

Keeping in touch

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Sun, Feb 7 2021 08:53:10

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



Leyland solid-tyred lorry belonging to Simonds brewery

Image courtesy of

The Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, Dann-Lewis Collection P DX322 P4/9

February is upon us and the long hard slog of lockdown continues so here are some more goodies to lighten your day.

The second batch of marriage downloads is included here - twenty this week - from Ashbury to Wallingford. We've an of item that is a little bit out of the ordinary and, of course, another crop of online events for you to enjoy from the comfort of your home and without having to brave the elements.

But we start on a darker note this week, with tales of dark deeds and murder most foul.

News



Murder most foul in Berkshire

For those whose family research has unearthed victims of murder, murderers, police investigators or even witnesses to such acts, or who are interested in the darker side of Berkshire's history, you might want to check out the blog of the society's former Vice-President Angela Buckley. Angela's latest blog focuses on the poisoning of Eleazar Jennings of Thatcham, for which his father Thomas Jennings received the death sentence. The case isn't quite as cut and dried though as it might first appear.

Other blogs explore the evidence for the murder of:

- Alfred Oliver, a tobacconist, in his shop in Cross Street, Reading, in 1929.
- Inspector Joseph Drewett and Constable Thomas Shorter of Hungerford in 1876.
- Elizabeth Spicer of Howard Street, Reading (originally from East Illsley).

- The baby farm victims of Amelia Dyer of Caversham and Reading.

There are also interesting articles on the history of the Reading Police Force and the development of forensic techniques.

<https://victorian-supersleuth.com/the-poisoning-of-eleazar-jennings/>

BHO | BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE

British History Online - now free

British History Online (BHO) has announced that it is making all of its transcribed material available free online until 30 April 2021. Not yet used BHO? It's a digital collection of key printed primary and secondary sources for the history of Britain and Ireland, with a special focus on the period 1300 to 1800. Much of this is usually available for free to researchers and users, now to support those needing access to resources during England's third Covid-19 lockdown, it has extended free access to all records.

The extra 200 volumes now available are predominantly made up of two important series:

- The Calendar of Close Rolls, covering the reigns of Henry III to Henry VII (1244 to 1509)
- The Calendar of State Papers Domestic, covering the reigns of Edward VI to Anne (1547 to 1704)

For those sufficiently far back with their family history these make interesting reading and contain gems such as these depositions to the inquisition post-mortem, just a few of many sworn, to attempt to prove the age of Ida, daughter of Amery de Sancto Amando in 1406 (reign of Henry IV).

- "Roger Sydmanton, aged 40 years and more, was riding at West Woodhay on the day of the birth and baptism in the church of St. Lawrence, Woodhay, when his horse fell and he broke his arm. It was then common report in the parish that she had been baptised.
- John Hyde, 50 and more, on the Monday before St. George (23 April) in that [not stated] year was apprenticed carpenter with master Walter Asshele, carpenter of West Woodhay, and he knows the date by his indenture of apprenticeship.

- Roger Smyth of Newbury, 44: Thomas Smyth, his father, died within a fortnight of the birth and was buried in Newbury churchyard.
- Peter Cravyswyk, 40, had a brother Henry, who held a flaming torch at the font in Woodhay church at the baptism.
- William Hoome, 64: Katherine Hoome, his mother, was buried that day in the church of Midgham, and he knows from the date of the obit.
- William Chalow, 57, within a fortnight of the birth had a daughter Agnes born and baptised in the church of West Woodhay."*

*<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/inquis-post-mortem/vol19/pp50-65>

Volumes are fully searchable. Check it out at:

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk>



The Wolsey Manuscripts

The Wolsey Manuscripts

And now for something a little different ...

This isn't strictly family history, although it is a reminder for those that can trace English ancestry back into the 1500s that the country was, until the break with Rome, a Catholic country and that Catholic doctrines and beliefs continued to be important to our ancestors for some time afterwards. Unashamedly though, when things outside are pretty bleak, we just wanted to bring you these stunningly beautiful 16th century illuminated manuscripts, now available to view online for the first time.

In 1530, two intensely beautiful liturgical manuscripts were made for the country's leading cleric, Thomas Wolsey. Befitting Wolsey's position as a cardinal and first minister of Henry VIII, they are of the highest quality, handwritten, not printed, and produced by the leading artisans of his day. The twin volumes are lectionaries, providing readings for the Mass on specific feast days in the

Christian calendar. The feasts include several saints, including St Frideswide, a local saint to our area, and nowadays the patron saint of Oxford and its university.

During her lifetime, the devoutly religious Frideswide had to flee Oxford to avoid being forced into a marriage with a pagan nobleman, journeying across the countryside to avoid detection. According to local legend, one of the places she stayed was Frilsham in Berkshire, where both the church and a well remain dedicated to her to this day.

The manuscripts are now in the possession of two of the Oxford Colleges, but you can view them here in their glorious colour, and zoom in for greater detail.

Enjoy:

<http://www.wolseymanuscripts.ac.uk/>

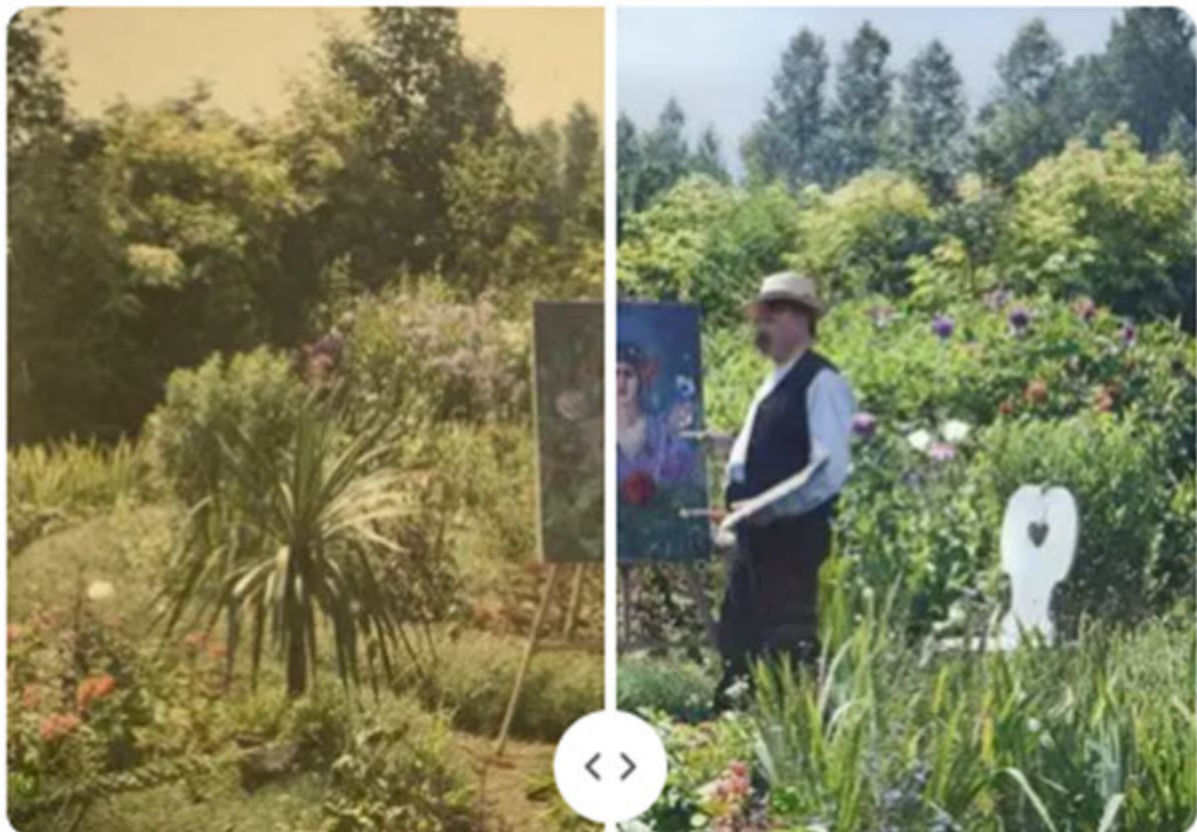


Marriage Data Downloads - Second batch

We have developed data downloads to provide choice and flexibility in how you access data for Berkshire. Each download is in PDF format and your purchase is automatically fulfilled as soon as you have paid. Terms and conditions apply and these downloads are for your personal use only. Prices vary but start from just £2.00. The usual member discounts apply.

If you're interested in a number of parishes, also check out [Berkshire Marriages Edition Four CD](#), likewise, individual [Parish CDs](#) also exist. So check out what best suits your needs.

[Ashbury St Mary Marriages 1612-1836 \(Download\) D1111](#)
[Blewbury St Michael Marriages 1813-1837 \(Download\) D1482](#)
[Bradfield Tutts Clump \(Methodists\) Marriages 1921-1935 \(Download\) D1485](#)
[Brightwalton All Saints Marriages 1559-1837 \(Download\) D1488](#)
[Buckland St Mary Marriages 1605-1837 \(Download\) D1559](#)
[Buscot St Mary Marriages 1607-1935 \(Download\) D1562](#)
[Clewer St Stephen Marriages 1874-1935 \(Download\) D1503](#)
[Englefield St Mark Marriages 1561-1935 \(Download\) D1519](#)
[Hamstead Marshall St Mary Marriages 1605-1837 \(Download\) D1526](#)
[Harwell St Matthew Marriages 1559-1837 \(Download\) D1528](#)
[Hungerford St Lawrence Marriages 1600-1837 \(Download\) D1534](#)
[Lambourn Woodlands St Mary Marriages 1842-1935 \(Download\) D1545](#)
[Maidenhead Congregational Church Marriages 1879-1895 \(Download\) D1568](#)
[Reading St Laurence Marriages 1605-1739 \(Download\) D1358 \(Part 1 of 3\)](#)
[Reading St Laurence Marriages 1740-1839 \(Download\) D1571 \(Part 2 of 3\)](#)
[Reading St Laurence Marriages 1840-1935 \(Download\) D1572 \(Part 3 of 3\)](#)
[Shellingford St Faith Marriages 1583-1935 \(Download\) D1374](#)
[Tubney St Lawrence Marriages 1848-1935 \(Download\) D1439](#)
[Uffington St Mary Marriages 1612-1935 \(Download\) D1443](#)
[Wallingford St Leonard Marriages 1605-1925 \(Download\) D1446](#)



Restore the colours in your faded family photographs

MyHeritage have just announced the latest addition to their suite of photo features: colour restoration. This feature restores the colours in faded colour photos. Colour restoration is ideal for reviving photos that were taken in colour in the 1950's through the 1990's, stored in albums, and faded over the years. The process does not modify your original photo; it creates a new version, which you can easily download or share.

Find out more at:

<https://www.myheritage.com/incolor>

Check it out

Events

Our events programme is exclusively online -
so join us - wherever you are



Women & the Victorian Army Newbury Branch Meeting with Speaker: Dan Allen 10 Feb 19:30 - 21:30

Queen Victoria's Army served all over the world. But what did their wives do? Were they utilised for more than their catering skills which kept the Army marching on its stomach? Did their role change during the 19th Century? Dan Allen of the Victorian Military Society gives us an insight into life for soldiers'

wives & children in Victorian times at home & abroad.

Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

[Book now](#)

The Upper Thames Patrol

Speaker: Bill King

11 Feb 14:00 - 15:15

The Upper Thames Patrol was formed to defend the Thames when World War Two seemed inevitable. It became part of the Home Guard, when it was formed in 1940.



It was the Upper Thames Patrol's responsibility to destroy the Thames' bridges and locks if the enemy was seen approaching. They covered an area from Teddington Lock to Lechlade, which included 35 road bridges, 7 rail bridges and 42 locks. This often forgotten unit had their work cut out. This talk tells the story of the Upper Thames Patrol, their organisation, their experiences and the men who served in it.

£4 members - £5 non-members. Pre-booking required.

[Book now](#)



Old Occupations

Abingdon Branch Meeting

15 Feb 19:15 for 19:30

Our meeting this month is a chance to chat about our ancestor's occupations. Please join in and tell us what your ancestors did to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Or perhaps, you just want to seek some general research advice from fellow members or share a eureka moment. We are happy to go with the flow.

Before lock-down hit last year, our 'Show & Tell' Branch Meetings were steadily growing in popularity. These meetings are designed to be an informal opportunity to share. You do **not** need a presentation prepared to take part.

Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now

Family History at home

Computer Branch Meeting with

Speaker: Gillian Stevens

17 Feb 19:15 for 19:30

What can you find out without having to travel?
This meeting will discuss what you can and cannot find out without having to travel.



Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now



Reading c.1740 – c.1800:

commerce, culture and

chapel

Speaker: Joan Dils
18 Feb 14:00 - 15:15

Discover mid-Georgian Reading in this fascinating talk by eminent local historian Joan Dils.

Reading's age of cloth production was over and its reputation for flourishing industries was still to be made. In contrast, during these five decades Reading was intent on cementing its role as an inland port and distribution centre, a magnet for the aficionados of balls and race meetings and a welcome home for serious-minded Christian worshippers. Joan Dils' talks are always very popular and offer new insights into the history of Reading. One not to be missed!

This is the fourth talk of five in the Winter Potpourri of Social History Talks Series.

£4 members - £5 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now

Searching for Dora

Bracknell Branch Meeting with

Speaker Les Mitchinson

19 Feb 19:15 for 19:30

Searching for Dora is a description of a case study that has more red-herrings than an Agatha Christie novel. The talk describes the search and the methods used to untangle the mess and to eventually arrive at the truth; proving that family tales should never be taken at face value! A comparison between old and modern search methods is also included.



Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now

These are just a few examples from our extensive

events programme - for more....

... [click here for the full programme](#)

Our events routinely sell out so book early to
secure your place



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

The Centre for Heritage and Family History
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