also like to thank Chad Hanna who began the process of developing our IT presence over 20 years ago, for his many contributions to the society, most recently as IT manager and speaker and leader of workshops. He may have laid down some of those responsibilities but hopefully we will benefit from his wisdom and knowledge for a long time to come.

Introducing for 2021-2022

Your Trustees

Your returning Society Chairman - Catherine Sampson



Catherine began her own family research when she was a teenager and has been hooked ever since. Her own research interests are mainly centred on East Anglia and the North East. She joined the society in 2009 and has served as a trustee for every year bar two ever since. She was elected as Society Chairman in June 2021, having previously served as Chairman 2017-2020. Catherine is also the society's Projects Co-ordinator, she chairs the Projects & Publications and Centre Committees, and is an active member of the Education & Events and Marketing & Communications Committees and the Editorial Panel. She is a regular speaker across Berkshire on social history subjects and is also a keen photographer and traveller, when time and circumstances permit.

Your NEW Society Vice-chairman and continuing Newbury branch representative - Nick Prince

Nick is still a full-time civil servant now based in Reading. He began researching his family history in early 2007. He is Chair of the Newbury Branch. A change in his status at work allows him to be a trustee and Society Vice-chairman. Nick was recently widowed after 32 years of marriage to Maureen and has 3 stepchildren. His young granddaughter is the only one of his family to share his interest. She attended 2 fairs in 2018 to support the society. Nick is also a member of Thatcham Baptist Church and volunteers at the Watermill theatre.



Your continuing Society Secretary and Abingdon (Vale) branch representative - Vanessa Chappell



A society member since 2006, Vanessa has been Chair of the Vale of the White Horse branch for many years. Vanessa has lived in Abingdon and been married to Duncan for over 25 years and has two children Robert, working in London and Nicole, who is currently living in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada. When not researching her own ancestry in Wales, Birmingham and the Black Country, or her husband's in Scotland, London and Cobourg in Canada, she enjoys creative paper-crafting and working in her garden. Vanessa also helps run her husband's music business 'Big Ginger Tom Music', which promotes live acoustic music and she can be found behind the bar in Harwell Village Hall on gig nights!

Your NEW Society Treasurer - Martin Pilkington

Martin is from Wigan, Lancashire. He has been involved in Family History since 1977 and his family comes from Lancashire, Westmorland and Herefordshire. Martin moved down to London in 1978 and spent 5 years working in various finance roles in the NHS, before joining the Civil Service. He trained to be an accountant with HM Customs and Excise and became an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants in 1995 and a Fellow in 2003. Martin retired in 2015. Since retiring he has spent about one or two weeks a year working for the council on various activities around elections and a lot more time on his family tree and taking photographs.



Bracknell and Wokingham branch- Sandra Barkwith

Sandra joined the Executive Committee in 2012 as the Representative for Bracknell & Wokingham branch. She became Chairman of the branch in 2015. She has been a member of the society since 1998. Currently, Sandra is Convenor of the Research Zone Committee and the Branches Consultation Group and a member of the Education and Events Group.

Woodley (Computer) branch - Gillian Stevens

Gillian joined the society in 1998 and has worked closely with the Federation of Family History Societies, Findmypast and The National Archives. She has served on the Executive since 2007, bar two one-year compulsory gaps, and represents the Computer branch of which she is chairman. She also sits on the Education and Events group. Gillian forms part of the 'Tuesday evening team' who provide technical as well as family history advice to visitors to the Centre for Heritage and Family History. Gillian has recently found her first and probably only Berkshire ancestor whilst researching her own family history and by making a worldwide study of the Blofeld surname.



Reading branch - Graham Vockins

Graham joined the society in 2010 and was elected chairman of the Reading branch in 2013 serving as a trustee for one year. In 2017, he returned as a trustee and branch representative. He has been married to Carol for over 40 years and has two children and five grandchildren. He is proud of his Berkshire roots, which is made up of ag labs and shopkeepers. Graham is also a trustee of Shinfield Players Theatre.

Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead branch - Helen Conchar

Helen was brought up in Warwickshire, but her parents came from the north west. Helen and her sister moved to London in the early 1980s. She first started researching her family history in the early 1990s. Helen discovered that a branch of her Scottish ancestors came from Bracknell, and she started going to WSM meetings in 2000 while working in Windsor. She joined the committee a couple of years later. Although Helen now lives and works near Watford, she still drives back to Windsor as she enjoys meeting her friends at the branch.





John Dunne

John joined Berks FHS about 20 years ago and has been a committee member of the Computer branch for over 15 years. Since taking early retirement from the NHS in 2008 he has had more time to catch up with his Irish, American and British relatives. As his father was one of 15 children and his mother one of 4 children, he has many aunts and uncles and of course very many cousins to keep track of. John moved to the Reading area in the early 1980s from his home in Bracknell. He had been in Bracknell since 1958 when his family left West London to start a new life in the wonderful New Town, which was a big change of pace for all.

Tony Roberts

Tony first joined the Executive Committee in 2012, having been a research assistant. He has been a member since 2010 and was the society's secretary for 4 years. He is one of the Directors of Berkshire Family History Enterprises Ltd, looks after the bookshop, as well as a member of the society's journal editorial panel, Research Zone and Centre groups. Tony is a retired Chartered Engineer and Environmental Manager, and has a daughter living locally, and a son & grandson living in Western Australia. Currently he is a member of both St Paul's, Wokingham & St Nicholas, Emmbrook PCCs and is treasurer of the latter church among other interests.



Paul Barrett

Paul is a retired software product manager and spent the final 25 years of his career in the tech industry. He and his wife moved to Northumberland in 2005 to be close to their son and his family but the Barretts have strong connections to Berkshire albeit in the annexed section around Abingdon! Paul joined the society in 2017 and, in 2019, took on the post of Webmaster having redesigned the society's websites. He is passionate about digital transformation and its role in engaging with the digital generations and with members who are remote from Berkshire. He co-edits the online newsletter "in touch" and is a member of the Marketing & Communications committee.

Christopher Singleton

Chris has a Degree in Mechanical Sciences, Cambridge, and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies, Strathclyde University. He has 10 years' experience in genealogical research and has made presentations to Berkshire FHS branches on Heraldry. He spent 15 years in heavy engineering, 15 years in electronics/IT and 10 years in consultancy, having held General Management positions in 3 small to medium-sized enterprises, 2 of them international. He was Chairman of Wokingham Chamber of Commerce and a Town and Borough Councillor. Chris is married, lives in Wokingham and cycles 2 or 3 times a week.



Vicki Chesterman

Vicki has been involved with Berkshire FHS for nearly 20 years being Reading branch secretary and programme secretary, and previously a trustee and society secretary. She is also has a keen interest in local history. Vicki is Chairman of the Education and Events committee, assists in The Centre for Heritage and Family History, and is the editor for the Berkshire Family Historian.

David Wooldridge

David was born in Grimsby, and moved to Bracknell in 1978. He was an Industrial Chemist in sales and technical support working in many different countries for various industries, latterly, for 20 years, supplying speciality chemicals into the aerospace industry, but is now retired.

David started looking at his family history 22 years ago, when bequeathed a small attaché case full of old documents and photographs. He joined the Society in 2009, and is a past Bracknell & Wokingham Branch Chairman and Trustee. David has supported the Bracknell Library Drop in since 2010, and has participated in MI recording and at various events.



Malcolm Gray

Malcolm is a recently retired former insurance broker who like many, who as he grew older, had many questions about his family history that should have been asked to the relevant people many years ago. His roots are in Reading but as he has discovered his family's roots spread around the country.

Malcolm enjoys most sports and has for many years been a season ticket holder at Reading FC and retirement was meant to have involved summers watching more cricket and hopefully he will do later this year. Malcolm also likes music and he has been a regular concert goer, and is a member of the Ramblers and walks all year round.

Martin has started regular volunteering for a local charity, The Ways and Means Trust, and also some ad-hoc work for the Reading Museum service.



Reuniting family with "lost" memorabilia

Catherine Sampson

Whilst some individuals are unappreciative of sepia photographs, once treasured certificates and dusty letters, there are thankfully many others who recognise their importance. In recent months, the Society has been contacted on a surprisingly high number of occasions to ask for its assistance in returning a box of memorabilia to the Berkshire family from whom it has become separated. Many of us probably dream of being the recipient of an unexpected treasure trove of family memorabilia, being a member of Berkshire Family History Society has just slightly raised the odds of that happening. You could say, it's an unexpected benefit of being a member.

So what happens when we receive details of memorabilia waiting to be reunited? Usually, one of our volunteers will carry out a little investigation to establish who the collection likely belonged to, and whether there are any immediate family still alive, before we widen the search. At this point, we often advertise the material on the society's Forum and invite replies – there are several enquiries posted that are still ongoing at the moment, and more about to be added. It is another very good reason to be signed up to the Forum.

We have some recent successes to share with you. A box containing memorabilia relating to the Titcombe family of Henry Street, Reading, turned up not so long ago in a very old oven which had been fly-tipped. The last member of the immediate family died in 1990, but Vicki Chesterman, secretary of Reading Branch, was able to track down relatives on the paternal line who were thrilled to receive the box. A beautiful Edwardian photograph album full of photographs relating to the Kent family, former ironmongers of Church Street, Wantage, was discovered in a house clearance. Thanks to the help of member, Joyce Hermon, this is now reunited with members of the family who still live locally.

YOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS

Mark Stevens

Mark is Berkshire's current county archivist. He grew up in Maidenhead and has a lifelong love of history in the Royal County. He is particularly interested in historic mental health care and the people who received it and is the author of two related books: *Broadmoor Revealed* and *Life in the Victorian Asylum*. He was elected as vice-president of the society for the first time in 2016.



Derek Trinder



Derek's active involvement with the society extends over 20 years. Now a vice-president, he is a former society chairman, branch chairman, and a trustee for two full terms. Derek attends Executive Committee meetings by invitation, is a member of the Marketing and Communications group, and a director of Berkshire Family History Enterprises. He represents the society on some external bodies and provides a voice for family history in local media.

Besides Berkshire, his family and local history interests include Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire and Ireland. Other interests include gardening, music of many genres and theatre. And after 40 years, Derek still holds a season ticket (same seat) at Queens Park Rangers.



YOUR SOCIETY PRESIDENT Mr James Puxley DL, Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire

We are pleased to announce that Mr James Puxley is again, returning for a fourth year as President of Berkshire Family History Society. He became our society President last year after expressing an interest in genealogy at the official opening of the Centre for Heritage and Family History in 2018. He has looked into his own family history and is in the fortunate position of having a wealth of archives to refer to enhance the stories of his predecessors.

Born in 1948, Mr Puxley was educated in Berkshire before attending the University of Bristol where he obtained a BA degree in history. He attended the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester where he obtained a diploma in rural estate management and worked as a rural chartered surveyor for several years following qualification as a chartered surveyor. In the 1980s he started to manage the Welford Estate, near Newbury on behalf of his mother and then on his own behalf when she transferred ownership to him. He continues in this role today living at Welford Park with his wife, Deborah, who assists her husband in the management of the Welford Estate and organises the annual opening of the grounds for 5 weeks every February for the public to come and view one of the country's finest snowdrop displays.

Welford Park is a historic house in extensive grounds of 3000 agricultural acres. The property has been owned by James' family on his mother's side for 400 years, originally being purchased in 1618 by Sir Francis Jones Kt, Lord Mayor of London in 1620. It was subsequently inherited via the female line several times by the Eyre and Archer Houblon families.

Mr Puxley was High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire from 2000 to 2001. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant in 2005 and became Vice Lord Lieutenant in 2010. In 2015 he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County, thereby becoming the Queen's representative within Berkshire. This role involves taking considerable interest in and supporting very many aspects of county life, civic, voluntary, military, religious, business and others.



Events organised from The Centre for Heritage and Family History

September - December 2021

Our events currently continue largely by Zoom, and so the majority remain available to everyone, if the time zone allows, wherever you live. Please 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 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>

Workshops - Online & F2F	
TICKETS £10 (members £9)	
Places are limited, pre-booking is required.	
September Saturday 18th 2.00 - 4.00pm Online	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.
October Saturday 16th 11.00am-1.00pm The Centre for Heritage & Family History 2nd Floor Reading Central Library	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 F2F 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.
October Wednesday 20th 7.00-9.00pm Online	Getting the most out of UK Census Records <i>Tutor: Tony Roberts</i> Find out how to get the most from census records for your family history research. This workshop considers the background to the census and looks at it in some of its early forms in England and Wales. Attendees will explore the development in the modern census from 1841 to date, including also the 1939 Register, and have the opportunity to examine examples of different census.

Courses - Online

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

Fridays

October - 1st, 8th, 15th,
22nd & 29th

November - 5th, 12th,
19th & 26th

December - 3rd

2.00 - 4.00pm
(all 10 sessions)

Tickets £125
(members £115)

Georgian Sources for Historians *Tutor: Dr Margaret Simons*

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.

To help us apply what we are learning you will undertake a small project, which we will share in the final week.

Mondays

October - 4th, 11th,
18th & 25th

November - 1st & 8th

10.30am – 12.30pm
(all 6 sessions)

TICKETS £35
(members £28)

Beginners' Family History Course

Tutors: Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens

This course comprises of a series of six workshops for those new to researching family history including where to start, how to progress and good research practice. Learn how to work with core records of civil registration, censuses, parish registers and modern wills. Discover the different genealogy websites, the content they offer and their strengths and limitations.

This is also a good refresher for those who want to make sure they have covered all bases.

Caribbean Research – Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

October

Saturday 23rd
3.00 - 4.15pm

An Introduction to Caribbean Family History *with Guy Grannum*

The Caribbean was populated by millions of voluntary and involuntary migrants and settlers from the UK, Africa and South Asia from the 17th century. Many later returned or migrated to the UK for education and work especially in the 20th century. Do you have family who settled in the Caribbean or migrated to the UK from the Caribbean? Guy Grannum will introduce you to sources available in the UK and online and techniques to help you to research your Caribbean ancestors.

Natter Group - Online and FREE

Sept - Tuesday 7th

Oct - Tuesday 5th

Nov - Tuesday 2nd

Dec - Tuesday 7th

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.

6.45pm for 7.00pm start - end time varies.

Social History Talks - Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

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

<p>September Thursday 9th 2.00 - 3.15pm</p> <p>Final talk in 'Summer Potpourri' series</p>	<p>Berkshire and the Industrial Revolution <i>with Richard Marks</i></p> <p>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 within Berkshire itself and elsewhere. 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.</p>
<p>October Thursday 7th 2.00 - 3.15pm</p> <p>First talk in 'Autumn Potpourri' series</p>	<p>'Smelly Alley, Reading': Fish mongering & other stories <i>with Kevin Little</i></p> <p>"Smelly Alley", more properly Union Street, is a narrow pedestrian street linking Friar Street and Broad Street. It's famous in Reading as one of the few locations where you could until recently experience a more 'characterful' shopping experience. From the 1930s until relatively recently, Kevin and his father before him, ran Frosts the fishmongers there. This talk is packed with anecdotes about life in the Alley, including how it got its name, and the story of the oldest shop in Reading.</p>
<p>October Thursday 21st 2.00 - 3.15pm</p> <p>Second talk in 'Autumn Potpourri' series</p>	<p>Fairmile Hospital, Cholsey <i>with Mark Stevens</i></p> <p>One hundred and seventy six years ago, public mental health care was invented. Acts of Parliament from 1845 resulted in 'lunatic asylums' being built in every county in England and Wales. Berkshire's own asylum opened in 1870, as what became known as Fair Mile Hospital. Situated near the River Thames, and close to the village of Cholsey, this institution dispensed care to generations of local people and appears in many of our family trees. Discover its history and experience 19th century mental healthcare.</p>
<p>November Thursday 4th 2.00 - 3.15pm</p> <p>Third talk in 'Autumn Potpourri' series</p>	<p>Wilts and Berks Canal <i>with Martin Buckland</i></p> <p>The Wilts & Berks Canal opened in 1810 and links the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington, near Melksham, to the River Thames at Abingdon. It had a chequered career until its legal closure in 1914, its demise hastened by the collapse of Stanley Aqueduct in 1901. In 1977, restoration of the canal began in a few places but in 2004 full restoration of the entire 62 miles was decided upon. The talk looks at the historical, restoration progress and future proposals for this major East to West canal link.</p>
<p>November Thursday 18th 2.00 - 3.15pm</p> <p>Fourth talk in 'Autumn Potpourri' series</p>	<p>The Duke of Wellington; A life of Service <i>with Brigadier Michael Aris DL & Richard Bennett DL</i></p> <p>Stratfield Saye House may sit just over the border in Hampshire, but its importance is felt across Berkshire. This talk captures the life of its most famous resident, the Duke of Wellington, from his birth in 1769 to his state funeral in 1852. Inevitably, the story includes conflict in India, the Peninsula War and of course Waterloo. We will follow his political life, his varied appointments and his fondness for women. Finally, we will hear Queen Victoria's reflections on the Great Duke in her diary.</p>

Social History Talks continued

December Saturday 4th 12.00 - 1.15pm Final talk in 'Autumn Potpourri' series	The History of Greyfriars Church, Reading <i>with Malcolm Summers</i> Greyfriars Church in Reading started life as part of a larger Franciscan friary church, within a complex of other buildings – a chapter house, cloister, dormitory and others. When the friary was closed down under Henry VIII, the nave survived. After half a century as Reading's town hall, it was used as a poor house, barracks in the civil war, and a prison. There was even a pub attached to it, where the south transept is now. In 1863, it re-opened as a parish church, restored and enlarged. This well-illustrated talk covers its rich and varied history from the arrival of the first friars in the town, to the present day redevelopment of the site.
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Family History Advice Sessions – Online and FREE

Our popular online family history advice sessions continue. These sessions are 1-1, free of cost and are available to members and non-members alike. Pre-booking required.

Sept - Monday 20th Oct - Monday 18th Nov - Monday 15th 2.00 - 4.00pm	1-1 Family History Advice Session <i>with our Research Assistants</i> Are you just getting started in family history and wanting guidance as to how to proceed? Or are you stuck at a particular "brick wall" and need some help? We will provide whatever help and suggestions we can within your booked slot and will book a follow-on session with you, if needed. Four 25 minute 1-1 slots are available in each session.
Sept - Saturday 25th 2.00 - 4.00pm	1-1 Merchant Navy Advice Session <i>with Tony Wright</i> Do you have Merchant Navy ancestors? Need some advice in how to trace or interpret their records? Three 20 minute 1-1 slots are available in this session.

DNA & Family History – Online

TICKETS £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

October Saturday 2nd 2.30 - 4.30pm	DNA Special Interest Group <i>facilitated by Debbie Kennett</i> 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.
November Saturday 6th 3.00 - 4.15pm	DNA testing and family history: how DNA testing can advance your genealogical research <i>with Debbie Kennett</i> DNA testing is now all the rage but what can you really learn from a DNA test? This talk provides an introduction to the use of DNA testing as a tool for family history research, for those interested in DNA and how testing works, but, who haven't necessarily tested yet.

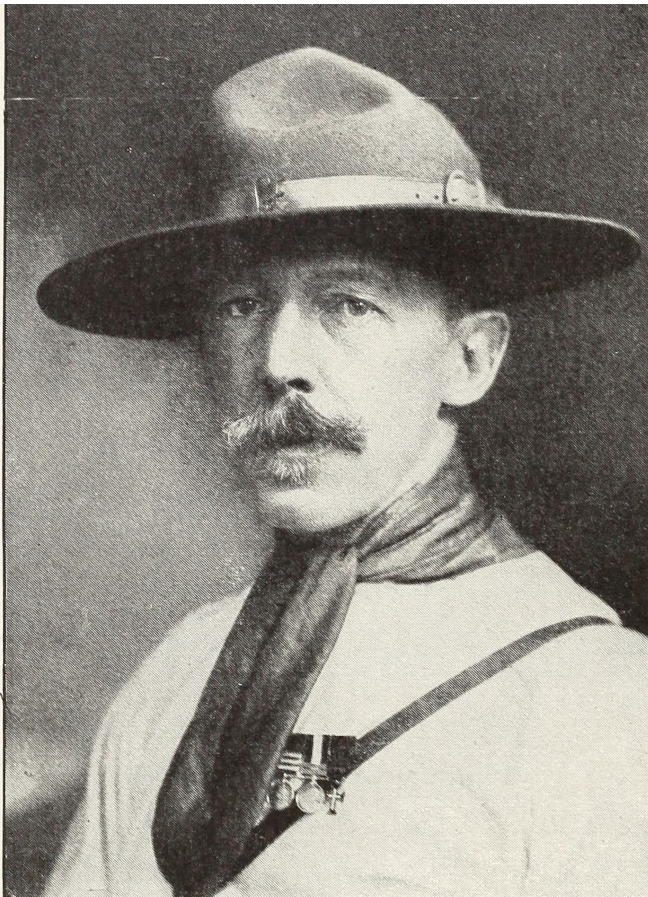
ROBERT CLAUDE UTLEY (1896-1911)

Eric Saxton tells a tale of a life cut short

The Reading Mercury of Saturday September 2nd 1911, reported that a party of 80 Boy Scouts had left Charing Cross station the previous Saturday, August 26th, for France, with the two-fold objective of demonstrating the Brotherhood of the movement and extending its influence and operations in France. The week's stay would involve camping with a company of French Scouts at Hardelot near Boulogne. They were instructed that their duty was to encourage the raising of French Scouts by making themselves useful to the neighbours there. Sir Francis Vane, the President of the British Boy Scouts, (a breakaway group from Baden-Powell's organisation) accompanied the party, and Captain Walter S. Masterman, a brother of the Under Secretary for Home Affairs, was in command.

Among the party was a troop of Scouts from the 1st Berkshire Troop under Scoutmaster F. G. Sainsbury, and among that Reading group was a 14 year old Scout, Robert Claude Utley.

Robert's parents, Robert and Elizabeth Utley, had



Sir Francis Vane

arrived in Reading from Wokingham shortly after the birth of their first child in 1887. Between that date and 1906 a further five children were added to their family in Reading, including Robert Claude who was born December 31st 1896 at 131 London Road, Reading. Robert senior took on a newsagent's shop at 3 Granby Terrace. By 1892 the address appears to have become 131 London Road. He continued to trade there until he was forced to abandon the premises and move to 92 Radstock Road. The family later moved to 17 Merchant's Place about 1905.

Robert Claude Utley had been connected to the 1st Berkshire Troop since its formation. He was an eager and popular member, keen on scouting, and had achieved the rank of lance corporal. From January 1911, he had been employed as a junior clerk by Messrs. Warmsley and co., builders' merchants, of Bangor Wharf, King's Road. This trip to France was not the first time he had experienced camping, though it was his first time abroad.

On arrival at Boulogne the boys were received by the mayor, and afterwards they marched to Hardelot, eight miles away.

Before the scouts went to Hardelot the mayor of Reading had sent out a friendly dispatch to the mayor of Boulogne, and received the following reply, dated August 26th 1911.

*My Dear Colleague,
I have had the very greatest pleasure in receiving, on their arrival at Boulogne, the company of Boy Scouts visiting France. I have been most happy on this occasion, to extend to your young citizens the sentiment of brotherly feeling which unite our two nations. It was an especial pleasure to welcome them to our country, and give them every assistance on their tour.*

It is with very great pleasure that I have read your kind letter and assure you of the keen sympathy felt by my colleagues and myself. I have hailed with joy this opportunity of binding together still more closely those ties which already exist between us.

With every good wish C. Peron, mayor.

On the Monday after they arrived, a party of

boys went out at noon to bathe. Robert was not a good swimmer, having only recently learnt at the Corporation Baths, in Reading. They had all been warned not to get out of their depth, but shortly after they entered the water, Robert got into difficulties. A companion named Stanton tried to reach him, but was not a sufficiently strong swimmer, and called for help. Two of the adults with the party, Mr. J. Owain Evans and Captain Masterman swam out to rescue him. There was a very strong current which swept Robert about 150 yards out. Mr. Evans managed to get hold of him but the boy panicked and in the frantic struggle which followed he was forced to let him go. He sank before the other rescuer reached him. Both adults remained at sea, eventually recovering the body. First Aid was administered for over an hour but all effort proved useless, and Robert's body was conveyed to the hotel.

Robert's parents learned the news from newspapers the next day, before the arrival of a telegram, sent by Sir Francis Vane, expressing his deep regret at the terrible accident. They were understandably heartbroken at the news. Sir Francis Vane later wrote to Robert's parents and expressed a desire to visit them.

I believe every human precaution was taken, three officers – all expert swimmers - being in the water and farther out than the boys..... I can only say that never in my life, old soldier that I am, have I felt anything so much: and I beg you to believe that everybody present – scout officers and scouts – did everything possible to save your son, and when he was recovered, to restore life.

John Utley, Robert's eldest brother, travelled to Boulogne to make the necessary arrangements for the return of the body to Reading. He met with Sir Francis, who deeply sympathised with the bereaved in their irreparable loss.

A report which came from
September 2021

Boulogne the following Thursday described a ceremony which took place at Hardelet that afternoon, when the body of Robert Utley was prepared for the journey to Reading with full honours.

The coffin was covered with a Union Jack, the boy's hat and wild flowers. It was first placed on a transport cart by four Reading scouts. A procession, accompanied by the entire force of boy scouts, headed by muffled drums and bugles, made its way through the village, while local inhabitants and many others lined the route to the station where the coffin started its journey back to Reading.

The Reading Chronicle of September 2nd reported that the Duke of Argyll, who was present at this ceremony, had received a message from his wife, Princess Louise, expressing regret and conveying her sympathy to Sir Francis and the scouts.

Captain Masterman wrote to emphasize the bravery of Mr. J. Owain Evans, who nearly lost his life in his attempt to save the boy and was brought out of the water unconscious. Mention was also made of the conduct of Scout Stanton, who, although he had just learned to swim, went to Robert's aid at great risk to himself, but who was unable to save his comrade's life.

The body of the dead scout arrived at Charing Cross on the Thursday evening, and was conveyed to Reading. It was not taken to the deceased's home in Merchant's Place, but directly to the undertaker's premises.

The funeral service was held on September 2nd in St Laurence's Church, and a procession left Robert's home in Merchant's Place at about 11.30 am. Large crowds lined the streets, and the church was filled. The coffin was almost



Robert Claude Utley

hidden beneath the floral tributes, and was draped in the scarlet of the original 1st Berkshire Troop flag. The hearse was flanked by scouts of Robert's troop and was followed by several eminent persons. Significantly the newspaper report does not include Robert's parents or his five year old brother among the mourners, who were led by his two elder brothers and two sisters.

As the procession proceeded along Friar Street towards the church, the scouts who lined the street fell in behind, and followed in double file. The coffin was met at the door by the Rev. H. H. Cox who conducted the service. After a moving service the coffin left the church, and all along the route to the Reading Cemetery there were crowds of people. Blinds were drawn, flags were lowered to half-mast. Many were moved to tears at the graveside during the ceremony. After the "Last Post" by two buglers of the 8th Company Boys' Brigade, numerous people took their last look at the coffin, before moving slowly away.

This incident was widely reported at the time in the local newspapers, the Berkshire Chronicle the Robert Claude Utley Reading Standard and the Reading Mercury. Several columns covered the accident and its aftermath, both in France and England, and the funeral arrangements, with pictures of the funeral cortege and graveside salute. One report concluded that it was understood a suitable

headstone would be erected at the grave, and a commemorative plate at St Laurence's Church. Some weeks later a Grand Concert was held in the Town Hall in aid of a fund to put in place a memorial headstone. Several other appeals appeared in the press, asking for donations. However, nothing seems to have come of the enterprise and today there is little trace of Robert's grave in Reading Cemetery. It seems no memorial was ever placed there.

Research has shown that later both of Robert's parents were buried in the same grave, his mother in 1933 and his father in 1943.

Had he not died when he did, Robert Claude Utley would have been approaching his eighteenth birthday when war broke out almost three years later, in August 1914. The chances are that at some time he would quite possibly have returned to France under very different circumstances.

Note:

I think I have identified the boy Stanton who assisted in the rescue attempt, but have not named him as some of his relatives and descendants may still be living in the Reading area, and I do not wish to cause embarrassment if I am wrong. I believe he was a soldier during the First World War, and he married and died in Reading having lived there all his life. I would be interested to hear from any of his descendants, should they wish to contact me.



The last photo taken of the 1st Berkshire Troop of Boy Scouts, a member of which, Robert Utley, was drowned in the Boulogne Camp. Utley is the third from the right back row, and past and present members met a month ago for this picture to be taken. Stanton, who went to Utley's assistance, is in the next row, with a companion's hand on his shoulder. See page 11.

Berkshire Chronicle September 2nd 1911 (image courtesy of Reading Local Studies Collection)

Reader's Letter

Dear Editor

I wonder if I may, through the Berkshire Family Historian, say a huge thank you to all those who have helped keep the members of the Society sane during the many months of the Pandemic; lockdowns; winter and much more.

Thanks to those who have set up Zoom meetings. I have been able to join Windsor and Abingdon branch meetings, something I would not normally be able to do, as well as enjoying my own Woodley (Computer) and Bracknell branch meetings also via Zoom.

The weekly e-mailed newsletter has been a source of much information and I have taken advantage of a number of the talks offered and am looking forward to more in the coming months. Free access to websites have been negotiated whilst the Centre is closed which has helped me to solve two long unanswered questions. Then the Berkshire Family Historian arrives, full of interesting articles and news and, as ever, exceptionally well presented, despite these difficult times.

I recently joined another Family History Society and on viewing their website I can confidently say that we are very fortunate in that our Society's website is second to none. We are extremely fortunate to have so many members with a wealth of knowledge in so many fields of Family History.

The luxury of having more spare time to fill has spurred me on and I have really got back to my family history. I realised that all the data stored in my Family History package needed to be presented in stories rather than just a database of facts so I decided to start with my late Uncle Charlie who, I was always told, was "some kind of cousin of your grandfather". I was determined to find out our exact relationship which turned out to be that Uncle Charlie was the husband of a 1st cousin twice removed! I then set about writing Uncle Charlie's story as I thought this would not be too long as he only had one child and would thus be a good place to make a start on my first attempt. However, it turned out to be 25 pages of A4. My next story project is to write about my great grandFather but as he had 15 children I'm wondering if I will have enough sheets of A4 paper!

It will be so good when we can get together again but in the meantime I'm sure all members would join with me in expressing a huge vote of thanks to all those working behind the scenes to ensure that we can all still enjoy our membership of such a thriving Family History Society.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Spratt

Another Journal Exchange available on our website



Norfolk Family
History Society

The Norfolk Family History Society, has joined the growing list of societies with whom we exchange electronic journals. If you have Norfolk connections June's edition of the Norfolk Ancestor is now available on the website for you to enjoy. It takes our list of exchange magazines up to 12.

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. However, we have been working hard to reopen and hope to do in the not too distant future, if we haven't already by the time you read this Historian. Please keep an eye on our newsletters and the website for up-to-date details of the situation.

Thank you to those who responded to our request for more volunteers to help in the Research Zone - we are looking forward to working with you over the coming months.

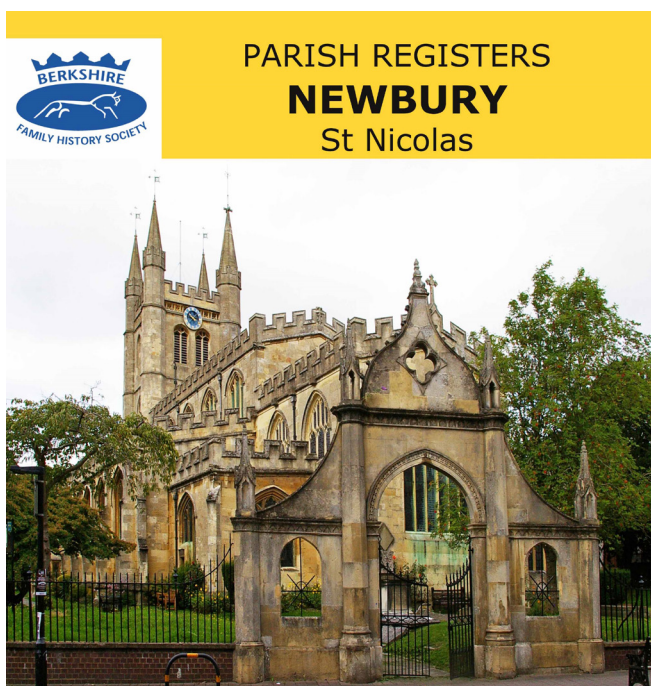
Whilst the Centre remains closed, the Society's online access continues for members to two of its subscription websites, Findmypast Worldwide and The Genealogist. This is a great opportunity to access new records and extend your family research from your own home. And it's another great benefit of being 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). We are currently in discussion with these organisations as to what we may be able to offer after the Centre reopens.

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.

New in the bookshop



Newbury St Nicolas Parish Registers 1538- 1965 (CD)

This CD contains a full transcription of the parish registers, main and draft, and is fully indexed. It also contains a useful history of Newbury. Coverage is Baptisms 1538-1910, Banns 1754-1904, Marriages 1538-1917 and Burials 1538-1965.

Price: shop £12.00, members £10.80

Projects and Publications Update

Catherine Sampson

As I write, lockdown is steadily lifting and there are indications that access to parish registers will steadily improve.

Newbury St Nicolas Parish Registers have now been fully checked and a CD of the transcripts has been published - see this *Historian* for full details. In due course, we will produce Data Downloads of the material and also publish it on Findmypast. This project has been over four years in the making, partly because some of St Nicolas' registers are extremely fragile. Our journey has included special imaging of some registers, and checking some under ultraviolet light. This publication fills a significant gap in the Society's transcript coverage. A huge thank you to all of our volunteers who have worked on these registers.

Our transcribing and checking of the final registers to complete the Berkshire Burials series is now also complete and I hope by the time you read this *Historian* we will be close to publishing

the final edition of Berkshire Burials. This will also enable us to produce and publish the final burial data downloads. Our focus in the Record Office is now marriages and baptisms and three new parish registers' publications - Shaw-cum-Donnington, Winkfield and Bray.

Work has also continued in Berkshire's churchyards. We are making good progress recording Bradfield St Andrew's monuments. This one is a slight race against time as the church building has been sold to Bradfield College and building work to convert it into a library is due to start imminently. Our recording and imaging of the monuments inside the church is already complete but once building work begins, our access to the churchyard may be either removed or limited until it is finished.

Please contact projects@berksfhs.org.uk if you think you might be able to help with our work.



St Mary's almshouses, one of Newbury's many almshouses which are mentioned frequently in St Nicolas' parish registers. St Mary's almshouses originated in a 1656 charitable foundation, but these almshouses (specifically for "old maids") were rebuilt in Victorian times and demolished in the 1970s to make way for an office development.

Around the Branches

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

Abingdon Branch

abingdon@berksfhs.org.uk

In May, we held a 'Members' Evening'. Before lockdown and moving onto Zoom, these evenings were growing in popularity, it gave our local members a chance to get to know each other and share their family history research, and ask for help and advice from fellow members over a cup of coffee in a relaxed and informal environment. Each time we choose a theme (although we are always happy to digress) which this time was 'crime and punishment' and we asked attendees to tell us if one of their ancestors was a victim of crime or indeed, the villain. Our evening started with a presentation (my first) that I had put together after finding out that my 3x great grandfather's brothers were convicted of burglary and transported to Bermuda. I tried to show how, by using the census, prison records and newspaper reports, I could piece together their story. This was followed by a brief interlude on medieval torture by Colin Jones, before a presentation by David Wooldridge about a Norfolk ancestor and his numerous court appearances. Although more difficult on zoom than in a face to face meeting, these talks did provoke a discussion between attendees.

In June, John Hanson gave us an excellent talk on the Findmypast (FMP) website. We had originally scheduled John to talk about the Family Search website but as that had already been covered earlier in the year we opted for FMP and, with over 80 people attending, it showed what a popular choice it was.

There was a lot of ground to cover given the breadth and depth of records that FMP offers, so John's presentation was quite fast paced. Even so, he kept it very digestible and the format was good, using selected screenshots from worked examples rather than walking us through the process field by field, which would have been tedious.

FMP has recently introduced a new search function and John showed us how to get the best out of it. The previous FMP search wasn't as easy to use as that on Ancestry and it was good to see that the new one is much better. His whole presentation was full of useful pieces of information for those of us who aren't regular

users of FMP. Some of the ones I made a note of were that FMP produces a weekly newsletter of new releases, it has the only set of fully indexed overseas BMDs, an extensive set of pre-1858 wills, women's army service records and WW1 hospital records, and a lot of Irish records. Despite the new search function, John suggested that for searching the newspaper records, which by the way are refreshed every night, one should use the Newspaper Library search engine to locate a record before going back to FMP to view it.

Meetings ahead:

20th September

Birth & Death - the hidden secrets of registration by *Anthony Marr*

27th September

F2F Branch Meeting: a chance to meet and catch up

13th October

Combined Branches' Meeting (Zoom) - Introducing Manorial Records by *Ian Waller*

See page 25 for more details.

15th November

The Whiting Family (hopefully F2F) by *Simon Burbidge*

Vanessa Chappell & Simon Burbidge

Bracknell & Wokingham Branch

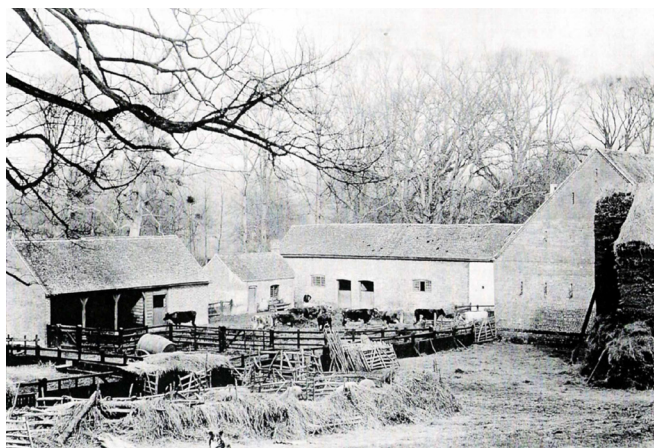
bracknell@berksfhs.org.uk

The first combined branches' special meeting took place in April. A record number of attendees (118) gathered virtually to hear Gill Blanchard give a two-part talk entitled 'The Inland Revenue Valuation and National Farm Surveys'.

When David Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1908, he introduced a new Pensions Act and to pay for this introduced the 1910 Finance Act. The Valuation Office was set up by the Inland Revenue in 1910 for England and

Around the Branches

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



Home Farm, Purley, circa 1900, a typical small Berkshire farm recorded in the National Farm Survey

Wales (Scotland 1911) to carry out the work of the survey, which actually stopped in 1915. The aim was to collect duty on any increase in value of the land from 1909, in order to finance infrastructure such as new railway lines and telegraph lines. It was never implemented and was repealed in 1920.

Valuation Books were the first major record created by the Valuation Office at the start of the survey with details from local government records. If it survived, it will be stored at a County Record Office and may have a map. It included the surname, size of the holding, gross annual and rateable value, fixed charges and total value.

Field Books were prepared which gave details of the property. The National Archives hold the Field Books and maps which are being digitised and are gradually becoming available on www.genealogist.co.uk.

After the Branch Annual Meeting, our talk in May was entitled 'Adoption in England & Wales' and given by Eric Probert. Adoption is defined as the process whereby a person assumes the parenting of another permanently, transferring all rights and responsibilities from the original parent or parents. This change in status required recognition by society through legal or religious endorsement. Eric gave the reasons why children were adopted. He also told of the "Boarding Out" order which placed workhouse children in long term care of foster parents who usually received a weekly allowance.

Emmeline Pankhurst, who adopted four babies, established a War Memorial Adoption Home in

Kensington in 1919 to deal with the adoption of war babies. Before 1927, adoptions were usually informal but following the Adoption of Children Act in 1927 there was legal documentation and a central register. Council records have lists of adoption homes. There is also a website: www.childrenshomes.org.uk. In 1975, adopted persons were given the right to discover their birth origins.

For further websites, see the Meeting Summary on the Society's website.

Meetings ahead:

Friday 17th September

Heraldry by Christopher Singleton

See website for details of future meetings.

Sandra Barkwith & Bryan Pledger

Newbury Branch

newbury@berksfhs.org.uk

Within a few days of this magazine's distribution, Newbury Branch will be meeting face-to-face for the first time in 18 months. The plan (at the time of writing) is to hold an afternoon meeting at West Berkshire Museum. We hope to get a good turnout, from which we can take soundings as to members' preferences for timing, venue, content and delivery method of future Newbury Branch meetings. Nobody expects an unthinking return to the pre-Covid pattern: Zoom meetings have engaged worldwide members' interest, which we want to retain, but we are also keenly aware that Zoom is not for everyone, and face-to-face interaction is highly valued.

Our May Zoom meeting delivered useful insights into the resources for researching Hampshire ancestors. Les Mitchinson is a professional genealogist with strong Hampshire connections. He knows all the local specialisms of the county, and where to find them.

Our June speaker, Phil Isherwood, introduced us to Evernote, an app which can bring order and accessibility to that ever-expanding stack of family tree fragments, old photos, letters, certificates, audio clips, web references and random scribbles which we are pleased to call our research findings.

Around the Branches

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



Newbury's Cloth Hall, built as a workhouse in the early seventeenth century, has at times served as the council chamber and the Bluecoat schoolroom. For the last 120 years it has been home to Newbury's local museum, and in September it will host our first F2F branch meeting.

At the branch annual meeting in May, the committee bid farewell to Peter Corneck, who has chaired the branch admirably through its most difficult year. Peter now wants a break to get on with his own FH research. Nick Prince, familiar to all as the Society's chairman of the past year, is taking on our branch chair, in addition to continuing as our branch trustee representative on the Executive.

Penny Stokes

Reading Branch

reading@berksfhs.org.uk

Our April meeting was the combined special branches meeting, via Zoom.

In May, we held our branch annual meeting (via Zoom) where the serving committee was re-elected. This was followed by a talk by Vicki Chesterman entitled "How to lose an afternoon to a photograph". This presentation was a very well documented and researched piece tracing the family and the development of the business of G Hookham and Son, using census records, directories and newspaper articles, that started from a photograph sent to Vicki. The Hookham shop traded in suitcases as well as perambulators and many other goods, moving and developing the business in a Reading street. At the meeting, a photograph of the shop was produced by one of the attendees - an amazing find to top off the

presentation.

In June, we held a Zoom meeting in which members shared their discoveries of unusual occupations found in census records and other documents such as Birth, Deaths and Marriages.

At the time of writing, we are not sure whether we will be permitted to meet face to face again at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Please keep an eye on the website for the latest details.

Meetings ahead:

30th September

The Canning Tomb Mystery by Catherine Sampson

25th November

A Mountain Heritage by Dr Jane Sellwood

Graham Vockins & Vicki Chesterman

Windsor, Slough & Maidenhead Branch

windsor@berksfhs.org.uk

The WSM branch continues to live its life by Zoom, as does the rest of the Berkshire Family History Society, but we are pondering how to go back to physical meetings which can still welcome Zoom attendees.

In late March, John Titterton spoke on 'Autosomal DNA and One Name Studies' for several different branches of his Titterton family. His journey was inspired by seeing his own obituary in the paper, which luckily turned out to be an unknown namesake. A healthy 62 attendees were in the Zoom to hear this.

In April, we gathered virtually together with the other branches, to hear Gill Blanchard speak on

'The Lloyd George Domesday and National Farm Surveys'.

May saw our very brief Branch Annual Meeting, followed by the excellent Stephen Gill speaking on 'Dating Old Photographs'. Great numbers again at 67, for a great talk. Steve is a professional photographer and photo restorer and taught us how you can tell a story about an old photograph, how to get the most from it and to help date it. We can now look at our photos in a different way and enjoy them more.

At the time of writing we anticipate our June meeting with Sue Paul who will be speaking on "Breaking Down Brick Walls". This will be covered in more detail in the next Historian along



with our other meetings in the third quarter of 2021, such as Dr. Penny Walters in July on the intriguing topic of 'DNA with a Paper Trail'.

After our traditional summer recess in August, we will be back in September.

Meetings Ahead:

28th September

Posted in the past - old postcards sent to family by *Helen Baggott*

See website for details of future meetings.

Leigh Dworkin

Woodley (Computer) Branch

woodley@berksfhs.org.uk

In May, we looked at some of the marriage customs and laws around the world, and throughout time, and answered a number of questions, including the following. Can you marry your first cousin? How do you get married in the USA? What happens to your will when you get married? Why do some Spanish brides wear black when they marry? When are wedding photographs taken in Hong Kong? Why was Hardwicke's Marriage Act enacted in 1753?

In June, we showed how we prepare and present our Family History talks for meetings, so that you could create something similar for your family, friends, but chiefly ourselves, the Berkshire Family History Society. The talk consisted of the structure of a presentation, the number of 'slides' and how much goes on them, selecting and preparing images, how to use animation, thinking about if your audience can see/hear at the back (and the front) and so on. We are considering doing a follow-up workshop at some time, so if you are interested, please let us know.

We don't have meetings in July or August but we do hope to get out and about recording and taking photographs of memorials in the grounds that surround Woodley St John church.

Meetings Ahead: (all via Zoom)

15th September

Edible History. How did our ancestors get their food, what did they like to eat, what utensils, crockery and so on did they use, plus anything to do with edible histories.

17th November

An early Christmas meeting of genealogy knowledge - lots of questions and answers

December - no meeting

Gillian Stevens



News from the Berkshire Record Office

Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist at the Berkshire Record Office

June 2021 saw the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading Abbey and the BRO collaborated with the History Department of the University of Reading to create information based on the archives. Although the archive of the Abbey was scattered after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the BRO holds several items either from the Abbey or relating to it, particularly in the archives of the Corporation of Reading. You can read our Reading Abbey web pages to find out more.

We remain open to visitors and continue to provide an enquiry and copy order service. If you would like to visit, you will need to book and you can find out all about how to do so and what to expect when you arrive on the Visit Us pages on our website.

If you would like to find out more about what 2020/21 was like for us here at the BRO, please take a look at our Annual Report which is now available on our website.

Don't forget to also take a look at our online exhibition about the River Thames "Where Smooth Waters Glide: 250 years of caring for the River Thames". And keep an eye on our website and social media feeds on Twitter @berksarhives, Facebook, The Berkshire Record Office and Instagram berkshirerecordoffice for all the latest information.

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Reading
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ACCREDITED ARCHIVE SERVICE

Combined Branches' Meeting

Wednesday, 13th October 2021

7.15 for 7.45pm - by Zoom

Talk - **Introducing Manorial Records**

Speaker - **Ian Waller FSG FGRA**



For centuries, the lives of our ancestors were controlled by the lord of the manor which continued until their final demise in 1922. For many family historians, any mention of the manor makes them tremble, because they think it leads back into the strange world of medieval history where only faint ghosts of our anonymous ancestors exist. However, manorial records are an important source of information providing a fascinating insight of the day-to-day life of most of our ancestors.

Manorshadcountlessofficials,rulesandregulationsandheldcourtstodealwithtransgressionsand uphold the local laws. The records generated contain many family names. Every person associated with the manor – urban or rural - will likely be named. This talk examines how the manorial system operated and what records it generated in which your ancestor may well have appeared.

Ian Waller is a retired professional genealogist with considerable experience in English research. He currently serves as the vice chairman and education officer of the Family History Federation and is a former Chairman of AGRA (The Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives). He has authored several books in the Society of Genealogists' "My Ancestor" series including My Ancestor was an Agricultural Labourer, My Ancestor was in the Royal Navy and My Ancestor was a Leather Worker and has also written Family History Research Challenges and how to solve them and Introducing Manorial Records published by Family History Books.

Pre-booking required.

Free to members, £3 non-members

See website for full details and to book your place

How to make an easily remembered complex password

Do passwords drive you mad? Do you have a stash of Post-It notes, a little black book or a document with lots of entries you can copy and paste? There's a way that's based on the latest advice from the UK Cyber Security Council, that will allow you to have a complex password that's unique for each site but is easy for you to remember.

We know passwords need to be strong and we've been conditioned to believe that they need to look like this 7HxB2o#qjEwgl\$r. I defy most twenty-year-olds to remember a password like that and it's probably a long time since most of us saw twenty. So we have to find a way to store them. You could use a password manager but for many of us, that's just another layer of complication.

There's a method that mere mortals can use that will create a complex password by using common words in combination. For example, our website would accept this:

icecreamcheesecakepavlova

But you shouldn't use the same password everywhere; and some sites require the use of mixed case, numbers and special characters. How will you remember all that? Here's how.

Step 1: Select THREE memorable words

You need words that are memorable and meaningful, to you. For example, I could use part of the address where I lived as a child

Pield Heath Road

Hillingdon

Middx

They can be any words that you can remember easily.

You might want to shuffle the order. I will use Hillingdon.Pield.Middx and separate them with full stops. That deals with the special character requirement - you can use any special character.

Step 2: Use them as a "secret constant"

When a site asks for a password, take the three secret words and the separators and type them in the password box. You will use them over and over again so they will be easy to remember. But we're not done yet.

Step 3: Make it unique to the site

We need to make the password:

a) unique to each site

b) contain at least one number

We achieve that using a standard pattern that you combine with your secret constant. Only you know what those two elements are.

Take the first three initials of the company name (or the first three letters if they have a one-word name.) So the Berkshire Record Office would be BRO and we would be BFH. Now we need some numbers and the way to do that is to have two - the first is the number of vowels in our three letters and the second is the number of consonants. So my password for the BRO is:edit

Hillingdon.Pield.Middx.BRO12

According to an online password checker, it would take a computer 200 decillion years to crack this password. Give or take a million, that's:

200,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years!

The sun is due to checkout and take us with it in 5 billion years so the process will still have a way to go when that happens. But you can proudly do it in seconds. As long as you know the secret constant and the secret pattern, you have a complex password that varies by site but is completely standard to you. You can create a hint:

my.secret.words.first three charsVC

You can stick that on a Post-It on your computer and no one will work it out. As a precaution, write the three secret words down and store them somewhere safe, but not so safe you can't find them when you need them!

Play with the concept, shorten the secret words, find what works for you - you'll soon come up with a combo that's easy for you to remember but impossible for anyone else to work out - at least, not before the sun dies.

Your Trees - a new member-only service



As part of our ongoing Digital Transformation, we're proud to announce a new, member only service - YourTrees.

Put simply, YourTrees allows you to submit a copy of your family tree as a GEDCOM file. We upload it to our server to make it available to all members to view on the website to foster collaboration. Update your local version, submit a new GEDCOM and we'll update your online tree.

The service is entirely free to members. When membership ceases your tree can remain in place so there is a permanent record of your life's work that other members can view, and you can pass on.

Why are we offering this service?

Your hard-won research is probably locked up in a family tree program on your computer.

- What happens if your computer fails? Do you back up your research?
- How do you share your research with other family members?
- What will happen to your research after you've passed?

YourTrees answers all those questions in one free and easy-to-use service.

There are other services, surely?

Yes there are, but many come with a catch.

Ancestry and FMP aren't free. They will accommodate you while you're doing your research, but when you're done, they're an expensive archive.

Family Search is free but uploading a GEDCOM isn't promoted. They prefer you to re-enter your tree using their research tools to find and cite sources.

WikiTree is a global cooperative initiative to have one record for a person no matter how many people are related to them. It's a noble ideal, but there can be only one owner of a person's record which causes problems.

It's good to have more than one backup, so please feel free to use those services too but we think **YourTrees** is different because:

- We make it easy for you to submit and update your entire tree
- It's identifiably **your** tree
 - You own it
 - We host it and handle all the techie stuff
- We're a local society with a global membership
 - there's no limit to who or how many people you include in your tree(s) - family is family
 - but there's an obvious emphasis on your Berkshire connections, to help you collaborate with people with local knowledge
- Our members are serious researchers
 - you won't be flooded with spurious hints
 - but you can collaborate with like-minded people.
- Ours is a 'boutique' personal service with none of the loss of identity you get when you deal with a large enterprise.
- Our volunteers are here to help you host your tree(s)

Birth Briefs and Members' Interests

YourTrees enables us to bring these services into the 21st century. Both services should allow members to search for fellow researchers with common interests but the information is sketchy and submitting the data takes some manual effort.

YourTrees includes the ability to search by name or place, as you have become accustomed to with other services. It does it very rapidly and will include variants of a name.

As far as Birth Briefs are concerned, when we developed the new website, we knew we could upgrade the service - we just didn't have the resources to do it at the time. Well, we do now. The Birth Brief structure

is the same as a full family tree - it just has fewer generations - so it's a perfect fit for YourTrees. Nor need you limit a Birth Brief to five generations.

So we've decided to absorb Birth Briefs into YourTrees and we will, in time, discontinue the current Members' Interests. In fact, over the last decade, we've accumulated over 200 Birth Briefs from current members that we've converted into GEDCOM format. With their permission, we are using some or all of them to seed the new service.

Can I include documents & images?

For the initial launch, photos and documents are not included because the GEDCOM file format is text only. There are ways around that, so look out for further announcements once the initial service has bedded in.

I already use other services, why should I use this one?

This isn't a binary choice. There's no reason to not have your tree in more than one place. From a pure data security point of view, having multiple backups is good practice. And it's so simple to submit a GEDCOM that you really have nothing to lose.

It's also a great way to foster new contacts.

Here's a good example. The author used Ancestry for years because he and his sister collaborate on the tree and needed a way to do that. But we were drowning in unhelpful information and useless contacts. People were taking our carefully researched and cited records and bending them to their own purposes, in some cases using them for completely unrelated people. Their modified and incorrect records were picked up by careless researchers and the cumulative effect was pushed to us as a dreaded leaf hint. If there was any useful content in there, it was impossible to separate it from the rubbish. Four years ago we moved to an independent site and in that time we've received several useful contacts from people that have advanced our research.

Who can access YourTrees?

Members have view access to all trees except for living people and people marked private. Occasionally, an entire tree may be marked private.

We apply a 110-year rule to GEDCOM imports that assumes anyone with a birth date less than 110 years ago and no death date, is still living. People who are recently deceased are treated as private if their date of death is less than 10 years ago, and users can add a private flag to any record for any reason where there is sensitivity.

To bring fellow researchers from the general public to your door, internet search engines are allowed to index names, birth dates and places but not detailed records. Anyone who follows a link is invited to join the society to gain access.

How do I sign up?

The service is open to all members (with a special username and password) and you can access records now. Log in to the website and you'll find a new top-level menu item. As you would expect, there are participation guidelines - so do read these first.

To submit a GEDCOM, go to *YourTrees > Members' Section*. It's that simple. Go on. Give it a try!

GEORGE BARNARD SMITH (1885-1962)

Michael Hill *recounts his grandad's life*

My grandad, George Barnard Smith, was born in Chatham Street, Reading in 1885. Nothing is known of his boyhood apart from his attendance at Oxford Road school and having a lifelong love of horses. At 15 he was already working as a general carrier/carter delivering and collecting provisions and by the age of 25 he was lodged at the Green Tree pub in Wallingford where, in the 1911 census, he was employed as a servant/carman, again delivering beer by horse and cart.

In 1903 he had joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers, then a cavalry regiment, on furlough, pending transfer to the Army Reserve in 1905, while continuing at his day job of a carter. His length of service in the regular army seems to have started the same day as his service in the army reserve ended in 1911, so he probably threw in his day job at the Wallingford pub as his papers stated he was "with the colours".



By 1914 the Royal Scots Fusiliers 1st battalion had become an infantry battalion and it is with this unit that he obtained the rank of corporal as a foot soldier. He was mobilised for war and landed at Le Havre, France in August 1914 and was engaged in various battles and skirmishes until March 1915. In one of these battles George suffered a shrapnel wound to his right arm and returned to England on March 6th of that year where we believe he spent time recuperating at the Devonshire Hospital, Buxton, Staffordshire. He then returned to Reading to marry my nan, Viola, in May of that year. George returned to the front

line in France in July where he suffered the loss of one of his eyes in the Actions of St. Eloi Craters, April 1916 (a local operation in the Ypres Salient of Flanders) and was discharged with honour from the army in June of that year.

Up until now his life had followed the path of millions of others, but after his discharge he found himself considered an invalid and also unemployed with no trade to speak of, married and soon to become a father to their first daughter, my aunt.

From now on this is how my mum roughly related to me what we know of grandad's life until he found employment, as he never, like many men, talked much about his war experiences, or his boxing and gambling exploits. He liked a pint in moderation and his regular haunts were The Alfred's Head in Chatham Street and The Star in Duke Street, Reading, where nearly broke, he would normally win a free pint from the card games he learnt in the army. George possessed a crown and anchor board, similar to the card game pontoon, and if you were the banker, which he was, the percentages of winning most of the money were high. He was also very good at darts and other pub games. The other string to his bow was that he also learnt organised boxing in the army. Bare knuckle boxing (pugilism) had always been prevalent in the UK since the beginning of the 18th century but it was also illegal, with large purses offered on the big fights in front of thousands in pre-arranged fields and commons secretly arranged. These fights made many pugilists rich and famous household names throughout the land. At a local level in places like Reading it was totally different as local men fought down back alleys, pub courtyards or pub back rooms for a few silver coins collected at ringside or for a leg of meat, in front of a handful of pub regulars. The Star had a side alley and The Alfred's Head, we think, had a courtyard and George soon caught on with the idea of using his boxing skills for extra money, especially as these were two of his two local drinking holes. Nothing is known of the men he fought, or where, and no records of how many fights he had were kept, but

with the cards and boxing he managed to keep his family just above water financially. He fought with one eye, however he wore a glass eye the rest of the time which we believe was supplied by the army and changed at regular intervals as the colour matching his good eye faded after a few years.



eating. However it didn't stop him now and again using a glass of water at meal times, stirring the water with his fork, quietly slipping the eye out, dropping it in the glass and watching my sister and me looking in horror as the eye went around and around in the current! He also rescued a pure black feral cat which he called Smut and he was the only one who could handle him, anyone else who got too close to Smut when sat on his favourite chair was met with spitting and hissing and yet George could stroke and play with him.

Grandad died in 1962 aged 76 in the house he bought with nan in 1915 in Queen's Cottages, Reading, and where he lived all his married life. To us all he was a man who was larger than life and they don't make them like him anymore.

My mother was born in 1922 and we understand by then George was employed at Jackson's scrap metal merchants in Oxford Road, Reading. He was back on a horse and cart again, this time collecting the scrap metal until just before the Second World War, when the company changed from horse drawn transport to lorries. George never learnt to drive, but became a lorry driver's mate at the company where he stayed until his retirement in 1950. At home he was a wonderful and typical grandfather to my sister and me in the 1950's when we were children and visited regularly, sometimes staying the weekend. He showed us all the card games (and tricks) that he knew, dice games, made us a bagatelle board and played a game with us flicking cigarette cards against a wall. He always took his glass eye out for meals because it aggravated his jaw while



George and Viola at Queen's Cottages

The Binfield Family of Reading

Gordon Cox introduces us to a musical dynasty

The musical life of Reading in the nineteenth century was dominated by three generations of the remarkable Binfield family. It was in September 1799 that 33 year-old Richard Binfield arrived in the town together with his wife Anne. They were to have no fewer than nine children. In this article I will concentrate particularly on Richard Binfield (1766-1839), his son John Bilson Binfield (1805-1875) and his youngest daughter Hannah Rampton Binfield (1809-1887).



Richard had previously worked in the theatrical profession but now described himself as a music seller and music teacher. Richard soon established the Binfield Music Warehouse at 159 Friar Street. It sold musical instruments (particularly pianos) and sheet music, and provided musical tuition and a library. In 1804 Richard became organist of St Lawrence's church, just a short walk from his business.

Richard became known as an excellent music teacher, but he was also an entrepreneur, and his most striking innovation was to found and direct a major series of what became known as the Berkshire Musical Festivals, from 1809 until his death thirty years later. They were held every three years and lasted from one to three days. The format was a morning performance of sacred choral works with orchestral

accompaniment in St Lawrence's church (including Handel's Messiah), and in the evening 'a miscellaneous concert' in the Town Hall including lighter secular vocal and instrumental items followed by a Ball. The majority of the festivals featured choirs from cathedrals or leading parish churches including the Chapel Royal, St Paul's Cathedral, and St George's Chapel, Windsor. Richard organised these events with aplomb. His mantle was passed on to one of his sons, John Bilson Binfield, who organised a further two festivals, but they finally expired in 1846. Securing sufficient financial backing had always been an uphill task which in the end was too onerous.

John Bilson Binfield and his wife, Mary, had six children. I shall later mention three of them briefly: Richard Leverton Binfield (1835-1860), Fanny Jane Binfield (1837-1881), and Louisa Donaldson Binfield (1839-1891).

John was a gifted musician who edited a number of important collections of church music, including *The Reading Psalmody* (1847) and *The Choral Service of the Church* (1847). But perhaps his most interesting venture was to establish a Singing School for adults and children in 1842. Its purpose was to teach the skill of singing music at sight from notation. This was part of a national mania for sight-singing which swept the country. His first class successfully completed a course of sixty lessons. The response was so encouraging that he developed a further series of classes designed specifically 'for Ladies, for Gentlemen, for the Middle Class, the Working Class, and for young children'. Outposts were established in Henley, Wokingham and Hartford Bridge (near Hartley Wintney).

In March 1844 John Pyke

DIRECTORY ADVERTISER, 1842. 9

SINGING SCHOOL,
AT THE LECTURE ROOM, VASTERN-STREET,
CONDUCTED
BY MR. BINFIELD,
ON THE METHOD OF M. WILHEM.

MR. BINFIELD has the honor of announcing, that his Classes, for the study of PART SINGING, on the system of M. Wilhem, as adapted to English use by Mr. Hullah, have commenced at the above Rooms, and will be continued

Every Monday and Thursday Evening.

PRIVATE CLASSES FOR LADIES
At half-past One o'clock on the same days.

TERMS may be known by application at the Musical Library, No. 159, Friar-street, or at Mr. Binfield's residence, No. 12, Baker-street.

MR. BINFIELD and his SISTERS give Instruction as usual on
THE PIANO AND HARP,
in Reading and the Neighbourhood.

AN EXTENSIVE ASSORTMENT OF
ALL KINDS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS,
BY THE BEST LONDON MAKERS,
Is always ready for inspection at the MUSICAL LIBRARY,
either for sale or hire:—also, the best
CLASSICAL MUSIC,
Ancient and Modern, including the splendid new MUSICAL
ANNUALS.

ITALIAN, ENGLISH, AND PATENT ROMAN STRINGS FOR THE
HARP, VIOLIN, &c.

Piano-Fortes tuned and repaired.

John Snare, Printer, Reading.

Singing classes

Hullah, the leader of the national sight-singing movement, paid a visit to Reading to see the progress that was being made in the classes. His lecture in the Town Hall was to be illustrated by 171 singers from the singing schools in Reading, Henley and Wokingham. The occasion attracted a capacity audience of 700. It was a great success. John Bilson Binfield spoke movingly and with great emotion at the end of the evening which had been something of a personal triumph.

However, by 1846 there appeared to be little evidence of the continuation of this popular rota of classes. John almost disappeared from view apart from his edited collections of church music. I found him unexpectedly listed in the Lunacy Patients Admission Registers from 1849. For over nine years he was incarcerated in a variety of asylums in Alton, London and Devizes. He suffered from what was described as 'mania', and eventually died in the Devizes asylum. Sadly, both John's sister, Mary, and his second son, Richard Leverton Binfield, were admitted to asylums in which they also died. The three tragic losses are poignantly remembered in the inscription on John's grave, 'Then are they glad because they are at rest'.

Hannah Rampton Binfield (1809-1887) was Richard's youngest daughter. On her father's death in 1839 she was unanimously elected to succeed him as organist of St Lawrence's church, a post she held for the next forty years. She also established a reputation as a published composer of drawing room ballads and works for the piano.

Hannah excelled as a business woman and expanded the Binfield Music Warehouse in collaboration with her niece, Susan Havell, Richard's grand-daughter. By 1881 Hannah took the unexpected step of forming a business partnership with a celebrated song composer, Joseph Milton Wellings, and the firm became known as 'Binfield and Wellings'. Under its auspices the Royal Berkshire Academy of Music was set up to provide advanced instruction on the science and art of music.

However the partnership was dissolved at the beginning of 1884, and the business became 'Binfield & Co'. Hannah died in 1887. The Berkshire Chronicle commented on May 7th 1887 that 'Miss Binfield was a member of a family which has long been connected with the musical

profession in Reading. Miss Binfield's father, her brother, her sister and many of her relatives have taken a prominent part in the history of music in the town'.

It fell to a third generation of the family to guide the company's future, including two of John Bilson's children, Fanny Jane Binfield, a much respected pianist, and Louisa Donaldson Binfield who taught both the piano and the concertina.

As a postscript, on November 15th 1902 the Berkshire Chronicle reported that an amalgamation had taken place between 'Binfield & Co' and its main competitor, 'Frank Attwell's'. The new name was to be 'Frank Atwell's, Binfield & Co'. The Binfield business moved away from 159 Friar Street to Attwell's more spacious premises at 162-3 Friar Street. Thus ended a century's musical domination of the town by the Binfield family. It had been a remarkable collective achievement.

The images in this article have taken from my newly published book, *Music in Nineteenth Century Reading: A Family History* (Scallop Shell Press). It is available from the author for £10 (or by post £11.50). Contact gordoncox50@gmail.com



Hannah Rampton Binfield

Sharing my Seares saga...

Jackie Mitchell details a family who have given her a few problems

Family history research can take you to some wonderful places. Ten years ago, for my birthday treat, I visited St Michael's church in Warfield (from my home in Portsmouth), to see where my 3x great grandparents had been married. Still rather rural and surrounded by fields, it must have looked similar in 1815. It was a very special feeling.

I had started researching my family history in 1999. I was working full time and had a young family at the time, but would sit up late (as you do) searching on the IGI and planning visits (around my business trips) to the Family Records Office in London! One of my first finds, via the IGI, was my 3x great grandfather Richard Seares who married Ann Miller (aged 15) with 'consent of parents' in Warfield in 1815. Both were said to be 'of this parish'.

Following further searches and a trip to the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) to view microfiche, I was able to find baptism records for some of their children at the intriguingly named 'Ebenezer Chapel', Old Street, Shoreditch, London. These records were unusually detailed and gave me an occupation for Richard (tailor) and parents' names for Ann (Robert and Ann). Via the IGI, I then found baptisms for various of Ann's siblings at St Michael's, starting in 1788 (although no marriage).

But nothing for Richard. Then, family life took over, and I had to leave him for a while.

The Ebenezer Chapel was part of the Baptist movement. It was part of the London Circuit of the Arminian Bible Christian Church, which was based on the theology of the Dutch Reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609).



*St Michael's Church, Warfield
(Julian P Guffogg) CC BY-SA2.0*

FamilySearch have filmed records for this church for 1823-1837. According to an Ecclesiastical Census return for 1851, held by The National Archives, the Chapel was consecrated in 1829 and had estimated attendances of 180 in the morning, 650 in the afternoon and 200 in the evening.

No change!

Fast-forward 20 years, now facing an empty nest, I took up my research again. I had hoped that during this time, more records would be accessible and Richard might be easily found. But, nearly a year later, he remains my brick wall!

Here's what I know. Richard and Ann had at least 4 children. George (my 2x great grandfather) was born in 1822, and baptised at St Leonard's, Shoreditch. There was an address of Leonard Square, and Richard's occupation of tailor. Then came Mary Ann (1824), Joseph (1826) and Esther (1828), who were all baptised at the Ebenezer Chapel.

Ann must have died around that time, as Richard marries Mary Ann Read (née Kirk) at St Leonard's Shoreditch in 1829, and their daughter Elizabeth is baptised at the Ebenezer Chapel in 1831.

Then the trail goes cold.

No records in Warfield, prior to Richard's marriage to Ann – or, indeed, afterwards. I assume they had more children between 1815-1822, before they appear in London.

No more children for Richard and second wife Mary Ann. Mary Ann died in 1840, address 'Willow Walk', London, but I can find no death record for Richard.

No mention of Richard in any census. Although there's a possible son named Richard, aged 25, in the 1841 census, living at 70 Willow Walk, with Joseph, aged 15, but no other family members.

Deceased?

Richard is listed as the father on the marriage entries for Joseph in 1846 and Elizabeth in 1851, and on both of George's marriages in 1846 and 1868. Although there is no mention of

'deceased', I know I can't assume he's still alive. Not least because he is 'deceased' in 1864 (four years earlier) on George's Freedom of the City of London application.

Recently, I joined the Berkshire Genealogy Facebook page to seek help with my brick wall. A very kind lady helped me find the death of Esther in 1829 (a transcription error, she was cunningly disguised as 'Hester') – which explains why I had found nothing further on her.

But still nothing on Richard!

I am still very much an amateur as far as genealogy goes, so any advice and suggestions on my brick wall would be most gratefully received. And, if it means coming back to visit Warfield, I'd be delighted!

jackie.mitchell@virginmedia.com

Amazon Smile - you shop, Amazon gives

Earlier this year, we announced that Berkshire Family History Society was now one of the listed charities you could support if you use Amazon for online shopping. Thank you to everyone who has nominated the society as their chosen charity.

If you are not already supporting a charity and would like to support the society, you can go to *smile.amazon.co.uk* and sign up. The donation isn't a lot but it costs you nothing and as a certain supermarket ad says "every little helps." Once you've selected us as your nominated charity, all you have to do is shop using the *smile.amazon.co.uk* address instead of the regular *amazon.co.uk* address, and a percentage of what you spend will come to us.

Use the Amazon app and want to make a difference while you shop, at no extra cost to yourself?

Simply follow the instructions below to select Berkshire Family History Society as your charity and activate AmazonSmile in the app. Amazon will donate a portion of your eligible mobile app purchases to us.

How it works:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programmes & Features
3. Select Berkshire Family History Society as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app

Thank you.

Members' Surname Interests

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

Over the coming Historians the way we publish Members' Interests will change. Members' Interests are moving to a different online platform, and in future we'll publish a list of surnames recently added/modified and the details will be available on the new Your Trees pages on the website. Please see the back cover and article for more details.

Members submitting their interests:

6657	MCANDREW S.,	8 Boronia Crescent, Orange, NSW 2800, AUSTRALIA	pardrae67@gmail.com
8165	BISHOP M.,	55 Omers Rise, Burghfield Common, Reading, RG7 3HH	genequeen56@gmail.com
8458	SEARS G.,	260 Sears Hollow Tri., Hot Springs, Arkansas 71913, USA	gail_sears@cablelynx.com
8473	GOODCHILD D.,	Copperfield, Borrowby, Thirsk, YO7 4QP	amancara123@hotmail.com
8479	WILKES T.,	412 Eriska Avenue, Glasgow, G14 0XZ	tonywilkes@hotmail.com
8484	WHEELER K.,	Belle Vue, Ville Es Pies, Vale, Guernsey, GY3 5LR	kendwheeler@me.com
8485	GIBBINS A.,	52 Partridge Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 4SX	alan.gibbins@hotmail.co.uk
8486	INNS D.,	31 Holyoake Crescent, Horsell, Woking, GU21 4PN	innsdb@gmail.com

8473	CARVEY Jane	Ashampstead	m. 1854
8473	COLLINS Hannah	Bradfield	
6657	COLLINS John	Winkfield	1778-1861
6657	COLLINS John	Winkfield	1810-1857
8479	DEACON	Wantage	1810-1911
8165	GARDINER	Ashampstead	1750-
8165	GARDNER	Ashampstead	1750-
8485	GIBBINS George	Moulsford	mid 1700s
8485	GIBBINS John	Moulsford	1780-
8473	GOODCHILD James	Ashampstead	1750
8473	GOODCHILD William	Ashampstead	1815
8165	GOODMAN	Basildon	
8473	HENWOOD Mary	Ashampstead	m. 3 April 1777
8165	HOUSE	Basildon	
8486	INN(E)S Edward	N/S Morton	c1796-1871
8486	INNS Charles	N Morton	c1818-1850
8458	PAYTON Charles Henry	Abingdon	1835
8165	PIKE	Ashampstead	1750-
8165	PIKE	Reading	1750-
8484	WHEELER John	Thattham	b.1836
8484	WHEELER Thomas (coachsmith)	Thattham	b.1802, 1836



Continuing our Digital Transformation programme, we're proud to present an exciting new service

Your life's work may be in:

- A genealogy program on your computer such as Family Tree Maker
 - A paid online account such as Ancestry or Findmypast
- A free service such as Family Search which takes a lot of work to maintain
 - WikiTree with its complex ownership rules

Now there's another option

YourTrees - a free service to members

- Free to view even when your membership ceases
 - Upload your tree to our server
- It can be stored for all time - even if your membership ends
 - Collaborate with other society members
 - Reach out to a wider but focused audience
- Create a Digital Legacy you can bequeath to your family or to us

See page 27 for more information

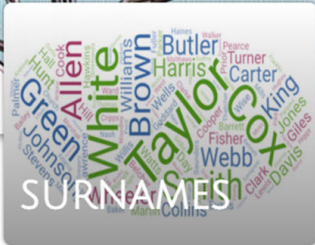
yourtrees.berksfhs.org

YOUR TREES

FROM



A MEMBER SERVICE



PHOTOS



WHAT'S NEW

YOUR DIGITAL LEGACY



A free service for Members

- Secure your lifetime's work
- Share it with your family
- Collaborate with other members
- Bequeath it to a family member

Create your Digital Legacy

Why not JOIN US?

Featured Families

Royal House of Windsor



Simonds the Brewers



Jane Austen



Berkshire Liebenroods



ENTERTAINING EPITAPHS

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THEM!

I knew if I waited around long enough something like this would happen

~ George Bernard Shaw