
in touch



Berkshire Family History Society
for family historians, wherever you are



Colourised image courtesy of Jim Bradshaw

Believe it or not, the banner image is chosen at random, unless there's a seasonal theme, so it's a complete coincidence that this week's features water like last time. The area has changed a lot. So, once again, you can have a hunt for it yourself. My best guess is [here](#) but do you agree? *The Mysterious Case of the Missing*

Leckhampstead Pond attracted some comment last time so we're going to develop that idea - see below.



We've featured heritage photos as the newsletter banner image for a while now, using the amazing collection colourised by Jim Bradshaw. A few months ago, lacking inspiration for that week's intro, I talked about how that week's location appears now through the miracle of Google StreetView.

That struck a chord with lots of you and we made it a regular feature. *The Mysterious Case of the Missing Leckhampstead Pond* caused a few of you to write in so we've decided to make more of it by also posting the week's image to the Community (Forum) and providing a link to it, so you can all see the feedback and share memories or theories.

Comment in the Community



UNESCO's World Book Day is celebrated on 23rd April, because it's the day several prominent authors, including William Shakespeare, died. The UK celebrates in March because of the clash with St George's Day, but our members are all over the world so we thought we'd follow UNESCO's date and provide you with some suggested reading.

[1. Jewish Ancestors? A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Germany & Austria](#)

The Guide includes detailed information about the holdings of the various resource centres including archives, libraries, museums, record offices, synagogues, etc.. for your German and Austrian ancestors. It is designed specifically with family historians in mind, whether or not a beginner.

P.S. Maybe look also at [Jewish Ancestors? A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in the United Kingdom](#) and [Tracing your Jewish Ancestors, A guide for Family Historians](#)

[2. Recollections of Shinfield, 'Those were the days!'](#)

Recollections of the early and mid 20th century village by six residents

[3. Abingdon, Ock Street Remembered](#)

This well illustrated book published by the Ock Street Heritage Group, describes the trades and people of this historic Abingdon thoroughfare. It also covers the social changes and key events that shaped the area.

PS Why not take a look at [Abingdon, Pride of Place - The Story of Abingdon's County Hall](#) ?

[4. The Family Historian's Enquire Within](#)

This evergreen standard reference work for family historians, gives clear and concise information on more than 1,000 entries giving explanations, definitions, dates, and useful websites.

[5. Didcot Revisited \(Images of England\)](#)

A photographic record of people and places in the town.

[6. A Beginners Guide to Irish Family History](#)

For those researching their Irish family history this book provides the basic guidance needed. It introduces the reader to techniques of research, guides to the use of archives, libraries and the internet, and suggests numerous research sources.

[7. Wallingford - 1155 and all that!](#)

A brief readable account of the story behind the Wallingford Charter - a handsome illustrated booklet of who, what and why.

[8. Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA](#)

This book provides an accessible, wide-ranging introduction to this subject, and offers a clear explanation and practical guide for family historians to DNA discoveries and their use in exploring our ancestry and their ethical and legal implications. 2019 Edition

[9. Taylor-Made Jackpot - sheep, horses, cats and dogs.](#)

This biography of Jack Taylor tells the story of the family history of himself and his wife, and who became a well known Reading bookmaker with interesting details of his horses and greyhounds.

[10. Methodist Records for Family Historians](#)

It does what it says on the tin! - giving a brief history of the Methodist movement; the location of Methodist Church archives; and other useful sources for locating the records of your Methodist ancestors



Coronation Closures

We're sure it goes without saying that The Centre will be closed on Coronation Day while we're glued to our TVs watching something that for many of us is a never-before seen event. I was exactly one day old when the previous King died so my recollections of the 1953 Coronation are non-existent.

So put down the research, grab the TV remote, break out the bunting, join a street party and celebrate the day in the style of the good old Queen Mum with a G&T.

We will also be closed on Monday 8th, as it's a bank holiday.



YourTrees To-Do List

We're delighted to announce another new feature of our free YourTrees service - a tailor-made To Do list.

If you've used the service or attended one of the workshops, you'll know that every family tree file you send to us is run through a data checker that finds and corrects as many data related issues as it can - things such as incorrect date format or incomplete addresses - but how can you correct those issues in your local copy? We could send you a Boomerang Tree but overwriting your existing tree entirely takes courage!

With immediate effect, when we run the data checker it will generate a report that we'll send you as a spreadsheet that can be opened in Excel, Numbers, Google Sheets and any other Excel compatible application. It will list all the issues we found and the changes we made. You won't have to request it - we'll send it by default. Then you can make the changes locally and send us a new GEDCOM file. We'll rerun the data checker just to make sure that you got 'em all.

192

No, it's not the number for UK Directory Enquiries!

It's the number of member trees in YourTrees - our free to members archive and collaboration tool

Find out more and join the club



AGRA Conference 8-9 September 2023
Downing College, Cambridge

AGRA's September Conference

The third conference of The Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA) takes place on 8-9 September 2023 and is open to the general public as well as to the AGRA membership. This year's event is being held at Downing College, Cambridge. Early-bird bookings made before 30 April receive a discount.

Find out more at:

<https://www.agra.org.uk/conference/>

Events

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

Drop In Advice Session

Tues 25 Apr 14:00 - 16:30
Bracknell Branch

Wokingham Library, Wokingham



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.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WOKINGHAM LIBRARY HAS MOVED TO:

Carnival Hub,
Wellington Road,
Wokingham,
RG40 2AF.

The entrance to the Centre is on the right of the building looking from the road.

[Find out more](#)



Researching at The National Archives

Wed 26 Apr 19:45 - 21:30

**Combined Branches' Meeting and Talk by
Jessamy Carlson**

Online

In this talk, Jessamy Carlson will introduce you to some of the resources available at The National Archives, including Discovery, the catalogue, research guides and some of the records held. She will also talk about some of the resources available from the collection through commercial partners, and answer questions about the collections.

Early booking is recommended.

Tickets cost £5 (members free)

Pre-booking is required

Book now



Potpourri of Social History Talks – Spring Series

Thu 27 Apr 14:00 - 15:15

Thu 25 May as above

Thu 22 Jun as above

Online

This all series ticket covers all three in the Spring “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. This is an online talks series using Zoom.

Reading in the Time of Jane Austen

Thu 27 Apr 14:00 - 15:15

Talk by Joy Pibworth

Jane Austen is perhaps Reading’s most famous past pupil. She spent 18 months at school at Reading Ladies Boarding School, in The Forbury, between the spring of 1785 and December 1786. Reading, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was becoming increasingly wealthy. This wealth is increasingly reflected in more and better facilities for shopping, education, town planning, leisure and entertainment. Discover more in this fascinating talk.

[Thursday 27 April “Reading in the Time of Jane Austen” 2 – 3.15pm with Joy Pibworth](#)

The History of the Gas Industry in Berkshire

Thu 25 May 14:00 - 15:15

Talk by Jo Alexander-Jones

From the 1820s, gas technology was being adopted as a lighting, and latterly heating and cooking, resource. This talk looks at the growth of the gas industry in Berkshire, using the Reading Gas Company as an example of how the industry developed, the locations it used, and the impact that gas had on the area’s population.

[Thursday 25 May “The History of the Gas Industry in Berkshire” 2 – 3.15pm with Jo Alexander-Jones](#)

A trip around the Inner Distribution Road in Reading – Before and Afterwards

Thu 22 Jun 14:00 - 15:15

Talk by Joe Doak and Graham Turner

The Inner Distribution Road (IDR) opened in 1969 as a radical solution to the regular build-up of traffic in the town centre. Its construction resulted in parts of old central Reading being demolished, changing the shape of the town forever. The talk will provide selective descriptions of some of the areas which were affected by the building of the IDR. This will make use of the photographic record produced by Doug Noyes of the before and after situation around Coley/Castle Street and the London Street/Queens Road area. Graham and Joe will highlight some of the key changes and discuss them in a Q&A session.

[Thursday 22 June “A trip around the Inner Distribution Road in Reading – Before and Afterwards” 2 – 3.15pm with Joe Doak & Graham Turner](#)

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

Pre-booking required

Book series now



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Online

Jane Austen is perhaps Reading's most famous past pupil. She spent 18 months at school at Reading Ladies Boarding School, in The Forbury, between the spring of 1785 and December 1786. Reading, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was becoming increasingly wealthy. This wealth is increasingly reflected in more and better facilities for shopping, education, town planning, leisure and entertainment.

Discover more in this fascinating talk.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking is required

[Book now](#)



May Natter Group

Tue 02 May 18:45 for 19:00

Discussion Group facilitated by: Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens

Online

Join in this online discussion from your own home, wherever 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](#)



House Histories Course

Fri 05 May 14:00 - 16:00

Fri 12 May as above

Tutor: Dr Margaret Simons

Online

Researching the history of a house can be both exciting and rewarding, revealing fascinating stories of those that lived there before you. Do you have a house that you are interested in knowing more about, have you come up against a dead end or do you just want to know how to approach the subject?

If so, then this online course with Margaret Simons will help you reveal people, dates, events and much more using familiar resources like the census, but also introduce

you to the less familiar such as the national Farm Survey, 'Modern Domesday', the 1910 Inland Revenue valuation survey, rate books, tithe records, local authority records, sales particulars and auction catalogues. You are welcome to bring your housing project to these sessions.

Two sessions: May 5th and 12th, both sessions 2 – 4pm

Week 1. Establishing what you know already and a starting point for your research. Identifying those records that will get you started.

Week 2. Where next? Using the facts and figures of our data collection as our base we will consider those sources that can help us to give context to our research and flesh out our house history.

Tickets cost £20 (members £18)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Quaker Family History

Wed 10 May 14:00 - 16:00

**Newbury Branch Annual Meeting and talk
with speaker: Simon Burbidge**

West Berkshire Museum, Newbury

Simon Burbidge has been using Quaker records in his own research back to the seventeenth century. They are more informative than parish registers of the established church. He also describes the administrative structure of Quakerism.

Simon has been a committee member of the Abingdon Branch of the society for several years and is a volunteer one day a week at Oxford History Centre, working with the conservation manager.

This talk is free to members of Berkshire Family History Society, and we request a donation of £5 from non-members.

[Find out more](#)

That was just a small selection from our extensive
events programme

[Click here for the full programme](#)

Our events routinely sell out -
book early to secure your place



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