



**Watercress beds, Letcombe Bassett - used by Thomas Hardy as the inspiration for Cresscombe in Jude the Obscure. Image courtesy of Jim Bradshaw**

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Hello friend

*Somewhere in Royal Berkshire, Friday 1st April, an email is sent:*

Catherine: "Just checking, have you done this week's newsletter yet?"

*A few minutes later, from snowy Northumberland, a few miles south of Hadrian's wall, comes the reply:*

Me: "Ha ha! You can't catch me out. April Fools right? Of course I have"

*And then two seconds later a dawning sense of realisation hits.*

Well that was an exciting morning! But here it is. Enjoy!



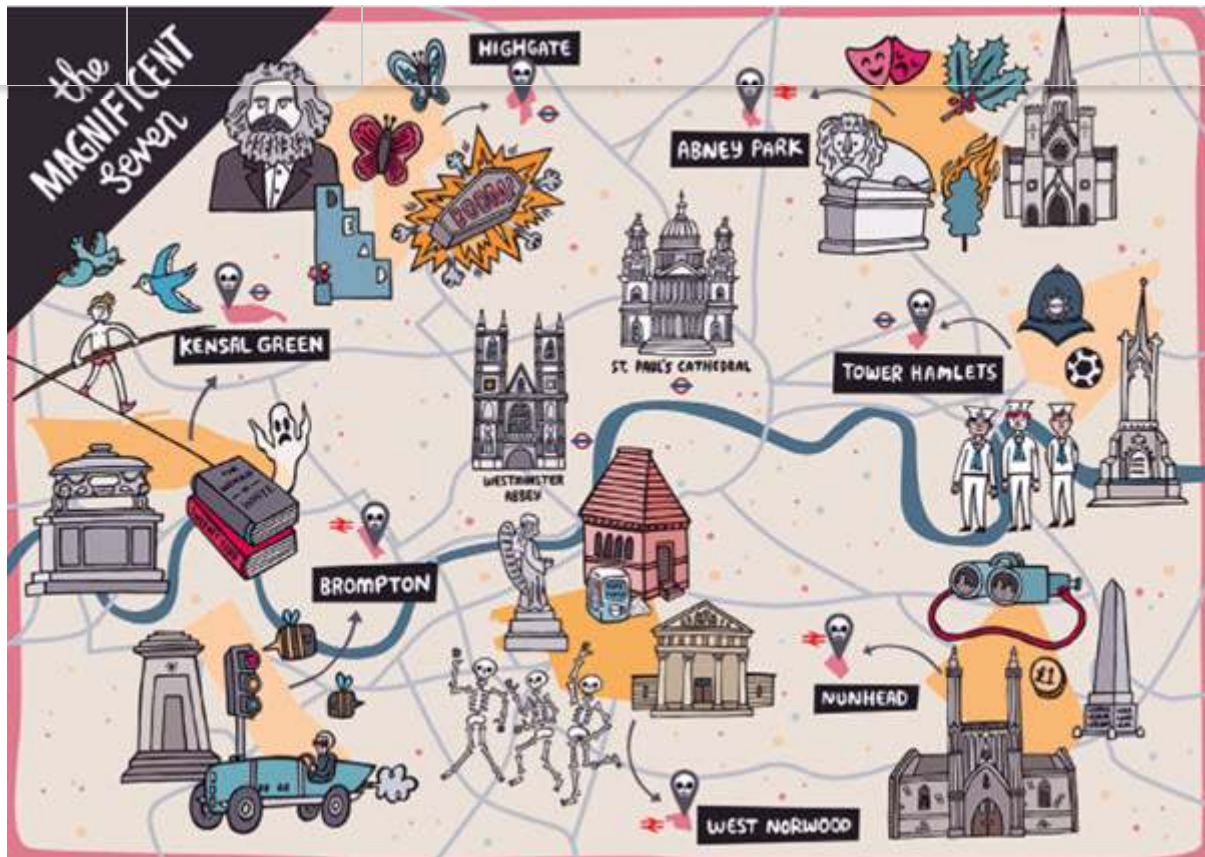
Image (c) the [Air Crew Photo Archive](#)

## Searching for relatives of a Berkshire WW2 Casualty

Are you related to Alec Henry Cousins, a Flight Sergeant in the 35th Sqdn, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, who died in a crash of a Lancaster Bomber on Christmas Eve 1944? He was the son of Frederick William and Bertha Cousins of Maidenhead and is buried in All Saints Cemetery, Maidenhead.

The plane crashed in the village of Great Paxton in Cambridgeshire and volunteers there have built a memorial to the crew which will be unveiled on May 7th. They would love to have relatives there.

To be put in touch with the volunteers - contact Catherine at [projects@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:projects@berksfhs.org.uk)



## London's Magnificent Seven

Those with ancestors buried in one of London's Magnificent seven cemeteries will probably want to check out The Londonist's interactive map, if they haven't yet.

The Magnificent Seven is a collection of Victorian cemeteries spread across the capital which includes Highgate and Kensal Green cemeteries, famous for their celebrity burials and extravagant tombs, and at the other end of the spectrum Tower Hamlets Cemetery, established by some of London's wealthiest inhabitants, but for London's working classes.

Like all cemeteries, these seven have many interesting stories to tell - of exploding coffins, lion tamers, three policemen buried in the same grave and the scouts who drowned on a camping and sailing trip to the Isle of Sheppey.

Discover more at:

<https://londonist.com/london/maps/an-interactive-map-of-london-s-magnificent-seven-cemeteries>





## BERKSHIRE BURIALS 13th Edition



### **Berkshire Burials - 13th Edition CD - now out**

If you missed it in the March Historian - here's a reminder that Berkshire Burials 13th Edition CD is now out.

This new edition of Berkshire Burials has 53,000 more transcriptions than the previous edition and has more than 944,000 transcriptions covering all of the pre-1974 county. It contains records from nearly 290 churchyards, cemeteries, burial grounds and workhouses and over 1,125,000 names. It is fully indexed.

Don't forget members get a 10% discount - use the discount in March's Historian or obtain it from the website (when signed in). It's under the menu item **Shop**

**More info or buy**

## The National Archives - free access to digital archives reminder

It's been a while since we last mentioned this - so we thought it would be good to remind you that the National Archives (TNA) is still offering free access to digital archives whilst access to its reading rooms is limited.

If you haven't yet done so, you will be required to register for a free account on TNA's website and to be logged in to be able to download documents. To find records that are available to download for free, filter your search results in Discovery to include records that are 'available for download only'.

### What sort of documents can you download?

You will be able to download records digitised by The National Archives and published through Discovery, its online catalogue. These include:

- First and Second World War records, including medal index cards
- Military records, including unit war diaries
- Royal and Merchant Navy records, including Royal Marine service records
- Wills from the jurisdiction of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury
- Migration records, including aliens' registration cards and naturalisation case papers
- 20th century Cabinet Papers and Security Service files
- Domesday Book

**Find out more**

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## **Easter Opening Hours at The Centre for Heritage and Family History**

With Easter fast approaching and then the May Day holiday - it's a good time to let you know that the society's Centre for Heritage and Family History will be closed on both Easter Monday (April 18th) and Monday May 2nd to give our volunteers a well earned rest.

All other opening times are unchanged.



## **Bringing your family history to life**

Many of us enjoy tracking down images of the places associated with our ancestors. There are many good websites that can help and social media also often comes up trumps. One which keeps getting better and better is the London Picture Archive.

This website contains over 250,000 images of London from the collections at London Metropolitan Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery. On it you will find a series of featured galleries covering subjects as diverse as the London Fire Brigade 1866 - 2016, London's Department Stores, and Inns, Taverns and Public

**Check it out**

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## Events

Our events programme is mostly online

Join us - wherever you are

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### **April Natter Group**

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

**Venue: Online**

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

Pre-booking required

**Book now**

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## **Edible Reading Walk and Cream Tea**

**Walk by Terry Dixon**  
**08 Apr 10.00 - 12.30**

### **Venue: The Centre for Heritage & Family History, Reading**

Guide, Terry Dixon, will take us on a food-themed walk through Reading, covering over 200 years of history. It will feature famous, and not so famous, people, products and companies. Also, World War Two's 'Dig for Victory' initiatives and unique restaurants and cafes. On the way, the walk will be illustrated with photos and maps.

In tribute to the theme, we will finish with a cream tea at the former site of another famous Reading food product.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

**Book now**



## **Royalty Social History Talks Series**

**14 Apr 14:00 - 15:30**  
**12 May as above**  
**9 Jun as above**

### **Venue: The Centre for Heritage & Family History, Reading**

To celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, our face-to-face talk series this quarter focuses on Royalty. This all series ticket covers all



three talks in the “Royalty Social History” talks series, for the discounted price of £12.50 (members £10.00). You may also book each talk individually – see each separate event page. All three talks are on Thursdays at 2pm in The Centre for Heritage and Family History, Reading. They last about an hour with time for questions and discussion afterwards.

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

## **Royal Women**

This talk tells the story of the lives of three Royal women from the Tudor Court – Catherine of Aragon, Anne of Cleves and Lady Katherine Knollys. Two well-known; one less so nowadays, but part of a family that would have been a household name in the Reading area in Tudor times. And one still remembered today in Reading’s street names. All survived the potentially life-threatening difficulties they faced, largely by utilising strategies learnt during their own childhoods.

We will explore their lives and their Berkshire connections.

[Thursday 14 April “Royal Women” with Catherine Sampson](#)

## **Windsor Castle: 1100 – 1700**

Discover the history of Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest occupied castle in the world. The castle has been home to 39 reigning monarchs. It was founded by William the Conqueror in the 11th century, and originally built as a motte-and-bailey, but has been gradually rebuilt over time. It survived a protracted siege in the 13th century and being used as a military headquarters for the Parliamentarians during the English Civil War.

The castle has been the setting for some of the most stunning and expensive architectural achievements, yet at the same time it was designed to function as a practical arm of government. Find out more in this fascinating talk by Dr David Lewis.

[Thursday 12 May “Windsor Castle: 1100 – 1700” with Dr David Lewis](#)

## **Queen Victoria’s Daughters**

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were the parents of nine children – five daughters and four sons. The collective lives of their daughters span the period from 1840 – 1944. They include the Empress Frederick, the tragic Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt and the Rhine, and the talented Princess

Louise, Duchess of Argyll. In this talk, Colin Parrish will describe the lives of the royal sisters and their descendants.

[Thursday 9 June "Queen Victoria's Daughters" with Colin Parrish](#)

The all series ticket cost £12.50 (members £10)

Pre-booking required

**Book now**



## Royal Women

**Talk by Catherine Sampson**

**14 Apr 14:00 - 15:30**

**Venue: The Centre for Heritage & Family History, Reading**

This talk tells the story of the lives of three Royal women from the Tudor Court – Catherine of Aragon, Anne of Cleves and Lady Katherine Knollys. Two well-known; one less so nowadays, but part of a family that would have been a household name in the Reading area in Tudor times. And one still remembered today in Reading's street names. All survived the potentially life-threatening difficulties they faced, largely by utilising strategies learnt during their own childhoods.

We will explore their lives and their Berkshire connections.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

**Book now**



## Drop In Advice Session

**14 Apr 14:00 - 17:00**

Bring your questions, problems and 'brickwalls' ... and get some new ideas and advice from members of the Berkshire Family History Society.

For ALL family historians wherever your ancestors came from.

Free

### **More details**



## **Royal Flying Corps Records Workshop**

**Tutor: Richard Marks**  
**23 Apr 14.00 - 16.00**

**Venue: Online**

The Great War of 1914-18 saw the first use of aircraft in warfare. The British Royal Flying Corps playing an important role throughout.

In this workshop, we will look at what the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was and how it related to the Royal Naval Air Service, prior to the amalgamation of the two into the Royal Air Force in 1918. We will investigate how the family historian can discover what their relative did in the RFC. We will consider their experiences, their aircraft, what records may be available and where to find them.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

**Book now**



## **1-1 Family History Advice Session – April**

**The Centre - Berkshire FHS  
25 Apr 14:00 to 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

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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That was just a selection from our extensive

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events programme ...

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

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Events routinely sell out so book early to secure  
your place

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**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  
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