

1 messages

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Keeping in touch

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Sun, Sep 19 2021 08:58:14

To: Paul <paul.b@rrett.me.uk>

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



St Mary's Church Uffington - known as the Cathedral of the Vale, and its war memorial, image courtesy of Catherine Sampson

Hi Paul

Last Tuesday, in Reading Central Library, a rare event occurred. The doors of the The Centre for Heritage and Family History were opened for visitors. New Research Assistants were present, members and non-members came and went, conversation was had, help was sought and given, tea and coffee were made and by all accounts it was both normal and weird. Here's to more normal and less weird over the coming weeks as more of you visit us!

We're delighted with the reaction to YourTrees - more on that below - but also of note is the new feature to help decipher old documents. How many of us have

pored over old documents trying to solve the mystery of the scribe's hand.

Overall though there is no sign of a theme in this week's offerings - there really is something for every family historian in this edition



Wow! I mean..... WOW!

The launch of a new service is always a nervous moment. Will the membership have any appetite for the new offering? Well, **YourTrees** has proved to be every bit as popular as we hoped, and then some. In 14 days, the total number of trees submitted to the service has reached (enter numbers on Saturday)

- 90 Trees!
- > 30K People
- > 10K Families
- > 10K Places
- > 10K Notes

To put that in context, in 14 days the total number of people has already exceeded the total number of Members' Interests submitted *in the history of the society!*

Please - keep them coming

YourTrees Forum

Given the popularity of the service we've created a **YourTrees** forum where you discuss anything that relates to it. Why not subscribe to it?

<https://berksfhs.org/member-protected-content/forum/forum/yourtrees/>

We've just posted a new topic to answer a question we've been asked a few times, "What's a GEDCOM file and how do I create one?"

<https://berksfhs.org/member-protected-content/forum/topic/what-is-a-gedcom-file-how-do-i-create-one/>

The forum is also the go to place for YourTrees help. You can post questions there and we'll answer them there. If you email us we'll reply by email and copy the reply onto the forum so that everyone benefits

ICYMI

(in case you missed it)

It's here. A brand new member service to allow you to create your digital legacy, create a secure backup of your life's work and place it in the public domain.

- **A new free benefit** for members
- **Unlimited data uploads** while you're a member
- **Unlimited tree size** (although we'll always advocate quality over quantity)
- **Data preserved** if your membership ceases for you and your family
- **Collaborate** with other members
- **Your data is YOURS.** We won't ever claim any kind of right to your assets, unlike some services

This is *Members' Interests* and *Birth Briefs* on steroids. With lightning fast searching you can find out what other members are working on but with vastly more information than either of those services could provide, in a fraction of the time. And submitting your data is so simple because all you have to do is extract a GEDCOM file from your desktop genealogy program and upload it to our server. One of our volunteers will then create or update your tree.

You can read more on the website and in the September edition of the *Berkshire Family Historian*. (pp 27-29)

GEDCOM files are already arriving in our inbox. Why not add yours today?

[Read more ...](#)



Need help reading old documents?

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence has transformed what can be done with old photographs, now its application has also been turned to the transcription of old documents.

Developed by the University of Innsbruck, Transkribus is a comprehensive platform for the “digitisation, AI-powered text recognition, transcription and searching of historical documents – from any place, any time, and in any language”. That’s a major boast and it’s fair to say that the accuracy of translation is still in its relative infancy – but as more data is uploaded, the accuracy will steadily improve.

- Transkribus allows you to work with your own documents, either locally or by uploading them to the server.
- However, the best results come from loading documents to the platform. A range of formats are accepted - PDF, JPEG, PNG and TIFF files.
- You can upload documents which you have scanned yourself. You can also use their DocScan app for Android smartphones to take images and upload them directly to Transkribus.

Signing up to Transkribus is free and you receive 500 free credits on signup; there are also paid for services available for larger documents and handwritten text.

Try it out at:

<https://readcoop.eu/transkribus/>



Abingdon ancestors who fought in the First World War?

Friends of Abingdon Civic Society have just launched a new website, remembering those who served their country during the First World War.

The website contains an extensive archive of many of the people of Abingdon who served their country during World War 1, which is searchable by name, street and occupation. It is well illustrated with photographs, images of memorabilia and life stories.

Do take a look if Abingdon is one of your places of interest.

<https://www.abingdonfirstworldwar.uk/>

Members' Articles

With publication of the September 2021 edition of the *Berkshire Family Historian* so it's also time for us to reprise the articles from last year's edition, on the website. September 2020 had a particularly rich vein of member-submitted articles and here they are for you to enjoy again:

[Historical epidemics discovered during my research](#)

Barry Jerome shows us that the current pandemic is nothing new

[A Problem Family](#)

Terry Wickenden illustrates the problems that can be presented when researching a family

[Berkshire's Mayflower connection](#)

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage to the New World we take a look at Berkshire's connection.

[William Watkins Waite and his travelling family – the New Zealand Years](#)

Fred Waite continues the story of a much-travelled ancestor – William Watkins Waite and his travelling family

[Bandsman John Charles Harvey, 1914 – 1940](#)

Eric Saxton tells the story of an East Ilsley man who was caught up in Dunkirk

[The Talbot family of barge builders](#)

Elizabeth Lloyd delves into her heritage, "sparked by the stories my Grandma told me of the forest of masts she could see over the roofs when she grew up in Rotherhithe in the 1890s."

[An Ancestry Review](#)

Tim Powys-Lybbe asks can I verify some of the ancestry of Annie Powys, my great-great grandmother?

[Purley's Japanese Prisoners of War in World War Two](#)

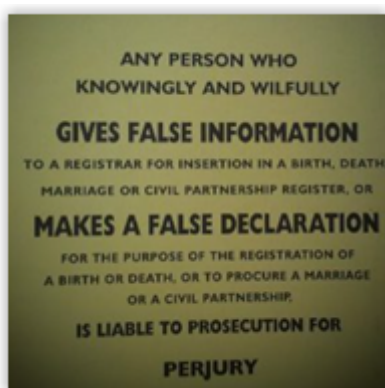
Catherine Sampson takes a look at some local men's experiences in the Far East. VJ Day has always been something of a poor relation to VE Day, yet many Berkshire villages had men who were in the Far East, Purley included. Includes new images.



Events

Our events programme is mostly online

Join us - wherever you are



Birth & Death – The Hidden Secrets of Registration

**Abingdon Branch Meeting and
Talk by Antony Marr
20 Sep 19:15 for 19:30**

Venue: Online

Why can the same birth be registered more than once and in different years?

Why does a single death registration involve three different certificates?

This talk will look at the complex rules of registering birth and death events, uncovering the complexities and hidden information these essential records of civil registration can contain.

Free to members. Non-members £3.

Pre-booking Required

Book now

Members Evening – A time to catchup *in person*



Abingdon Branch Meeting 27 Sep 19:15 for 19:30

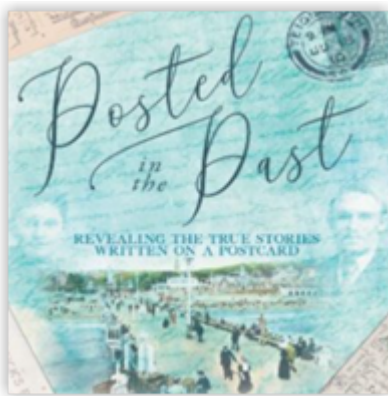
Venue: Long Furlong Community Centre

This is our first non-zoom branch meeting since March 2020 and will be for members whose closest branch is Abingdon. It will be a chance to catch up with each other and share or seek advice about family history research, brick walls and/or share eureka moments.

Free to members. Non-members £3.

Pre-booking required as numbers are limited

Book now



Posted in the Past

**Windsor Branch Meeting and Talk
by Helen Baggott
28 Sep 19:15 for 19:30**

Venue: Online

Following on from her book of the same name, Helen uses genealogical skills to reveal the true stories behind post cards sent in the early years of the 20th century, and shares these tales with an illustrated talk. A 10 year old servant living in Bath, a soldier who died in the First World War, and even a man who helped prepare Lord Kitchener's last meal are all connected through postcards.

Helen is a freelance writer and editor from Sturminster Newton, and gives talks to many Societies and Clubs. She has also written articles for many magazines including Dorset Life.

Free to members. Non-members £3.

Pre-booking Required

[Book now](#)



The Canning Tomb Mystery

Reading Branch Meeting & Talk by Catherine Sampson

30 Sep 19:15 for 19:45

Venue: Online

The Canning Tomb lies in St Mary's churchyard in Purley. Despite being a listed monument, and a high status late Georgian chest tomb, it is sadly neglected, badly decaying and in desperate need of restoration.

For years, the family it commemorates remained obscured in mystery – but there seemed to be a distant link to George Canning, the Prime Minister. There was even some mystery as to whether they were buried there.

This talk describes the journey to uncovering their identity, their surprising Royal connections and the unexpected twists and turns along the way.

Free to members. Non-members £3.

Pre-booking Required

[Book now](#)

Georgian Sources for Historians

**Ten week course led by:
Dr Margaret Simons**



All sessions 14.00 – 16.00

**Fridays 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th
Oct, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th Nov, 3rd
Dec**

Venue: Online

Course Overview

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.

Timetable

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Week 1 | Introduction - overview of course and the variety of sources that are available, their reliability and how to use them. |
| Week 2 | Industrialisation - often referred to as a revolution, how did it come about and what can sources tell us about those involved. |
| Week 3 | The Making of Modern Cities and the rise of London - a consequence of industrialisation was urbanisation; here we will use a variety of sources to inform us about the perceptions of town life and the realities that awaited those who sought a better life! |

- Week 4 **At Home in Georgian England** - from palace to hovel we will use various sources to explore the reality of 'Georgian Elegance'.
- Week 5 **Health and Hygiene** - with medical knowledge still at a basic level, industrialisation created even greater challenges for the professionals of the time. Here we look at sources to examine how society coped with the ever present threat of death and disease.
- Week 6 **Poverty and Crime** - the two were often bedfellows and here we will use sources to explore cause and consequence.
- Week 7 **Popular Culture** - in many ways the Georgians were more accepting and less rigid than the Victorians regarding the social mores and this week we will use sources to find out about their interests and pastimes.
- Week 8 **Empire** - the question of slavery has been much in the news recently and this week we will use sources to help us explore those involved in the rise of colonial power.
- Week 9 **Politics and Military Matter** - in our penultimate week we look at sources to assess how the government responded to military threats and how those who had little in the way of political right expressed themselves.
- Week 10 **Conclusion** - students will present their projects and we will have an overview of the themes and sources.

Tickets cost £125 (members £115)

Pre-booking required

Book now

DNA Special Interest Group – October

Facilitator: Debbie Kennett
02 Oct 14:15 for 14:30



Venue: Online

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.

This is a member priority event. Tickets for non-members will go on sale from 20th September.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)
Pre-booking required

Book now

Beginners' Family History Course

Tutors: Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens

All sessions 10.30 - 12.30

Mondays – 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th October and 1st & 8th November.

Venue: Online



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.

Tickets cost £35 (members £28)

Pre-booking required

Book now

This is just a selecton from our extensive events
programme ...

... click here for the full programme

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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