



Berkshire Family History Society

in touch



Chieveley

Image colourised by Jim Bradshaw

Hi friend

This view of [Chieveley](#) took about 30 seconds to find because the village remains small. The name will be familiar to those hurtling north and south on the A34 and east and west on the M4 because the services are named for the village, are about the same size, but very busy, in stark contrast to the sleepy village!

NEWS



Exchange Journals

We have another bumper crop of exchange journals this week:

- British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa
- Bucks FHS
- Calderdale FHS
- Dyfed FHS
- East Yorkshire FHS
- Family History WA (4 back copies)
- Glasgow & West of Scotland FHS (plus back copies for Mar and Jul 2024)
- Herefordshire FHS
- Society of Australian Genealogists
- South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society

[View on website](#)



Who Do You Think You Are? 2025

The family history TV programme Who Do You Think You Are? Is due to return to BBC in the spring and the new line up of celebrities has just been announced.

Celebrities including BAFTA-winning actor Andrew Garfield and chart-topping pop star Will Young will trace their family history in this year's series of Who Do You Think You Are?

The new series will follow eight celebrities as they discover their family stories around the world and across 800 years of history. These being: BAFTA-winning actor Andrew Garfield, pop star Will Young, actor and journalist Ross Kemp, comedian Diane Morgan (aka Philomena Cunk), journalist and Today programme presenter Mishal Husain, comedian and actor Aisling Bea, reality star Fred Sirieix and actor and singer Layton Williams.

[Find out more](#)



Free Access to the 1939 Register

Family history website Findmypast has announced it is offering free access to the 1939 Register until 9 May 2025 as part of celebrations of the 80th anniversary of VE Day, or the end of the war in Europe.

The 1939 Register was conducted by the British government on 29 September 1939, soon after the start of the war. It is a complete record of the civilian population of Britain at the time. It includes the records of over 45 million people. Similar to a census, it records who lived at each house, as well as details such as their date of birth, marital status and occupation.

Search the register [here](#)



Easter Closures

The Centre for Heritage and Family History

The Centre will be closed on Easter Monday 21 April 2025 and again on the Early May Bank Holiday, 5 May 2025.

Royal Berkshire Archives (RBA)

The RBA will be closed for Good Friday 18 April 2025 and Easter Monday 21 April 2025. They will reopen at 9am on Tuesday 22 April 2025. If you plan to visit on 22 April, please aim to book by 4.30pm Thursday 17 April 2025.

We will not be able to process any enquiries until we reopen so please bear this in mind if you contact us over the Easter weekend.



Backup and Archive 2

Wed 16 Apr 19:30 - 21:30

**Computer Branch Meeting and talk by
Chad Hanna and Tony Wright**

Online

Have you copied your precious files to a backup since the January meeting? What problems have you had?

Chad previously explained the problems he had with his backups taking too long. Has he found a solution?

Chad will talk about his experiences with his Western Digital MyCloud Duo that sits in his house. He will explain how he can access it securely from his mobile phone and laptop computer when he's away from home. The Berkshire Family History Society has its own cloud system provided by Synology and Tony Wright should be able to tell us more about that. You NEED a backup, it needs to happen regularly, it needs to work, and you need to be able to recover from it.

We'll focus on Microsoft Windows but contributions about other systems will be welcome (please let us know beforehand if possible).

How have you tackled these challenges? We want to hear from you!

Free to members (non-members £5). Pre-booking is essential.

Book



Spring Potpourri Talks Series

Thu 24 Apr 14:00 - 15:15

Thu 22 May 14:00 - 15:15

Thu 26 Jun 14:00 - 15:15

Online

This all series ticket covers all three talks 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.

The talks last about an hour with time for questions and discussion afterwards.

Thursday 24 April “Ratcatchers”: 2 – 3.15pm with David Cufley

The 19th century saw a rapid rise in urbanisation, often resulting in overcrowding and congestion. This not only made things difficult for humans, but created an enticing environment for rodents. Rats threatened food supply and carried a potential risk of disease. As a result, and to combat this, a new profession arose – the rat catcher. This new industry was highly sought after, and in turn gave rise to modern rodent control. Speaker David Cufley will describe how the ratcatchers plied their trade and earned their money, including sporting events involving rats that took place in pubs.

Thursday 22 May “Stories from Berkshire’s Graveyards”: 2 – 3.15pm with Catherine Sampson

Berkshire’s graveyards are packed with history and stories. We begin with a virtual visit to a typical churchyard to examine its layout and the features which were common across the county. Our stroll through the county’s burial grounds then takes take us to Basildon, Maidenhead, Longcot, Bisham and Cholsey, as we discover the cemeteries there and the occupants who link us to some of the more poignant local and national tragedies of the past hundred and fifty years. This will include victims of the sinking of the Lusitania and the Titanic, and their stories. Plus, the possible murder victim of a notorious blackmailer of Britain’s wealthier classes.

Thursday 26 June “Coffers, Clysters, Comfrey and Coifs: the lives of our C17th ancestors”: 2 – 3.15pm with Dr Janet Few

‘Why do you need a bum roll?’ ‘What colour were carrots in the seventeenth century?’ ‘Can you think of 47 uses for urine?’

Supplying the answers to the above (well, maybe not all 47 uses), this talk is a light-hearted but informative insight into the domestic life of our seventeenth century ancestors. Our speaker, Dr Janet Few, is an experienced and qualified family, social and community historian who lectures regularly on these subjects throughout the UK and overseas.

Book



Just A Job: Revitalising Your Family History With Occupational Research

Thu 24 Apr 19:45 - 21:00
**Reading Branch Meeting with speaker Dr
Sophie Kay**
The Church of Jesus Christ of the LDS, Tilehurst

How many hours of your life have you spent working?

Housing, income, leisure time: our occupation has the power to shape so many aspects of our existence – and that wasn't so different for our ancestors either. Delving into occupational research can offer marvellous insights into an individual's life story and the choices they made. The jobs of our forebears could shape the houses they lived in, dictate the timing of daily life, and cause potentially fatal maladies. In this session, we'll harness the power of digital resources and physical archives to expand and strengthen our family history research. We'll also explore occupational stories from some familiar – and not-so-familiar – jobs to see how the demands and hazards of the workplace influenced workers' lives, with examples ranging from medieval times through to the Victorian era.

Including historical nuggets to fascinate and delight, attendees will gain valuable insights into bygone trades and an action plan for how to enrich their family history through occupational research.

Free to members (non-members £5).

Find out more



Using Newspapers in Historical Research

Fri 25 Apr 14:45 - 16:30
**Bracknell Branch meeting with speaker
Denise Bates**
The New Priestwood Community Centre, Bracknell

Newspapers contain fascinating, and sometimes forgotten family history detail. This talk looks at what type of information may be available, search techniques for locating it without wasting time, and ensuring that it does relate to a member of your family. The presentation also considers ways to interpret discoveries, hopefully helping the reader to understand something about the times in which their ancestor lived.

Free to members (non-members £5).

Find out more



Britain Listening
How Bletchley Park helped win WWII
Fri 25 Apr 19:00 - 21:00
with tutor Dr Richard Marks
Online

Bletchley Park was a typical British country house and estate in Buckinghamshire which few had heard of until the early 1990s. Yet, it was a key part in the allied victory over the Axis Powers during World War 2. Only recently has the true story of the work of the people there been able to be told.

The site was a key part of allied code breaking, but also so much more. The birth of computing which transformed the world during the postwar period started at Bletchley. As did the British electronics industry. Plus, major sea changes in global telecommunications which we are so reliant on in the twenty-first century.

In this course, historian Dr. Richard Marks will take you on a journey through the history of the 'Government Code & Cypher School'. You will discover what was done there, and the people who did it. The course will also look at how Bletchley fitted into British intelligence and worked alongside organisations such as SOE, MI6 and the American OSS in Europe, North Africa and the Far East.

Find out what 'The Bombe', 'Lorenz', 'Ultra' were, and who some of the unknown people working in the shadows were.

This is a four week online course with sessions on: April 25th, May 2nd, May 9th & May 16th, All sessions run from 7 – 9pm.

Tickets £36 (non-members £40)

Book the course

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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