

in touch



Harwell Cherry Pickers

Image colourised by Jim Bradshaw

Hi

This week, we're back with heritage images of historic Berkshire. Finding an isolated field in the area was out of the question so I decided to look into the local importance of cherry orchards. It seems Harwell was well known for this, according to [this article](#)

Next I thought about a date for the image. What date would *you* put on it? With no clues other than their attire I was unsure, and the image didn't have a date in the

caption, so I thought I'd give My Heritage's new [Photo Dater](#) tool a try. This is the latest in their lineup of image tools.

I uploaded it and waited for the result with bated breath, and the computer he say..... 1949? Hmm. Looks earlier than that to me?

Anyway, after our Heritage Open Day Special last time, were back to our normal fare of news and events and we kick off with the final batch of Banns downloads



New Marriage & Banns Data Downloads - Final Part

This week we bring you news of the final batch of new data downloads which can be purchased from our online shop.

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.

Marriage and Banns entries are presented in alphabetical and date order. If you're interested in a number of parishes, the Berkshire Marriages Fifth Edition CD may be better value.

- [Binfield All Saints Banns \(Download\) D1880](#)
- [Bray St Michael Banns \(Download\) D1881](#)
- [Farnborough All Saints Banns \(Download\) D1885](#)
- [Peasemore St Barnabas Banns \(Download\) D1891](#)
- [Purley St Mary Banns \(Download\) D1892](#)
- [Reading All Saints Banns \(Download\) D1893](#)
- [Reading St Giles Banns \(Download\) D1895 Part 1 of 3](#)
- [Reading St Giles Banns \(Download\) D1896 Part 2 of 3](#)
- [Reading St Mark Banns \(Download\) D1898](#)
- [Reading St Mary \(The Minster\) Banns \(Download\) D1899 Part 1 of 3](#)

[Reading St Mary \(The Minster\) Banns \(Download\) D1900 Part 2 of 3](#)

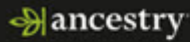
[Sulham St Nicholas Banns \(Download\) D1904](#)

[Theale Holy Trinity Banns \(Download\) D1905](#)

[Wargrave St Mary's Banns \(Download\) D1907](#)

[Wittenham, Little St Peter Banns \(Download\) D1908](#)

[Wytham All Saints Banns \(Download\) D1909](#)



UK and Allied Countries, World War II Liberated Prisoner of War Questionnaires, 1945-1946

Ancestry adds Second World War POW questionnaires

The family history company Ancestry has added a new collection, 'UK and Allied Countries, World War II Liberated Prisoner of War Questionnaires, 1945-1946', consisting of 83,560 records.

More than 360,000 British soldiers were taken prisoner by the German, Italian and Japanese armies during the Second World War.

The questionnaires were distributed to surviving POWs by the War Office Directorate of Military Intelligence after the end of the war.

They are held at The National Archives in record series WO 344 and were not previously published online.

The records can be searched by name and the complete digitised documents are available on Ancestry.

Those whose family members completed the questionnaire will find a treasure trove of poignant and thought provoking information confirming not just their personal details, but also details of their capture, the camps and hospitals at which they were held and the conditions in them. The questionnaires are marked as 'Top Secret'. The details potentially recorded include: service number; rank; name; details of any medals; name of ship (if in the Navy), unit and division (if in the Army) or squadron and command (if in the RAF); date of birth; date of enlistment; address and telephone number; profession before the war; place and date of capture; and the camps or hospitals in which he was held together with the names of the camp leaders. The POWs were questioned about their conditions in captivity, whether they were interrogated, any escape or sabotage attempts and whether they knew of any POWs who had collaborated with the enemy.

Search the database here:

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62114/>



Journal Exchanges

September rolls around and a new clutch of journals arrives in our inbox. Here they are:

Bradford FHS
Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire FHS
Hertfordshire FHS
Highland FHS
Hillingdon FHS
Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies
Lanarkshire FHS
Liverpool and SW Lancs FHS (*new*)
New Zealand Family History Society
Queensland FHS
Richmond-Tweed FHS
Society of Genealogists
Shropshire FHS
Suffolk FHS
Tasmanian FHS

You can view them here: [Journal Exchange - Berkshire Family History Society](#)

Berkshire Family Historian

*The quarterly journal of the
Berkshire Family History Society*



September 2023
Volume 47

ICYMI

September's edition of Berkshire Family Historian was the first to be offered in a digital only form to those who chose to go green. Over 200 of you have gone that route already. Did you know we've actually made the digital version available to everyone for several years? So if you're undecided whether to switch, why not take a look to see if it's for you too?

[Berkshire Family Historian - Berkshire Family History Society.](#)

If you like what you see and want to opt in to digital only you can do that here:

[My Membership Account - Berkshire Family History Society.](#)

(Scroll down, check the box and save)

Find your family.
Discover yourself.

Bring to life your family's history by exploring the
lives of those that came before you.



More records available for free at FamilySearch

The Family History website Familysearch has expanded its free online archives with 16.5 million new indexed family history records from 54 different countries, including

a worldwide membership census for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Over 11 million records were added for France, Russia, and the United States in particular. Good news if your ancestors have migrated around the world.

Search here:

[Find your family. Free Genealogy Archives • FamilySearch](#)



College of St George, Windsor - Maurice & Shelagh Bond Memorial Lecture

This year's annual Maurice and Shelagh Bond Memorial Lecture is on Wednesday 18th October at 7pm at St George's Chapel, Windsor. It will also be simultaneously live streamed on Zoom. Admission is free, by named ticket only, and face-to-face attendees will also need to bring photo ID to be admitted to the Chapel.

The speaker is the eminent Windsor historian Dr David Lewis on "King Henry VIII's Reformation in Windsor: the Symonds family and the Windsor Martyrs of 1543". The talk focuses on three men burned in the sixteenth century, by people from St George's Chapel and a townsman called William Symonds. Symonds was an inn-keeper, but a rich one, his money coming from his father, the first specifically beer brewer in Windsor, when beer was a new, fashionable drink of the late fifteenth century. It eventually replaced traditional ale. The talk contains considerable family

history research, and shows the links between the Symonds of Windsor and their descendants, H & G Simonds, the famous Reading brewers.

Find out more and book your face-to-face or online ticket at:

[Maurice and Shelagh Bond Memorial Lecture WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2023 - 7pm - College of St George](#)



Historic England Aerial Photograph Library

Historic England's online aerial photograph collection has now grown to over 400,000 images, following the addition of 20,000 photographs captured by reconnaissance aircraft over England during the Second World War. The newly digitised images show airfields, military bases, towns, and countryside in England between 1943 and 1944. The website is free to use although permission must be sought to use any of the images for commercial use.

The digitised content is however still a fraction of the more than six million aerial photographs held by Historic England, and with new collections regularly added - this is a good site to add to your favourites.

You can search the collection by typing in a place name or by clicking on a map of England. It's easy to use and images can be enlarged to drill down into the details.

Search it here:

[Aerial Photo Explorer – Over 400,000 aerial photos in Historic England's digitised collections | Historic England](#)

Events

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



The Origins of Camp Hopson

Wed 13 Sep 14:00 - 16:00

Newbury Branch Meeting with talk by Jonathan Hopson

West Berkshire Museum

Camp Hopson is the department store based in the heart of Newbury, located at [6-12 Northbrook Street](#).

Join Jonathan Hopson as he takes us through a brief history of the Camp & Hopson families and shows how the two families relate to Joseph Hopson & Sons, Alfred Camp's Drapery Bazaar and Camp Hopson & Company Limited from 1851 to the present day.

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

Booking not required

[Find out more](#)



Family History – why it matters

Wed 13 Sep 19:30 - 21:30

Talk by Chris Broom

Online

'Family History, why it matters', promotes the numerous benefits of family history research, while also encouraging attendees to reflect on the unique sequence of events leading to their own birth, the many challenges faced by their ancestors and the importance of documenting their own lives.'

This is the talk postponed from our society Annual General Meeting in June.

Tickets cost £5 (free to members).

Pre-booking required.

[Book now](#)



Drop In Advice Session

Thu 14 Sep 14:00 - 17:00

Bracknell Central Library

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 for everyone

[Find out more](#)

The History of Purley's River Estate

Thu 14 Sep 14:00 - 15:30

Talk with speaker: Catherine Sampson



The Centre for Heritage & Family History

One of only two large inter-war plotland sites in Berkshire, Purley's River Estate has a significant history. It began life in 1935 as a holiday destination suitable for camping and caravanning in usually idyllic former parkland by the Thames. However, very soon many of the plots gained more permanent accommodation, particularly after war broke out in

1939. Entrepreneurship thrived, resulting in a multitude of private businesses and shops over the years, as did a strong community spirit.

This talk is accompanied by lots of images of the estate and its people, including its famous range of adapted dwellings such as railway carriages and buses.

This is the final of three talks in the Houses & Estates Talks Series.

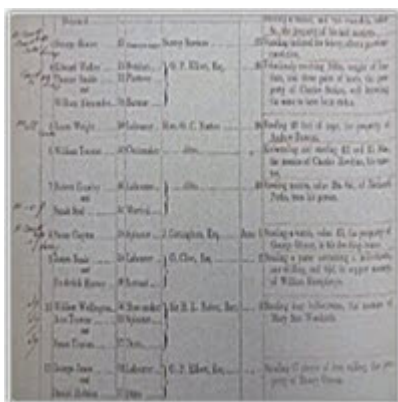
After the talk, tea/coffee and cake will be available (included in the price).

Pre-booking is recommended, but you can pay on the door if there are spaces available.

Members £4

Non-members £5

[Book now](#)



Family History – the dark side

Fri 15 Sep 14:45 - 16:30

**Bracknell Branch Meeting with speaker:
Katie Amos**

The New Priestwood Community Centre

Using examples from her own family tree Katie explores the more roguish members of her family and discusses the sources that can be used to find out more about them.

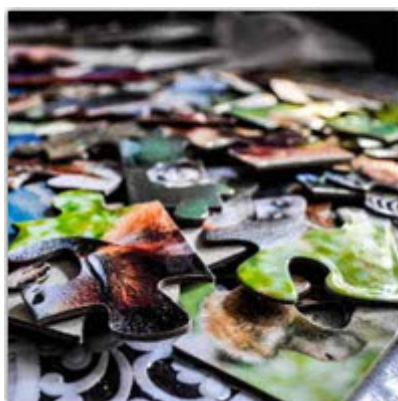
This talk is free to members of Berkshire Family History Society and we request a

donation of £5 from non-members.

Branch library available to members to borrow books. Refreshments available. Car park outside the hall.

Booking is not required

[Find out more](#)



Who Do I Think I Am?

Sat 16 Sep 12:00 - 13:00

Talk with with speaker: Catherine Sampson

The Centre for Heritage & Family History

Discovering our back story

This talk is part of Berkshire Family History Society's programme of activities to celebrate the annual Heritage Open Days across Britain.

Are you interested in tracing your family tree? Discover how to research, what types of records are available and how to interpret them. The talk is interspersed with humorous and poignant stories of ancestors encountered along the way and their stories. Speaker, Catherine Sampson, will share some of her own back story. This includes war heroes, pioneers, an early Union activist and aspiring politician, smugglers, criminals and a murderer. And it takes us to the coal mines of the North-East, London's dockyards, the fields of Cambridgeshire, the Suffolk coast, the prairie lands of Canada and the battlefields of the First World World.

It is free to attend, and pre-booking is recommended as numbers are limited. You may just turn up on the day though – subject to availability.

If you are inspired to get going, the Research Centre will be open that day from 10.30am to 2.30pm.

[Book now](#)



The Remarkable Life of Olive Gibbs

Mon 18 Sep 19:30 - 21:45

Abingdon Branch Meeting with talk by Liz Woolley

Long Furlong Community Centre

Olive Gibbs was born in the 'tough but full-blooded' parish of St. Thomas's in West Oxford in 1918. She went on to become a redoubtable local Labour politician, peace campaigner, and founding member of CND. During her long political career she helped to stop the building of an inner relief road through Christ Church Meadow, prevented the mass clearance of housing in Jericho and was instrumental in the demolition of the infamous Cutteslowe Walls. She protested against the Spanish Civil War with Denis Healey and later led anti-nuclear marches with Marc Bolan, Joan Baez and Donovan.

In this talk we will learn more about Olive's extraordinary life and legacy.
Large Free Car Park adjacent to hall.

Free to members.

We request a donation of £5 from non-members.

[**Book now**](#)



Face-to-Face Family History Advice Clinic

Thu 21 Sep 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.

To make the most of your session our advisors will carry out some preliminary research beforehand, and for that we need you provide us with some information please:

- **to tell us what you've done so far**
- **describe the nature of the problem**
- **attach copies of any key documents such as BMD certificates, research notes**
- **if possible, provide a link to a family tree we can view (members – if your tree has been uploaded to YourTrees, that would be perfect) or at least attach a copy of a hand drawn tree of the immediate family of the people you're researching**

For members and non-members of Berkshire Family History Society.

Free.

Pre-booking required.

[Book now](#)

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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Berkshire Family History Society
The Centre for Heritage & Family History
2nd Floor, Reading Central Library
Abbey Square, Reading

Berkshire, RG1 3BQ, UK

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