

in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



The First World War Memorial inside St Mary's Church, Aldermaston by Catherine Sampson

Hi Paul

The summer solstice has passed, along with the supposed relaxation of lockdown rules that would have allowed the Centre to reopen. The "are we, aren't we - will we, won't we" uncertainty continues but of course we only want to open when it is completely safe to do so. And when we do, we still need a few more volunteers to help in the Centre.

In the meantime our online activities continue at pace. If you attended the AGM you'll have learned of a very satisfactory year in all areas of operation, despite

lockdown, so we must say a big THANK YOU to you all for your continued support.

One of our very successful new initiatives has been the introduction of Data Downloads, and we have another batch of baptism records this week.

It's renewal season



For those who joined BEFORE 01 Aug 2020*

If you have already renewed, **thank you!** You can ignore the rest of this message

The new, automated renewal system has begun to send renewal reminders. They're phased, based on a random renewal date from 2nd to 30th July (see earlier Historians). If you want to know your new date, log in to the website, click on the Profile menu item, then the Subscriptions tab.

Reminders go out two weeks, one week, and one day prior to your due date. You need to renew promptly to retain your valuable member benefits including access to the members' area, this email newsletter and the Historian, because there's no grace period.

If you don't want to wait, you can renew now - there's nothing to lose - your membership will be extended a full year from the current expiry date.

Renew Now

** If you joined since 01 Aug 2020, this doesn't apply to you because we now operate a rolling membership year. You will receive reminder 2 weeks before your due date.*

Calling all family historians within reach of Reading



Would you be prepared to share your expertise and knowledge with others?

Could you spare some time to help other members and visitors with their family history?

We are looking for some more volunteers to join the team of volunteers and expand the help we can give in The Centre for Heritage and Family History, on the second floor of Reading Central Library, when we reopen to the public. We are looking for some more help either morning or afternoon on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

You'll find it very rewarding and we can guarantee you'll learn more too. For more information contact Sandra at sandra.barkwith@berksfhs.org.uk

News



Murder, Mystery and My Family back on TV

Series 5 of Murder, Mystery and My Family airs on BBC One from Monday 28 June 2021. All ten episodes will be broadcast over consecutive days at 11am each day. The episodes will also be available to watch on BBC iPlayer.

In the series, criminal barristers Sasha Wass and Jeremy Dein will reinvestigate murder cases from British history. They interview the descendants of those involved and apply the more rigorous standards of modern-day criminal justice to ask: was the right person convicted?

The new series begins with the case of Henry Jacoby. On 13 March 1922, after an evening playing cards, a wealthy widow named Lady Alice White headed for bed at the Spencer Hotel in London's Marylebone. The next morning she was discovered by the chambermaid covered in blood and close to death. She had suffered horrific injuries, including a fractured skull, and died a day later.

Despite there being little evidence, an 18-year-old pantry boy, Jacoby, was hanged for the crime on 7 June. Having previously confessed, Jacoby changed his story at trial but it was to no avail. The jury took just 43 minutes to find him guilty. Nearly a century later, Jacoby's relative Peter, whose grandmother cared for Jacoby when he was young, thinks there are grounds to question the conviction. Was the confession forced? Did class prejudice influence the decision?

Other cases in the series include the brutal murder of a barge captain, an apparent case of matricide, and the 19th-century ambush of a police van carrying two political prisoners from the cause of Irish independence.

[Click for more info](#)



Baptism Downloads - Batch 4

We are delighted to now release the fourth batch.

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

[Appleton St Laurence Baptisms 1570-1850 \(Download\) D1580](#)

[Binfield All Saints Baptisms 1551-1809 \(Download\) D1595 \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

[Binfield All Saints Baptisms 1810-1920 \(Download\) D1732 \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

[Clewes St Andrew Baptisms 1607-1799 \(Download\) D1617 \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

[Clewes St Andrew Baptisms 1800-1860 \(Download\) D1734 \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

[Easthampstead St Michael & St Mary Magdalene Baptisms 1558-1799 \(Download\) D1631 \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

[Easthampstead St Michael & St Mary Magdalene Baptisms 1800-1920 \(Download\) D1735 \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

[Fernham St John Evangelist Baptisms 1860-1920 \(Download\) D1638](#)

[Hatford Holy Trinity Baptisms 1540-1811 \(Download\) D1644](#)

[Lyford St Mary Baptisms 1845-1920 \(Download\) D1656](#)

[Reading St Agnes Baptisms 1904-1920 \(Download\) D1675](#)

[Sulham St Nicholas Baptisms 1607-1920 \(Download\) D1696](#)

[Tilehurst St Michael Baptisms 1559-1814 \(Download\) D1705 \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

[Tilehurst St Michael Baptisms 1815-1920 \(Download\) D1750 \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

[Wargrave St Mary Baptisms 1538-1779 \(Download\) D1717 \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

[Wargrave St Mary Baptisms 1780-1920 \(Download\) D1737 \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)



John Grenham's video channel for those with Irish ancestors

The channel launch was reported in an earlier newsletter. Professional genealogist John Grenham is uploading videos, all of which aim to help those with Irish research interests to better understand and explore his website - <https://www.johngrenham.com>

Along with useful tips on how to get the best from the site, the video format also allows him to offer more general advice on Irish resources. There are now 17 short videos on the channel (anything from 11 to 23 minutes in length). They are free, informative and helpful, with a dash of Irish wit and humour for which John Grenham is known. [See all 17 videos here](#)



Events

Our events programme is mostly online -
join us - wherever you are



Breaking Down Brick Walls

Windsor Branch Online Meeting & Talk by Sue Paul

29 Jun 19:15 for 19:30

Searching for *[insert name here]* – Breaking Down Those Brick Walls.

Using case studies, often amusing, from her own family history research, Sue Paul sets out research strategies for breaking down the brick walls in your family tree. Examples include: starting with little information; non-standard families; research in London and very common names.

Free to members. Non-members £3

Pre-booking required

Book now



July Natter Group

Informal discussion group facilitated by Chad Hanna and Gilian Stevens

06 Jul 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 attend, but pre-booking required.

Book now



A Potpourri of Social History Talks – Summer Series

15 Jul, 29 Jul, 12 Aug, 26 Aug, 9 Sep

This all series ticket covers all five talks in the summer “Potpourri of Social History” talks series.

All five talks are on Thursdays, three at 2pm, two at 7.30pm. All last about an hour with time for questions and discussion afterwards.

Sculls, skiffs and steamers: the history of Salter’s Steamers

[Thursday 15th July 7.30-8.45pm: Sculls, skiffs and steamers: the history of Salter’s Steamers with Dr Simon Wenham](#)

A Disappearing Landscape: the heathlands of the Berkshire borders

[Thursday 29th July 2-3.15pm: A Disappearing Landscape: the heathlands of the Berkshire borders with Dr Alan Crosby](#)

The Battle of Maiwand

[Thursday 12th August 7.30-8.45pm: The Battle of Maiwand with Dan Allen](#)

Reading Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39

[Thursday 26th August 2-3.15pm: Reading Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39 with Mike Cooper](#)

Berkshire and the Industrial Revolution

[Thursday 9th September 2-3.15pm: Berkshire and the Industrial Revolution with Richard Marks](#)

The all series ticket costs £20 (members £16)

Pre-booking required

The description for each talk is given in the following events, where individual tickets can be booked at the same time. Individual tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Book the All Series Ticket (5 for the price of 4)



Sculls, skiffs and steamers: the history of Salter's Steamers

**Talk by Dr Simon Wenham
15 Jul 19:15 for 19:30**

Pleasure boating became very popular along the river Thames during the nineteenth century. Salter's Steamers (founded in Oxford in 1858 and known for much of its existence as Salter Bros Ltd) did more to popularise it on the non-tidal river than any other Thames business.

This talk traces the development of the firm and how it grew from a leading racing-boat constructor in Wandsworth to become one of the largest inland boat-builders and passenger boat operators in the country. It also describes many of the famous names associated with the business, including Lewis Carroll, William Morris and T. E. Lawrence.

Image: A boat belonging to Salters Steamers, by Folly Bridge in Oxford (cropped from original) – Andrew Gray

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



A Disappearing Landscape: the heathlands of the Berkshire borders

Talk by Dr Alan Crosby
29 Jul 13:45 for 14:00

Back in the early 1720s, Daniel Defoe found Bagshot Heath terrifying. There were then over 100,000 acres of barren sandy waste, sprawling across three counties and touching the edges of Egham and Wokingham, Farnham and Woking. It was largely unpopulated, virtually treeless, and with only the most rudimentary agriculture. Places like Sunningdale and Crowthorne were among the poorest parts of England.

Today, of that bleak and hauntingly beautiful landscape, only fragments remain. Whole towns have grown up where a few cottages were three centuries ago – Bracknell, Bagshot, Camberley, Aldershot, Farnborough. And forests have covered tracts of the wastes. The military have requisitioned great swathes of commons and heaths. Monumental institutions for the undesirables of Victorian society – the insane, the mentally ill, the criminal, the public schoolboys – gobbled up much more.

Chopped up by railways and motorways, bombarded with artillery, seized for leafy estates, the heathlands fell victim to their reputation as worthless land with a lot of development potential. Discover their story – and the story of the people who lived there with one of the UK's leading local historians, Dr Alan Crosby.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



The Battle of Maiwand

Talk by Dan Allen

12 Aug 19:15 for 19:30

The impressive cast iron statue of a lion in Forbury Gardens, Reading has become one of the most iconic images of Reading. Built by George Blackall Simonds and unveiled in 1886, it commemorates those who died in the Battle of Maiwand. Yet few of us probably know much about the Battle and its tragic association with Berkshire.

In this talk, Dan Allen, of the Victorian Military Society, tells us about the events which led to the conflict, the battle itself and its local connections.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Reading Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39

Talk by Mike Cooper

26 Aug 13:45 for 14:00

Reading has one of the country's best regarded memorials to volunteers who served in the International Brigades, fighting in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39.

In this talk, Mike Cooper, co-author of "We Cannot Park on Both Sides" a history of Reading volunteers in Spain, will look at the background to the memorial, the war, and what are now believed to be over 15 men and women with a Reading connection who served in Spain.

Image: Poster of the Spanish Civil War, Por las Armas-La Patria, el Pan y la

Justicia (cropped), Creative Commons CC PD-UK-unknown.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

Book now



Berkshire and the Industrial Revolution

Talk by Richard Marks
9 Sep 13:45 for 14:00

The Industrial Revolution, with images of cotton mills and smoke belching factories in the Midlands and the north of England, is familiar to everyone, but how was Berkshire impacted by the industrialisation of Britain in the 18th and 19th Centuries?

In this talk, we will look at how a rural county was impacted by industrialisation both elsewhere and within Berkshire itself. We will examine how traditional Berkshire industries were affected, how new ones sprang up and developed over the period and what impact the railways had on Berkshire industry.

Image: Bill Nicholls The last bit – CC BY-SA

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

Book now

A changing school experience 1914-1960 **Workshop**



Tutor: Joan Dils

17 Jul 10:45 for 11:00

Discover the schooling of your parents and grandparents in this two hour online workshop with local history tutor Joan Dils.

English education was transformed between 1914 and 1960. Schools and schooling changed profoundly in the first decades of the 20th century. Almost all children attended school for longer periods, especially if classes for teenagers were provided. The curriculum expanded well beyond the 3 Rs, especially into more practical subjects. Child health improved as medical services and school meals appeared. War provided challenges for many schools. Finally, the great reform of 1944 made secondary education available for all based on age, aptitude and ability. By 1960, comprehensive schools were in the offing.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

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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