

Keeping in touch

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in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



Farmer leading horse-drawn wagon loaded with harvested wheat - West Woodhay

Cropped Image courtesy of

The Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, Dann-Lewis Collection *P DX289 PH1/442B*

Pore over 19th Century UK Census forms for Berkshire and you will soon become familiar with the occupation 'Ag Lab' - so prevalent that the enumerators probably couldn't bear to write it out longhand!

I'm not and never have been a Berkshire resident but on a recent visit to the villages in the part of Berkshire 'annexed' to Oxfordshire in 1974, where my ancestors originated, I saw that farming still dominates the landscape. The Ag Labs though have been replaced with black Labs and 4x4's in the now gentrified

rural villages.

So while we'll continue to feature commercial activities from the MERL catalogue, we're also going to include some agricultural items too - we start with this image from West Woodhay in the west of the county.

Elsewhere, we've another nineteen marriage downloads for you, details of more indexes available online and half a dozen events, including advance notice of a rather special one in April - a combined branch meeting from all six of our branches. Enjoy!

News



Civil records from France now online at MyHeritage

Family history website MyHeritage have added two major record sets to their website - 6.7 million births 1820-1915 and 6.9 million deaths 1820-1835. Whilst these records are available on other websites, the MyHeritage collections includes extra information. For example the child's birthplace, both parents' names and the mother's maiden name.

<https://www.myheritage.com/>

Certificates bring your search to life with unique and sometimes unexpected information about your ancestors

Get certificates from just £11.00 direct from the General Register Office, the official source of birth, marriage & death certificates for the whole of England and Wales since 1837

Order certificates online at www.gro.gov.uk



Find your Scottish ancestors

The General Register Office & ScotlandsPeople update their online civil registration indexes

Normally at the end of each year the General Register Office (GRO) will add the birth records for 100 years ago to their index. However, at the end of 2020 the GRO took the unusual step of adding birth records from 1920 up to 1934. The index can be used to order a copy of the original birth registration, but the 1920 - 1934 births are not yet available as PDFs. The new additions have an advantage over the indexes currently available on other sites - they include the child's middle name, but sadly not yet the mother's maiden name.

The GRO also covers the years 1984 to 2019, but family historians will need to use freebmd.org.uk or subscription sites for the years not covered.

ScotlandsPeople has also been updated, adding records of 136,546 births from 1920, 48,728 marriages from 1945, and 64,943 deaths from 1970.

<https://www.gro.gov.uk>

<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>



[See page for author, CC BY 4.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

Wiltshire Nonconformist records now on Ancestry

Family history website Ancestry has recently added a new collection of 229,276 nonconformist records from Wiltshire covering the period 1810 to 1987.

The records include baptisms, marriages and burials and include entries from the registers of Methodist, Baptist, Quaker, Presbyterian, Congregational and Catholic places of worship. In addition, there are also the surviving rolls of members for some churches, which can provide valuable evidence of residence and profession, as well as the date they were admitted to the church, for those members.

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>



Gardener Ancestors?

Many of us have professional gardeners in our family tree, perhaps not surprising given that gardening was one of the top twenty occupations for men and boys in the late 19th century. The 1851 census contains details of around 88,000 paid gardeners and numbers grew to a peak of just under 300,000 in 1931.

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has now produced a handy online guide to help family historians. The guide breaks down the main types of gardener and explains how to use the RHS collections and resources to find out more about your gardening ancestors.

Check it out at:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/library-services/researching/library-guides-publications/gardening-ancestors>



Marriage Data Downloads - Third batch

As a reminder, we have developed data downloads to provide choice and flexibility in how you access data for Berkshire. Each download is in PDF format and your purchase is automatically fulfilled as soon as you have paid. Terms and conditions apply and these downloads are for your personal use only. Prices vary but start from just £2.00. The usual member discounts apply.

Marriage entries are presented in date order, and there is also a “by person” finding aid to assist your use of the download. Berkshire’s marriages are also available in CD format. If you're interested in a number of parishes, also check out [Berkshire Marriages Edition Four CD](#), likewise, individual [Parish CDs](#) also exist. So check out what best suits your needs.

[Beedon St Nicholas Marriages 1607-1935 \(Download\) D1477](#)
[Bisham All Saints Marriages 1560-1836 \(Download\) D1481](#)
[Chieveley St Mary Marriages 1560-1837 \(Download\) D1498](#)
[Cookham Holy Trinity Marriages 1563-1837 \(Download\) D1507](#)
[Cumnor St Michael Marriages 1559-1935 \(Download\) D1512](#)
[Grazeley Holy Trinity Marriages 1850-1935 \(Download\) D1523](#)
[Hanney, West St James the Great Marriages 1564-1837 \(Download\) D1527](#)
[Reading Monthly Meeting \(Quakers\) Marriages 1801-1835 \(Download\) D1254](#)
[Reading St Mary \(Castle Street\) Marriages 1914-1935 \(Download\) D1361](#)
[Reading St Mary Minster Marriages 1538-1819 \(Download\) D1362 \(Part 1 of 3\)](#)
[Reading St Mary Minster Marriages 1820-1879 \(Download\) D1573 \(Part 2 of 3\)](#)
[Reading St Mary Minster Marriages 1880-1935 \(Download\) D1574 \(Part 3 of 3\)](#)
[Sotwell St James Marriages 1606-1835 \(Download\) D1380](#)
[Sulham St Nicholas Marriages 1607-1935 \(Download\) D1390](#)
[Sulhamstead Bannister St Michael Marriages 1607-1837 \(Download\) D1392](#)
[Windsor Castle Royal Free Chapel of St. George Marriages 1627-1856 \(Download\) D1459](#)
[Winterbourne St James the Less Marriages 1565-1837 \(Download\) D1465](#)
[Wittenham, Little St Peter Marriages 1539-1935 \(Download\) D1466](#)
[Yattendon St Peter & St Paul Marriages 1559-1932 \(Download\) D1474](#)



Look out for *DNA Family Secrets* on BBC Two

Starts Tuesday 2nd March at 9pm

available afterwards on iPlayer

DNA testing has become hugely popular in recent years, particularly with family historians. In a new four-part series, presented by Stacey Dooley, BBC Two explores what happens when ordinary Britons with a burning question about their family, health or ancestry take a DNA Test. Whether it's diagnosing mystery conditions, discovering unknown relatives or exploring long held family secrets, the results that they receive will have the power to change their lives.

Partnering with the internationally-renowned genetics team at the University of Leicester (where genetic fingerprinting was discovered, and who uncovered remains of Richard III) and senior scientists at King's College London, the four-part series attempts to seamlessly weave emotional human stories with universally relevant science.

Find out more at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000sthc/episodes/guide>

Events

Our events programme is exclusively online -
so join us - wherever you are



Keeping Up With FamilySearch

**Windsor Branch Meeting with
Speaker: Sharon Hintze
23 Feb 19:15 for 19:30**

Keeping Up With FamilySearch is a review of resources available on FamilySearch, some familiar and others not.

It will highlight:

- how to get the most of out of the world's largest genealogical record collection
- how to search effectively
- how valuable a resource FamilyTree is for everyone.

Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now

Mum and Dad's Story: 1918-1945

**Reading Branch Meeting with
speaker: Mark Bowman
25 Feb 19:15 for 19:45**



Mark shares the personal story of his parents lives in the first half of the 20th century.

This talk deals with their infancy and schooling, their first jobs, how and where they met, and the effects that World War 2 had on their lives. Mum and Dad were both born at the end of WW1. Fate brought them together on the dance

floor soon after WW2 broke out; the war dominated their early time together and then forced them apart for nearly four years soon after their marriage. Mum worked in Central London during the Blitz, and her place of work was completely destroyed in the second Great Fire of London. Arguably a more dangerous war than Dad's.

Dad joined the RAF and went to Egypt the long way (from Liverpool round the North of Ireland to Gibraltar, and then to Cairo via Freetown, Durban and the Red Sea) zigzagging to avoid U-boats. His accounts talk mainly about playing in dance bands rather than the discomforts and dangers he faced. Luckier than many, they both survived the war and lived well into the 21st century.

Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now



March Natter Group

**Facilitated by Chad Hannah and
Gillian Stevens**

02 Mar 18:45 for 19:00

Join in this online discussion from your own home, wherever where 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 attend, but pre-booking required. Booking ends one day beforehand.

Book now

The arrival of the railways in Reading

Speaker: Richard Marks

06 Mar 14:00 - 15:15

Brunel's Great Western Railway arrived in Reading on the 30th March 1840. The history of railway building states that railways destroyed property when the railways were built, and always resulted in huge economic growth for those towns it reached, but was this true in Reading? In this talk, historian Richard Marks, will look at the impact the railway had on the town when it arrived, and how this compared to other places. We will also look at how the first train service compared to the service Reading enjoys today.



This is the final talk of five in the Winter Potpourri of Social History Talks Series

£4 members - £5 non-members. Pre-booking required.

[Book now](#)



Beginners' Family History Course

Tutors: Gillian Stevens and Chad Hanna

16 Mar 14:00 - 15:30

This course comprises of six sessions: Tuesdays – 16th, 23rd & 30th March and 6th, 13th & 20th April.

All sessions run from 2pm – 3.30pm.

The course is aimed at those new to researching family history and includes where to start, how to progress and good research practice. Learn how to work with core records of civil registration, censuses, parish registers and modern wills. Discover the different genealogy websites, the content they offer and their strengths and limitations.

This is also a good refresher for those who want to make sure they have covered all bases.

£28 members - £35 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now

The Lloyd George Domesday and National Farm Surveys Combined Branches' Special Meeting with Speaker: Gill Blanchard 14 Apr 19:15 for 19:45



Discover what the Inland Revenue Valuation Survey and National Farm Survey were, how they can be of use to house historians, local historians and family historians; where to find records and how to use them.

Taking its nickname from the Chancellor of the time, the Domesday Survey, or the Inland Revenue Valuation Office Survey as it was officially known, is a fantastic resource for house historians, social historians, and genealogists. The National Farm Survey was undertaken as a means of improving productivity during the war. The result was an in-depth analysis of 300,000 agricultural holdings.

Free to members - £3 non-members. Pre-booking required.

Book now

These are just a few examples from our extensive

events programme....

... [click here for the full programme](#)

Our 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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