

Keeping in touch

Berkshire FHS <noreply@berksfhs.org>

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



East Ilsley - late 19th Century
Image courtesy of Jim Bradshaw

Hello

A warm welcome after a warm week. Who am I kidding? As the red tops are inclined to say, "Phew. What a scorcher!" Way up north in the wilds of Northumberland, I was better off than most of you - just - although you have to bear in mind that Geordies are into T Shirts and shorts when the temperature reaches 10° C so I expect some of them melted.

The clock is ticking on renewal for those of you who joined before Jul 2020. If you haven't already renewed you need to do so before the counter reaches zero, to retain your membership benefits. There are more details below,

including what to do if you haven't received a reminder, and how to find out if you have already renewed.

Membership fees have been held at the same for the third year running, and are great value at between 5 and 8p a day. We can't do all the things we do without your financial support so please do renew.



Membership Renewal: the final countdown

There's just a week to go before the end of the renewal season. If you haven't already renewed, now's the time to do so*

If you've renewed already - thank you. If not, we look forward to receiving your renewal so you can continue to enjoy all the traditional services we offer as well as the new ones we've been adding, such as YourTrees. If you're an Ancestry of FMP user who's finished their research we have a low cost alternative for you - see below.

If you haven't received a reminder, no worries, here's what you do:

1. **Login** to the website
2. Choose menu option **Membership > Renew**.

Not sure if you've renewed or not? Login to the website and select **Profile** and then below your Membership Number, you'll see a **Subscriptions** link. Click that and you'll see your recent payment history.

Increase the value of your subscription by 25% without it costing you a penny

As part of the renewal process you'll be asked if you want to elect for Gift Aid. If you're a UK taxpayer, you just need to tick a few boxes and add your name and

address and we'll be able to claim 25% back from the taxman, which is always a good feeling!

**If you joined since July 2020, this doesn't apply to you - your renewal is one year from the date you joined and you'll be sent a email reminder when the time comes.*



Held hostage by Ancestry or FMP?

A couple of weeks ago I was helping a member with their renewal and when were done I said, *"Is there anything else I can help you with?"*

"Yes" came the reply, "I have finished my research but I'm paying Ancestry £25 a month just to keep my tree. Is there anything the Society can do to help me with that?"

Are you in the same boat? Because the answer is an emphatic yes. You can exchange £25 a month for **£0** a month, because your membership fee includes free access to YourTrees - the Society's own online family tree archive.

The first step is to extract a copy of your tree from Ancestry/FMP into a GEDCOM file. Then you submit that us and we upload it to the site. It costs you nothing, your tree will be preserved in perpetuity and we even give you a digital legacy certificate you can give to your family so that your work can pass on down the generations.

With membership starting at £19 a **year**, compared to £25 a **month**, society

membership is worth it for this benefit alone

To get you started Dave Osborne, one of our webmasters, has recorded a couple of short videos on how to extract your tree.

[Download your tree from Ancestry.](#)

[Download your tree from FMP](#)



YourTrees: a box full of surprises

We all love a pleasant surprise and this is exactly what happened to member *Janet Moseley* on Wednesday:

"I was idly browsing the My Trees section of the website this evening, and entered my maiden surname, Wheldon, into the search field - without any expectation of a hit, as my Wheldons all came from Bedale and Northallerton in North Yorkshire. To my amazement, the search revealed 19 Wheldons from my family tree, including my grandfather, Frederick Thomas Wheldon and his seven siblings, my great grandfather, James Wheldon and his siblings, and many more relatives from my tree.

"I would be grateful if you could pass this message on to the other member who

perhaps would like to contact me directly. I can fill in a few more details, such as my grandfather's date of death."

This is the sort of connection we'd hoped our members would make and we were able to show Janet how to contact the other member directly from YourTrees by clicking on the tree owner's name to reveal their contact details.

Have you had a peek inside the box? Who knows what surprises you might find, what blanks you might fill for others and they might fill for you.

<https://yourtrees.berksfhs.org>

The username is **member**
The current password is **Longworth**



More army records now available

Back in February 2021, the MOD began transferring all 9.7 million historic service records to The National Archives (TNA). The first tranche was released on Discovery in April of this year, covering the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, in series WO 420.

Now, nearly 100,000 more Second World War records are now available to order from TNA. These are records from the 'War Office: Selected Smaller Corps Other Ranks: Service Records', which have the reference number WO 421.

The series consists of 94,234 service records of soldiers (excluding officers) who served in the Army Air Corps; the Royal Army Veterinary Corps; the Royal Military Police or Corps of Military Police; the Royal Army Pay Corps; the Royal Army Physical Training Corps; the Military Provost Staff Corps; the Royal Corps of Army Music; the Royal Army Education Corps; the Royal Pioneer Corps; the Intelligence Corps; the Officer Training Corps; and the Non-Combatant Corps. It only includes soldiers who were discharged because they were over age.

The types of documents enclosed in service records include attestation forms signed by a new recruit, or created upon transfer between units; statements of service, which outline an individual's postings; and discharge forms issued when

a soldier left the regiment.

You can search the catalogue here:

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C17682287>



New Wiltshire Records on Findmypast

Those whose ancestors stray over the border into Wiltshire, will no doubt be pleased to hear of the new record sets now available on Findmypast.

Three new collections have just been added.

1. Wiltshire Tithe Award Register 1813 - 1882 - which consists of more than 257,000 records.
2. Lunatic Asylum Registers 1789 - 1921 covering six asylums.
3. First World War Hospital Records - 6,000 records covering admissions to the Old Sarum Isolation Hospital, Salisbury. The Harnham Red Cross Hospital and the Salisbury Infirmary. Many of the patients came from camps on Salisbury Plain.

The records consist of transcriptions created by the Wiltshire Family History Society.

Search Findmypast here:

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



Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury Launched

Many of us with Irish roots attribute many of the difficulties in locating relevant records to the catastrophic fire at the Record Treasury of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) in June 1922.

Now some hope is at hand in what is PROI's biggest and most exciting launch for years.

The centenary of the fire is being commemorated with an ambitious project to reconstruct some of what was lost in 1922. This is partly possible, as after the fire archivists began collecting the remnants of what survived. Material was gathered up, wrapped in brown paper and then boxed. These boxes were finally opened for the first time in 2017 when an analysis of the material began.

The "Beyond 2022" project aims to build a virtual Record Treasury which will be populated with digital, searchable copies of records which survived the fire. Alongside them will be copies and substitutes of some of the collections which were lost. The new online repository is free and the first deposits are now available to be searched.

Major sources you might be interested in include the 1766 religious census - now fully digitised and searchable for the first time. Also, the Quit Rent Office copy of the Book of Survey and Distribution which documents owners of Irish lands prior to the 1640s.

Search the archive here:

<https://beyond2022.ie/>



Events

Our events programme is a mixture of online and face-to-face (F2F)



The Archives of the College of St George since 1352

**Windsor Branch Meeting with talk
by Kate McQuillian
26 July 19:15 for 19:30**

Venue: Online

St George's Chapel Archives is home to a stunning collection of documents relating to the history of the Chapel, the properties it once owned and the Order of the Garter, which has its spiritual home at St George's. These documents include accounts and deeds dating from as early as the 12th century; maps, plans and photographs; and collections of the personal papers and correspondence of individuals associated with the Chapel over the centuries. In this talk, Archivist and Chapter Librarian Kate McQuillian will explore the history of the collection, the characters who helped to develop it and some of its star attractions.

We request a donation of £3 from non-members, (free to members)
Pre-booking required

[**Book now**](#)

A Potpourri of Social History Talks – Summer Series



28 July 14:00 - 15:15
25 August as above
22 September as above
Venue: Online

This all series ticket covers all three in the summer "Potpourri of 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 and last about an hour. Afterwards there will be time for questions and discussion.

Caversham Court – Ghosts, Gardeners, Girl Power & Good Works

This illustrated talk gathers together some exciting new historical discoveries regarding Caversham Court, the house, its occupants, the gardens and the people who visited there.

The house is now demolished but the beautiful gardens are open to the public. In particular, the talk follows some of the remarkable women connected with the house. You will meet Lady Mosley, a black servant, female gardeners, women's literary circles and the founder of a Victorian crèche. You will also hear gossip about divorce, ghosts and nosy neighbours.

[Thursday 28 July "Caversham Court – Ghosts, Gardeners, Girl Power & Good Works" 2 – 3.15pm with Hester Casey](#)

One hundred years of shopping in Reading

Jacksons, Langstons and Tutty's are familiar shop names to people in Reading. But do you remember Hawkes Ironmongers or Cook's Dairy and Farm Equipment?

This talk will take us on a virtual walk round the town centre and look at shops from the 19th century to the present day, and how shopping has changed over the years. Some of these shops were unique to Reading, others house-hold names. .

[Thursday 25 August "One hundred years of shopping in Reading" 2 – 3.15pm with Ann Smith](#)

The history of Southcote and its Manor

Look hard enough and there's no such thing as an "ordinary suburb".

Drawing on research for Reading Libraries booklet on Southcote, Mike Cooper

looks at the origins of Southcote as a medieval manor, its development as a rural community and then, in the second half of the 20th century, its transformation into a planned residential suburb. Along the way, there's a Saxon sheriff, an Elizabethan mathematician, and the Home Guard.

[Thursday 22 September "The History of Southcote Manor" 2 – 3.15pm with Mike Cooper](#)

Tickets cost £12.50 (members £10)

Pre-booking required

[**Book now**](#)



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Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking is required

[**Book now**](#)



Discovering the Maps Website

**Reading Branch Meeting with talk
by Craig Statham
28 July 19:15 for 19:45**

Venue: Online

The National Library of Scotland holds over two million cartographic items, making it the largest collection of maps in Scotland and one of the largest in the world. There are several separate collections of maps within the library's holdings, namely the Bartholomew Archive and the Graham Brown Collection. At the library there are maps relating to many different kinds of landscapes, such as estates, counties, railways and maps which show the trenches of World War I.

- Over 1.5 million sheet maps
- 15,000 atlases
- 100,000 maps on microfilm
- Over 200,000 digital maps
- Gazetteers, cartographic reference books and periodicals
- Map ephemera

Craig will take us on a tour of the maps, with reference to Berkshire, and show how they can help us understand the environment our ancestors lived in.

We request a donation of £3 from non-members, (free to members)
Pre-booking required

Book now



Catching up with the Family Search Website

**Tutor: Sharon Hintze
30 July 10:45 for 11:00**

Venue: Online

Find out how to get the most from this free website with the former director of the London FamilySearch Centre. This will include a short introduction together with some brief case studies chosen to illustrate different features. A summary of the case studies will be circulated a week before the session.

Participants are asked to use FamilySearch for at least an hour before the session.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



August Natter Group

**Discussion Group facilitated by:
Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens
02 August 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](#)

Berkshire Heritage Fair

The Centre - Berkshire FHS



06 August 10:00 - 12:00
14:00 - 16:00

Venue: Online

This online heritage fair is organised jointly between Berkshire History Society and Berkshire Local History Association. It takes place in two sessions between 10am and 12 noon and 2-4pm. You may book places on either or both sessions.

The event aims to give attendees the opportunity to connect with participating organisations from across the historic county of Berkshire. Additionally, family history societies from the contiguous counties will also be present. A full list of participating organisations can be found [here](#)

This is the first time this type of event has been held in Berkshire. So it offers a unique opportunity to connect to local experts who can help you to deepen your understanding. Of the places your family lived, the organisations they were connected to and the businesses for whom they worked.

Many have their own private archives of images, documents and memorabilia they are happy to share with you, others can point you in the best direction. Maybe you'll discover that never-before-seen photo of your great grandparents does actually exist!

It is free to attend and open to members and non-members alike

Each participating organisation will have their own breakout room. Attendees will be able to move from room to room to pose questions, ask advice and share information with the experts present. These are private conversations and can only be heard by those present in the "room".

Experts from Berkshire Family History Society will also be available. They will be able to answer your questions on topics such as Berkshire's parish registers, wills and probate, maps, getting started in family history and breaking down brick walls.

Pre-booking is required so we can send you the Zoom link

Book morning session

[Book afternoon 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
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