
in touch

Berkshire Family History Society



from Douai Abbey Archives, Woolhampton

Image © Catherine Sampson



We've had a week of glorious sunshine and last Monday saw the relaxation of the final rules in England.

While you're out, perhaps you could take some photos of Berkshire places, landmarks or miscellanea? We're always looking for good photos to use for the **in touch** banner image. Landscape layout is needed, preferably without people, and a blue sky is always better than the classic British overcast! Photos can be from any era and if you submit a black and white one, we'll have a go at colorizing it - so why not look through your archive?

Email them to webmaster@berksfhs.org.uk



The Projects & Publications team is in need of some extra help from someone who has experience with MySQL

The Society transcribes parish registers into Excel spreadsheets which are then loaded into mySQL databases from which we produce reports that form the basis of our CDs. Periodically, we then upload some of this data to Findmypast.

We are looking for someone with mySQL skills to take on the task of uploading new data to Findmypast. The tasks include:

- Reformat the data to match FMP requirements and our previous submissions.
- Filter out events less than 100 years old (baptisms), 85 years old (marriages & banns), 50 years old (burials).
- Filter out events for parishes which have not given permission for online publication.
- Remove addresses from any event less than 100 years old.
- Filter out any records we have previously sent to FMP.
- Add security features so we can prove copyright should our data appear elsewhere.
- Provide reports such as number of records per parish.
- Upload batch to FMP as mySQL data export.

The process needs to be performed annually, and after new editions of Berkshire Baptisms, Berkshire Marriages or Berkshire Burials have been released. In total, that amounts to roughly twice a year. Help and guidance is available.

If you can help, please contact Tony Wright at projects@berksfhs.org.uk



Are you able to lend a hand checking Monumental Inscriptions in Bradfield?

Bradfield St Andrew churchyard is looking a little worse for wear at the moment. The church building has been sold to Bradfield College and work to transform the space into a library is due to begin soon. The church is now fenced off, including some graves within the churchyard, but most remain accessible.

After plans to sell the church were announced last year, society volunteers made contact with the Diocese and were granted permission to record the monuments inside the church before all public access is removed and the interior is altered. The memorials inside the church, the ones most at risk, have already been imaged, transcribed and the transcriptions checked. Since then, work has focused on recording those in the churchyard, many of which have already now been imaged and transcribed. However, we still have more to transcribe and we also need more pairs of eyes to check the transcriptions against the original monuments, to ensure they are correct and everything is included.

Work will be carried out in small groups – if this is something you could lend a hand with – please contact Brian Wilcock at projects@berksfhs.org.uk

RENEWAL SEASON IS NEARLY OVER

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For those who joined BEFORE 01 Aug 2020*

If you have already renewed, **thank you!** You can ignore the rest of this message

By now renewal notices have been sent to everybody and follow-ups are being dispatched too.

Prompt renewal will allow uninterrupted access to your valuable member benefits including access to the members' area, this email newsletter and the Historian. Please remember, there's no grace period.

If you're having difficulty renewing, [here's a page](#) where you'll find solutions to common issues or can ask for help. If all else fails, call us on 0118 950 9553 and leave a message.

Renew Now

** If you joined since 01 Aug 2020, this renewal cycle doesn't apply to you because we now operate a rolling membership year. You will receive a reminder 2 weeks before your due date.*

In other news ...



Baptism Downloads - Batch 6

Once again, we have more new data downloads for you this week, as we come to the end of this series of Baptism records. That's it, for now, but we'll be bringing you more data downloads as soon as our projects team has compiled them. 560 items comprising baptisms, marriages, burials and monumental inscriptions, are now available as downloads and there's a link to all the items below.

As a reminder, data downloads have been developed 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. If you're interested in a number of parishes, also check out [Berkshire Baptisms Edition Three CD](#), likewise, [individual Parish CDs](#) also exist. So check out what best suits your needs.

- [Ashampstead St Clement Baptisms 1813-1920 \(Download\) D1584](#)
- [Ashbury St Mary Baptisms 1813-1882 \(Download\) D1585](#)
- [Bradfield St Andrew Baptisms 1539-1920 \(Download\) D1600](#)
- [Bradfield Tutts Clump Methodists Baptisms 1877-1920 \(Download\) D1601](#)
- [Braywood All Saints Baptisms 1867-1920 \(Download\) D1603](#)
- [Brimpton St Peter Baptisms 1678-1920 \(Download\) D1605](#)
- [Burghfield St Mary Baptisms 1562-1913 \(Download\) D1607](#)
- [Compton St Mary & St Nicholas Baptisms 1553-1920 \(Download\) D1620](#)
- [Easthampstead Union Workhouse Baptisms 1849-1914 \(Download\) D1632](#)
- [Reading St Laurence Baptisms 1686-1769 \(Download\) D1677 \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)
- [Reading St Laurence Baptisms 1770-1834 \(Download\) D1739 \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

[Reading St Mary Castle Street Baptisms 1884-1920 \(Download\) D1680](#)
[Reading St Michael & All Angels Baptisms 1901-1920 \(Download\) D1682](#)
[Swallowfield All Saints Baptisms 1607-1920 \(Download\) D1701](#)
[Windsor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Baptisms 1823-1837 \(Download\) D1722](#)
[Wokingham Union Hospital Baptisms 1904-1920 \(Download\) D1728](#)
[Woodley Lodge Baptisms 1802-1869 \(Download\) D1729](#)

[View all downloads](#)



Events

Our events programme is mostly online

join us - wherever you are



Mixing DNA with a Paper Trail

**Windsor Branch Meeting and Talk
by Dr Penny Walters
27 Jul 19:15 for 19:30**

Dr Penny Walters, author of 'Ethical Dilemmas in Genealogy' and 'The Psychology of Searching' (Amazon) in this session, will take people past receiving their DNA results, and just looking at their ethnicity estimates. How to merge DNA results with an established paper trail will be explained, and how these two methods can interact with each other, to devise a better-informed tree will be explored.

Useful information for adopted people will be given.

We will look at the advantages and disadvantages of different tests, a variety of helpful methods, putting DNA on different sites, including GEDmatch. Collaborating with matches and successfully merging DNA results with an evidence-based tree can lead to a more informed family history narrative, although some ethical dilemmas may arise.

Free to members. Non-members £3

Pre-booking required

Book now



A Disappearing Landscape: the heathlands of the Berkshire borders

Talk by Dr Alan Crosby
29 Jul 13:45 for 14:00

Back in the early 1720s, Daniel Defoe found Bagshot Heath terrifying. There were then over 100,000 acres of barren sandy waste, sprawling across three counties and touching the edges of Egham and Wokingham, Farnham and Woking. It was largely unpopulated, virtually treeless, and with only the most rudimentary agriculture. Places like Sunningdale and Crowthorne were among the poorest parts of England.

Today, of that bleak and hauntingly beautiful landscape, only fragments remain. Whole towns have grown up where a few cottages were three centuries ago – Bracknell, Bagshot, Camberley, Aldershot, Farnborough. And forests have covered tracts of the wastes. The military have requisitioned great swathes of commons and heaths. Monumental institutions for the undesirables of Victorian society – the insane, the mentally ill, the criminal, the public schoolboys – gobbled up much more.

Chopped up by railways and motorways, bombarded with artillery, seized for

leafy estates, the heathlands fell victim to their reputation as worthless land with a lot of development potential. Discover their story – and the story of the people who lived there with one of the UK's leading local historians, Dr Alan Crosby.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

Book now



August Natter Group

**Facilitated by Gillian Stevens
and Chad Hanna**

10 Aug 18:45 fof 19:00

August's Natter Group will take place on the second, rather than first Tuesday of the month.

This is an informal online discussion group, facilitated by Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens. Topics are chosen by the group on a monthly basis. Join in the discussion from your own home, wherever where you live.

Open only to members of Berkshire Family History Society

Free to attend, but pre-booking is required.

Book now

The Battle of Maiwand

With speaker: Dan Allen

12 Aug 19:30 - 20:45



The impressive cast iron statue of a lion in Forbury Gardens, Reading has become one of the most iconic images of Reading. Built by George Blackall Simonds and unveiled in 1886, it commemorates those who died in the Battle of Maiwand. Yet few of us probably know much about the Battle and its tragic association with Berkshire.

In this talk, Dan Allen, of the Victorian Military Society, tells us about the events which led to the conflict, the battle itself and its local connections.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

Book now



Writing up your Family History Workshop

Tutor: Dr Barry Jerome
21 Aug 10:45 for 11:00

Have you been researching your family tree and would like to write it up as a story but don't know how to start?

In this online workshop, Barry will help you get started and show you how you can structure it, so that you can write-up your family history while still continuing your research. Barry will show you the system he developed and also suggest alternative approaches and opportunities.

The workshop will help if you have not started yet. Or, if you have already been

writing up your family history and would like additional advice, or inspiration.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Reading's Historic Rivers Walk

Walk Leader: David Cliffe
4 Sep 14:15 for 14:30

Our guide is eminent local historian David Cliffe, who, before retirement, was Local Studies Manager for Reading Libraries. David will take us through land which once belonged to Reading Abbey. During the nineteenth century it became built up and industrial. Now much of it has been redeveloped for housing. Along the way, we will hear of the history of the area, and see photographs of the different locations and what used to be there. So the pace will be leisurely.

The walk is of around 1½ miles, and should take around 1½ hours. It will be comply with prevailing Covid requirements and may, therefore, be subject to last minute changes or cancellation. If this occurs, we will attempt to provide an alternative date, and if this isn't convenient, we will offer a full refund to effected ticket holders.

Tickets cost £5 (members £4)

Pre-booking required

[Book now](#)



Parish Registers Workshop

Tutor: Catherine Sampson
18 Sep 13:45 for 14:00

Increase your chances of success with family historians' core resource. Better understand what registers can provide for you and how and why they differ in content over time. Find out where to find them and how Church of England and non-conformist registers differ. Discover the codes and hidden clues which can be found in some entries and how to interpret them. Also, indexes and transcripts, their benefits and pitfalls.

Image: copyright Berkshire Record Office, reproduced with their kind permission.

Tickets cost £10 (members £9)

Pre-booking required

Book now



1-1 Merchant Navy Advice Session

With Advisor: Tony Wright
25 Sep 13:45 - 14:00

Do you have Merchant Navy ancestors? Need some advice in how to trace or interpret their records?

Our popular specialist family history advice sessions have returned. These sessions are 1-1, free of cost, online and available to members and non-

members alike.

Three 1-1 slots are available in this session:

Slot 1: 14.00 – 14.20

Slot 2: 14.35 – 14.55 (sold out)

Slot 3: 15.10 – 15.30 (sold out)

For members and non-members of Berkshire Family History Society

Free

Pre-booking required

Book now



Georgian Sources for Historians

**Ten week course led by:
Dr Margaret Simons**

All sessions 14.00 – 16.00

**Fridays 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th Oct, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th
Nov, 3rd Dec**

Course Overview

The 18th century has been referred to as one of the most transformative periods in British history. During it, the term revolution has been used to describe both changes in agriculture and the birth of industrialisation. The population expanded and cities grew, colonialism and slavery powered the expansion in trade, which in turn fuelled the growth in consumerism.

Along with the politics of the day, the royal dynasty that gave rise to the era known as the Georgians and the cultural and social changes of the period, there

is an abundance of written evidence. From official manuscripts and documentation, to private papers. All can inform us at every level about life during the period.

Using a themed approach, we will consider the sources available to uncover how our forebears may have lived their lives in the long 18th century.

To help us apply what we are learning you will undertake a small project, which we will share in the final week.

Timetable

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|--------|---|
| Week 1 | Introduction - overview of course and the variety of sources that are available, their reliability and how to use them. |
| Week 2 | Industrialisation - often referred to as a revolution, how did it come about and what can sources tell us about those involved. |
| Week 3 | The Making of Modern Cities and the rise of London - a consequence of industrialisation was urbanisation; here we will use a variety of sources to inform us about the perceptions of town life and the realities that awaited those who sought a better life! |
| Week 4 | At Home in Georgian England - from palace to hovel we will use various sources to explore the reality of 'Georgian Elegance'. |
| Week 5 | Health and Hygiene - with medical knowledge still at a basic level, industrialisation created even greater challenges for the professionals of the time. Here we look at sources to examine how society coped with the ever present threat of death and disease. |
| Week 6 | Poverty and Crime - the two were often bedfellows and here we will use sources to explore cause and consequence. |
| Week 7 | Popular Culture - in many ways the Georgians were more accepting and less rigid than the Victorians regarding the social mores and this week we will use sources to find out about their interests and pastimes. |

Week 8 **Empire** - the question of slavery has been much in the news recently and this week we will use sources to help us explore those involved in the rise of colonial power.

Week 9 **Politics and Military Matter** - in our penultimate week we look at sources to assess how the government responded to military threats and how those who had little in the way of political right expressed themselves.

Week 10 **Conclusion** - students will present their projects and we will have an overview of the themes and sources.

Tickets £125 (members £115)
Pre-booking required

Book now

... [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

The Centre for Heritage and Family History
2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square
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