

Keeping in touch

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



**THE 1921 CENSUS
IS COMING**



in association with
**THE
NATIONAL
ARCHIVES**



...and you're invited to
hear about it directly
from Findmypast, in one
of two online talks
hosted by Berkshire FHS

Woodley Branch		Windsor Branch
19 Jan		25 Jan
19:15 for 19:30	OR	19:15 for 19:30
Speaker: Mary McKee		Speaker: Jen Baldwin

Non-members £3 - Members free - Prebooking required

Berkshire Family History Society, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BG - Registered Charity No 283010

To book - click image



We thought we would begin our Christmas newsletter with a look at some of our many Christmas traditions and their origins. The National Archives have a wonderful collection of youtube videos exploring Victorian Christmas traditions – a

few of our favourites are below for you.



The Victorian (re)invention of Christmas

While a few festive traditions have ancient origins, most of the things we associate with Christmas today were actually created by the Victorians. The nineteenth century saw the introduction of the Christmas tree, the Christmas card and the Christmas cracker and also witnessed the birth of modern Christmas consumerism. The Victorians centred their Christmas traditions around the middle class home and family, and in particular the innocence of childhood. Christmas began to be imbued with feelings of nostalgia and sentimentality, while at the same time encouraging charity and sympathy for those less fortunate. These developments were fuelled by the publication of successful Christmas carols, stories and poems, the most famous of which being 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens.

Drawing on a variety of records held at The National Archives, this talk by Katherine Howells examines how some of our most treasured Christmas traditions developed in the Victorian era, and paints a picture of what Christmas was like for those at different levels of Victorian society—the poor, the rich and the middle class.

Find it [here](#)



The National Archives

Katherine Howells showcases some of the most beautiful and intriguing visual records held at The National Archives, which shows the development of Victorian customs and imagery surrounding Christmas. In this festive document display you'll discover the development of the Christmas card, the Christmas tree and the Christmas cracker, and why the Victorian visions of Christmas are so dominant in modern culture.

Find it [here](#)



The warmth and cosiness of a seat by the hearth in Victorian Britain was provided by more than just a well-laid fire. At the heart of the 19th-century home, the fireplace and its surrounds were a carefully curated space that displayed the owners' tastes, wealth and even moral values, through a burgeoning number of ornaments and furnishings. In this festive document display, Olivia Gecseg explores a selection of records from the Board of Trade design registers and the Stationers' Company copyright records to show how the hearth was designed and used within the Victorian middle-class home.

Find it [here](#)



Staying with Youtube videos – here are a few more which caught our eye.



Many of the traditions we associate with the festive season in Britain, the US and around the world come to us via Germany. The Christmas Tree, Santa Claus, Advent Calendars, nutcrackers, toys, Christmas Markets and a cornucopia of Christmas confections had roots in Deutschland. Much of this cultural exchange comes from the tight familial bonds between the British and German royal families. So curl up by the Tannenbaum with a plate of Weihnachtsplätzchen

(Christmas cookies), and a mug of Glühwein or Kinderpunsch (mulled wine with or without the alcohol). And explore the history of German Christmas traditions and visit the royal neues palais on December 24th, 1907 for a spectacularly festive meal with Kaiser Wilhelm and his family.

Find it [here](#)



Michael Buerk and chef Paul Ainsworth recreate mock turtle soup served for Queen Victoria and her family at Christmas in 1895.

Find it [here](#)



Join Mark Griffin and Kathy Hipperson to discover the delights of historical seasonal food. Take inspiration from the Victorian kitchen and try some traditional dishes this Christmas.

Find it [here](#)



One - Historian Reprise

With publication of the December 2021 edition of the Berkshire Family Historian it's time for us to reprise the articles from last year's edition, on the website. Here they are for you to enjoy again:

[William Watkins Waite and his travelling family – the Australia years](#)

Fred Waite continues the story of a much-travelled ancestor

[Memories of Christmas at Sulham in the 1930s](#)

Jean Harland gives an insight into pre-war festive life

[A tale of two houses called Adelaide](#)

Cathy Oldham takes a look at the reason for the name of her relative's house.

Two - More Exchange Journals

Buckinghamshire FHS

Newfoundland & Labrador

Richmond-Tweed FHS Inc - Ballina, NSW, Australia

Waltham Forest FHS

[View them here](#)

Three - New Video

20th Century Family History

VIDEO AVAILABLE UNTIL 31 DEC 2021



From Victorians to Elizabethans: tracing
our English Ancestors from 1901-1952

Windsor Branch Talk

Berkshire Family History Society, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BG - Registered Charity No 283010

Only available until 31 Dec!

Click the image above to access the video library



Centre for Heritage & Family History Christmas opening times

A reminder that The Centre for Heritage & Family History is now closed for the Christmas and New Year period and will reopen at 11am on Tuesday 4th January.

We look forward to seeing our regulars and new visitors in the New Year.



Events

Our events programme is mostly online

Join us - wherever you are



Free family history advice sessions

from members of Berkshire Family History Society

Did you make a start on your family tree during the lockdowns? Have you always wanted to research your family but are not sure how to start?

Whether you are just beginning, or you have become stuck on your family tree, you can get free, one-to-one help from a member of Berkshire Family History Society's Newbury or Bracknell branch.

for more info:

[13 Jan - Bracknell](#)

[14 Jan - Newbury](#)



Where there's a will there's usually an argument

Newbury branch meeting and talk (face-to-face)

Speaker: Sue Ellis

12 Jan 13:40 for 14:00

Venue: West Berkshire Museum

Local and family historian Sue Ellis will be giving us an insight into how to interpret wills. She explains where you can find them, what the stock phrases are, how you interpret the contents and what the mysterious word "admons" means. She also looks at how the inventories of people's possessions give us an invaluable insight into our ancestors' lives and show how different they were from our own.

[Book now](#)



The Dunkirk Evacuation: Reading Railway's pivotal role

Talk by Paul Joyce

13 Jan 13:45 for 14:00

Venue: The Centre for Heritage & Family History, Reading

The Dunkirk evacuation, code-named Operation Dynamo, is one of the most well-known operations in World War Two. During it, over 338,000 Allied soldiers were

evacuated from the beaches and harbour of Dunkirk in May and June 1940. The involvement of the little ships, as they came to be known, is well known. Yet in contrast relatively little mention is made of the vast logistical effort needed to transport these men once they had landed on British soil. In this talk, Paul will explain the pivotal role which Reading Railways played in the evacuation. And also the enormous effort which went into this little known operation.

This is the first of three talks in the Transport Social History Talks series. The other talks take place on 10th February and 10th March. You may book tickets for individual events or for all three talks in the series for a reduced price.

After the talk, tea/coffee and either biscuits or cake will be available (included in the price). Advance booking is preferred, but you can pay on the door, if there are spaces available..

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

Book now



DNA Special Interest Group – January

Facilitator: Debbie Kennett
15 Jan 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.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

Book now



1-1 Family History Advice Session – January

17 Jan 14:00 - 16:00

Venue: Online

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?

Our popular family history advice sessions have returned, and these ones are online using Zoom technology. These sessions are 1-1, free of cost and available to members and non-members alike.

Book a 25 minute slot with our advisers and you’ll receive help from our experienced research assistants. We will provide whatever help and suggestions that we can within the time frame and will book a follow-on session with you if needed. Four 1-1 slots are available in this session:

Slot 1: 14.00 – 14.25

Slot 2: 14.30 – 14.55 (fully booked)

Slot 3: 15.05 – 15.30

Slot 4: 15.35 – 16.00

For members and non-members of Berkshire Family History Society

Free

Pre-booking required

Book now



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19 Jan		25 Jan
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Speaker: Mary McKee		Speaker: Jen Baldwin

Mary McKee and Jen Baldwin have both been involved with scanning of the census for Findmypast, and will explain and answer questions on its background and how we can gain access to the 38 million lives who are recorded within. This will be the last census release for at least 30 years, as the 1931 census was destroyed by fire, and the 1941 census was cancelled because of the Second World War.

Both sessions are free to members. Non-members £3.

Pre-booking essential as demand will be high. One session per person please.

Book Woodley 19 Jan session

OR

Book Windsor 25 Jan session

That was just a selection 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

The Centre for Heritage and Family History
2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square
Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3BQ, United Kingdom
Registered Charity Number 283010

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