
in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



Wickham - a very different road today but a very distinctive building. Can you find it on Google Streetview?

Image courtesy of Jim Bradshaw

Hello Paul

I thought we'd start this week with a challenge. The banner image of Wickham features a very distinctive building. Can you locate it on the modern map or

Google Streetview? I think we can.

For a bonus point, what's the car make and model? Identifying the passengers and pedestrian is taking it too far, although if you want to surprise us ..?

But don't get so caught up in the challenge you forget to read the rest of the newsletter. We've more Berkshire Burial downloads for you and some appeals for volunteers to help in some important roles. We're celebrating putting the final copies of our 47 year Historian Archive on the website and, of course, we have our usual pick of events to share with you.



The Local History Recording Scheme From Hilary, on the Community

"I attended a talk today given by Ellie Thorne, Senior Archivist at the Berkshire Record Office. I had never heard of this scheme but thanks to her hard work, it is now available for use at the BRO. A copy of the material is also kept in storage at Reading Library, but can be viewed by prior arrangement:

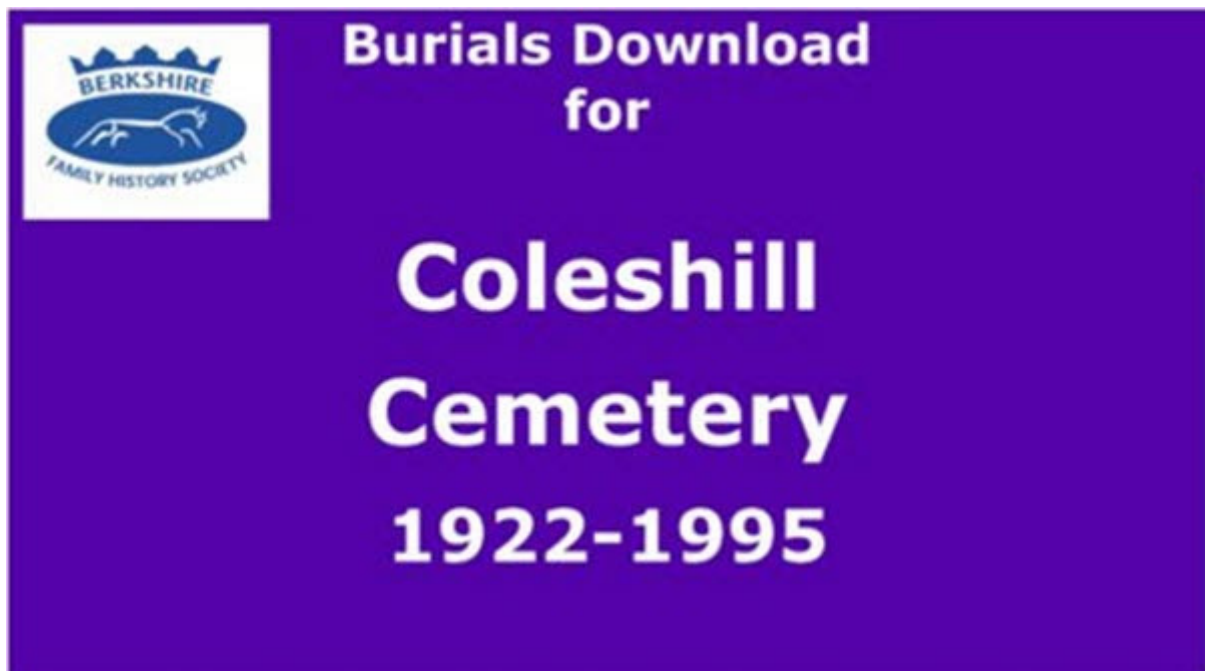
- The Local History Recording Scheme began in 1921 and was intended as a national system. Berkshire joined in 1924 and continued until 1972.
- Local volunteer correspondents used standard forms to log information by Parish, about buildings, people, historical information, artefacts etc.
- Two copies were produced, one which was sent to the British Museum and one which was kept by Reading Library. (Original photo's were only

included in the local copy.)

- In 1973 the BM returned their copy for Berkshire to the Record Office here in Reading and Ellie is almost nearing completion of cataloguing this. It is now included in their online catalogue under reference T/Z4/1-3.
- The type of records kept by each parish owe a lot to the interests of the local correspondents but some of them may therefore be of use to family historians or those interested in local history.

"Lastly, she mentioned that they are looking for a volunteer to take help take the cataloguing beyond the Parish level, to include better detail of each subject matter. Please contact her if you are interested."

ellie.thorne@reading.gov.uk



More Berkshire Burials Digital Downloads

Following the launch of our final tranche of Burial downloads in early September, we're delighted to confirm that the third batch is now available to purchase in the society's shop.

Data downloads were developed and originally launched in 2020, to provide choice, flexibility and instant access in how you access data for Berkshire. The downloads are in PDF format and your purchase is automatically fulfilled as soon as you have paid. Ts & Cs apply and these downloads are for your personal use only.

Prices vary but start from just £2.00. The usual member discounts apply.

Burial entries are presented in alphabetical and date order. If you're interested in a number of parishes, the Berkshire Burials 13th Edition CD may be better value.

[Coleshill Cemetery Burials 1922-1995 \(D1804\)](#)

[Crowmarsh Gifford St Mary Magdalene Burials 1575-1992 \(D1068\)](#)

[Easthampstead SS Michael & Mary Magdalene Burials 1558-1949 \(D1083\)](#)

[Finchampstead St James Burials 1607-1893 \(D1828\)](#)

[Inglesham St John the Baptist Burials 1592-1913 \(D1812\)](#)

[Newbury Shaw Cemetery Burials 1913-1944 \(D1818\)](#)

[Newbury Shaw Cemetery Burials 1945-1972 \(D1832\)](#)

[Sotwell St James Burials 1606-2019 \(D1195\)](#)

[Streatley St Mary Burials 1607-1907 \(D1207\)](#)

[Waltham St Lawrence St Lawrence Burials 1558-1995 \(D1238\)](#)



Searching the Mills Archive Trust Catalogue

Millers or milling assistants in your family? interested in the local mill your family would have used?

The Mills Archive Trust is the registered charity dedicated to the protection and preservation of the records of milling history. If you haven't yet used their website – it is well laid out and worth spending some time on. Their online database of mills contains more than 12,000 entries and can be searched in a variety of ways. You can search for a mill by name, place, location on a map or by type.

Search the mills index here:

<https://new.millsarchive.org/mills/>

Mills and milling have always depended on people, so it is not surprising that the Mills Archive also holds many original “people” documents, as well as family history research data, and images of individuals and (in many cases) their

families. Over 50,000 individuals are named in their records.

Find out more about using the archive for family research at:

<https://new.millsarchive.org/family-history/>

Finally, you can search the archive catalogue at:

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/>



BFHS Health & Safety Coordinator

We have a vacancy for someone to keep an eye on our health and safety compliance. Zip-wiring, rock climbing or sky diving are not really our thing so the role is not onerous and is mainly concerned with reviewing the Risk Assessments for the Centre and other venues, such as those used by our branches. You'll need to:

- work with the branches to ensure they know how to report incidents and carry out initial investigations.
- assist activity leaders to undertake relevant risk assessments of buildings used for society activities
- ensure that all equipment used is certified as safe by the appropriate bodies
- ensure that members and visitors have appropriate equipment including PPE, where relevant, for the activity and relevant training in its safe use.

That may sound like a long and complex list but, given what we do, it really isn't very time-consuming. It is very important though.

If your interested please contact policies@berksfhs.org.uk



Windsor Branch Committee Member

At our recent Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch Annual Meeting the current committee members did agree to stand again, but we are always looking for extra committee members as new thoughts and ideas are most welcome.

Could you see yourself joining the WSM Branch committee? Most of the work can be done at home and we meet using Zoom. Please give this some consideration!

If you are interested or would like to know more please email:

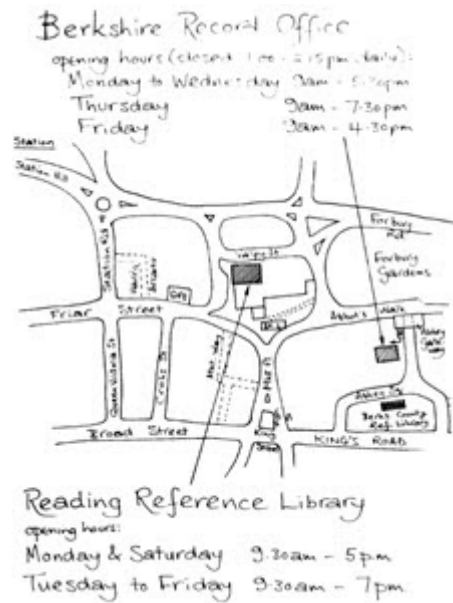
leigh.dworkin@berksfhs.org.uk



47 Years of the Historian

It's 47 years to the month since the publication of the first edition of Berkshire Family Historian and, thanks to the determined efforts of longstanding member Penny Stokes, the entire digital archive is now available on the web site. Penny has been steadfastly chipping away and there are 174 editions for you to browse.

The first edition is worth looking at, to see the story behind the society and how far our publishing capabilities have come. It was a slim edition of 16 pages with an impressively detailed handdrawn map of the location of the BRO and the Reading Reference Library - Google maps was long in the future!



You can access the archive through the Resources menu item, once you've logged into the website.

Thank you, Penny, for your hard work to create this important archive, to which we are adding future editions.

Events

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

War and Remembrance Social History Talks Series

13 October 14:00 - 15:30



10 November as above
08 December as above

The Centre for Heritage & Family History, Reading

This all series ticket covers all three talks in the “War and Remembrance 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 each 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.

[Thursday 13 October “The influence of Victorian Mourning on Reading Cemetery” with Anna Ellis](#)

The iconic landmark that is Reading Cemetery, on London Road, was established after an act of Parliament in 1842. The first burial took place a year later. Its design was based on London’s seven “garden cemeteries” and influenced by the writings of the landscape gardener John Claudius Loudon. This talk tells of the growth of the cemetery in the Victorian period, and the development of more flamboyant, ritualised forms of mourning after the death of Prince Albert in 1861.

[Thursday 10 November “Reading’s Home Guard” with Mike Cooper](#)

Formed in 1940, the Home Guard was part of a long list of voluntary and part-time formations raised for local defence. Despite the bumbling image created by the BBC classic “Dad’s Army”, the force emerged as a well-trained, well equipped and highly motivated part of Britain’s defences. Find out about Reading’s Home Guard in this fascinating talk.

[Thursday 8 December “Reading’s First World War Hospitals” with Lionel Williams](#)

Reading was one of the largest war hospital complexes during the First World War. It was based on Battle Hospital as War Hospital No. 1 and a number of schools and larger houses were taken over to accommodate the wounded. The main war hospitals were run by the military but many of the auxiliary hospitals

were run by the Red Cross. The first war hospital opened in 1914 and the last one closed in 1920. This is their story.

Tickets cost £12.50 (members £10)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



The Influence of Victorian Mourning on Reading Cemetery

Talk by Anna Ellis

13 October 14:00 - 15:30

The Centre for Heritage & Family History

The iconic landmark that is Reading Cemetery, on London Road, was established after an act of Parliament in 1842. The first burial took place a year later. Its design was based on London's seven "garden cemeteries" and influenced by the writings of the landscape gardener John Claudius Loudon.

This talk tells of the growth of the cemetery in the Victorian period, and the development of more flamboyant, ritualised forms of mourning after the death of Prince Albert in 1861.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)

Railway Records for Family Historians Workshop



Tutor: Richard Marks
15 October 11:00 - 13:00

The Centre for Heritage & Family History

Did your Ancestors work on the railways? Britain's railway history is complex and can be difficult to

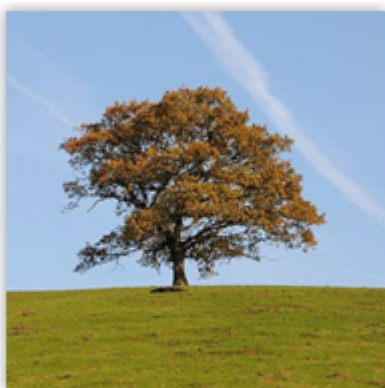
decipher.

In this workshop, we will unravel the history of the railway companies, from British Railways in the 1980s back to the first railway companies in the Victorian period. We will work through some sample railway documents to decipher what the railway language used within them means, and how they can be used by family historians to build their family histories. We will conclude by looking at where railway archives can be found and how they can be accessed.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Behind the scenes of Who Do You Think You Are?

**Online Combined Branch Meeting
with talk by Nick Barratt**
19 October 19:45 - 21:30

"Who Do You Think You Are?" was first aired on BBC in 2004 and since then well over 150 celebrities have been helped to trace their family tree. Sometimes with some very surprising results, but often uncovering poignant human-interest stories. More than ten international adaptations of the programme have now been produced.

Author, historian and broadcaster Nick Barratt was involved from the very first series. Using case studies from the show, he will take us 'behind the scenes' of

WDYTIA, explaining how the series was originally created and the impact that it's had on the way genealogy is presented in the media today. Nick will reveal how the programme changed its focus from ten stories about British social history in the first series, to an emotional journey of discovery that brought family history to a mainstream audience and explored the myth that it was just about collecting names of dead people. The media exposure, alongside the rise of the internet and platforms such as Ancestry and Findmypast, turned genealogy into something everyone could do, with implications we're still feeling today.

Free to members

We request a donation of £5 from non-members

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Family History Advice Clinic

20 October 11:-00 - 14:30

The Centre for Heritage & Family History

Just beginning your family history research and need some advice? Baffled by so many competing research websites? Banging your head against a brick wall? Or struggling with some other issues? In this one-to-one session, one of our seasoned advisors will help you make some progress.

There are three slots available:

11:00 - 11:30

11:45 - 12:30

13:45 - 14:30

Free to everyone but prebooking, no less than 7 days in advance, is required so that we can carry out some preliminary research

[Book now](#)

Greyfriars' Church, Reading, Tour

Tour Leader: Malcolm Summers
20 October 14:30 - 15:30

Meeting Point will be notified within booking process



Greyfriars Church in Reading is an Anglican Church and former Franciscan Friary. It is the oldest Franciscan church still in use as a place of worship in the UK and often described as the most complete surviving example of Franciscan architecture in England. After the dissolution of the friary, the site went through many uses including time as a house of correction and a hospital. Join us for a tour of this historic building led by historian Malcolm Summers and discover its history and development.

The tour will take about an hour. Places are limited, so pre-booking is required. Attendees will be notified of the meeting point and time, by email, approximately a week before the walk.

Image: Wikimedia Commons CC. 4.0

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)

A Potpourri of Social History Talks – Autumn Series

27 Oct 14:00 - 15:15



24 Nov as above
15 Dec as above

Online

This all-series ticket covers all three in the Autumn "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.

A Brief History of Reading Gaol

County Archivist Mark Stevens will explore the history of one of Reading's most iconic Victorian buildings – Reading Prison – from the Georgian period until its first closure in 1920. Find out about the separate system of 'hard labour, hard board and hard fare' that characterised the Victorian regime; before hearing about Oscar Wilde, some of the prison's executions and Reading's little-known role in the Easter Rising.

[Thursday 27 October "A Brief History of Reading Gaol" 2 – 3.15pm with Mark Stevens](#)

Huntley and Palmers

Huntley and Palmers were not only one of Reading's major employers but an institution within the town and a global brand familiar to many tables across the world. In this talk, find out how the company began, and why it grew to the huge corporation it became. Huntley and Palmer were a prime user of railways and used the great Reading's position as a transport hub to export its products across the globe, find out how in this talk. Our speaker, Richard Marks, will also explore what it was like to work for the company across the decades. A must for anyone whose ancestors worked in this iconic institution.

[Thursday 24 November "Huntley and Palmers" 2 – 3.15pm with Richard Marks](#)

The Murder of Alfred Oliver

The murder of Reading tobacconist Alfred Oliver, in Cross Street in 1929, remains unsolved to this day. Several witnesses saw a man near the shop at the time of the murder and later identified him as Philip Yale Drew, an American-born actor performing at Reading's County Theatre. The ensuing Coroner's Inquest, at which Drew was subjected to intensive questioning, divided opinion and attracted considerable crowds and controversy. Find out more in this

fascinating talk by David Downs.

[Thursday 15 December "The Murder of Alfred Oliver" 2 – 3.15pm with David Downs](#)

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

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Munition Workers in World War One - Workshop

Tutor: Richard Marks

12 Nov 11:00- 13:00

Online

The First World War was the first global conflict fought by industrialised nations. Each side was dependent upon a ready supply of munitions. Who were the people who worked in these factories and what did they do to support the men at the front?

In this workshop, we will look at where the munitions factories were and what people who worked in them did. We will consider working conditions and experiences, and what records may be available and where to find them.

Members: £9, non members: £10

Pre-booking is required because places are limited.

[Book now](#)

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

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