



Berkshire Family History Society
in touch

50th Anniversary Conference
7 Jun - Wokefield Place
[Click here for details and to book](#)



Snowdrops at Welford Park

Hi friend

As the snowdrops are appearing up here where I live near Hadrian's Wall, I thought it would be an idea to reprise this photo which last appeared in one of our earliest newsletters five years ago.

Have you booked your 50th Anniversary Conference ticket yet? Click the banner at the top of the page to view our conference pages, where you can find out more about the venue, the speakers and the other special events we have planned through the year. and book your tickets. The early bird deal is still available.





We have some more exchange journals to share with you:

- Alberta Genealogical Society
- Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire FHS
- Glasgow & West of Scotland FHS
- Highland FHS
- Queensland FHS
- Shropshire FHS

[View on line](#)



Berkshire on Film

Wessex Film and Sound Archive (WFSA) is the regional film archive for Berkshire and holds over 38,000 historic film and sound items relating to the region.

WFSA and the Royal Berkshire Archives have joined together at the Reading Biscuit Factory on Thursday 17 April, 7:30-9pm, to show a screening of archive film from this fantastic historic collection. The event features an introduction from Rosemary Everitt (Royal Berkshire Archives) and commentary from local historian, David Cliffe. Screening will be followed by Q&A.

It includes footage from Newbury, Reading, Windsor, Slough, Wargrave, Sonning, Datchet, Bray, Cookham, Bracknell and Wokingham.

The event will be held at the Reading Biscuit Factory and tickets can be booked via the Reading Biscuit Factory website:



A Year of Extremes - 1809 in Sutton Courtenay

Those with ancestors from Sutton Courtenay or its surrounding parishes will probably be interested in the latest update from the Royal Berkshire Archives.

Sandwiched between the pages of one of Sutton Courtenay's parish registers is a curious note by the Curate, I. W. Batcheler, which throws light on the extreme weather conditions our ancestors would have experienced in January 1809. And more extremes were to follow later in the year.

Read more here:

<https://www.royalberkshirearchives.org.uk/news/article/flooding-extreme>



2025 - A Year of anniversaries

2025 will see us mark the 80th anniversary of both VE and VJ Day. The Society has events planned to commemorate both important milestones, and you can find out

more and book your place at the first of these via our website now:

<https://berksfhs.org/events/ve-day-anniversary-lunch-and-talk>

This year, we are also offering a new online course led by Dr Richard Marks on the secret work of World War Two. Focusing mostly on Bletchley Park and the work undertaken there, the course will also look at how Bletchley fitted into British intelligence and how it worked alongside organisations such as SOE, MI6 and the American OSS in Europe, North Africa and the Far East. It begins on Friday 25th April and runs for four weeks. Find out more at:

<https://berksfhs.org/events/britain-listening-how-bletchley-park-helped-win-world-war-2>



Discussion Group

Mon 17 Feb 19:30 - 21:30

**Abingdon Branch Meeting
with the members**

Long Furlong Community Centre

This evening is designed to encourage open discussion about family history research. Whether you have hit a brick wall and need some advice or have made a remarkable discovery, this is the evening to share in a small informal gathering.

Free to members but we request a donation of £5 from non-members.

Find out more

More tools for Family History



Wed 19 Feb 19:30 - 21:30

**Computer Branch Meeting
and talk by Chad, Gillian and Tony
Online**

What tools do you use that are not directly related to family history? We want to hear from you! What programs or websites do you use for enhancing or colouring your images? We'll take a look at MyHeritage's web site does for you. Do you or can you use Google Lens to do a reverse image search? What have you found out? Social media is in a state of flux at the moment, X (formerly Twitter) seems to be on the way out, Bluesky seems to be the 'in thing'. Why are some people using Mastodon and what is the Fediverse?

Pre-booking is required. This talk is free to members but we request a donation of £5 from non-members.

Book



**Where there's a Will
there's usually an argument**

Fri 21 Feb 14:45 - 16:30

**Bracknell Branch Meeting
and talk by Sue Ellis
The New Priestwood Community Centre,**

This talk looks at the Wills process – what a Will is, what a testament is, and what an administration means, and for those working with older Wills, what you can expect to find and how to translate the, often obscure, text. It also looks at what information it contains to understand more about your ancestors, including family arguments or disputes! It is illustrated with actual examples of Wills, mainly from my own research.

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

Find out more



St Michael the Archangel Church, Warfield

Sat 22 Feb 10:30 - 11:30

Tour Guide: Rob Entwistle

Meeting Point will be notified within booking process

Join Rob Entwistle for a tour of the inside and outside of this amazingly interesting church that charts its origins back to 1016 AD when Queen Emma granted permission for an old Saxon chapel to be built. The present North Aisle is the oldest part of the present church, probably built in the 12th century. It still retains the old 'Devil's Door', kept open during christenings to let out the banished evil spirits. The tower is 13th century and the nave, including the roof, is 14th century. Tour will last at least 60 minutes, and may be up to 90 minutes.

Image: Andrew Smith, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons (cropped)

Tickets cost £5 (members £4). Pre-booking required as numbers are limited.

Book



Getting the most out of your Membership - Workshop

Mon 24 Feb 19:00 - 21:00

**Online workshop Catherine Sampson and
Vanessa Chappell**

Are you a relatively new member of the Society and now want to get the most out of your membership? Join this informal workshop by Zoom which introduces you to the range of benefits that is now have available.

Open only to members of Berkshire Family History Society. Assistance will be given to members who are new to joining Zoom meetings. Free to attend, but pre-booking is required.

Book



Drop In Advice Session

Tue 25 Feb 14:00 - 16:30

Wokingham Library

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

For ALL family historians wherever your ancestors came from.

Find out more



Researching and writing the Mourning Brooch Trilogy

**Windsor Branch meeting with speaker
Jean Renwick**

Tue 25 Feb 19:30 - 21:30

Online

Historical fiction series The Mourning Brooch (Books 1-2) follows daughters of a Doncaster farmer's wife from 1849-1913, commemorated in the mourning brooch. Family history societies in Doncaster, Bradford, Liverpool, and South-West Lancashire provided research support, and by presenting to Berkshire Family Society she hopes to get valuable feedback and sharing of knowledge.

This talk is free to members but we request a donation of £5 from non-members.
Pre-booking required

Book



Putting Berkshire on the Map

Talk with speaker John Leighfield CBE MA

Thu 27 Feb 14:00 - 15:15

Online

Maps allow us to better identify where our ancestors lived and worked and the local environment in which they spent the vast majority of their time.

If you like maps – this is one not to miss. John will talk about the history of mapping with particular emphasis on Berkshire, beginning with Matthew Paris' map of Britain c. 1250 and finishing with Google and modern mapping. He will explore the various reasons why maps were commissioned and how best to interpret them.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4). Pre-booking required

Book

That was just a small selection from our extensive
events programme



Our events often sell out so please book early to avoid
disappointment

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