

Keeping in touch

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



Beedon Farm, Berkshire circa 1935

Cropped and colourised by BerksFHS. Original image courtesy of

The Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, Dann-Lewis Collection *P DX289 PH1/525/1-3*

And so, finally, lockdown starts to ease around Britain. Small groups are allowed to meet outside and we've had some glorious Spring days to allow us to do that. It should come as no surprise therefore that, for my area at least, snow is forecast for Easter Monday! If you are similarly affected you'll have some time on your hands. Good, because we can fill it easily, with Ancestry's help to name but one.

Batch six of marriage downloads is available in the shop and you can jump

straight in with the links below, and we have our usual pick of the upcoming events, including advance notice of the AGM.

News

The logo for The National Archives, featuring the words 'THE', 'NATIONAL', and 'ARCHIVES' in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, each enclosed in a white rectangular box. These three boxes are arranged horizontally and are set against a dark grey background.

The National Archives Research Guides

If you haven't used them before, The National Archives (TNA) offer a comprehensive collection of online research guides, designed to help researchers understand what sources may be available. Currently, 191 guides are available covering 12 main topic areas with three guides marked out as of particular interest. These being: The 1939 Register, Census Records and Wills 1384-1858.

The guides are easy to read and use and worth a look, even if only to confirm you've covered all bases with your research.

Don't forget TNA's free access to certain online documents continues with up to 100 records per month downloadable per researcher each month. You need to register an account to take advantage of this.

Check out the guides here:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/?research-category=family-history>



Batch 6 of the marriage data downloads is now available online. As a reminder, data downloads have been developed to provide choice and flexibility in how you access data for Berkshire. Each download is in PDF format and your purchase is automatically fulfilled as soon as you have paid. Terms and conditions apply and these downloads are for your personal use only. Prices vary but start from just £2.00. The usual member discounts apply.

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

- [Ashampstead St Clement Marriages 1614-1935 \(Download\) D1109](#)
- [Barkham St James Marriages 1542-1935 \(Download\) D1148](#)
- [Basildon St Bartholomew Marriages 1540-1837 \(Download\) D1150](#)
- [Beech Hill St Mary Marriages 1868-1935 \(Download\) D1476](#)
- [Bucklebury St Mary Marriages 1538-1876 \(Download\) D1560](#)
- [Greenham St Mary Marriages 1612-1837 \(Download\) D1524](#)
- [Hurst St Nicholas Marriages 1579-1935 \(Download\) D1537](#)
- [Lyford St Mary Marriages 1846-1935 \(Download\) D1567](#)
- [Marlston St Mary Marriages 1907-1935 \(Download\) D1553](#)
- [Reading St Luke Marriages 1909-1935 \(Download\) D1359](#)
- [Shaw cum Donnington St Mary Marriages 1563-1837 \(Download\) D1368](#)
- [Shinfield St Mary Marriages 1605-1837 \(Download\) D1375](#)
- [Shottesbrooke St John the Baptist Marriages 1566-1915 \(Download\) D1377](#)
- [Speen St Mary Marriages 1617-1918 \(Download\) D1382](#)
- [Speenhamland St Mary Marriages 1847-1935 \(Download\) D1383](#)
- [Streatley St Mary Marriages 1607-1836 \(Download\) D1389](#)
- [Thatcham St Mary Marriages 1561-1935 \(Download\) D1398](#)
- [Tidmarsh St Lawrence Marriages 1609-1935 \(Download\) D1436](#)
- [Wokingham All Saints Marriages 1589-1837 \(Download\) D1468](#)
- [Wootton St Peter Marriages 1725-1935 \(Download\) D1473](#)



National University of Ireland in Galway – new digitisation project

Archivists in Galway are starting work on a project to digitise thousands of letters sent home by emigrants to America from the late 1600s to the mid-1950s. The letters will be scanned and put on a searchable database in the coming months.

The archive has been donated to the National University of Ireland in Galway by Kerby Miller, emeritus Professor of History at the University of Missouri. He gathered the material over five decades after becoming interested in the experiences of Irish emigrants to the US in the early 1970s. In the years that followed, he travelled the country getting letters that had been sent to all parts of Ireland, over several centuries. Professor Kerby borrowed the original documents, photocopied and transcribed them, before returning the correspondence to its owners. Fifty boxes of material have been sent to the University for the digitisation project.

It is hoped that the archive will provide information to people researching their Irish heritage and that the collection will expand in the years ahead, with contributions from others who may have old letters stored in their homes.

One to keep an eye on ...



Berkshire Record Office – reopening news

The Berkshire Record Office (BRO) has announced that it hopes to reopen on Tuesday 13th April 2021, subject to government guidance.

There will be a limited research service open to visitors onsite who will be required to book their visit and order documents in advance. Places are limited to four people on original documents, and one on the PC, per session and each visitor is limited to a maximum of two sessions a week. Bookings are now being taken.

To find out more and plan a visit see:

<https://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/visit-us>



REME Museum launches online photo archive

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

Great news if you have REME connections.

Check it out here:

<https://rememuseum.photos/>



Ancestry gives free access to all its records this Easter weekend

Just when you thought you'd be getting out in the garden this weekend! If you missed the news launch of this, and you don't currently subscribe to Ancestry worldwide, don't worry you've still got time to take advantage of this historic offer from Ancestry. For the first time ever, Ancestry is offering free access to its entire collection of historical records.

The collection of 27 billion records will be free to view over the Easter weekend, from 00.01am BST on Friday 2 April 2021 to 11.59pm on Monday 5 April. Ancestry has historical records for every continent apart from Antarctica. Its major British family history records include parish registers, criminal records, wills, census returns, and First and Second World War records. Happy hunting.

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

Events

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



April Natter Group **Discussion Group facilitated by: Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens** **06 Apr 18:45 for 19:00**

Join in this online discussion from your own home, wherever where you live. Open only to members of Berkshire Family History Society.

Informal discussion group, facilitated by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. Topics are chosen by the group on a monthly basis. End time varies

Free to members.

Prebooking Required

Book now

The Kitchen Garden of Caversham Court

Talk with speaker Dr John Evans

08 Apr 14:00 - 15:15



The online talk will look at how kitchen gardens have evolved over time from early monastic plots to the grand walled gardens of the Victorian era.

Using the walled gardens at Caversham Court, in Caversham, as an example, it also follows how many have survived the passage of time to become allotments. Valued plots which provide a source of folklore, amusing techniques, fine food and friendship.

This is the first talk of five in the Spring Potpourri of Social History Talks Series. There is still time to [book all five talks in one multi-ticket for the discounted price of four.](#)

This talk: £4 members - £5 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now



DNA Special Interest Group

Discussion group with Tutor: Debbie Kennett

10 Apr 14:30 - 16:30

Enjoy this online DNA special interest group from the comfort of your own home, and wherever you live in the world, whilst still being able to contribute fully to the discussion.

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.

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

Book now

The Lloyd George Domesday and National Farm Surveys Combined Branches Special Meeting with Speaker: Gill Blanchard

14 Apr 19:15 for 19:45



Discover what the Inland Revenue Valuation Survey and National Farm Survey were, how they can be of use to house historians, local historians and family historians; where to find records and how to use them.

Taking its nickname from the Chancellor of the time, the Domesday Survey, or the Inland Revenue Valuation Office Survey as it was officially known, is a fantastic resource for house historians, social historians, and genealogists. The National Farm Survey was undertaken as a means of improving productivity during the war. The result was an in-depth analysis of 300,000 agricultural holdings.

Free to members. Non-members £3.
Prebooking Required

Book now

Education 1860-1914 - Workshop

Tutor: Joan Dils



8 May 11:00 - 13:00

In this workshop, discover how English education was transformed between about 1860 and the start of the First World War.

After 1870, schools run by local elected boards (Board Schools) supplemented those founded by religious bodies. In turn, in 1902 schools became council schools administered by local education authorities. Throughout the period, teacher training was improved, the school syllabus developed and pupil numbers increased until, in the 1890s, compulsory free schooling was provided for most children.

The result enabled many of our ancestors to seek new and more varied employment opportunities that their forefathers could only have dreamed of.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

Book now

Annual General Meeting

18 Jun 19:00 for 19:30

Berkshire Family History Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 18th June at 7.30pm, via Zoom. There will be no speaker booked for the event, as we will only be conducting society business.



Places must be booked in advance. If there are two members within your household, please book two places. Booking will close 2 days before the AGM.

This is a great opportunity for those of you who haven't previously been able to attend an AGM, to join this important part of the governance of the society.

Meet other members of the society, hear about the society during 2020/2021 and find out the plans ahead. Questions and debate is encouraged. We welcome all members, wherever you may live.

Free to members

Pre-booking required

Book now

These are just a few examples from our extensive events programme....

... [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

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