



Berkshire Family Historian

June 2005 • volume 28

For Family Historians in the Royal County of Berkshire



Town records

The value of town records for family historians

What's new at FamilyHistoryOnline

Progress since the launch of the service in 2002

Wiltshire Wills Project

The digitisation of Wiltshire wills

A history of the Battle Workhouse

From Workhouse to NHS Hospital

And much more...

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The illustration on the front cover is a picture of Battle Hospital taken in 1917.

Publishers: Berkshire Family History Society. Printers: Richfield Graphics Ltd, Richfield House, Unit 48 Paddock Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 5BY.

Registered Charity No. 283010.

In the event of non-delivery please return to John Gurnett, 5 Wren Close, Burghfield Common, Berkshire RG7 3PF.

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ISSN: 1468-1080

Copy deadline for the September issue is July 20

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Contents

News

02

Features

- 06 Town records for family historians
- 10 What's new at FamilyHistoryOnline?
- 14 Wiltshire Wills Project - a progress report
- 19 The End of Battle Hospital
- 22 A Canadian War Child

Regulars

- 24 Gleanings from exchange magazines
- 26 Write now
- 29 Bookends
- 32 Members' Interests
- 34 Back pages
- 36 Index

Inside back cover Branch programmes for Bracknell and Wokingham, Computer Branch and Newbury

Back cover Branch programmes for Reading, Vale of White Horse and Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead

6



19



22



28



Freedom of Information

This Act came into force on 1 January 2005, and provides a right of access to public authority information. In practice this may make little difference for users of archives, who have had access to such information for many years. But it is likely to strike a chord with the general public, which may in turn affect demand made on our local Record Offices.

Put simply, all records of public bodies come within the Act. Family historians will note that this excludes all records of the Church of England or other religious organisations. Also, any information which is 'publically available' is exempt from the Act's regime. So material listed in a Record Office catalogue is as accessible as before. The practical implication of this is that charges for research and copies will continue as before. Most Record Offices achieve a quicker turnaround for enquiries than that envisaged in the Act anyway, and will endeavour no doubt to maintain this service.

The Act again raises the problem of access to personal information. Increasingly the law is tending towards protecting the privacy of this in the records. This may have implications for family historians, as there may be pressures to keep personal information withheld for longer than at present. Although the Act effectively ends the '30-year rule' and '100-year rule', instead it looks towards lifespans of both those included in records, and their close relatives.

Now available for research at BRO

Ashbury banns 1824-1867, and overseers papers 18th-19th centuries

Wargrave parish magazines 1861-2001

Hungerford Wesleyan Methodist circuit baptisms 1837-1937

Lambourn section of the same circuit baptisms 1837-1954

Walsh family of Warfield Park estate records 13th century-1876 (Ormathwaite papers)

Maidenhead SS Andrew and Mary Magdalene: Ann Seymour's charity records

1862-1952, which include names of girls provided with funds for schooling.

Research Centre

The number of visitors to the Centre continues to increase with the total during the first three months of the year in excess of that in 2004. Our regional study days have been particularly successful. In March we publicised the event in the local press and on local radio stations. To say we were overwhelmed is putting it mildly. A total of 43 researchers turned up during the day and evening, 27 were non-members. Consequently we were inundated with requests for help. As you can guess, many had no idea where in the country their ancestors came from – apart from London. This has caused us to rethink our local advertising, as well as recognise the need for more people to help.

Over-subscribed five week long family history classes have been held in the Research Centre, run by Barry and Caroline Boulton and, due to space and equipment limitations, they have been limited to eight students. Following the courses in the autumn and winter months, the next course will begin in the autumn and they already have the names of five interested people. Local extra-mural classes are also over-subscribed.

Cliff Debney

History of Easthampstead Park uncovered

The history of Easthampstead Park has been uncovered with the exciting discovery of Charles 1's original seventeenth century charter. The charter, granting Easthampstead Park to William Trumbull in 1636, had long been thought lost but was recently discovered in London by historians.

William Trumbull was the son of another William, who had been British Ambassador to the Netherlands and gifted Easthampstead Park in 1628. The grant of 1636 gave the Park to the Trumbulls permanently. The Trumbulls used this grant as a starting point from which to build their estates. By the nineteenth century their heirs, the Downshires, had the largest single landholding in the whole of east Berkshire.

The giant charter, measuring nearly 3ft by 2ft, has now been purchased by Berkshire Record Office in Reading with support from the MLA/Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and is available for public inspection. The document includes a detailed portrait of Charles I within its initial letter. It is written in Latin and lists a number of places included in the estate, such as Ennworth Meadow, Queen's Meadow and Barres Coppice.

Who's who of 1871 online

The 1871 census is available online, in full, for the first time. Thanks to a new initiative by The National Archives and Ancestry.co.uk, you can search the index by name and look at scans of original records of the famous, and not so famous. Searching the index of names is free and if you want to see the full original entry you can do that on a pay-per-view basis.

Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew and former Emperor of France, Napoleon III, is included in the census. After his expulsion from France he moved to Camden Place, Chislehurst, Kent, and continued to live there until his death in January 1873. Frederick (Fritz) Delius was born in Bradford, Yorkshire in 1862 of German descent. His father was a 'Yarn & Stuff maker' and Fritz was expected to go into the family business but disappointed his father by becoming instead one of the greatest composers that this country has produced.

The census contains details of George Gawthorpe, who in 1871 had lain in bed for 15 years. A number of 'gay girls' lived in Wharf Street, Bradford. 'Gay girls' was one of the many euphemisms found in the census for prostitutes. For each of the women recorded there is a corresponding man whose details were (perhaps unsurprisingly) unknown.

Diary dates

Buckinghamshire FHS will be holding its annual open day on Saturday 23 July from 10am to 4pm, at Aylesbury High School, Walton Road, Aylesbury (south east of the town between the A413 and A41). There will be many attractions for Buckinghamshire researchers including the Society library and database. Many guest societies will be present and speakers include Ian Waller and Michael Gandy.

Gateshead family history fair

The National Family History Fair will be held on Saturday 10 September at the Gateshead International Stadium from 10am until 4.30pm. It's expected that there will be more than over 150 exhibitors from all over the British Isles.

West Middlesex FHS

The Society will be holding a one-day conference at the National Archives, Kew, on Saturday 10 September on the 'poor are always with us'. Speakers include Jean Debney on the parish chest, apprenticeship records by Richard Harvey and the Victorian way of death, by Tom Doig. The cost will be £12 and includes coffee and tea, but not lunch. Advance booking forms can be obtained from Mrs Maggie Mold, 48 Darby Crescent, Sunbury on Thames, TW16 5LA

1861 census online

Parts of the 1861 census are now available on the <1837online.com> website. Beginning with London, Middlesex, Kent, Essex and Surrey, 594 pieces have been placed online and just over 174,000 images from the census put onto the site. To complete the project and upload the entire 20 million records, additional counties will be included over the coming months. The next counties will be: Essex, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Worcestershire, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

As well as placing the census images online, they have also fully transcribed the data for every household, vessel or institution enumerated on the night of the census, making the records much easier to decipher and search.

They have also indexed the records to provide advanced searching techniques. One of the highlights is that when you search for an individual, you will also be able to search simultaneously for another person who lived in the same household at the same time, simply by entering their name into the search criteria. You can find the site at <www.1837online.com>.

London Metropolitan Archives

The LMA will be holding a number of courses during the summer months. The first is a two-day course on using images, memories and written sources to write your family history. It will be held on Thursday 23 June and Thursday 30 June from 10am to 4pm. The tutor will be Dr Hilda Kean from Ruskin College, Oxford. The workshop is free, with a £10 deposit refunded upon completion of both sessions.

The second course is on using family history online resources on Thursday 7 July from 2pm to 3.30pm. This course is aimed at those who have some experience of the internet and is free.

On Saturday 23 July there will be a talk and workshop on introducing wills. Dr Gillian Spraggs will explain how to make the best use of wills and inventories and there will be a number of original documents available. The cost of the afternoon session including tea and coffee will be £7.50.

Finchampstead Church Bells

Coral Mist and Anne Pusey

Walking around Finchampstead in March 2005 we found that workers from the Whitechapel Foundry were returning the bells to their rightful place in the Bell tower of St James Church after re-conditioning at the foundry. This had involved having various parts such as the headstock and rollers replaced and in addition the clappers had been re-adjusted to the correct length and the bells themselves re-tuned.

Several bells had already been moved into the church but two bells were still on a lorry and we noticed that one had an inscription on it.

MEARS & STAINBANK,
FOUNDERS, LONDON
TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND IN COMMEMORATION
OF THE REV: EDWARD ST
JOHN M.A.

RECTOR OF THIS PARISH
ATTAINING THE 80TH YEAR
OF HIS AGE

THIS BELL WAS GIVEN BY
SOME OF HIS PARISHIONERS
AND FRIENDS

A.D.1885

The following inscription was inscribed round the top of the second bell.

J.W. 1792 THOS ALLEN
& JOHN SOANE CHURCH
WARDENS

A gentleman from the Foundry told us that the J.W. stood for John Warner and the date 1792 identifies him as John Warner the First whose bells are now quite rare, only five still being in existence.

RAF Roll of Honour Project

David Barnes is the project coordinator of this new database which will bring together a central listing of all casualties of those who served in the British and Commonwealth aerial services in the inter-war period or for the Second World War. Although the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 'Debt of Honour' Register can provide a lot of information it is not complete and it has limited search facilities. Of course not all casualties are listed in the Commonwealth War Graves Records, for example, there is no listing of the many Polish airmen who died, and published information on non-aircrew casualties is minimal. Some of the missing information may be obtained from other sources the Royal Air Force published some 550 Casualty Lists which list by Cause of Casualty, the name, rank and number of the service person. The books published by Midland Counties – Bomber Command Losses, Fighter Command Losses and soon to be published, Coastal Command Losses all list in chronological order all losses, giving aircraft type, serial number and the crew of the aircraft. The new database will allow searches by surname and service number, awards, squadron, aircraft type, cause of death, burial, age, nationality, family details and other service details.

Currently 120,962 names are recorded in the index, but collating the information is quite clearly a mammoth task and David is seeking help and assistance in gathering information. If anyone is able to help, a copy of the data as a partial monthly or alphabetical listing on floppy disc and later a CD version of the entire database will be sent out when the project is complete. Further information can be obtained by sending an email to <rafproject@hotmail.com>.

GRO records and indexes

Joan Heuvel raises an important question concerning the accuracy of the GRO indexes: how was it done without the aid of computers? In any one quarter hundreds of thousands of names needed to be indexed – and then the same had to be done again in successive periods. Joan has been transcribing for freeBMD, and the scans for births alone in just one quarter of 1903 amounted to some 648 pages, each containing 375 names. This means that there would have been 243,000 entries! Somehow all those entries had to be sorted before the index could be produced. How did they do it? Has anybody any idea how this massive task was completed and what would have been the failure rate with individual entries missing from the indexes?

Access2Archives

If you haven't used Access2 Archives recently you may like to know that their website address changed in March to <www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a>. The A2A database contains catalogues describing archives held throughout England and dating from the 900s to the present day. Click the search button to search these catalogues. A2A does not yet offer a full description of all the archives in England, but it is regularly updated, so do revisit often for newly-included catalogues. Since it was launched there have been almost six million searches with 13.5 million catalogue downloads. Among the records currently being added to the database are: descriptions of the archives of education and nonconformity in Cambridgeshire, descriptions of Church of England parish records in Kent and descriptions of medical and health-related collections and records relating to individuals and families in the London region.

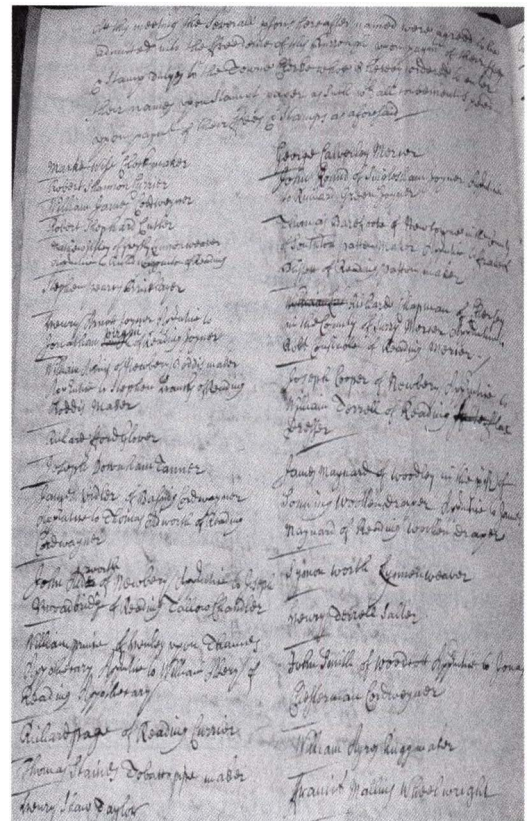
Town records for family historians

Joan Dils

The election of 1714 was hard fought in Reading. Since all freemen could vote, it was in the interests of all contestants to ensure as many as could claim the freedom should do so. The result is a list in the borough's records of their names, occupations and in some cases, their birthplace, a gift for the researcher with Reading ancestors.¹ (see illustration). Such finds are pure serendipity but recording the names of freemen was a normal feature of all English borough records from the middle ages, sometimes until the nineteenth century

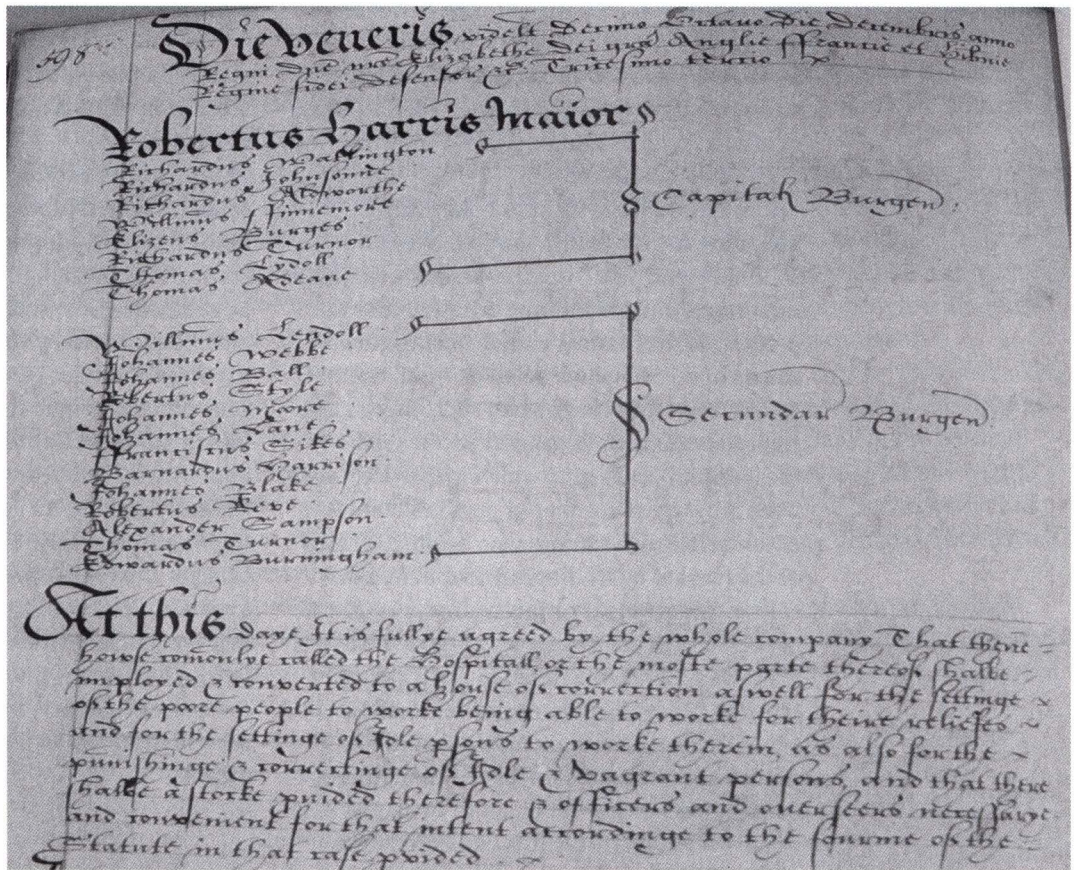
The title of borough is important. Before 1835 it denotes an urban community with certain rights of self-government, conferred by a charter from the king or the lord of the town. Many boroughs were incorporated, governed by a council or corporation headed by a mayor or warden. They had their own courts to deal with breaches of local bye-laws, sometimes their own courts of quarter sessions and other privileges.² In Berkshire, for example, there were six corporate boroughs by 1612: Abingdon, Maidenhead, Newbury, Reading, Wallingford, Windsor; Wokingham did not have all the privileges of incorporation. Their institutions produced records, some of which can have great value for family historians. Other towns might be seigniorial boroughs where the lords kept some control over town affairs with the result that their records are often fewer and less useful. Size is no guide to urban status; towns such as Birmingham and Manchester which were major regional centres and leading market towns from the late medieval period were administered as manors until the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 so have

The Diary
of the
Corporation of
Reading 1714.
BRO R/ACa
1/20



no borough records. Additionally it should be remembered that all towns came within archdeaconries and dioceses and had one or more parishes but these records will not be discussed here.

The survival of borough records varies from one town to another, being generally better in later centuries. Some have been printed in full or part: in Berkshire some of Reading's and Windsor's are available, as are extracts from those of Abingdon and Newbury. Elsewhere there are excellent records in print for boroughs such as Nottingham and Leicester



The Diary of the Corporation of Reading, 1598. BRO R/AC 1/1/1

which may be in local studies libraries rather than the county record office. It is always worth checking to see if printed versions exist.

The most likely survival from before 1835 is the council or corporation minute book though it is unlikely to have this title; for example, Reading's is called The Diary of the Corporation and Windsor's The Hall Book. The minute book may be very detailed or simply a bare list of essential decisions or non-essential ones, such as dinners and social events but it should include the names of councillors, sometimes called burgesses, mayors and other elected officials. (see illustration above). It is unlikely that original records will have a name index though printed ones may. Some minute books include information normally found in other borough records such as apprenticeship and freemen's rolls, leases, licences, rentals, the names of recipients of scholarships to universities or awards to long-serving

maidservants. Minute books sometimes include court cases concerning disputes between masters and apprentices which may contain details about apprentices' birthplace and parentage.

Other records, among them apprenticeship rolls and indentures, have more personal details. The rolls will include the name of the apprentice, his father or mother (if she were a widow), the name of his master and the trade he was entering. Sometimes, as at Oxford, his original place of residence is also given. Indentures are more likely to survive among borough records if the apprenticeship fee was paid to the master by a town charity. Greenslade's Charity in Newbury paid for Robert Love, son of Elizabeth Love, a widow, to be apprenticed to James Purdue in May 1714.³ Apprenticeship normally ended with admission to the freedom, giving the freeman the right to practise his craft or to trade within the borough, though men were less likely to apply for it in later centuries when

it no longer justified the expense of the fee. The surviving freemen's rolls of some towns including Leicester and Oxford are extensive and some have been published, whereas those of others, such as Reading, cover only the early seventeenth century.

Boroughs had the right to hold courts, including courts leet (to enforce bye-laws especially on trade), quarter sessions (to judge minor and middle-ranking criminal cases), petty sessions (to deal with licensing), and courts of record which acted as small claims courts. Not all boroughs had such courts; the right to hold them depended on the term of the charter. Court leets which met twice a year have the largest number of personal names of townsfolk and visitors who broke the rules of the market by trading without a licence, selling underweight or faulty produce. Courts of record provide the names of those who borrowed money or traded in the town and failed to repay the debt or pay for goods on time, and sometimes include the amount of money and the goods involved. Though they contain fascinating detail about the activities of townsfolk, court records can be very time consuming to study unless they have been

published with an index, even if the searcher is sure that an ancestor lived in the town at a given period. A good example of these records in print is the court books of Witney, Oxfordshire.⁴

Many towns administered various charities: schools formerly the concern of monastic houses or newly-founded as charitable institutions post-1550; almshouses founded by religious guilds; scholarships or other gifts bequeathed by wealthy townspeople. All these activities generated records which can sometimes include really valuable information such as the list of boys apprenticed from Newbury Bluecoat School in the early eighteenth century, and Windsor's nominations of boys to benefit from Laud's Charity as well as more mundane income and expenditure accounts.⁵ Leases of property belonging to charities also survive for many boroughs. Even if there are no separate records of charities, information about their administration may be found in council minutes.

List of the Voters for the Borough of Wallingford 1820. BRO/WAEp7

Name of Voter			Name of Voter			Name of Voter		
A	M	B	A	M	B	A	M	B
A. Abbott			John Wilson			John Wilson		
...

Boroughs also administered property of their own (recorded as town leases) and often retained in their own archives certain documents which townfolk deposited there for safe keeping (enrolled deeds). Town leases of inns, houses, shops and land will include the name of the lessee and possibly a detailed description of the property. Enrolled deeds will give similar information but should also include the names of the lessor who may not be resident in the town. Occasionally copies of wills were lodged with the borough. Details of all these records are normally given in record office catalogues, making searches very easy.

By the end of the eighteenth century many former urban institutions were becoming obsolete, new ones such as Improvement Commissions being created and new kinds of urban communities were emerging.⁶

The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act made it possible for the growing towns to achieve borough status, and standardised the structures and procedures of existing boroughs. Documents recording the deliberations and activities of the corporations were produced by new and old boroughs though some types, especially freemen's rolls, usually cease.

By way of compensation, rate books which rarely survive for earlier centuries are often found for more recent times. Boroughs had long possessed the right to levy rates for various purposes such as the relief of victims of plague, and Improvement Commissions levied rates on those properties which profited from their work; both kept records in rate books of properties rated and monies collected. They are primarily concerned with the location and value of property rather than the names of people and are not indexed, but could be a useful confirmation of the place of residence of an ancestor.

One final record type can also be found in later borough records though it also exists separately in its own right. Most boroughs had parliamentary representation, and poll books survive from the early eighteenth century which registered how electors cast their votes. Some poll books of borough seats were placed in the borough's archives. Not many survive

from early dates but when they do they record in alphabetical order the voter, sometimes his occupation and his choice of candidate. A particularly fine list survives for Wallingford for 1820.⁷

Borough records do not, at first sight, appear the most useful source for family historians but for those who know that their ancestors were townspeople, they can be a useful way of making mere names into people with homes, a livelihood and an environment.

¹ Freemen were those who had the right to practise their craft or trade in the borough and in some places they also had the right to vote; Reading Borough Records Diary of the Corporation (Berks. Record Office R/Aca 1/20).

² Incorporation gave the borough a legal identity allowing it to hold property, sue and be sued in the king's courts and hold quarter sessions courts.

³ Newbury Borough Records Charity Records (BRO MF 188). Abingdon and Maidenhead and Reading Council Minutes include freemen's admissions.

⁴ J. L. Bolton and M. M. Maslen eds., A Calendar of the Court Books of the Borough of Witney 1538-1610 (Oxford Record Society vol. LIV 1985).

⁵ Newbury Bluecoat School Account Book (BRO N/QK5/1).

⁶ Improvement Commissions were set up in both boroughs and towns by private Act of Parliament to provide amenities such as street lighting for which a charge could be made. Expanding urban communities included those which developed as spa towns, textile producers, inland ports on canals and transport hubs on turnpike roads.

⁷ Wallingford Borough Records (BRO W/AE p7).

What's new at FamilyHistoryOnline?

Chad Hanna, Systems Designer for FamilyHistoryOnline

Since the service started on Christmas Day 2002 the amount of information available on the FamilyHistoryOnline website has grown from four million records to over fifty million records from across the country, including both the 1881 census for England and Wales and the majority of the National Burial Index.

While FamilyHistoryOnline is always pleased to add large databases of marriages and baptisms, it also welcomes small and unusual databases. Examples include the Somerset hemp and flax growers, the tithes awards around Wakefield and the Freemen of Ipswich.

Our Society was there at the beginning and receives royalties for any searches of the data we have provided. The royalty rate we receive as a member of the Federation of Family History Societies has now been increased from 25 to 30% retrospectively. You will see more Berkshire information in the future.

The site has also had an overhaul and sports a cleaner look and some new search features. Knowing the features of the search engine could help you find that elusive ancestor.

The search form illustrated shows a search for Richard Bel?her in Berkshire during the first half of the nineteenth century, including any possible ones born in Berkshire during that time.

?erridge will find both 'Kerridge' and 'Herridge'

When you write a name you normally begin with a capital letter and many capital letters can easily be confused with another during transcription – Lawyer can be confused with Sawyer, Francis with Trancis. The ability to put a 'wild-card' at the start of name can be a

Searching for
Richard Belcher
(or Dick Belsher)

Surname	<input type="text" value="bel?her"/>	Wildcards: ke?idge would match keridge and ke*idge matches keridge and kerridge
include variants	<input type="checkbox"/>	include similar names - but no wildcards
Forenames:	<input type="text"/>	Wildcards: Use ? and * as for surnames
include variants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	include similar names e.g. Thos for Thomas
County or area	<input type="text" value="Berkshire"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	specific part of the UK or all
Years between	<input type="text" value="1800"/> and <input type="text" value="1850"/>	Leave blank for all years
also check	est. births <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> others of this family <input type="checkbox"/>	e.g. from census age and birthplace, parents at baptism
Types of record	<input type="text" value="-all-"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Limit search to specific records
	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	more help

Richard BEL?HER (with variants for forename only) in Berkshire between 1800 and 1850 including estimated birth years.

7 matches found with 16 entries.

[Refine search](#) > Search results

Result page	1	30	view as table or text
-------------	---	----	---

1. Richard BELCHER found in [Buckinghamshire 1851 Census](#) 1 entry in Berkshire between 1840 and 1841 [details £0.09](#)
2. Richard BELCHER found in [Berkshire 1881 Census](#) 2 entries in Berkshire between 1805 and 1810 [details free](#)
3. Richard BELCHER found in [Berkshire Marriage Index post-1754](#) 3 entries in Berkshire between 1815 and 1835 [details £0.15](#) or [list places £0.10](#)

Free results reveal a 'stray' in the Bucks 1851 Census

big help in finding incorrectly copied surnames and forenames. Use ? to substitute for a single unknown letter and * to substitute for zero or more unknown letters. You can use these wild card characters anywhere but the search engine will complain if they could match too many records.

You can search without a surname

If you still have difficulties, why not leave the surname out entirely. The new search engine does allow this provided that the forename is not too common – it won't work with Mary and John.

Looking for Mary Anne?

You can now search with more than one forename, but be warned: both names must be present in the records to be found, although they could be in any order. Remember most Census records only include one forename and, perhaps, an initial.

You want to look at records before 1837?

You can also supply both a start year and an end year. In this case you would leave the start year blank and enter the end year. Many people have said they prefer this to entering a single year and a range.

Searching for Jones in Glamorgan?

Many surnames are common in one part of the country and you can easily find too many records (there are 1727 entries for John Jones in the Glamorgan 1851 census). It would be very expensive to find the one you want even at the low rates charged by FamilyHistoryOnline (it would be cheaper to buy the CD-ROM from the Glamorgan FHS). Now you have the option to pay a much smaller fee to list the places where a John Jones could be found on census night, and then pay to see the entries for the places of interest to you.

Why can't you search by place?

This is because many places have more than one spelling or arrangement of words, and because the place may not be what you expected, e.g. Sonning instead of Earley (Earley was a liberty of Sonning). It seems wiser to choose from a list of places.

What does the Est. Birth checkbox do?

Censuses databases for 1851 and after often include both age and birthplace. This allows FamilyHistoryOnline to create index entries for the year and place where they claim to have been born. If the box is checked these index entries will be included in the search. This can be very helpful if you want to find where your relative moved to in later life.

List of available databases for Berkshire (excluding the 1881 Census)

BERKSHIRE			
● <u>Berkshire 1871 Census Details</u>	Newbury RD, ongoing	20,000 entries	31OCT2002
● <u>Berkshire Marriage Details</u>	92 places (1538-1891)* ongoing	47,574 entries	07FEB2003
● <u>Sarum Diocese Marriage Licence Bonds & Allegations</u>	(1609-1837)* jurisdictions of the Bishop of Salisbury, the Dean of Sarum and Wantage	(see <u>WILTSHIRE</u>)	19NOV2004
● <u>Berkshire Burial Index</u>	153 places (1537-2000)*	280,847 entries	02DEC2003
● <u>Wiltshire Courts Wills Index</u>	1 court (1800-1840)	1,659 entries	24Mar2005
● <u>NBI - Oxfordshire FHS</u>	21 places (1539-1851)*	43,688 entries	03MAY2003

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Wiltshire Wills Project – a progress report

Amanda Goode, Project Archivist, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office

It is nearly three and a half years since the last article on the Wiltshire Wills Project appeared in this journal, and readers keen to learn more about the Berkshire wills which form part of the Diocese of Salisbury archives must have wondered from time to time what had happened to the project, and whether any progress had been made. Well, a lot has been happening, and the first phase of the project is almost complete, so it seems an appropriate time to update Society members about it. The sharp-eyed among you may have noticed that there has been a change of personnel; the first Project Archivist, Lucy Jefferis, who had worked so hard to get everything up and running smoothly, left in the summer of 2002 to take up a permanent post in a neighbouring county. I replaced her in November 2002, having worked previously at Lincolnshire Archives.

Cataloguing and conservation

The good news is that all 105,000 wills and supporting probate documents such as inventories, administration bonds and accounts (over 300,000 items in all) have now been catalogued onto a specialist archive database; they have also been assigned new reference numbers. This database will be searchable by name, place, date and occupation, a vast improvement on the 30 old handwritten indexes, which were searchable by surname alone. It is hoped that it will be available online in the Wiltshire and Swindon

Record Office in Trowbridge by early 2006, together with any available digital images (see below). Internet access is the ultimate aim, but this is still at the development stage.

Digitisation

It was always intended that digital copies of each will would be created to accompany the electronic catalogue. In a pioneering project of this nature it was not possible to know with certainty how long the digitisation would take, and our initial estimate of two to three years has proved optimistic, with only 25% of the collection having been filmed to date. All Berkshire wills registered in the probate court of the Dean of Salisbury have been filmed; these can be easily identified as their reference numbers have the prefix P5.

Berkshire wills in the collection

There are just over 11,000 Berkshire wills entries in the catalogue database (nearly 10% of the total collection), although this figure disguises the fact that there is sometimes more than one entry for the same individual, since we have catalogued register copies of wills as well as the originals. If the information given in the register copy does not accord with the original, the latter is likely to be more reliable, as the probate clerks had understandable lapses of concentration. The earliest Berkshire wills are dated 1539, with good survival thereafter, excluding of course the Commonwealth years. The numbers of wills break down as follows: 1539-1599: 846; 1600-1699: 3222; 1700-1799: 5728;

1800-1857: 920. Only about 40 wills are registered after 1836, following the transfer of the Archdeaconry of Berkshire to the Diocese of Oxford.

Places covered

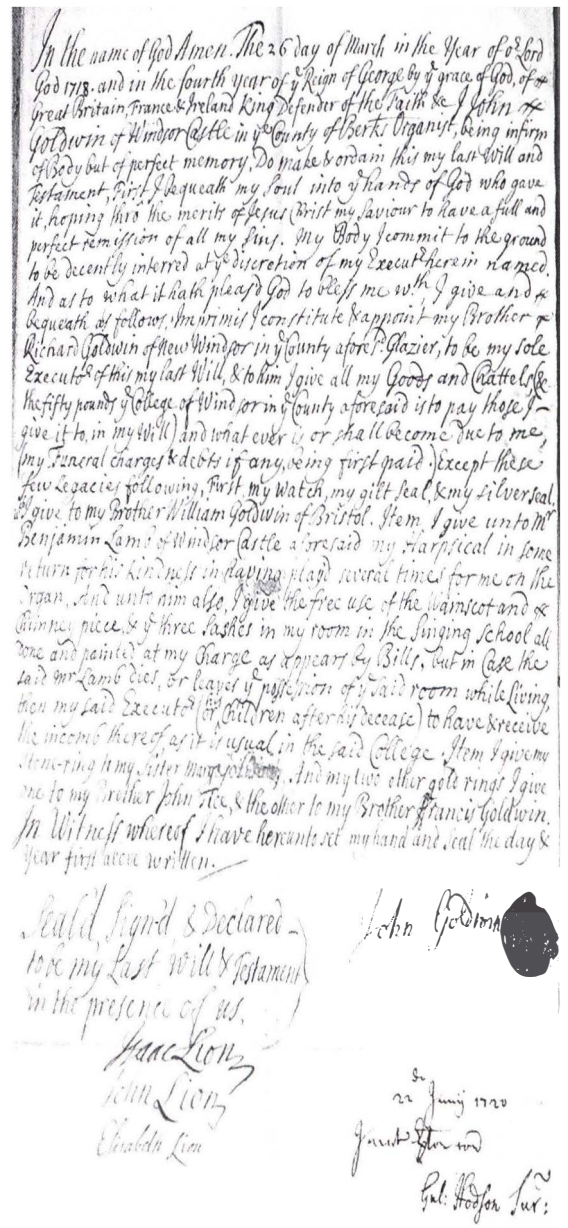
The catalogue contains 533 Berkshire place names – each hamlet, street or individual property is recorded in the database as a separate place. Because of the peculiarities of probate administration many Berkshire parishes appear occasionally in the Consistory Court of Salisbury records, but the places featuring most frequently are those covered by the Dean of Salisbury’s court (principally Arborfield, Blewbury, Great Faringdon, Hurst, Ruscombe, Sandhurst, Sonning and Wokingham) and by the Peculiar court of the Dean and Canons of Windsor (Hungerford, Shalbourne and Wantage). It may be that we have misspelt a few of the very obscure place names; please let us know if you think there is anything we should change.

Occupations

Now that the wills can be easily searched for the first time by occupation we are expecting much use to be made of them by local historians. Of the 11,000 Berkshire entries, some 8000 give the deceased’s occupation or status (for example widow). Over 25% of these were yeoman, by far the biggest occupational group. The usual trades make up the bulk of the remainder, although a greater variety of occupations and specialist trades are to be found after the second half of the eighteenth century, particularly in the larger towns. Sometimes they were combined with less rarefied occupations, as in the case of William Hide of Arborfield (d 1848), who was both a paper maker and a beer seller – the latter being more lucrative, one suspects.

As might be expected, a few wills survive of royal servants. There is a Yeoman of her Majesty’s larder (Lawrence Austen of Hurst, 1593), and a Yeoman of the Guard (the oddly named Stileham Mylam of Warfield, 1689). John Goldwin, organist at Windsor Castle, died in 1720, and his will contains this interesting bequest: ‘I leave unto Mr Benjamin Lamb of

Windsor Castle...my Harpsical in some return for his kindness in having play’d several times for me on the Organ, And unto him also, I give the free use of the Wainscot and Chimney piece & the three sashes in my room in the Singing School all done & painted at my Charge as appears by Bills, but in case [he] dies...my said Executor...to have & receive the incomb thereof, as it is usual in the said College [of Windsor].”¹



The will of John Goldwin, 1720

Female testators constitute a statistically significant group. There are 1697 wills of widows (i.e. about 15% of all Berkshire testators), and 279 wills of spinsters, as well as many other women's wills where no marital status is given. Only 59 wills of married women are found, as wives did not have power of disposal over any property unless their husbands gave permission. Sometimes this permission formed part of a formal marriage settlement, as alluded to in the will of Eleanor Talmage of Hungerford, 1727.

Few women are ascribed an occupation; there are a few innholders, a linen draper, one servant, one schoolmistress (Elizabeth Hebblewhite of Wantage, 1826), a trunk and fishing tackle maker (Priscilla Avery of Reading, 1823), and a patten maker of Newbury, 1750, bearing the wonderfully inappropriate name of Mary Barefoot. Needless to say, this disguises the fact that many widows carried on their husbands' trades. John Thomas Skeats of Newbury (d 1798), for instance, acknowledges that his wife 'is desirous' of carrying on his trade to support herself and his children, and makes provision for her to do so.² He clearly considers it a dubious enterprise, however – not surprising, given that he is a blacksmith!

Interesting wills

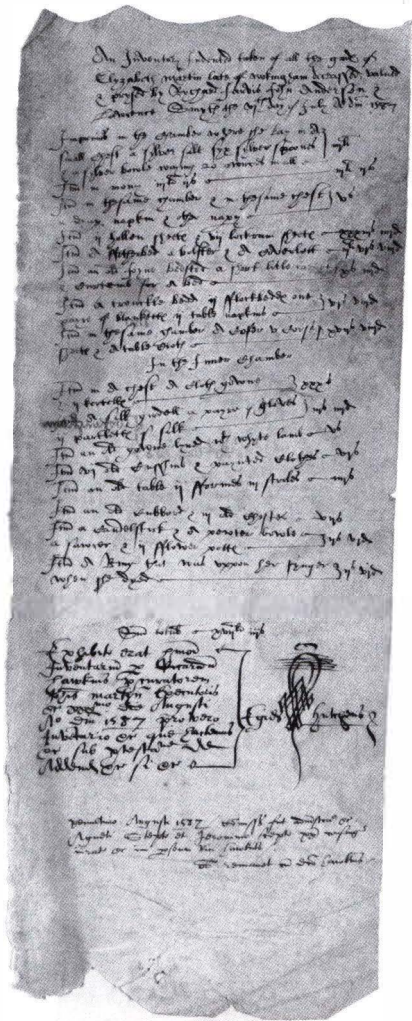
Many interesting documents were found during the cataloguing, but doubtless some intriguing or amusing items escaped our notice. If users come across any of these, please let us know, as there is a notes field attached to each catalogue entry, in which we can record interesting observations.

It was the norm for a man to leave property to his wife on condition that she remained a widow – otherwise their children would inherit. This was not an attempt to control the widow's behaviour – it was to safeguard the children's welfare, as a widow's estate became her new husband's property on marriage, and she lost all control over it. Sometimes, however, a more personal note is sounded: Ralph Breach of Sonning Eye (d. 1596), stipulated further that his wife had to remain a 'chaste' widow if she wanted to keep her bequest!³

An undisguised note of jealousy can be found in the will of Henry Jackson of Hungerford, a wealthy chapman, who died in 1745.⁴ He clearly harboured suspicions about his 'loving wife Jane', as although he left her his house and shop goods, she was to forfeit the lot if caught 'living or keeping company with her former husband, John Beech'. Since divorce was next to impossible at this time, the terms husband and wife are clearly being used loosely, shedding an interesting light on how some people regarded the supposed sanctity of marriage. A search of parish registers might reveal if Jane had actually committed bigamy. Detailed inventories are unfortunately rare by this date, but Jackson's is exceptionally interesting, as it itemises his shop goods, including silk and cotton gloves, garters, rings set with stones, necklaces old and new, knives, combs, women's caps and fans, and assorted silverware. He also stocked an astonishing range and quantity of handkerchiefs – no excuse for the townspeople to use their sleeves.

The inventory of Elizabeth Martin of Wokingham, 1587, makes no mention of her status, or any former occupation, and at first glance she appears to be just another elderly spinster occupying one room in someone's house.⁵ Intriguing items are listed, however: silverware valued at £4, fine diaper napkins, a silk girdle, 2 partlets of silk, a gown lined with white lamb and 'paynted Clothes' (wall hangings), all evidence of refined taste and a degree of former prosperity (see illustration on page 17)). Her will, which survives only as a register copy, reveals all.⁶ In it she describes herself as 'sometyme Prioress of Wyntney' – Hartley Wintney in Hampshire, some 10 miles from Wokingham. She asks for bells to be rung for an hour in Wokingham, but leaves £10 to cover the costs of being conveyed to and buried in the chancel of Hartley Wintney church: I would that a stone should be layde over my grave with a picture made of a plate of a woman in a longe garment with wyde sleeves hir handes joyned together holdinge uppon her brest and figured over her hedd **In te domine speram non confundor in aeternum. In**

An inventory of Elizabeth Martin's household



justicia tua libera me, et salva me. I would that an herse should be standinge over my grave by the space of an whole yeare covered with black cotton with a cross of white fustyon.'

Elizabeth makes several bequests to friends and relatives (with whom one assumes she had been obliged to live, following the dissolution of her priory), including her "greate ringe with the crapowlde [toadstone] in itt, and her 'ringe with the Jassinckt' [jacinth]. She must have given one of these away before her death, as her inventory mentions only one ring 'that was uppon her fynger when she dyed'. Unfortunately it seems unlikely that her estate could have met all her bequests and funeral costs, which may account for the fact that her executor appears to have renounced the duty.

Family quarrels always make entertaining reading. William Edwards of Speenhamland had this to say: 'Item, in regard to the many and great troubles, expences and vexations occasioned me and my Dear Wife by the undutifull and Disobedient Behaviour and Perverseness of my son William I give and bequeath unto him...one shilling and no more.'⁷ Conversely, some wills contain a note of genuine poignancy. Gilbert Pether of Arborfield dictated his will in his last illness, in 1569. He was a servant who left everything to his master, Mr Richard Bullocke, 'he se(e)ing me keppe and cherishede whiles I am sick.'⁸

Finally, there is a bonus for people lucky enough to have traced their Berkshire ancestry back to the sixteenth century. A little volume containing mid-sixteenth century wills registered in the Peculiar of Sonning, also records court proceedings, which have been included in the catalogue. Church courts dealt with testamentary disputes and moral misdemeanors, amongst other things, and researchers with good Latin can amuse themselves by reading about the bickering beneficiaries, libellers and fornicators – lots of these – who appear, willingly or otherwise, in these pages.⁹

Access to the wills

Until the catalogue and images are available on-line in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, the wills can be accessed in the usual way in our public catalogue room, using recently-updated printed surname indexes which give the new reference numbers. Please check our website for news of online availability.

- ¹ WSRO P1/G/405
- ² WSRO P1/S/1498
- ³ WSRO P5/1595/5
- ⁴ WSRO P23/591
- ⁵ WSRO P5/1587/31
- ⁶ WSRO P5/4Reg/147B
- ⁷ WSRO P1/E/203
- ⁸ WSRO P5/2Reg/52D
- ⁹ WSRO P5/20Reg

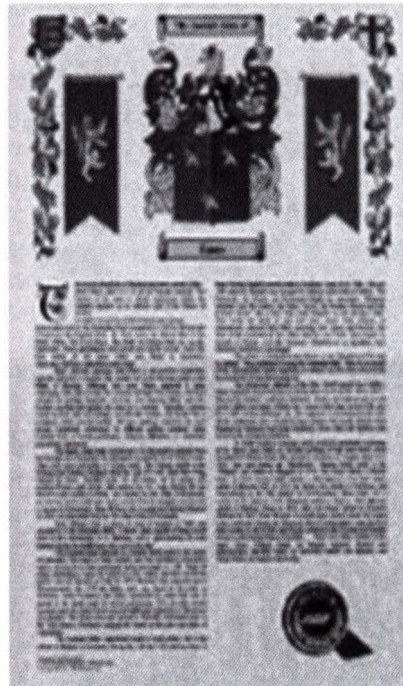
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(This series is now complete and it is hoped to have a name index for all entries published during 2005.)

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Books on other counties:

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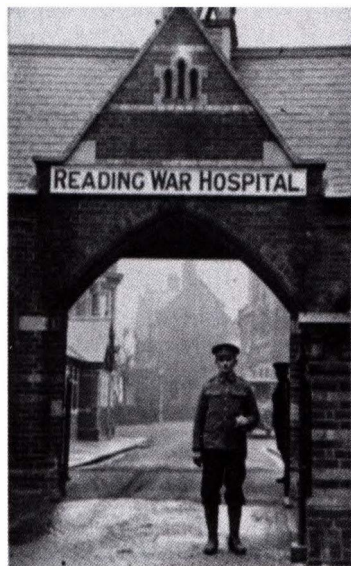
Berkshire Burial Index update

The parishes and periods which have been added to the Berkshire Burial Index since the position shown in the March 2005 issue of the Berkshire Family Historian are set out below. The index now contains more than 383,000 entries.

Aldermaston St Mary the Virgin 1813-1882
Binfield All Saints 1868-1884
Cholsey St Mary 1874-1900
Faringdon All Saints 1896-1918
Hampstead Norreys St Mary 1821-1919
Harwell St Matthew 1813-1865
Moulsford St Mary the Virgin 1813-1992
Newbury St Nicolas 1783-1797
Reading St Mary 1768-1776
Shrivenham St Andrew 1813-1867
Sonning St Andrew 1813-1825
South Moreton St John the Baptist 1948-1994
Steventon St Michael & All Angels 1868-1893
Stubblings St James the Less 1852-1949
Sutton Courtenay All Saints 1813-1888
Twyford St Mary 1889-1924
Wallingford St Leonard 1671-1678 (in register of Wallingford St Mary the More)
Wallingford St Mary the More 1671-1678, 1711-1712
Wallingford St Peter 1671-1678 (in register of Wallingford St Mary the More)
Wantage SS Peter & Paul 1828-1852, 1863-1870, 1892-1902
Wokingham All Saints 1841-1854

The End of Battle Hospital

Neila Warner, Berkshire Record Office



The gatehouse of Reading No 1 War Hospital. Reproduced courtesy of the Local Studies Collection, Reading Central Library

Battle Hospital in Reading is due to close in 2005 when the services it currently provides to the community will be transferred to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, bringing an end to nearly 140 years of history.

The hospital started life, as did many others, as a workhouse, built to serve the needs of the town's destitute. The Reading Poor Law Union was formed in August 1835, with a Board comprising five Guardians from each of the parishes of St Giles, St Laurence and St Mary. The old St Giles workhouse in Horn Street (now Southampton Street) was closed, and the remaining two were adapted and extended. St Mary's workhouse in Pinkney's Lane housed the aged, the infirm, the sick, mothers with children and orphans, while St Laurence's workhouse in Thorn Street housed able-bodied paupers and vagrants.

Medical officers were appointed to care for the inmates. The diseases most frequently encountered were fever, smallpox and consumption (tuberculosis), although many

children fell victim to influenza, diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, polio, tetanus, and typhoid. The homes of the poor, often built around small courtyards or along narrow alleys, were overcrowded and had poor sanitation. Contagious diseases such as cholera spread very quickly and it is small wonder that life expectancy at birth in the 1840s was low: 45 years for the gentry, 27 years for tradesmen and 22 years for labourers, although once children reached the age of five life expectancy showed a dramatic increase. Food was scarce, and malnutrition led to diseases such as rickets (caused by lack of vitamin D) and scurvy (caused by lack of vitamin C).

In 1847 the Poor Law Commissioners expressed concern over the sanitary conditions in St Laurence's workhouse and recommended that it should be replaced by a new building. The Guardians responded by converting an old granary in the Forbury to house vagrants, who were permitted to stay for one night as long as they picked a pound of oakum in four hours as payment.

In 1865, the Guardians obtained a loan of £11,700 and spent £5,000 on a site near Battle Farm on the Oxford Road. The old manor of Battle was part of the endowment providing income for the day-to-day running of Battle Abbey in East Sussex – it was not named after a famous battle! A competition was held to find an architect who could provide a workhouse to the standard required by the Guardians for no more than £6,700. It was won by a Mr Woodman, who based his design, as the Guardians had specified, on that of the East Grinstead Workhouse, built in 1859. The plans were submitted to the Poor Law Commission, and in February 1866 they commented:

'The Board observes with regard to the proposed Infirmary that it is ill adapted for the accommodation of the sick. The Wards will have windows on one side only, and consequently the ventilation would be imperfect.'

They produced five pages of complaints altogether, but fortunately Mr Woodman was able to modify the plans so that a compromise could be reached. An extra storey was added at an additional cost of £430, taking the overall cost, including furniture and fittings, to £14,000.

The opportunity was taken to make life slightly more bearable for the inmates: flock mattresses replaced straw ones, the old double beds were cut down to make single ones (a cost-cutting measure that ultimately caused further expense) and backs were added to the benches in the dining hall. Wool rugs were purchased for the floors and the day rooms had a fireplace at each end and suitable reading matter. Water closets were provided, although the architect clearly thought this would cause problems as 'they are used by parties who have never been accustomed to them and are not at all aware of their construction'. He advised that great and watchful care would be required to make sure that they were not used as waste disposal facilities for rags or meat bones. This has the familiar ring of putting baths into council houses in the 1920s when it was thought that tenants would use them for storing coal.

In 1870 fever wards were added, and extra two-storey wards for the infirmary. One of the new women's wards was partitioned to create a lying-in area for maternity cases. In 1892, the Guardians decided to build a new infirmary and the old infirmary building was then used to house female paupers. Male paupers occupied the whole of the original workhouse building. It was at this point that the Infirmary started to train its own nurses. Initially they were sent to lectures and demonstrations at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but later all training was given on site.

In 1909-11, an additional infirmary block was added to house 150 aged, infirm and convalescent patients, and care of the elderly remains one of Battle's functions. At the start of the Great War the scale of casualties meant that extra medical facilities were needed. The inmates were moved out to other institutions and the workhouse was handed over to the military authorities in March 1915 to become Reading No 1 War Hospital. There were eventually 20 war hospitals in the county, all linked to Battle.

After the war, the Guardians decided to carry on using it as a hospital with a Medical Superintendent and Matron in charge, and when the Poor Law system was abolished in 1929, Battle Infirmary was handed over to the local authority and became a Municipal Hospital, adopting its present name: Battle Hospital. This was still pre-NHS, and patients were expected to contribute to the cost of their treatment if able to do so. The functions formerly performed by the workhouse were taken over by the local Public Assistance Committee.

Under the National Health Service Act, which came into operation in 1948, Battle became a General Hospital and as new medical procedures became available, and cases previously thought to be inoperable became treatable, the hospital expanded to meet the demand. In 1972 the single-storey Abbey Block was opened. Acute services were now split between Battle and the RBH, and there was talk of a new 1000 bed hospital on the RBH site, but nothing happened. However, under the NHS reforms of the 1990s, the two hospitals joined together in 1993 to form the Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust, and the plan to amalgamate all the services in new accommodation on the RBH site was finally realised.

Much of the Royal Berkshire Hospital has already been reconstructed or refurbished, and the last part, the aptly named Battle Block, is due to be completed by the end of 2005. All the remaining services will be transferred over and the old Battle site will almost certainly be sold for development. Truly the end of an era.

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A Canadian War Child

Last year you may remember I recounted the poll books survive story of how I found my Canadian family after many years scouring the internet. Finally we booked tickets to visit my siblings, eight of them in all. My father was killed in a road accident in 1966 so sadly I was never able to meet him, but I could at least get to know him through my brothers and sisters.

On the flight over I must admit to fretting about whether or not we could build a relationship without ever having known each other. However, before the aircraft landed I had studied the photograph of Dwayne and Sharon, who were picking us up from the airport. We retrieved our bags and the wonderful moment had arrived as I scanned the arrivals hall for them.

Suddenly I saw them and rushed over saying 'it's me, Sandra', and from that moment we chatted and giggled as if we had always known each other, no stilted conversation or awkward moments, far more than I ever expected when we first contacted each other. The next day we met more brothers and sisters and I still cannot get over the reception we received, there was no animosity towards me, me who out of the blue turned up after 57 years, although my father did tell my brother who was nineteen at the time that he had a child in England. I take great comfort from the fact that he never banished me from his mind.

Dwayne also took us to see Lloyd, who was in the army with my father, and came to England with him. Unfortunately they weren't in the same regiment, and when they landed were sent to different areas; Lloyd couldn't remember much as he is now 83. The family know little of his army background, as all the papers were lost when Dad died. I am now

The grave
of Ralph
Edward
Newans
1923-1966

trying to track down his regiment and where he was stationed, but it is not as simple as you would expect dealing with the Canadian military authorities.

Dwayne took me to see our father's grave, it was a beautiful cemetery, very calm and peaceful. I had always dreamed of visiting his grave, if he had died before I could make contact. It was very emotional as I laid flowers on the grave with the sun shining and I felt sad but thankful for the way things had turned out.

Dwayne and Sharon held a Thanksgiving party for us and we met all the family: brothers, sisters their other halves, their children, and a sister of my father and her husband.

Cameras and pictures were in abundance, only about four of our father had survived, but there were promises of copies to be made and sent, many pictures taken and stories about childhood and memories were relived amid a great deal of laughter. I don't think I have laughed as much in such a short space of time, it really felt as if we had known each other all our lives and not just a year.



The week had really gone quickly and on Monday we were due to return home when one of the sisters said, 'you really should have come for longer than a week'. We wished we had, but as I told them all, we only came for a week as you might not have liked you and we might not have like you – and that really was the truth; this of course made us all laugh and giggle and how happy we all were that we really did like each other. Hopefully we'll all keep in touch and they'll come to England this year for a return visit, and we'll remember this wonderful beginning and end to my quest – sadly without Dad – for the rest of our lives.

I hope my story will give all of you searching for relatives inspiration to keep looking, as you never know what you'll turn up, so my advice is to keep searching.

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Somerset (Electoral registers)			
East 1832	£19.00		
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Gleanings from exchange magazines

Daphne Spurling

Know Your Parish: Stockton-On-Tees.

Article first published in 1988, a few names. (Cleveland FHS, Vol 9, No 5, Jan 2005)

Destination Auckland: Passenger shipping 1915-1921. Detailed article. (*The New Zealand Genealogist*, Vol 35, No 290, Nov/Dec 2004)

Immigrant information at Archives New Zealand. (*The New Zealand Genealogist*, Vol 35, No 290, Nov/Dec 2004)

An Oldham neighbourhood 1861-1881. Analysis of population, birthplaces, occupations, children and education, population and occupation of under 18s, socio-economic groupings, and widows and widowers. Lists surnames found in 1861 and 1881 census pages. (*The Manchester Genealogist*, Vol 40, No 4, 2004)

Index to Grave Inscriptions in St James Church and Brookfield Church, Gorton, and The Old Burial Ground, Stretford. (*The Manchester Genealogist*, Vol 40, No 4, 2004)

Army Records. Covers 1660 to 1945, both officers and other ranks, and GRO overseas indexes. (*The Manchester Genealogist*, Vol 40, No 4, 2004)

Scottish Archive Network. (*The Manchester Genealogist*, Vol 40, No 4, 2004)

1837 Online and FreeBMD Comparison (Leicestershire and Rutland FHS, No 118, Dec 2004)

A Snapshot of Elmstead using the 1881 census (Essex FHS, No 114, Dec 2004)

The Country Chorister. Subscription list giving nearly 300 names and villages of those subscribing to a new musical work; probable dates between 1786 and 1807. (Essex FHS, No 114, Dec 2004)

Aldham Burial Register 1813-1944

Glimpses into some named lives and families by a member transcribing for the NBI. (Essex FHS, No 114, Dec 2004)

Clopton; Walk about Kelsale; Walk about Kedington (Suffolk FHS, Vol 30, No 3, Dec 2004)

Quaker Marriage of Robert Alcock and Elizabeth Barker. Lists 33 witnesses; Trial of Margery Beddingfield and Richard Ringe: list of all persons involved; Deacons of Halesworth Congregational Chapel 1793-1903; Woodbridge Gaol Books Transportees 1825 – 1840: details of 24 persons. (Suffolk FHS, Vol 30, No 3, Dec 2004)

Start Writing: Family History. Account of using the Open University course. (Suffolk FHS, Vol 30, No 3, Dec 2004)

My Parish – Bristol (part 2). Twelve churches, some no longer extant. (Bristol and Avon FHS, No 118, Dec 2004)

Parish Officers – unpaid and overworked. Churchwarden, constable, overseer of the poor, highway overseer; where to find the records and bibliography. (Sheffield and District FHS, Vol 25, No 4,

Winter 2004)

Ruth Mynachlog's Recollections.

Memories of life as a female servant born in Wales in 1856. (Dyfed FHS, Vol 8, No 7, Dec 2004)

The Anatomy of a Divorce 1830s Style.

A case study. (The Heraldry and Genealogical Society of Canberra, Vol 27, No 3, Sept 2004)

Peterborough in the 1840s.

(Peterborough and District FHS, Vol 23, Part 4, Dec 2004)

Schedule of Wages 1617. (Hertfordshire FHS, No 91, Dec 2004)

Little Berkhamstead and Ponsbourne. (Hertfordshire FHS, No 91, Dec 2004)

Settlements: A talk on Poor Law settlement certificates. (Hertfordshire FHS, No 91, Dec 2004)

The Function Key. Preparing Digital Images for E-mail Transmission (Hertfordshire FHS, No 91, Dec 2004)

Cover Story – Every Picture tells a Story. Pictures and names from Cheriton Board School. (Hampshire FHS, Vol XXXI, No 3, Dec 2004)

National Memorial Card Index. Derbyshire Section. Details of cards of surnames beginning A to C. To be continued in future issues. (Derbyshire FHS, Issue 111, Dec 2004)

Seventeenth Century Sources from Reports on Meetings. (North Cheshire FHS, Vol 32, No 1, Feb 2005)

First Name Variants from Reports on Meetings. (North Cheshire FHS, Vol 32, No 1, Feb 2005)

News from the National Archives. The Medal Rolls Index (North Cheshire FHS, Vol 32, No 1, Feb 2005)

Patronymic Paranoia. Detailed article about Welsh names (Clwyd FHS, No 83, Jan 2005)

1801 Census of Guildford. Part 1. List of householders alphabetically arranged from Adams to Jones. For each is given the numbers of males and females, and numbers employed in agriculture, trade and other. (*Root and Branch*, West Surrey FHS, Vol 31, No 3, Dec 2005)

Computer Corner – PDAs. Personal Digital Assistant. (*Root and Branch*, West Surrey FHS, Vol 31, No 3, Dec 2005)

A Parish Genealogy: a study of all the families in the village of Corscombe. (*The Greenwood Tree*, Somerset and Dorset FHS, Vol 30, No 1, Feb 2005)

Spotlight on Lydlinch and Wraxall: a village remembered. (*The Greenwood Tree*, Somerset and Dorset FHS, Vol 30, No 1, Feb 2005)

Websites for New Zealand Research. (*Australian Family Tree Connections*, Feb 2005)

Raunds – a dissenting village. To be continued in future issues (*Footprints*, Northamptonshire FHS, Vol 26, No 3, Feb 2005)

Parish Profile – Weedon Bec. (*Footprints*, Northamptonshire FHS, Vol 26, No 3, Feb 2005)

List of Traders in Northampton taken from Universal British Directory 1791. (*Footprints*, Northamptonshire FHS, Vol 26, No 3, Feb 2005)

The History of High Wycombe to 1900. (*Origins*, Bucks FHS, Vol 29, No 1, March 2005)

Send your letters or articles: by email to Editor@berksfhs.co.uk or The Editor, 5 Wren Close, Burghfield Common, Berkshire RG7 3PF

The Gillies Archive of plastic surgery

Glyn Davies <glyn.davies@medwaywelsh.com>

Purely by accident, I have discovered an amazing archive of First World War personnel material, which hitherto I have never seen listed as a source for research. For years I have been trying to locate the admission and discharge records of a particular Cottage Hospital in the 1930s. Two weeks ago, I discovered that they were located at The Gillies Archives of plastic surgery at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup,

I made an appointment to view the records I was seeking but to my amazement I discovered the main contents of the archives are the case notes of military personnel who suffered facial injuries during the Great War. I mentioned that I had a member of my family who had a war wound to his jaw and within seconds of me giving his name, his medical records were produced with details of his age, rank, regiment, date of wound and the battle, together with the dates and nature of his operations. To my astonishment, I was then informed that they had further information on my relative, in as much that whilst he was in the hospital for treatment he had learned embroidery, and they showed me a photograph of his handiwork, which was embroidery of his regimental cap badge and colours.

They have thousands of photographs of their patients, many taken before they were wounded, but mostly of their wounds and the result after treatment. The archivist is keen to obtain photographs of ex-patients after they had settled back into civilian life. Altogether the archives contain over 2500 records of UK, Australian and New Zealand personnel. Most of the case notes are in their original folders and relate mostly to soldiers, with a small number of Navy and Flying Corps personnel, who had suffered burns. The records include rank, number, regiment and date of wounding so that the action in which they were wounded can often be identified.

I am informed that The Gillies and Macalister Archives are probably the most important and complete collection of facial surgery records of their age in the world and they are available to researchers by application to the Curator, details of which are on the following website: <<http://website.lineone.net/~andrewbamji>>

Prayer Book

*Mr L J Watkins, 18
Anson Avenue, Lichfield,
Staffordshire WS13 7EU*

I have in my possession a Prayer Book, published in 1774, in which are listed the dates of birth of Ann, Francis, Prissila, Martha and John Coppock. Prissila Coppock was born on 6 December 1761 and married George Edwards on 12 September 1785 at Bray. Prissila Banham died on 26 March 1828 aged 68 years. John Banham died on 26 February 1856 aged 80. His death was registered in the Cookham Registration District. The deaths of John and Francis Wakefield are also recorded. If any of your members has a connection to this family I would be glad to pass this Prayer Book on to them.

Hunter Scorer marriage

Bob Britnell 28 Orchard Close Canterbury Kent CT2 7AL

In the March magazine you asked for ideas as to the triple marriage of Hunter Scorer, first to Sarah Gilroy in 1879 and then to Sarah Ann Bagley in 1884 and 1887, all in the Newcastle upon Tyne area.

I first researched all three families in 1871; finding Hunter Scorer (15) with his parents William and Elizabeth in Front Street, Newbottle; (RG10/4980/40), Sarah Gilroy (9) with her parents William and Jane at 24 Hanover St, Newcastle upon Tyne; (RG10/5103/39) and Sarah Ann Bagley (11) with her parents Robert and Mary at Ricknale or Ricknall Mill, Woodham; (RG10/4908/73).

In 1881 Hunter and Sarah Scorer with newborn daughter Amy Jane are at 22 Hewgill Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, Hunter is a Clerk to Builder Contractor; (RG11/5064/10). William Scorer is at RG11/4973/8 and William Gilroy at RG11/5064/92. 21 Year old Sarah Ann Bagley is still at home with her parents at Brafferton Village RG11/4892/50.

In 1891 Hunter is now with Sarah Scorer, nee Bagley and their children Arthur, Ann, Ethel at 29, Pembroke St, Middlesborough. Hunter is now a railway contractor. (RG12/4008/121). First wife Sarah is back at home with her parents and sisters but is listed on the census under her maiden name of Gilroy; also in the house is a granddaughter 10 year old Emma Jane and clearly the child of Sarah and Hunter. Address seems to be 19 Shieldfield Green, (RG12/4212/13).

I have included the census references so that Sally Ritchie can follow them up, otherwise if she wishes to contact me I will give her full details of the census entries.

So, no deaths found because neither Sarah nor Amy/Emma are dead; obviously the marriage fell apart and Sarah, with daughter in tow did as so many others have and went home to mum and dad. Hunter by contrast thrived and went on to marry the same woman twice, both times bigamously!

Philip Harpwood, 3 Blue Row, Over Norton, Chipping Norton, Oxon, OX7 5PL

Two girls are involved in these marriages. Sarah Gilroy who married Hunter Scorer in 1879 was divorced in 1885. This is indexed in 'Matrimonial Causes 1858-1903' at <www.nationalarchivist.com/index01/index.cfm>, index 277.

However, Hunter had already committed bigamy by his second marriage to Sarah Ann Bagley in 1884. Both girls (wives present and future) appear on the 1881 census. And, in the 1891 and 1901 censuses, Sarah Gilroy and her daughter, Amy Jane (a 20 year old teacher in 1901) are under Sarah's maiden name. I can find no trace of Hunter and Sarah Ann Bagley after their second marriage in 1887.

Jean Debney writes:

Thank you, Bob, Philip and others, for your suggestions to solve Sally's puzzle. I must admit I hadn't considered the possibility of a divorce in the late nineteenth century because of cost and the few grounds available to couples at that time. For more information on using divorce papers at The National Archives I would suggest you consult 'Tracing Your Ancestors in the Public Record Office' (Ed. Amanda Bevan, 5th rev. edn. PRO, 1999). Permission to consult individual case papers in the files which are closed under the 75 year closure may be obtained from the Principal Registry of the Family Division. The Principal Registry also has records of divorces since 1944, and will search them for a fee.

There is a copy of 'Divorces published in *The Times*, 1790-1910' in the library of the Society of Genealogists, London. *The Times Index* from 1785 to 1980 on CDROM is also a useful source for divorce cases. This last index may be consulted at many central and university libraries. For further reading, see 'Victorian Divorce' by A Horstman (London, 1985).

Maidenhead street party



Coral Mist, 2 Horewood Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7LY

This is a photograph of a children's street party probably taken soon after VE Day in 1945. A friend of mine, Shirley Pepper nee Dowding (in the middle row sixth from the left) can identify some of the children but would like to name the rest. So is there anyone who can remember that day? Shirley lived in Wellington Road, other children in that road that she can name are Doris, Kathleen and Cyril North, Billy and Peter Eckersey, and Susan Kemp. Other places are St Marks, Gordon and Raymond Road.

'Lord' George Sanger

Terence Lee, 11 Fell Close, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5AP

Reading an article in the *Berkshire Family Historian* (September 2000) on 'Lord' George Sanger prompted me to locate him in the 1861 census. RG9 2943/114/6 Oxford Street, Manchester

Schedule 320 Portland Street, Travelling Shooting Gallery

Daniel Hughes, prop. Brother unum 18 travels with shooting gallery LAN Manchester

Schedule 321 'Sangers Equestrian Troupe' located in travelling carriages on the night of April 7

John Sanger	H	m	40	circus proprietor	BRK Newbury
Elizabeth Sanger	W	m	32		BRK Newbury
John Sanger	S		7		NFK Norwich
Laurina Sanger	D		4		SCO
George Sanger	Bro H	m	37	circus proprietor	BRK Newbury
Ellen Sanger	W	m	28		LAN Liverpool
Laurina Sanger	D		8		STF Cheadle
Harriet Sanger	D		6		STF Walsall
Charles Forbes	Servant	u	33	Labourer & watchman	LAN Manchester
William Chapman	Bro-I-Law		12		MDX London
Caroline Crockett	Neice		15	equestrian	MDX London

My interest in the Sangers came about because of the fight between the Lees and the Rossiters. I am related to both sides. Jimmy Lee married Barbara Rossiter; they were my great-grandparents. I am now in the advanced stages of writing an A to Z of gypsy genealogies.

Bookends

Jean Debney

Berkshire Records

Three new publications of indexed records, most from the Berkshire Record Office and some from the National Archives, but all transcribed and published by the enthusiastic Eureka Partnership:

Broad Street, Reading, Congregational Church: Baptisms 1715-1884 & 1894-1902 & Burials 1787-1869, The Eureka Partnership (2005) A5, green card flexiback, 60pp. Price £4.00, UK p&p £4.60, Overseas surface £5.70, Airmail £6.25

The introduction includes a brief background to the growth of nonconformity in Reading and the history of the Broad Street Chapel in particular. A Grade II listed building, it was closed for worship and, beautifully restored, and is now Waterstone's Bookshop. The main structure and many original features, including some memorials now in glass cases, have been retained.

The earliest registers are in the National Archives and the later ones in the Berkshire Record Office. The baptisms include the date, child's and father's or parents' name, plus residence in later entries; and the burials include dates and names plus, sometimes, ages and late residence.

Hungerford Union: Workhouse Births & Deaths 1866-1914 & Pauper's Service Book 1877-1917, The Eureka Partnership (2005) A5 grey, flexiback, 44pp. Price £4.00, UK p&p £4.50, Overseas surface £4.85, Airmail £5.75

Hungerford Union, in Berkshire and Wiltshire, included the parishes of Avingdon, East Garston, East & West Shefford, Inkpen, Lambourn & West Woodhay, all in Berkshire, Aldbourne, Baydon, Buttermere, Froxfield, Great & Little Bedwyn, Ham and Ramsbury, all in Wiltshire, plus Chilton Foliat, Hungerford and Shalbourne, part in Berkshire and part Wiltshire; Combe (Hampshire) was added in 1835, Tidcombe (Wiltshire) in September 1836 and Hippenscombe (Wiltshire) in September 1858. In 1896 it was renamed the Hungerford and Ramsbury Union.

A new workhouse in Park St, Hungerford was opened in 1847 which later became the Hungerford Hospital and is now the site of a housing development; only the chapel survives.

The birth and death registers list names, dates, parish of origin, place of baptism or burial where relevant and remarks; and the *Paupers' Service Book* lists boys and girls aged 11 to 15 years old, their hiring dates and who and where they were sent to, etc.

Easthampstead Union: Workhouse Births & Deaths 1849-1914, The Eureka Partnership (2005) A5, grey card flexiback, 36pp. Price £2.50, UK p&p £3.00, Overseas surface £3.35, Airmail £5.75

Easthampstead Union, Berkshire, included the parishes of Binfield, Easthampstead, Sandhurst, Warfield and Winkfield with Ascot and used some adapted almshouses in Easthampstead (built 1826) for a workhouse. Part of the premises is now Church Hill House Hospital and the rest have been converted into private accommodation.

Publications from the Federation of Family History Societies

Family History Century by Century - Stuart A Raymond (FFHS (Publications) Ltd, 2005) 115mm x 150mm, red & black flexiback, indexed, 208pp ISBN: 1-86006-186-9. Price £7.95, UK p&p £8.90, Overseas surface £9.70, Airmail £11.70

This small, pocket-sized guide, contains 19 chapters dealing with the various research topics and sources so important for all family historians plus lots of useful websites and further reading. A must-have for everyone whether beginners or more experienced.

British History & Heritage on the Web A Directory, Stuart A Raymond, (FFHS (Publications) Ltd, 2004). Landscape A5, blue & white flexiback, 160pp. Price £5.50, UK p&p £6.35, Overseas surface £7.00, Airmail £8.70

24 chapters detail websites by 'gateways', topics, time (from Prehistory through various historical periods to the 20th century) and place (Ireland, Scotland and Wales). There are five indexes by subject, journals, author, institution and place. A very useful guide for answers to your research questions via the internet without too many problems.

Irish Family History on the Web - A Directory, Stuart A Raymond, (FFHS (Publications) Ltd, 2nd edn, 2004). Landscape A5, (Irish) green & white flexiback, 112pp. Price £5.95, UK p&p £6.70, Overseas surface £7.00. Airmail £ 8.70

Updated with all the latest websites from 'how-to-do-it' in Ireland, discussion groups and message boards to surnames, BMDs, occupational records, etc., and, of course, 'miscellaneous sites'. Indexed by subject, institution and place, this is another 'must-have' guide to your Irish ancestors.

Methodist Records for Family Historians (green flexiback). The Wesleyan Methodist History Roll (white flexiback). Both by Richard Ratcliffe (FFHS, 2005). A5, 16pp. Price £2.00 each, UK p&p £2.50, Overseas surface £2.85, Airmail 4.25

Two excellent and comprehensive booklets from an author who is a Methodist Lay Preacher, as well as an experienced family historian. The first lists the history and details various sources and their locations. The second covers the 50-volume 'Historic Roll' available, by District, on microfilm, consisting of the original pages of names and addresses of donors of a guinea (among more than a million people are children who gave a shilling) to the 'Twentieth Century Fund' (1899-1904) in honour of the centenary of John Wesley's death (in 1791), the founder of Methodism in 1729.



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No	Name	Place	Code	Date
5745	AXTEN	All	BKM	1870-1890
5779	ALDER	Blewbury	BRK	-1950
5770	ALDER	Hendred	BRK	-1950
5779	ALDORTH	Blewbury	BRK	-1950
5779	ALDORTH	Hendred	BRK	-1950
5752	ATTENBOROUGH	Loughboro	LEI	pre 1830
3373	BALL(S)	Shaw cum Donnington	BRK	1900+
3373	BALL(S)	Andover	HAM	1940+
3373	BALLS	Alphamstone	ESS	pre 1900
5745	BARNETT	Stockenchurch	BKM	1870-1920
5643	BATES	Kintbury	BRK	All
5790	BEATON	Portsea	HAM	1862-1882
5752	BENNETT	South Brent	SOM	pre 1830
3373	BIRD	Enford	WIL	1700+
5790	BISHOP	All	CON	c 1800
5752	BOATER	East London	MDX	pre 1814
5643	BRADLEY	Greenham	BRK	1842
5752	BROCK	Chew Valley	SOM	pre 1830
5752	BROWN	East London	MDX	pre 1830

No	Name	Place	Code	Date
5752	CARTER	Sunderland	TWR	pre 1853
5745	COMLEY	Aldworth	BRK	1890-1920
5136	DANCE	Welford	BRK	-1700
3361	DIMMOCK	All	BKM	All
5659	ECKAT	Bramley	HAM	1500+
5790	EDNEY	All	SSX	1840-70
5643	FARRALL	Bunbury	CHS	pre 1890
5752	FAULKS	Loughboro	LEI	pre 1830
5659	FLEMMING	Burghfield	BRK	1600+
5659	GHOST	Wok	BRK	1600+
5420	GOODWIN	All	ESS	All
5790	GREENFIELD	All	SSX	1860+
3373	HOWSE	Cumnor	BRK	pre 1900
3373	LANGFORD	Great Shefford	BRK	1700+
3361	LEGGE	Vale of White Horse	BRK	pre 1850
5136	LEWINGTON	Donnington	BRK	pre 1850
5659	LEWIS	Wokingham	BRK	1700+

No	Name	Place	Code	Date
3373	MACKLIN	Enford	WIL	1700+
5659	MERSHAM	Upton Grey	HAM	1500+
5659	MERSHAM	Wokingham	BRK	1700+
3361	MOXON	Stewkley	BKM	pre 1900
5136	PARSONS	Lambourn	BRK	pre 1750
3373	PRATER	Great Shefford	BRK	1700-1900
5136	QUELCH	Farnborough	BRK	-1800
5643	RANDALL	Kintbury	BRK	All
5659	RIDER	Shrivenham	BRK	1600-1850
5659	RIDER	Lambourn	BRK	1600-1850
3361	ROLAND	Vale of White Horse		
			BRK	pre 1850
5643	ROSEWARNE		All	CON All
5752	SATCHELL	Chew Valley	SOM	pre 1830
5752	SEARLE	East London	MDX	pre 1900
5643	SKINNER	Greenham	BRK	All
5643	STACEY	Trysull	STS	All
5136	STANBROOK			
		Brightwaltham	BRK	1800-
5136	STANBROOK			
		Winterbourne	BRK	-1800
5643	STAPLEFORTH			
		Pinchbeck	UN	All
3373	STOBO	All	DFS	1800-1950
3373	STOBO	Stonehouse	LKS	1700+
3373	STOBO	Crawfordjohn	LKS	1750-1850
3373	TAYLOR	Leckhampstead	BRK	1800-1950
5643	THORPE	Bunbury	CHS	pre 1890
5136	WATTS	Kintbury	BRK	-1780
5752	WEBB	Chew Valley	SOM	pre 1830
5745	WEBB	All	BKM	1800-1900
5752	WILLIAMS	Chew Valley	SOM	pre 1830
3361	WOODWARDS			
		Wilug	BKM	pre 1900

No	Name	Place	Code	Date
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		Wilug	BDF	pre 1900

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How to find us

Next door to the Berkshire Record Office, off Coley Avenue, close to the centre of Reading. Good parking, 15 minutes' walk from the main railway station, with buses passing close by. Follow the signs to the Berkshire Record Office.

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The Computer Suite at the Research Centre



Research Centre and Berkshire Record Office

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- No tour in August
- Saturday 17 Sep 2.30pm–4.30pm

Whether you are a member or just a visitor, these tours will show you what research and finding aids are available to enable you to make the most of the rich resources at the Research Centre.

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- Late opening on Tuesday from 7pm to 9.30pm
- Second and fourth Sunday of each month from 11am to 4pm.
- Second Sunday of every month 2pm to 4pm
computer help is also available

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Birth Briefs are five-generation ancestral charts submitted by members of the Society. Fully completed charts contain the names and vital records (birth or christening, marriage and death or burial) of the member and up to 30 ancestors.

- You can search the index, currently 28,595 names, on the website or for £2 per surname by post.
- You can order a copy of a particular Birth Brief for £2. Quote the ID No. obtained from the website or from the postal search. The Birth Brief can be sent as a hard copy, in PAF Pedigree format or as a file in GEDCOM format.

Please post search requests and orders for copies to BFHS (BB), Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ. Mark your envelope BB and include the BB ID No. (if known). Enclose a sterling cheque, drawn on a UK bank, your email address and an A4 self-addressed envelope either stamped or containing two IRCs.

- You can contact the person submitting the Birth Brief, if they are still a member (see website). We will pass on a letter or email (if they have an email address – see website).

To contact the person submitting the Birth Brief: either send your letter with two unstamped envelopes, one self-addressed and one blank, with three IRCs (not stamps) to BFHS (BBxxxx) at Yeomanry House.

Or email your message to BBxxxx@berksfhs.org.uk (where xxxx is the BB ID No).

Berkshire Name Search

Berkshire Name Search consists of the following censuses and indexes:

1851 Census. Complete checked transcription of the 173,748 persons within Berkshire on 30 March 1851. Printouts are available for a surname search (listing all and giving district) on either the page or the household of a selected person. Also available on CD ROM.

1861 Census. Transcription has just started with 130,105 individuals to date; more districts will be added as available.

1871 Census. Transcription and index of 230,000 people now completed; checking ongoing and will be included as available. Printouts as 1851.

1881 Census. Complete transcription and index of 223,936 people.

Berkshire Marriage Index. Work in progress transcribing and checking pre-1837 registers. Includes 127,336 entries to date, see the *Berkshire Family Historian* or the Society website for the parishes and dates covered. Printouts of early entries only give dates and names of bride and groom; later entries included if from another parish or by licence.

Berkshire Burial Index. Work continues transcribing from burial registers, with over 383,000 entries to date. See the Society website or the *Berkshire Family Historian* for up-to-date contents. Some 50% of entries show all available data; the rest show – where available – name, age, abode, relationship, occupation and title together with a note indicating if there is further information such as date, place or cause of death etc. in the original record. An updated version of the index is available on CD.

Berkshire Strays Index. This dataset includes 12,000 people recorded in events taking place outside Berkshire if the person has given some reference to Berkshire. Strays records come from a variety of sources including the 1851 census of several neighbouring counties.

Berkshire Miscellaneous Index. This dataset is based on the former Berkshire Name Index and includes 100,279 records that were extracted

and submitted by individuals. When possible running sets (such as baptisms from a parish register) will be placed in specialist datasets leaving the disparate individual records and small datasets in this Miscellaneous Index. The amount of information available depends on the record.

Berkshire Name Index. This is the master index for all of the above indexes.

To search the Berkshire Name Index you may:

- do your own search at the Research Centre
- visit a BFHS stand at a family history fair
- request a postal search.

Postal Search

Send your request to Berkshire Name Search, BFHS (BNS), Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ enclosing a cheque for the charge together with your email address or an A4 sized stamped self-addressed envelope and two IRCs.

Charges

- To search the Berkshire Name Index send £2 per surname requested to obtain the number of entries in each census or index. This search will not provide any information from the records.
- To obtain the full details from the records printed on an A4 sheet (up to 25 entries or lines). We will advise the additional cost if more entries are found.
 - £2 per surname per requested database
 - £5 per surname to search all databases currently available (price will increase as more databases are included).

Records wanted

If you have records of any names that would fit into our Miscellaneous Index (event occurs within Berkshire) or Strays Index (event occurs outside Berkshire but person has Berkshire connections) please send them by post or email to:

- MiscIndex@berksfhs.org.uk, or Strays@berksfhs.org.uk
- BFHS, Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ labelling the envelope either BFHS (MiscIndex) or BFHS (Strays).

- Access2Archives 5
- Austen, Lawrence 15
- Avery, Priscilla 16
- Barefoot, Mary 16
- Barnes, David, RAF Project 5
- Battle Hospital 19-21
- Berkshire FHS:
 - Berkshire Name Search 35
 - Birth Briefs Index 34
 - Branch programmes Inside back cover and Back cover
 - Postal searches 35
 - Research Centre 2; guide to collections 34; Library tours, 34
- Berkshire Record Office:
 - Acquisitions 2
- Beech, John 16
- Bookends 29
- Breach, Ralph 16
- Britnell, Bob, on Hunter/Scorer marriage 27
- Broad Street Congregational Church Baptisms and Burials 29
- Bullocke, Richard 17
- Canadian War Child 22-23
- Census:
 - 1871 online 3
 - 1861 online 4
- Coppock family 26
- Davies, Glyn, on Gillies Archive of plastic surgery 26
- Diary dates 3
- Dils, Joan, on town records 6-9
- Easthampstead Park 3
- Easthampstead Union Workhouse Births and Deaths 29
- Edwards, William 17
- Exchange Magazines, Gleanings from 24-25
- FamilyHistoryOnline 10-12
- Finchampstead Church Bells 4
- Freedom of Information Act 2
- Gillies Archive of Plastic Surgery 26
- Goldwin, John 15
- Goode, Amanda, on Wiltshire Wills Project 14-17
- Hanna, Chad, on FamilyHistoryOnline 10-12
- Harpwood, Philip, on Hunter/Scorer marriage 27
- Hebblewhite, Elizabeth 16
- Hide, William 15
- Hungerford Union Births, Deaths and Pauper's Service Book 29
- Hunter/Scorer marriage 27
- Jackson, Henry 16
- Lamb, Benjamin 15
- Lee, Terence, on 'Lord' George Sanger 28
- London Metropolitan Archives 4
- Love, Robert, apprentice 7
- Maidenhead street party 28
- Martin, Elizabeth 16-17
- Members' interests 32-33
- Mist, Coral, on Finchampstead Church Bells 4; on Maidenhead street party 28
- Mylam, Stileham 15
- Newans, Ralph Edward 22-23
- Pether, Gilbert 17
- Prayer Book 26
- Purdue, James 7
- Pusey, Anne, on Finchampstead Church Bells 4
- RAF Roll of Honour Project 5
- Raymond Stuart A, "Family History Century by Century" 30; "British History & Heritage on the Web: A Directory" 30; "Irish Family History on the Web - A Directory" 30
- Ratcliffe, Richard, "Methodist Records for Family Historians", 30
- Sanger, 'Lord' George 28
- Skeats, John Thomas 16
- Spurling, Daphne, Gleanings from Exchange Magazines 24-25
- Talmage, Eleanor 16
- Town records 6-9
- Trumbull family 3
- Warner, John 4
- Warner, Neila, on Battle Hospital 19-21
- Watkins, L J, on Prayer Book 26
- Wiltshire Wills Project 14-17
- Wooddman, Mr 19,20

Programme Calendar 2005

Bracknell and Wokingham Branch

Priestwood Community Centre, Priestwood Court Road, Bracknell, 7.15pm for 7.45pm

- 17 June Writing up your family history, Roy Stockdill
Your folders and files are full. You have found the 'black sheep' and lots more besides. How do you pull everything together to share all your findings with family and friends?
- 15 July The Gentleman's Magazine, Alan Ruston
A veritable box of delights! Published monthly from 1731 until 1868, this unique journal gives us the news of the times, including births and bankruptcies, marriages and appointments, deaths and obituaries and much more
- 16 Sept The IGI, useful or not? Ian Waller
A popular speaker takes a fresh look at a familiar finding aid. Newcomers to family history, as well as more experienced researchers, will benefit from this reappraisal

Computer Branch

The Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley, 7.15pm for 7.45pm

- 15 June Berkshire Family History Society AGM followed by using Gedcom to exchange data between different family history programs
- 20 July Armchair genealogy
Some ideas on what's available on the internet so that you can continue with your family research at home whilst enjoying our 'beautiful summer', sitting in the rain

Newbury Branch

St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Shaw, Newbury, 7.30pm for 7.45pm

- 8 June Hannah Lightfoot — the Fair Quaker, Sheila Mitchell
Reputedly one of the most beautiful women of her time, mystery surrounds the fair Hannah and her liaison with the Prince of Wales
- July No meeting
- August No meeting
- 14 Sept Maps for family historians, Peter Park
How to use maps to find detailed information about our ancestors

See overleaf for the remainder of the programme for June to September 2005.

Programme Calendar 2005

continued from overpage

Reading Branch

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, 7.15pm for 7.45pm

- 30 June Dorchester and Wallingford, Hilary Thompson
A history of two towns
- 28 July Annual outing – time and place to be confirmed
- 25 August No meeting
- 29 Sept To be confirmed

Vale of White Horse Branch

Long Furlong Community Centre, Boulter Drive, Abingdon, 7.15pm for 7.30pm

- 13 June Name lists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Michael Gandy
Tithe and tax lists
- 11 July 'Grave Matters – MI-ing' at Drayton. Meet at the Church at 6.30pm
- 8 Aug Victorian servants, Pat Hase
- 12 Sep MI-ing at Drayton Churchyard. Meet at the Church at 6.30pm

Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Branch

Christ Church United Reformed Church, William Street, Windsor, 7.30pm for 7.45pm

- 28 June The Royal Mail Archives. 'Outreach' staff member
History of the Royal Mail and the available records in the archive dating from 1636 to the present day 26
- July History under the Carpet, Ken Surman
The story of our ancestors as revealed on monumental brasses and illustrated with a collection of brass rubbings
- 27 Sep Birth and Baptism. Tom Doig
A birth was steeped in mystery and tradition – how folklore affects our way of life even in the twenty-first century