



Berkshire
Family
Historian

Volume 21 - No 4 - June 1998

Southcote Mill, Kennet & Avon Canal, Reading.



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Events Calendar - 1998

Bracknell Branch

*Priestwood Community Centre, Priestwood Court Road, Bracknell
7:15pm for 7:45pm*

19 th June	"Making Sense of the Census"	Tom Doig
17 th July	"With Nelson at Trafalgar"	John Gurnett
18 th September	"Tracing Your London Ancestors"	Jane Cox

Newbury Branch

*United Reform Church Hall, Cromwell Place, Northbrook Street, Newbury
7:30pm*

10 th June	BFHS Annual General Meeting
July	No Meeting
August	No Meeting
9 th September	To Be Announced

Reading Branch

*BFHS Research Centre, Prospect Technology College, Honey End Lane, Reading
7:15pm for 7:45pm*

Please note that Reading Branch meetings are now held on the last Wednesday of the month.

24 th June	"Heraldry Can be Fun"	Colonel Ian Swinnerton
29 th July	Visit to Stratfield Saye. Travel by bus only. Price £13.50 a head payable in advance. Application forms at meetings or from John Pollock (0118-947-2750).	
August	No Meeting	
30 th September	"From the Beginning: Starting your Family Tree"	John Pollock

Friday 16th October at Earley St Peter's Church Hall at 7pm for 7:45pm

"Reading Old and New"

Doug Noyes

Slough Branch

*St Andrew's Church Hall, The Grove, Slough
7:30pm for 7:45pm*

30 th June	"Heraldry and Livery Buttons"	Mrs Pam Lindsey
28 th July	"Rabbits, Friends and Relations: Wills and What You Can Find"	Catherine Harrington
August	No Meeting	
29 th September	"Records of Other Ranks in the British Army"	Dr Chris Watts

BERKSHIRE FAMILY HISTORIAN

Volume 21, 1997/8

Part 4, June 1998

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If anyone has a suitable photograph for inclusion on the front cover please let the Editor know.

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Chairman's Comments

By Ivan Dickason

Your Society Needs YOU...! The Society is appealing for someone to come forward to act as Bookstall Manager. The profit from bookstall sales is a significant element of the Society's income and we need an energetic business-like person to take responsibility for this important function.

The duties of the Bookstall Manager include taking primary responsibility for the bookstall in the Research Centre; deciding what books and other stock are to be purchased; placing orders; arranging payment; etc., etc. Liaison is required with the Branch Bookstall Managers to procure the stock they require. In addition, the Bookstall is taken on *'away days'*: it is taken, for example, to Open Days of other societies and to the Society of Genealogists Family History Fair. These trips provide valuable publicity for the Society.

If you wish to know more about this important job for the Society please ring me at any time on 0118-978 6785.

The Society held a successful Open Day at Slough in March. On behalf of the Society I thank Barbara Swiatek and her band of helpers from the Slough Branch for arranging a successful day. Our thanks also to those volunteers who helped with the 1881 Census and IGI fiche. As always, many visitors were surprised at the amount of information that can be obtained from them.

The Computer Group has formulated its programme of meetings. Information about the first public meeting of the group will be found in *'Computer Forum'* elsewhere in this magazine. Please come if you can and help properly establish this new society group. A questionnaire about your computing interests is included in this magazine. Do not forget to complete the questionnaire and return it to your Membership Secretary. The results from the questionnaire will help the Computer Group target its programme of future events to the needs and wishes of members.

Included with this copy of the magazine is a fiche of Member's Interests. The Society has not published any Members' Interests since 1989 and this new publication will be welcomed by members. This is the first time the Society has issued a *'free'* fiche with its magazine and any feedback will be welcome. The Society Secretary - Robert Houseman - has masterminded this publication and our thanks go to him and to the members who helped input the data.

The Research Centre goes from strength to strength: the attendance in February was an all-time high! Elsewhere in this magazine we announce the experimental opening of the Centre on some Saturdays. This is in response to many requests from members and the Executive Committee hope that these additional openings will appeal to members who are not able to take advantage of the existing opening hours. This means of, course, that June and I are looking for more volunteers (sorry, Library Assistants!) In addition to people who would like to help on Saturdays, we are particularly in need of additional volunteers for the Tuesday and Thursday evening sessions. If you would like to help, please ring June on 0118-978 6785.

The Postal Search Service continues to provide both members and non-members with information from the census material at the Research Centre. However, members are now requesting information from the 1891 Census and we ask you to note that the Society does not yet hold a copy of the 1891 Census for Berkshire. In fact, the Research Centre has very little indexed material from the 1891 Census. Sorry!

June and I hope you all enjoy your summer holidays.



The Value of Networking

By John M Pollock

Researching alone can get only so far and takes time. Forming a network of family historians makes life much easier.

When I started work on my wife's maternal family I had a rough tree prepared by a beginner in 1970. It enabled me to make a useful start, but I quickly got stuck over my mother-in-law's ten siblings that survived infancy and their descendants, and was completely baffled over her grandparents' families.

My first step was to write to Richard, one of my wife's cousins who appears in *Who's Who*. He had recently had a heart attack, but referred me to his younger brother, Bill, and his first wife, Joanna. Joanna gave me full details of her children and grandchildren and also referred me to one of her first husband's cousins, Michael, in Canada. Michael gave me details of his own family and the addresses of his two brothers - one in Canada and one in England.

Bill and his wife described their own family and referred me to a distant cousin, Judith. She gave me some details of her own family and contacted another cousin who referred me to Anthea and Liz who were working on their own families.

This was the real breakthrough. Liz prepared my original brief. She is a granddaughter of Cecil, one of my mother-in-law's brothers who had six children, eighteen grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren. Liz provided the names of all of them and a lot of dates plus a fair amount of information on other relations, particularly on the families of my wife's grandfather's brothers, about whom I knew only the dates of birth.

Anthea had concentrated on my mother-in-law's maternal family but was very short of hard facts about the paternal family. She had prepared a computerised family tree which stretched across 10 pages of A4.

Together we have been able to extend the family tree and correct each other's errors. Also, I have been able to use *Crockfords'* and *Who Was Who*, to fill in details of the careers of five men. Their moves enable us to locate the birth places of their children.

One example of the gains from combining information from two sources and adding to it is on the family of Elizabeth Jane Thomas, my wife's grandmother's eldest sister. Anthea had found her baptism, marriage to Henry Price, the baptism of her eldest daughter and death. Some of these dates had not been confirmed. Liz also knew of the marriage, but not the date, and the known names of Elizabeth Jane's four children. Combining the information, I first obtained a birth certificate for the eldest daughter. Working from it I then found the births of two of the other daughters and the mother's death. The death certificate showed me why I had failed to find the fourth daughter's birth: the family had moved from Islington to St Albans.

By networking I have been able to add at least 200 names to my database within five months. Without networking this would have taken many years. Indeed, much of it would have been impracticable. Some members of the family are in Canada, some in Australia. Many of the records are in Wales, which I would find difficult to reach, while I am the only one of the three with ready access to London and the 1881 Census transcription.

Dates for Your Diary

- Sat. 27th Jun.* York Family History Fair to be held at the York Racecourse, Knavesmire Stand from 10am until 4.30pm. Many stalls anticipated including family history societies, local archive departments, local history books, advice tables, etc. Admission £1.50. Further details from Mr A Sampson, 1 Oxgang Close, Redcar, Cleveland, TS10 4ND.
- Sat. 27th Jun.* Gathering for those interested in surname **Foreman** to be held at Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Road, Bexley, Kent from 10am until 4pm. Tickets available at £2.50 from Mrs Judith French, 25, Lambaide Avenue, Eltham, London, SE9 3HH, cheques payable to "Foreman".
- 27th Jun. - 28th Jun.* Middlesex County Show, Uxbridge will be attended by the Federation FHS bookstall, all Middlesex FHSs and many other FHSs. For details and advance tickets write to Gill May, 20 Moreland Drive, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 8BB enclosing an SAE.
- Sat. 11th July* Open Day hosted by the Glamorgan FHS at the Historical and Cultural Centre, Bridge St, Pontypridd from 10.30 am until 4 pm. Admission free.
- Sat. 25th July* "Who were your Ancestors?" Open Day hosted by Buckinghamshire FHS Aylesbury Grammar School, Walton Road, Aylesbury from 10am until 4pm Range of material available including Census returns, Parish Registers, Marriage and Burial Database for Buckinghamshire and beyond also Library, Bookstall, Publications, Bucks Strays, Wills, IGI, Monumental Inscriptions, Lists of Bucks People, Computer section, and more. Guest Societies will be there from many other Counties including:-East Surrey, Northamptonshire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Bedfordshire, Kent, Wiltshire, and Essex. Admission free.
- 15th Aug. to 22nd Aug.* Twelfth Family History in Wales Course at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Brochures with full details of the programme, accommodation and costs available from: The Course Directors (FHW98), The Department of Continuing Education, University of Wales, 10-11 Laura Place, Aberystwyth, SY23 2AU, Wales.
- Sat. 22nd Aug.* "Local and Family History Fair" hosted by the The Marlow Society at the Shelley Theatre, Court Gardens Leisure Centre, Marlow, Bucks. There will be Local History Groups from the area, as well as local Family History Societies. The County Records and Local Studies department and the Archaeological Society will also be there. For further details send an SAE to LOFAMFA, The Sheiling, Gossmore Lane, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 1QF.
- 4th Sep. to 6th Sep.* "Digging up your Family History" 1998 East Midlands and Federation Family History Conference, hosted by Nottinghamshire FHS at Nottingham University. Further details from Mrs Kathy Orford-Perkins, 4 Linden Court, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 2AG.
- Sat. 26th Sep.* Open Day hosted by the Wiltshire FHS at Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London from 10am until 4pm. Admission free.
- Sat. 3rd Oct.* "Puttees, Puffers and Porridge" - Tracing Military, Railway and Criminal Ancestors - A One-Day Seminar hosted by Warwickshire FHS. Speakers are David Seeney, Frank Hardy and Dr Peter Davies. To be held at Bluecoat

School, Terry Rd, Coventry from 9.30am until 5pm. Cost £10 members; £12 non-members. For further details contact The Seminar Secretary, WFHS, 11, The Crescent, Brinklow, Nr. Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 0LG.

- Sat. 10th Oct.* North West Group of Family History Societies Family History Fair to be held at Stockport Town Hall, Wellington Road South (A6), Stockport; from 10am to 4.30pm. Admission £1.50.
- Sat. 10th Oct.* "Footwear to Footprints" One Day Conference hosted by Northamptonshire FHS at The Commarket Hall, Kettering from 10am until 5pm. Fee £10. Further details from Mr R Bailey, 25 Gotch Road, Kettering NN15 6UF
- 30th Oct. - 1st Nov* Family History, an advanced course; tutors Richard and Marjorie Moore at Urchfont Manor College, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts SN10 4RG. (Suitable for those with three years general research experience); fee about £100.
- Sat. 14th Nov.* Open Day hosted by West Surrey FHS at the Methodist Church Hall, Brewery Road, Woking from 10am until 4.30pm.
- Sat. 28th Nov.* "Berkshire and South Oxfordshire c.1840-1930: Place and People" day school at the Lecture Theatre, Bulmershe Court, The University of Reading, Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, Reading. Director of Studies: Joan Dils. Further information from The University of Reading, Centre for Continuing Education, London Road, Reading, RG1 5AQ (Tel: 0118-931-8347).
- Sat. 27th Mar 1999* Second Midlands Family History Fair hosted by Leicestershire and Rutland FHS at the De Montfort Hall, Regents Road, Leicester. Further details from Miss D Merryweather, 11 Faldo Close, Rushey Mead, Leicester, LE4 7TS.
- 9th Apr. - 11th Apr.* "Cabbages and Kings" Family History Conference hosted by the Hampshire Genealogical Society in association with the Federation of Family History Societies at Sparsholt Agricultural College, Winchester. Further details from Mrs J Renton, 27 Lodge Road, Locks Heath, Hampshire SO31 6QY.
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Bookstall Visits to Other Societies

The Society Bookstall will be at the following Open Days run by other societies. Cliff and Jean Debney (0118-941-3223) will appreciate any help offered by members going to these days. These are opportunities to help our Society and to meet and talk to people who are both members and non-members of the host Society, as well as browse other Societies' Bookstalls.

- Sat. 20th Jun.** Wiltshire FHS, at Bouverie Hall Pewsey, 10am to 3.30pm (followed by their AGM).
- Sat. 25th Jul.** Buckinghamshire FHS, at Aylesbury Grammar School, Aylesbury, 10am to 4pm.
- Sat. 22nd Aug.** The Marlow Society, at The Shelley Theatre, Court Garden Leisure Centre, Marlow. This is a Local & Family History Fair, 10am to 4pm.
- Sat. 14th Nov.** West Surrey FHS, at The Methodist Church Hall, Woking, 10am to 4.30pm.
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Evening Classes

David Disbury will be the tutor for two evening classes on Family History in the forthcoming Autumn term. One starts on 14th September at Churchmead School, Datchet (Eadeburgs College) and the other starts on 15th September at Strode's College, Egham, Surrey.

The Watchfield Horror

By David Disbury

At 8 o'clock on Tuesday 5th December 1893, John Carter, labourer, aged 45, of Watchfield, was hanged at Reading Gaol.

On the 15th November, at the Assizes, the jury had, without leaving the room, found John Carter guilty of the wilful murder of his wife, Rhoda Ann Carter, née Titcombe.

According to the press, refused admission to the execution by the High Sheriff, the prisoner Carter was visited in the condemned cell by one of his daughters Mrs Stratton and her husband Joseph. He had:

"slept well the night before, walked firmly to the scaffold, and died from a drop of about 7 feet, ably assisted by the executioner Mr James Billington".

At the inquest on Carter, Mr O.C. Morris, Medical Officer for the gaol stated that *"death appeared to be instantaneous"*. In reply to a juror's question, Lt. Col. Henry B Isaacson declined to say whether the prisoner had, or had not, made a confession or statement.

The morning after the execution, Colonel Blandy, Chief Constable of Berkshire, accompanied by Detective Sergeant Gamble, boarded a train at Reading. They were met at Shrivvenham station and conveyed by trap to Broad Leaze Farm which lies across the meadows from Watchfield towards Longcot. Here, waiting by arrangement, were Superintendent Robert Butcher of Faringdon, Charles Sparkes, Shrivvenham's police constable and a hired labourer, Joseph Wheeler.

After digging to Blandy's instructions at several points in what had once been a rickyard behind the farm, Blandy asked the labourer, *"What is the nature of a drock?"* He was informed that it was a local term

used for a ditch or culvert. With this information Blandy began pacing some 100 yards from a cottage once tenanted by John Carter. Satisfied with his position Blandy instructed the constable to dig. According to eye-witnesses, after removing one spit, Sparkes cried out, *"She's here"*.

John Carter, was the second of seven children born to William Carter, a labourer from Grafton, and Elizabeth née Anger at Watchfield. Baptised on 3rd September 1848 at Shrivvenham, he was by turn a ploughboy, agricultural labourer, cowman, and, at times, a blacksmith.

On the 17th July 1871, at Longcot, he married Elizabeth Ann Thatcher, aged 26, the eldest child of Henry Thatcher, a carpenter, and Ann née Rouse, of Longcot. Elizabeth Ann, the eldest of twelve children, was by then the mother of two illegitimate children, neither of whom survived infancy.

Two years later the Carter's first daughter Elizabeth Annie, always to be known as *"Annie"*, was born and baptised at Longcot. The family moved to Black Acres, Goosey, where three more daughters were born, Clara, Elizabeth Louise, who died after three months, and Martha.

Moving to Broad Leaze Farm cottages Elizabeth gave birth to two more children, Thomas in 1882 and William Henry in 1884.

On the 18th June 1887, Elizabeth Ann, heavily pregnant, and according to John *"Expecting her confinement any day"*, at around 6 o'clock in the evening fell down four stairs. Striking her head on the stone floor, she was later found to have broken her neck.

Carter and his daughter, Elizabeth Annie,

now aged 14, gave evidence at the inquest. John claimed he had left for work at 4am returning for dinner. He told the coroner, Mr Llewellyn Jotcham, a solicitor of Wantage, and the jury, *"his wife was poorly and she was in bed"*, he then returned to work. He went on, *"this was the last time he had seen his wife alive"*.

Annie's story was quite detailed. After dinner her mother came downstairs where she stayed until 6 o'clock. On climbing the stairs to return to bed:

"she reached the fourth step and cried out. She was fainting and said "Oh dear". She had her hands on the stairs about her. All at once she fell back on me and we both fell together to the bottom of the stairs. She fell on the back of the head on the stones of the room, she did not say anything but moved her head once or twice - she did not appear to be sensible".

Annie ran to the hayfield and found a neighbour, a Mrs Griffin. On their return to the cottage a Mrs Inmand from next door was there. *"When we got back"*, Annie went on, *"we found she had been placed straight on the stones - my mother was dead"*. The jury's verdict was that, *"the said Elizabeth Carter was accidentally killed by falling down stairs."*

John Carter used the *King and Queen* public house, Longcot, run by Joseph Pocock. Here he met Elizabeth Ann Alder, aged 18, from Letcombe Bassett.

Elizabeth Ann Alder was the daughter of Thomas Alder and Ann née James. The Alders, also listed as Alder alias Right, had lived in the Letcombes area for over a century. Within 17 weeks of his wife's *"accident"* John married his second Elizabeth Ann. The Shrivenham register recorded Elizabeth Ann as an Aldridge, she having signed *"Elizabeth Elder"*. A note in the margin states *"Corrected to Alder in the*

presence of John x Carter Elizabeth Alder". Very early the following year the newly-weds had a son! Elizabeth Ann was certainly pregnant when her predecessor *"fell down stairs"*.

In September 1889, Elizabeth Ann Carter was last seen cleaning her husband's boots on the threshold of their cottage. She told a neighbour, Cordelia Enstone, that she and John were off to Faringdon that evening to a bazaar.

The following morning, Martha Carter, aged ten, disturbed by the noise of falling chairs in the night, asked her father, *"where mother was?"*. Martha was told not to tell anyone but *"mother"* had run away.

Weeks went by and when asked about his wife John always told the same story:

"She's gone off with a chap from Stanford, they live in Swindon, she took my last 24 shillings and my only solace is the baby boy she has deserted".

The Carter family moved to Watchfield. They moved into a large cottage which had stabling, pig sties, a smithy and a wash house. He now drank at the *Eagle Inn*, Watchfield, mine host the ubiquitous Mr Joseph Pocock.

One of Joseph's staff was a 30-year-old woman called Rhoda Ann Titcombe. Rhoda's parents, James and Ann née Ewer or Hewer, were Non-conformists, their children having been baptised at either the Congregational Church, Highworth or by the Faringdon Primitive Methodist Circuit. Their cottage lay only 30 yards from Carter's home.

It was not long before John Carter was telling his fellow drinkers that he would soon be marrying Rhoda Pocock. When asked how he would do that with his wife still alive and living in Swindon. Carter offered £5 to anyone who could find her, in his words, *"dead or alive."*

On 1st April 1893, John Carter, "widower", married Rhoda Ann at the Register Office, Faringdon.

Two months later, at the Watchfield Club Feast, Lucy Carter, not a Carter relative but related to the Titcombes, asked what was amiss with Rhoda. He replied that she should only dance with a woman, not a man, "*should she want another man I will be the death of her*" he said. Later Carter approached a young widow and told her "*he should want a housekeeper in about six weeks to look after his children*".

On Thursday 20th July, not eleven weeks after their marriage, Rhoda Ann was last seen alive walking with her husband in Watchfield.

During the night of 20th July Thomas Carter, the nine-year-old son from Carter's first marriage, heard what he described later as "*a banging from the next room*". He heard Rhoda cry out "*Lord have mercy upon us*". Then from the stairs Thomas heard a sound he described as, "*knock, knock knock*".

The following morning the boy was told to collect the cows as Carter would be busy in the smithy. The boy returned for breakfast to find the smithy and wash-house locked and he was instructed not to go near either. Asking about his step-mother he was told she had gone to Eastleach to stay with her sister, but if asked Thomas was to say she was at home.

Ann Titcombe, Rhoda's mother, called on Friday morning and asked after her daughter. "*Gone to Eastleach to her sister*" claimed Carter, adding that Rhoda woke with her face burning during the night:

"Someone wants me" she cried. "It is my sister Jane. I shall get up in the morning when you go out and have an early breakfast and start when you goes to milking".

Later that day Carter sent Thomas to Mr Anger, a local farmer and dealer, to buy a quarter hundredweight of coal.

Across the lane from the Carter cottage lived Edward and Ann Butler. That evening Mrs Butler was disturbed by thick smoke coming from the Carter wash-house. Carter was seen going back and forth to the pump opposite her cottage. Eventually the smoke and smell made her go over to Carter's wash-house.

Pushing the door open, through the billowing smoke and steam, she saw a large soda tub surrounded by coal and kindling. This she considered as odd as the wash-house copper was unlit. The door was suddenly pushed against her and John Carter emerged, closing and latching the door behind him.

Carter told her:

"It is alright, I'm burning rubbish."

"No Jack" she replied, "it's all wrong".

David Henry Titcombe, Rhoda's brother, also saw the smoke from the nearby cricket field. He tried to open the wash-house door but burnt his hand. Carter came from the house and opened the door for David. Inside he saw the large tub which was boiling over with water. Asking Carter what was going on he was given the bizarre answer, "*I am boiling water to shave with*".

On the Saturday, Lucy Carter, on asking about Rhoda, was told she had gone to Eastleach. That evening Phoebe Ebsworth, herself a Titcombe, James Titcombe's sister and aunt to Rhoda, told Charles Sparkes, Shrivensham's constable, that Rhoda was missing.

The constable visited John Carter and asked after Rhoda. He was told she had gone to Eastleach, Carter claiming she wanted to bring her sister back for her confinement. They had argued and he:

"had told her, you won't, I married you

to look after my children, I says to her if you go you stop there; don't you come back here again".

Sparkes, who had known Rhoda for about nine years, thought this had been *"in consequence of a tiff - she being a short-tempered woman"* *"You expect her to return of course?"* asked Sparkes and Carter replied: *"Yes, I expect her back on Tuesday by the Carrier cart"*.

On the Monday Rhoda's mother went again to the cottage. She asked to go upstairs and open the windows but Carter refused to let her. That afternoon she returned with the constable. Going upstairs she found *"all my child's clothes and her under-linen. The things hanging up I last saw her wearing on Thursday night"*. She rounded on Carter accusing him, *"of having done away with her"*.

Constable Sparkes, obviously suspicious, went to Eastleach and visited Rhoda's sister Jane Wheatley and her husband David, neither had seen Rhoda.

Returning to Watchfield Carter had disappeared. Later his brother James, returning from a milk run to Shrivenham station, found him hiding in a field. *"Hello brother, what been up to?"* he asked.

"I did kill my wife and bury her in the blacksmith's shop." John Carter asked his brother to go to Watchfield to see if the body had been found. He did but returned with the constable. Carter was arrested and taken to Faringdon Police Station.

Sergeant Benning from Uffington and Sparkes later found Rhoda's body buried in the out-house used as a stable.

Following an inquest at Watchfield's schoolhouse and the Petty Sessional Court at Faringdon Police Court, John Carter was sent to the next Berkshire Assizes. Both jury and magistrates had found a case of

"wilful murder" against John Carter.

At both Watchfield and Faringdon large crowds had gathered, including many of the relatives of Carter's three wives.

At Reading, after a short morning trial, the jury, in five minutes, found the prisoner guilty of wilful murder. Hundreds came to Reading and gathered around the prison area for the execution.

Rhoda Ann Carter was buried on the 28th July 1893 at Shrivenham. On the 15th December the remains of Elizabeth Ann Carter, *"about 24"*, found at Broad Leaze farm, were buried.

Both lay near the first Elizabeth Ann Carter, buried 21st June 1887, undoubtedly murdered by the same evil man.

At the trial and various inquests Carter's now married daughters, Elizabeth Annie Stratton and Clara Breakspear, with Martha Carter, all evidenced their fear of their brutal father. A labourer came forward and claimed Carter had admitted going back to the cottage and killing his first wife.

Concern was expressed by the juries as to the future of the two boys, Thomas and William Henry. Faringdon's Workhouse Guardians recorded *"they were obliged to admit them to their workhouse"*. Eventually, with the permission of their grandfather, himself an inmate of the workhouse, they were emigrated to Canada.

Today, in a number of White Horse Vale villages, you can still find descendants and relatives of all the families involved in or affected by what was to be known as *"The Watchfield Horror"*. The often-found *"Agricultural Labourer"* entry in the census, here at least, once investigated, brings a whole new meaning to *"Family History"*.

Sources

- **Berkshire Record Office:** Coroner's Records Wantage Division COR/WT: 1/5/15, 1/10/11, 1/13/16, 1/9/12, 1/19/18
 - **Berkshire Record Office:** Faringdon Union Guardians Minutes G/F 1/39; 1/38
 - **Public Record Office, Kew:** Assizes Ref: ASSI.6.28
 - **Public Record Office, Kew:** Faringdon Union Correspondence MH12/231
 - **Newspaper:** Reading Mercury. July-December 1893,
 - **Newspaper:** Evening North Wiltshire Herald, July to December 1893
 - **Newspaper:** The Illustrated Police Budget Summer 1893
-

Computer Forum

By Robert Clayton

Report of Meetings of the BFHS Computer Group Steering Committee held at the Research Centre

Wednesday 18th February 1998,

We discussed the possible format of meetings at which 'experts' on computers in genealogy would speak on the finer points of such topics as:

- Software selection/demonstrations
- Getting the best out your computer
- Obtaining data and information via e-mail/Internet
- Using data from the 'FamilySearch' system

We also discussed the possibility of an element of questions and answers at most meetings. We would also need possible access to computers for some of the meetings. Various speakers' names were put forward and there would need to be variety in the meetings programme to cater for the needs of as many society members as possible.

It was felt that the group should be the equivalent of a branch of the society and, as such, should operate under the constitution of a branch with its own committee and budget.

There would not be a need for a formal report in the society's magazine, but it was felt that the group could contribute various articles to the magazine and would include

details of individuals which society members could contact for further information. Any frequently-asked questions might also get answered in the society's magazine.

Each branch (Bracknell, Newbury, Reading and Slough) could have its own computer 'help' desk covered by members of that branch or other members of the computer group. They would also have the backup of a good communication network and would enable members to get help from others throughout the society.

We discussed the possibility of having a project group co-ordinator within the computer group who would liaise with the project group. The computer group could provide expertise with publishing data and helping to make it more available to other members of the society, including the computerisation of material and resources at the Research Centre. We also discussed the possibility of a CD-ROM option with a future magazine (with a suitable alternative to non CD-ROM users).

The computer group could also take a leading role in the construction and maintenance of the society's own web site.

Wednesday 18th March 1998

We read through and discussed some of the

Internet messages I had received after I had circulated the minutes of the last meeting to interested parties. We discussed Adult Education computer genealogy courses, making data available to members and its implications and a credit card payment system.

Chad Hanna demonstrated the BFHS web site on the Research Centre computer which can be found at:

<http://www.vellum.demon.co.uk/genuki/BRK/berksfhs/>

We discussed the content of the site and how it would be distinct from other Berkshire pages held in other places. We talked about a society mailing list and the possible problems with viruses.

As there is no formal branch constitution, the Computer Group would need a Chairman and Secretary and 4-6 committee members, one of whom could oversee the budget. A representative would need to be elected to the BFHS executive committee and there would need to be an AGM around April/May.

We discussed the need for a computer directory. This would comprise a list of members of the group from the whole society. It will take the form of a returnable slip inserted into the society's magazine at the time of membership renewals. Issues of data protection of such information was also discussed.

A project specifically for the computer group was discussed. The birth briefs which are returned by new members could be thoroughly computerised and indexed. This project may have already started a few years ago, but could be continued by the group. Ways of presenting the information/index were also discussed, as was the possibility of having practical 'hands on'

indexing evenings.

Wednesday 15th April 1998

This meeting essentially brought together all the threads discussed at the previous meetings. The directory slip would be circulated with the June magazine and members replying would be contacted soon after receipt of their form.

Initially, Robert Clayton (myself) put himself forward as Chairman and Heather Hicks put herself forward as Secretary for the initial meetings before a proper committee can be formed.

We discussed having meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, beginning in July 1998. The meetings for the next few months will be:

**Wednesday 1st July, 7.45pm at
BFHS Research Centre**

Talk on using computers for genealogy, by Robert Clayton followed by a discussion on meetings up to Christmas 1998 also including questions and answers session as time allows.

**Wednesday 2nd September, 7.45pm
at BFHS Research Centre**

Talk on USA Social Security Records followed by questions and answers session

There will not be a meeting in August. Details of the October, November and December meetings will be announced in the September magazine.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the BFHS Computer Group, please contact me.

Robert Clayton, 10 Vidlers Farm, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hants. RG24 9LS

Tel: 01256 850155

e-mail: Robert_Clayton@Compuserve.com

Foreign Relations

By Norah Moore

I feel quite sure that some family historians may be missing a great deal by neglecting their cousins, even the distant ones. One's cousins are without doubt "*family*" and in Victorian times people not only frequently married their cousins but also corresponded with them extensively. Contact with cousins may well supply you with information of your own line and can produce family anecdotes and traditions through your maybe distant common link. In fact the more distant the relationship the further back the link will be. In my own case contact with a distant French cousin has produced some unusual and surprising information.

In a previous article, published in the *East Surrey Family History Journal*,¹ I described my adventures in a cemetery near Paris while looking for the grave of one Charles Perrin who was my father's second cousin once removed. As an outcome of this, my attention was focused on a Paul Perrin who I thought might be able to give me more information about my family. I looked up his telephone number in the Paris directory and eventually wrote to him asking for his assistance. Not surprisingly it was some months before I had a reply, since the Paris computerised directory failed to say that he had been dead for the last ten years. Fortunately his great-niece still lived at the same address and she was able to put me in touch with his daughter Annette who told me that Paul had been a keen amateur genealogist, who had even extended his research to England. By good luck she had some of his records. Later on I arranged to meet her in Paris, where she

arrived at my hotel bearing two large fragile pedigrees of her French family that even included my own name. She also persuaded me to take home a large and heavy family photograph album that contained 180 pictures of the family. This had belonged to Paul's great-aunt Agathe, who, so she told me, had lived in London for two years with my grandparents.

It seems that around 1835 two French brothers Desire and Frederic Lemoine spent quite a long time in England. They came from Rennes in Brittany and the reason for their stay is not recorded. They were described as tailors. It must have been in North Devon that these two boys met two sisters who were the daughters of a Torrington wheelwright, Henry Squire my great-great grandfather. They married the girls and returned with them to France. Desire, who had been in the army, married my great-great-aunt Eliza in 1836, and they went to live in Paris, where he worked as a tailor, joining her cousin Grace who was already established there as a modiste. It was here that they were to experience great hardship during the siege of Paris in 1870-71. A balloon letter to my grandmother in England says they even resorted to eating cats and rats to keep alive.² Desire disappeared during the Commune and it was assumed that he was shot on the barricades. My informant said "*he came in from work, put his watch on the table and went out, and never returned*". After his death the agents of the underground police arrived at their house to pick up stragglers and to seize the pretty girls. Eliza was very beautiful. She had had enough of France and had to be persuaded by her family from

¹ "French With Tears: Lost But Gone Before", 1987.

The Editor has a copy of the article and can supply copies to anyone who would like to see it.

² I have a balloon letter flown out at that time that tells of their life during the siege.

returning to England. She died in 1890.

Paul Perrin, Eliza's great-grandson, drew up the family trees and wrote on the back in minute script his somewhat cynical thoughts on French genealogy with additional facts about his family. It was here we found these fascinating stories with their distinct French slant.

Parentage

Paul started off by advising would-be historians to be aware of the frequency of bastardy, which he thought might make nonsense of any family tree. He was speaking of life in France but gives the following story from his own family to support his view. The tale came down by word of mouth from great-great-grandmother Perrin who remembered how in 1819, when she was a young girl, the Czar's Cossacks occupied her village of Port sous Seine for a year; and all the women of the district, including the nuns at the Hospice, had the honour of receiving the Cossacks' attentions.

Papal Grace

Another of his stories he calls, with his tongue in his cheek, the Sacred Story. An unnamed ancestor of the Perrin family fought at the naval battle of Leparte in 1571. It is known that the Pope rewarded all those who took part in the battle, together with their descendants in the direct line, by giving them dispensation from Friday duties. Paul and his family actually claimed the right to eat meat on Friday.

The Miracle.

On their marriage Desire, a Catholic, and Eliza, a Protestant, agreed that any boys that they might have would be baptised as Catholics while the girls were to be baptised in the Protestant church. As it turned out they only had three girls and no boys.

At the end of the Second Empire there was a virulent epidemic of cholera in Paris, and the people died like flies. Desire's three girls all went down with cholera. At that time the Lemoines had a cousin, Couillier, the Abbé of St. Bustache who at a later date they housed and fed during the privations of the siege of Paris. He had been much embarrassed when Eliza called on him at the monastery, which was a strictly enclosed one, bringing back a pair of shoes that he had left at their house and he bore her a grudge thereafter because of the scandal that it caused. (I suppose the classical farcical situation would be bringing back a pair of trousers).

Paul Perrin tells the story in his own racy style³

Grandmother Squire was beside herself when she saw that they already had cholera. Then the malice of the Abbé Couillier, their priest, appeared. "Let them become Catholics" he said to grandfather Lemoine "and they will be saved!" the grandfather did everything that the Abbé wanted him to do so that his daughters might recover. They recovered! - they say from cholera but perhaps it was only colic - Then the Abbé's publicity network appeared: he organised a grand procession, with a dais, pomp, chants, cortèges, all of the officials of the authorities, with himself at the head of it of course, to celebrate the efficacy of his prayers and the triumph of our holy religion over the Spirit of Evil represented by the Protestant cholera. A great aura descended on the three miraculous girls; the newspapers talked about it, sightseers came to see them, tracts were printed etc. etc. and the devious Abbé rose actually to become the Bishop of

³ My translation

Lyons.⁴ *When at length Aunt Marie died at the age of 57 (indigestion and chocolate) the Good Sisters with whom she lived still considered her miraculous!... So that is how my grandmother Blanche Lemoine, daughter of an Englishman and born a Protestant became Catholic because of the cholera and a malicious priest."*

The Rescue.

Coming to more recent times Blanche, one of the three girls mentioned above was to marry Georges Jean Weiss, who came from an Alsatian family. Maurice, one of her sons, was living in what became occupied France at the time of the German occupation in 1940. The name Weiss made the "Commissariat of Jewish Affairs"⁵ believe that they were Jews. Blanche's wealthy brother Maurice Weiss and his family were arrested and their property seized. Paul Perrin his nephew and his cousins Weiss protested that they had no Jewish blood. Paul produced pedigrees for the Gestapo and substantiated them with parish documents (my brother and myself appear on these documents). Non-Jewish descent had to be proved for at least three generations. The Weiss family claimed that "they were very much 'good peasants', paying their part as royalists and admirers of the Marshal". The authorities were eventually convinced and the prisoners were released, but uncle Maurice become, on the side, a collaborator with the Germans as an insurance policy. (Annette was very loath to tell me this shameful secret, saying that Maurice was a 'mauvais mouton', pointing out that his face had been blackened out in the photograph album).

⁴ He did in fact become Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of Gaul

⁵ An organisation set up by Marshal Petain, under pressure from the Gestapo, to round up Jews for eventual extermination and to confiscate their wealth.

Copies of the pedigrees survived and Annette lent them to me, but the supporting documents were never returned by the Gestapo. "That's families all over" said Paul but it certainly seems that having a genealogist in the family can be a blessing.

Although my French informant was a very distant cousin she was able to supply me with fascinating details of closer relations, with many of their photographs, as well as being able to identify a number of pictures that I already had going right back to my 4x great-grandfather's family. She also told me about William Squire another of my father's first cousins, who lived in St, Petersburg as Professor of Theatre. He was completely unknown to me. She identified him in one of my own old un-named photographs - I had thought it was of my father as a young man; they were so alike. Once again she gave me more details of cousins in Italy together with numerous photographs. Maybe I will have to go to Russia and Italy to get more stories.

From the Reading Mercury of 17th

July 1820:

"Wanted in a small family (only a Lady and Gentleman) a very good, Plain Cook, she must thoroughly understand making Bread and Baking, and the management of a small dairy (milking not required), an unexceptional character will be required from her last place, a steady, middle-aged woman would be preferred;

Also wanted a Cook and Housemaid for a small family, neither under 30 years of age; An Elderly Woman as Housekeeper to a single gentleman where no other servant is kept;

A steady woman as a Nurse and two other Plain Cooks, and a steady man as Footman, about 30 years of age.

Apply personally to Mrs Harper, Castle Street, Reading."

Song-Collecting in North-West Berks 1914-1916

By Andrew Bathe

Alfred Williams (1877-1930) was an autodidact and published poet who earned a living for many years as a hammerman in the GWR works at Swindon. During the early years of the Great War, he embarked on a project of song collecting in what he called the "*Upper Thames*", making daily expeditions by bicycle from his home in South Marston to seek out villagers who had any knowledge of what had once been a widespread tradition of singing amongst working people in the countryside.

In the course of this project, Williams made contact with 15 singers in what was then North-West Berkshire, resulting in the recovery of 27 song texts of varying kinds (he was unable to note music). Some of these texts are included in his book "*Folk Songs of the Upper Thames*" (1923). This haul represents a significant contribution to ethnomusicology in Berkshire, a largely neglected county.

As part of a contextualising study, I have been pursuing Williams' Berkshire informants by using the familiar techniques of family history. The following potted biographies are based on information so derived. If any member has any further family information on any of these people, I would be very interested to hear of it.

Buscot

Charles Hambridge (2 texts): baptised on 5th July 1857, he lived at Buscot until sometime after 1881 working as an agricultural labourer. He married (if he married) outside the village, and was still absent in 1891. He was buried at Buscot on 16th March 1946, aged 88, residing at the Old Malthouse at the time of decease.

Jonas Wheeler (2 texts): born into a noted family of singers, he was baptised on 13th

September 1857. An agricultural labourer, he lived all his life in the village. He married on 7th April 1888, Ruth Stallard, both parties signing in their own hand. One of the songs he gave Williams he claimed to have learned as a boy from the wife of a Thames bargee whilst he was working at the wharf at New Bridge, some way downstream from his native enclave. He was buried at Buscot on 16th March 1939, aged 81.

Coleshill

Edward Archer (1 text): though baptised at nearby Great Coxwell on 29th January 1832, his family had removed to Coleshill by 1841 where he ever after resided. He married Anne Truman on 3rd February 1866, both being literate. He worked as an agricultural labourer, she as a dressmaker. They appear not to have had any children. He was buried in the village on 26th April 1920, aged 87.

Thomas 'Wooden-legged' Holmes (1 text): a comparative late-comer to Coleshill, he was baptised at Highworth, adjacent but across the border in Wiltshire, on 7th July 1844. He was married at Highworth on 31st July 1865 to Sophia Jordan (he signed but she was only able to make her mark). They had seven children, from whose dates and places of birth it can be inferred that the family removed to Coleshill c.1874. He was buried there on 6th April 1931, aged 87.

Cumnor

Harry Bennett (1 text): lived, worked and died at Cumnor. He was baptised on 12th April 1865, his father being a shoemaker. On 21st February 1886, he married Amelia Griffin, a native of Wantage, signing in his own hand. His family finally amounted to seven children, which he supported as an

agricultural labourer. He was buried on 12th September 1931, aged 66.

East Hendred

Mrs (Mary) Sessions (2 texts): born c.1843 at Oddingley, near Droitwich, Worcs. By 1881, she was established at East Hendred with husband John, a gardener. The marriage is not recorded at Hendred, but the first child was born there c.1869. In 1891, the family was living at Hunts Farm in the parish. Her burial is not in the East Hendred parish register.

Eaton Hastings

James Beckett (1 text): baptised on 26th February 1864 at Ashbury, Berks, where he was still living as 17-year-old in 1881 along with a single brother and sister. His occupation is given as carter and fogger. By 1891 he was at Faringdon, still unmarried, a general labourer, and was perhaps only a fleeting resident of Eaton Hastings at the time of collecting. There is no sign of his burial.

Faringdon

Mrs Bond (2 texts) and **T Bowker** (1 text): in 1881, there were four Mrs Bonds, all Elizabeth, resident at Faringdon, the most likely of whom is aged 55, a laundress born at Fyfield, Gloucestershire, who would have been 88 in 1914. Williams notes that "*she is considerably over 80 years of age*". Of "*T Bowker*" there is no sign anywhere in any local records.

Longcot

William Jefferies (7 texts): easily the most significant informant identified by Williams in this quarter of the district, scion of a noted singing family. He lived all his life in the village, baptised there on 19th June 1842. He married Sarah Simpson, of Ashbury, on 8th February 1864, when both could only make a mark. He worked throughout as an agricultural labourer, and

was buried 22nd January 1916, aged 74.

Shrivenham

Thomas Larkin (1 text): originated in extreme East Sussex. He was baptised at Northiam, near Battle, on 10th June 1838 and married there on 9th April 1864, when he signed his name. By 1881, he had moved down the road with his wife and daughters to Brede, working as a gamekeeper. He entered the Upper Thames sometime before 1891, by which date he was gamekeeper to Lord Barrington at Shrivenham. He was buried there on 24th November 1924, aged 86: he had been living at the Almshouses in the village.

Southmoor

William Ostley (1 text): a William Ostley is recorded buried in Kingston Bagpuize parish, abode "*Longworth*" on 24th May 1939, aged 74. No other details located.

Watchfield

William Baxter (1 text): a person of that name was baptised here on 27th August 1848. Census entries located do not stack up, so there may be two individuals involved.

Christopher Carter (1 text): baptised on 3rd January 1847, he worked as an agricultural labourer, living with his widowed mother. By 1891, he had married Clara, a native of Highworth. He later moved away from the village, though where is not recorded.

Alfred Smith (4 texts): baptised on 16th May 1869, he lived with his parents until early 1891, occupied as a "*general dealer*". A month or so later, on 20th June 1891, he married Emma Yarbury, both being literate. Williams describes him as a shepherd.

No burial entries have been found for any of these informants at Watchfield.

Living With The Dead!

By Lee Rayner

On a recent visit to The Family Records Centre, Myddleton Place, Islington, I was struck once again by the large number of grey heads intent on discovering their past! Later, on the journey home, I started thinking why it is that the family history 'bug' seems to strike people after the age of about fifty or so.

Obviously, with early retirement or redundancy now quite common, many people in this age group have more free time and perhaps a little money to spare, but maybe the roots of the activity go much deeper. Perhaps we are all responding to some basic human need to write our history, before it is too late and we are consigned to oblivion! With not much of a future to look forward to, does the past become more important? Am I living with the dead?!

If this is the case, then it is unfortunate that the interest develops at the precise time when physical powers are beginning to decline! Travelling is tiring. On the journey into London from Hertfordshire, it is only the thought of what exciting discoveries may be made that spurs me on. Usually, I leave the last bit of my research plan to be completed and it keeps me occupied while on the Underground, but I have to feel energetic even to contemplate the thought of first negotiating the M25 during the rush-hour, then getting the tube and changing at Kings Cross for the Angel. The ten-minute walk to Myddleton Place increases my sense of impatience and anticipation - I can't wait to get started!

Rheumatism and arthritis are not helped by shifting the hefty volumes of registers, either! How many people, I wonder, have stiff necks and aching arms the next day! Most elderly researchers seem to wear

glasses and, apart from trying to interpret very small print, the bifocal or graduated lens wearer will have the added problem of coping with the focus adjustment from close-range reading to ordinary-distance. After a few hours on a fiche reader, my eyes refuse to make the adjustment and begin to blur. That is the point at which I usually end up spending vast sums on books and pamphlets, browsing in the shop, when the day's expenses would have otherwise been fairly modest.

A travel card to London costs me £4.30, the car park is £1.70 and a drink about 30p, so, unless I have lots of certificates to order, I can have an interesting day out for under £10. Not easily achieved these days! I also drive to Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Huntingdon Record Offices and spend little more than the cost of the petrol. Of course, if Record Offices start charging for admission and use of equipment, as Hertfordshire is threatening to do, then many people will no longer be able to enjoy the hobby.

Although I tend to bore my family with my 'obsession', it has been a great source of pleasure and comfort to me since my husband died, and has probably prevented me from becoming a nuisance to them in a different way! I can spend hours, alone in the house, thinking about and sorting my information and the time passes so quickly that I burn the 'midnight oil' without realising it

My ancestors have become strangely familiar and 'alive' to me now - almost as if I knew them - yet five years ago I did not even know the names of all my grandparents and certainly had no idea of my Berkshire roots. I think that I may have been particularly lucky with my mother's

maiden name of Diggens as it is not as common as some, but I have been just as successful with the Clarkes of Bedfordshire.

I suppose as a semi-retired teacher with some library experience, I may be slightly better placed than some people starting from scratch, but there is now such a vast amount of material just waiting to be found and access to it is improving all the time.

Since starting my research nearly seven years ago, my discoveries have made me more aware of the *'pattern'* of existence and of inherited tendencies. Is my fascination with the English language, books and writing just *'one of those things'* or does it have something to do with my maiden name being Clarke (a scribe or minor clergyman with some degree of literacy)? Few of my Clarkes *'made their mark'* - almost all could write! Many of them were Parish Clerks or Enumerators too. I prefer to think that this is not mere coincidence!

On the Diggens' side, perhaps my mother's obsession with sewing can be traced to the number of weavers and tailors found in her family; her fussiness over cooking and laying a good table to her grandfather's time spent in service, eventually as a butler.

The sad thing is that so many people who would have been delighted with my discoveries died without knowing of them. My mother knew nothing about our Berkshire roots, my husband did not know that his father's people came from the same area as some of mine.

However, there has been some benefit to the living, too. I have been able to get in touch with long-lost cousins, held a huge Diggens family party in 1996 and now edit a family newsletter.

I have discovered a new third cousin and we chat on the phone and have some

interests in common. The sense of loneliness that can swamp a widow at first, even with other family members close by, has been eased because of my hobby and I have this new feeling of pride when I drive through the Berkshire or Bedfordshire countryside, that *'my'* people have been part of the land, as farmers, since at least 1578.

Diggens Discoveries

I have found many interesting things about *'my'* Diggens. They were in Uffington between 1612 and 1709 and included John Diggens and William Diggens who were husbandmen, whilst Thomas Diggens was a Weaver, Churchwarden and Overseer of the Poor. They intermarried with the families of Thatcher, Franklin and (probably) Ayres.

Between 1706 and 1832 they are to be found in Upton, Blewbury, Aston Tirrold, Cholsey. Amongst their number there are several Aaron Diggens, one of whom was a tailor and founder of the Blewbury Club and bought his own house, which is still standing. There are also several Richard Diggens and John Diggens most of whom seem to have been Ag. Labs. They intermarried with Keats, Pope, Parsons, Wheeler, Prince, Jervis, Barfield

Between about 1780 and 1791 there are some in Beenham, Brimpton, Thatcham and Woolhampton. These include several Richard Diggens, one of whom was a tailor in Thatcham as well as several William Diggens and a huge number of girls, most of whom seem to have been in service. They intermarried with Leach, Johnson, Harwood, Matthews, Malt, Woodard, Arlett.

If anyone has any information and would like to contact me my address is:

67 Rivermead, Hoddesdon, Herts, EN11 8DP

How the Internet is Helping me to Research my Family Tree

By Philip Long

About five years before I was fortunate enough to be connected to the Internet, I began researching my Family History in earnest. Prior to that I had made several attempts to enquire about my Family History with members of my family in England. Although I recorded many names, dates and locations, my family history project was growing into a huge puzzle. If I was ever worried about what hobby to take up after my retirement in 1992, buying a Personal Computer along with a Family Tree software program immediately removed that concern.

I began to enter the information I had collected over the years into my modest "Personal Roots" program designed by Expert Software of Florida, USA. Gradually, I was able to print-out my first Family Tree with some rather sketchy profiles of my ancestors. However, this at least provided me with a 'Framework' which I sent to most members of my family, including cousins and my very few surviving aunts and uncles, requesting their input for more specific information. I realised I needed to be patient waiting for their answers, (by this time I had begun to realise that not too many of my family were as interested in this project as I was). A friend had mentioned the Latter Day Saints International Genealogy Computer Records to me, which I began researching using the sketchy information I had recorded. After several visits to the Centre, I had more information that I could plug into my Family Tree software program. However the puzzle was getting larger and I couldn't find the connecting pieces.

Voices were echoing in my mind - "Join a Family History Society". Yes, but which one??

Finally I relented and upgraded my PC to allow connection to the Internet. Gingerly I typed in the word 'Genealogy'. Well, it seemed as though the whole world unfolded at my feet and said:

"Here it is!! Here we are!! Please download this!! Contact me!! We will research your family tree for a small fee."

Not being too fast to part with my money, I carefully selected and read documents from the hundreds of Genealogy Web Sites available on the Internet. I found the following particularly helpful:

- **Getting Started in Genealogy and Family History**
- **Searching Ancestors from the United Kingdom**
- **Ordering Birth Registration Certificates from the United Kingdom**
- **British Military Records**
- **Genealogy Resources On the Internet:**
http://members.aol.com/johnf14246/gen_mail.html
- **Berkshire 1851 Census Surnames:**
<http://www.vellum.demon.co.uk/genuki/BRK/brksurs.htm>
- **Guides & Software:**
<http://www.familytreemaker.com/>
- **Homepages**
http://members.aol.com/johnf14246/gen_mail.html
- **Homepages**
<http://members.aol.com/johnf14246/index.html>
- **Salt Lake City Search**
<http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p=family%2Bsearch&a=m2>
- **Crash Course Genealogy**
<http://www.grl.com/grl/start.shtml>
- **Marriage Witness Index**
<http://www.grl.com/grl/start.shtml>

I have also been made aware of other

countries' genealogy Web Sites which I am sure will help all Family Historians in their research.

At last there appeared to be some order to my tree climbing.

Of course it didn't take me long to find the Berkshire Family History Society Web Site on the Internet. When I saw that the 1851 Census records were available late last year, I was able to use my combined information from relatives, the Family History Centre and Birth and Wedding Certificates to conclude that all of my family ancestral names appeared on that census. I am now waiting patiently this time - because I anticipate receiving information that will connect more *'Boughs to my Tree'*. With a little luck, I may even receive this input via E-mail, which for some of us folks miles away saves us time and money. We all know it is just a matter of time and

hard work, to automate our Family History and be able to develop and maintain our Family trees via the Internet. Oh yes, we must not forget our responsibility here too and that is to input our research back into the GEDCOM or equivalent world-wide record system.

As I read in the *Berkshire Family Historian*, the members/volunteers who have dedicated themselves to research the many sources of Family History and make it available to the world at large via the Branches, Libraries and the Internet, are to be commended. I personally have become closer to my heritage because of this remarkable continuing accomplishment. Thank you.

Special thanks to Chad Hanna, Robert Clayton and Geoff Mather, who have provided me with help toward my Family Tree project.

Major John Cross Godsolve Crosse 1766-1854

This gentleman raised a Troop of Yeomanry (the Havering Cavalry) at his own expense, transported them to Ireland and took part in military actions during the 1798 Rebellion. Specifically for his actions in defending Londonderry, the 'ladies of the City' presented him with a silk banner (guidon) which is in the possession of a relative of one of our members.

With the tremendous interest in 1798 matters in Ireland this year (200th commemoration) the North of Ireland Family History Society is seeking information on family histories of the lesser known 'players.' What we have so far on Major Crosse is just the sort of thing we are after, but we would like more! Do any fellow FFHS members have information on Crosse and in particular, the Havering Yeomanry Cavalry? We do know that Crosse, his wife and 9 children are buried in the family vault at Rainham. Presumably this is Rainham, Essex and not Kent, in view of Crosse's connection with the Havering Cavalry, which I assume originated from Havering-atte-Bower, Essex.

Any information please to Robert C Davison, General Secretary, North of Ireland Family History Society. E-mail RCDavison@msn.com

(Editor's note: If anybody has any information and wishes to contact Robert Davison, then drop me a line and I'll pass it on).

Bookends

Compiled by Jean Debney

The following books are, unless stated otherwise, available from the bookstalls at BFHS branch meetings, the Research Centre or by post from The Berkshire Family History Society, c/o Prospect Technology College, Honey End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG30 4EL.

Berkshire Probate Index 1711-1857

Berkshire Record Office (1998), 3 microfiche:

1. Surname index; 2. Place name index; 3. Occupation index; price £5.00 per part (fiche), £12.00 set of 3 + P&P 30p UK, 70p Europe & overseas surface, £1.25 airmail.

This is a computer print-out of the BRO index of wills proved and administrations granted by the archdeacon of Berkshire, which includes details of over 11,000 Berkshire people, their names, place of residence and occupation, types of surviving probate documents, BRO reference and microfilm or fiche number. A strong magnification viewer is recommended. This is potentially a very useful index but, considering the low cost today of producing microfiche, it does seem rather overpriced.

Berkshire Old & New (No.15)

Berkshire Local History Association (1998); A5, 52pp; price £2.95 + P&P 50p UK, 80p Europe & overseas surface, £1.50 airmail.

Another interesting collection of articles about Berkshire:

- Election scandal at Windsor,
- Adult singing schools in Reading 1842-1845
- W.H.Hudson in Berkshire
- Hungerford's market in the Middle Ages
- The Effect of the Great Awakening on Reading

Also includes the latest publications about

Berkshire and a list of articles published in volumes 1-14.

Family History News & Digest

(Vol 11 No 3) April 1998 - Feature article: The Imperial War Museum, by Sarah Paterson; A4, 44pp "news" and 16pp "digest"; £1.70 + P&P 75p UK, £1.10 overseas surface, £2.35 airmail; subscription⁶ (2 issues): £4.60 UK, £5.30 overseas surface, £7.70 airmail.

A treasure chest of information and news about family history societies world-wide, new publications, indexes and services available, digest of articles in societies' journals by subject and, of course, an up-to-date list of secretaries of all societies affiliated to the Federation. The "leader article" opens the way to explore another source for your family history - you cannot afford to miss it!

Let's Start Family History

(FFHS, nd) - A5 leaflet, 8pp; price £0.50 + P&P 30p UK, 55p Europe & overseas surface, £1.20 airmail.

A brand new introductory leaflet for those just "thinking about" doing their family history which includes a list of books to read and useful addresses.

⁶ To place your subscription, send name, address and cheque, payable to BFHS, to Mrs Jacky Holcombe, BFHS Research Centre, c/o Prospect Technology College, Honey End Lane, Reading, Berks RG30 4EL (or use the application form in this magazine).

Beginning Your Family History by George Pelling, revised and updated by Pauline Litton

(7th ed. FFHS, 1998); price £4.00 + P&P 65p UK, £1.10 Europe & overseas surface, £2.80 airmail.

First published in 1980, this is the standard introductory guide for those beginning their family history. Packed in its pages is sufficient information to enable you to trace your family back for about ten generations. Each section includes titles of further publications to follow up either by purchase or from a library.

Basic Facts About ... English Nonconformity for Family Historians by Michael Gandy

(Series editor, Pauline Litton; FFHS, 1998); A5, 16pp; price £1.50 + P&P 40p UK, 65p Europe & overseas, £1.60 airmail.

Listed on the cover on this basic volume are the names of forty two different denominations. Following an introduction, the chapter headings are a good indication of the range of facts packed into just sixteen pages: From the Reformation to the Civil War, The Civil War and the Interregnum 1642-1660, After the Restoration, A quiet period, The Wesleyan Revival, The Evangelical Revival, Scotland and Wales, Nineteenth century expansion, The social composition of the nonconformists (plenty of food for thought in this section), The records, bibliography and useful addresses.

Basic Facts About ... Family History Research in Glamorgan by Rosemary Davies

(Series editor, Pauline Litton; FFHS, 1998); A5 16p; price £1.50 + P&P 40p UK, 65p Europe & overseas, £1.60 airmail.

The front and back covers have outline maps of Glamorgan from 1974 and after 1996 and, following the brief introduction,

a list of the hundreds and parish in the historic county (pre-1974). Then follow sections on The modern counties, Civil registration, Census returns, Probate, Trade & Street Directories, Newspapers, Maritime records; Civil (administrative) records (includes electoral registers, freeholders, poll books, land tax assessments, hearth tax, rate books, valuation or Domesday books, tithe awards, quarter sessions and old and new poor laws), Ecclesiastical organisation, Religious records Bishops transcripts, nonconformist registers, Glamorgan FHS indexes and transcripts, Society of Friends (Quakers) and the International Genealogical Index (IGI). Useful addresses and a bibliography complete the text.

Also still available are: *Basic facts about ... family history research in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Ireland* - price, etc. same as above.

Welsh Family History edited by John and Sheila Rowlands

(2nd ed. FFHS, 1998); A5; 325pp; price £9.95 + P&P £1.40 UK, £2.30 Europe & overseas surface, £6.10 airmail.

This does not claim to be a "how-to-do-it" book but is aimed to give assistance with special aspects of Welsh research, which has its own characteristics. In this updated edition the authors of each chapter, who have a wide knowledge of Welsh history, were given the opportunity to alter their text in view of the changed circumstances in local government and archives, and from additional research. Improved technology also appears to have been used for the colour reproduction of an ancient Welsh pedigree on the cover which looks closer to the original.

Specialist Indexes for Family Historians compiled by Jeremy Gibson (*FFHS*, 1998); 64pp, A5, 64pp, price £3.50 + P&P 50p UK, 80p Europe & overseas surface, £1.70 airmail.

This is a completely new "Gibson Guide" and contains details of probably more than 1,000 indexes, some completely new and others previously "hidden" in *Marriage, Census & other Indexes* and in the *Unpublished Personal name indexes in Record Offices and Libraries* that has long been out-of-print. Note: for information about marriage and census indexes you must consult the relevant "Gibson Guide" below.

Local Census Listings 1522-1930: holdings in the British Isles compiled by Jeremy Gibson & Mervyn Medicott (3rd ed, *FFHS*, 1998); 52pp, A5 price £2.95 + P&P 50p UK, 80p Europe & overseas surface, £1.70 airmail.

This edition includes details of further early censuses in print and some other minor alterations and additions.

Marriage, Census & Other Indexes compiled by Jeremy Gibson and Elizabeth Hampson (7th ed, *FFHS*, 1998); A5, 64pp, price £3.50 + P&P 50p UK, 80p Europe & overseas surface, £1.70 airmail.

Includes updated indexers' addresses (which, according to the compilers, keep changing with bewildering rapidity) plus details of new and/or expanded indexes and new publications. Because of the rapid increase in "Specialist Indexes" these have now been published in their own "Guide" - see above.

Record Offices: How to Find Them compiled by Jeremy Gibson & Pamela Peskett

(8th ed, *FFHS*, 1998); A5, 48pp & over 100 maps; price £3.50 + P&P 50p UK, 80p Europe & overseas surface, £1.85 airmail.

Recent drastic changes in London - the closure of St Catherine's House and the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane and the opening of the new Family Records Centre in Myddelton Place (Islington) (with GRO indexes, Scottish link, census returns, PCC probate, death duty records, nonconformist registers and Family Search on CD-ROM, etc.), together with the transfer of all other Public Records from Chancery Lane to Kew - has meant that this new edition was absolutely essential in order to try and avoid chaos. Changes in some local authority areas has also led to confusion in locating records but, because family historians generally require pre-1974 records, the list is arranged by "ancient" county, updated with fax and e-mail numbers together with addresses and telephone numbers.

Raymond Genealogical Bibliographies compiled by Stuart A Raymond:

Kent - Volume 1: Genealogical Sources
103pp, price £7.50 + P&P 55p UK, 95p Europe & overseas surface, £2.25 airmail.

Vol 2: Registers, Inscriptions and Wills
66pp, price £6.00 + P&P 50p UK, 80p Europe & overseas surface, £1.70 airmail.

London & Middlesex - Volume 1: Genealogical Sources
(2nd ed, *FFHS* 1998), A5; 128pp; price £7.50 + P&P 65p UK, £1.10 Europe & overseas surface, £2.45 airmail.

South West Family Histories - Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset & Wiltshire
(*FFHS*, 1998), A5; 128pp; price £7.50 +

P&P 65p UK, £1.10 Europe & overseas surface, £2.45 airmail.

As more counties in this series are published, so more researchers are discovering and using them. These latest editions all follow a well-defined format of listing printed sources - including microform - under various headings. It is then up to the researcher to locate and obtain items of interest either, where available, by purchase or via the inter-library loan service. The compiler does not claim that the volumes are comprehensive

and would welcome details of further titles for inclusion in the next edition.

Register of One-Name Studies

(14th ed, 1998, *Guild of One-Name Studies*); A5, 96pp; price £3.50 + P&P 55p UK, 95p Europe & overseas surface, £2.05 airmail.

A useful register of individuals and one-name societies who specialise in researching all (i.e. usually world-wide) references to specific surnames.

The Case of Samuel Blackall

By Jean Debney

The following notes were taken from the Reading Mercury and the Berkshire Assize Records while searching for information about the trial and conviction of Samuel BLACKALL of Basildon, Berks in 1820 when, like many family historians, my eye became distracted to some of the other Berkshire names recorded therein.

1. Extracts from the Reading Mercury, Mon 17th July 1820

The trial of Geo. Stockbridge and the notorious Francis Povey, of Maidenhead, for burglariously breaking open and stealing a variety of articles from the house of Sir James Nichol Morris at Great Marlow on the night of 15th April last, took place at Buckingham on Wednesday [11 July 1820], when, after a long and patient hearing they were both found guilty and doomed to die. Stockbridge was condemned for a similar offence at our assizes some years since, but his sentence was afterwards mitigated to two years imprisonment. Povey is an old, daring and desperate offender who has long been a terror to the respectable inhabitants of Maidenhead and its vicinity. Their liberality and gratitude at being thus liberated from so odious a pest, we understand, will be immediately manifested by a public subscription for the benefit of Messrs. Miller of Maidenhead, John Boulter and Bowles, constables of Marlow, by whose resolution and perseverance, backed by the watchful exertions of the worthy Mayor of Maidenhead, these desperadoes have been brought to justice. Indeed an act of this kind cannot be too warmly commended, for their duty honourably and conscientiously are put to considerable expense, inconvenience and danger and rarely stimulated to exertion by adequate rewards.

County Quarter Sessions

The following cases were tried at the County Sessions held at Abingdon on Wednesday last [11th July 1820] before Lord Viscount Folkestone and a full Bench of Magistrates:

- William Keeley, for stealing beans and barley meal, the property of Messrs Swallow of Cookham, *was sentenced to be transported for seven years;*
- John Green, for stealing a handkerchief in the night, the property of James Brind of Stanmore, *to be imprisoned one year and publicly flogged;*

- James May for stealing a donkey, the property of Ann Keen, and
- John Murrill and Jonathan Cassells, for stealing 2 geese and 9 gulls from John Tarsey of Bray, *to be imprisoned six months each*;
- Mark Freeman, for stealing a goose - *six months*;
- Charles Bitmead, for stealing a billhook - *one month*;
- William Pearson, for stealing two foot irons - *a fortnight*;
- Thos Ewer and Francis Fidler were acquitted.

Berkshire Assizes

The Berkshire Assizes commenced at Abingdon on Monday, 10th July 1820, before the Hon. Mr Justice Best and the Hon. Mr Justice Richardson. The following prisoners were tried and received sentence:

- Henry Bren - for breaking open the dwelling house of William Brushwood at Greenham, on the 13th April last, and stealing several articles of wearing apparel and money - convicted, Death. This is the second time of Bren's condemnation; he is now left for execution: on the first occasion his sentence was commuted for two years imprisonment;
- John Holton and John Smart accomplices with Bren;
- Samuel Blackhall, Robert Leach and Gabriel Parker, for sheep stealing;
- Robert Brown and Joseph Reeves, for breaking open Mr Latham's house at Abingdon;
- Richard Hall and Edward Moicardia for breaking open the house of Wm Simonds at Shinfield;
- Thomas Smith for robbing Sarah May on the highway near Greenham;
- James Bayliss for breaking open the house of Thomas Blagrove of Sutton Wick, no person being therein - all received sentence of death, but were afterwards reprieved.
- Thomas Bond and Robert Wenman for putting off forged notes at Windsor, *to be transported for fourteen years*;
- Robert Welladvice for breaking into the house of David Heath at Wantage and
- George Foster for breaking open the house of James Williamson and stealing a pair of brass scales, *to be transported for seven years*;
- Samuel Yeates for picking pockets at Faringdon, *to be imprisoned two years*;
- Esther Bridges for concealing the birth of her child and
- William Griffin for stealing a copper pot, etc. *to be imprisoned for one year*
- Francis Hazard was acquitted.
- Against John O'Bryen no bill was found.
- Robert Stocker, charged with perjury, was remanded till the next Assizes.

- Wm Bond, a traverse⁷, was discharged, no person appearing to prosecute this misdemeanor (sic).

It should be stated that the action against Mr Ryalis was brought by order of the 'Commissioners for managing the Hawker's Duties'. This is a most important case to the trade of every town in the kingdom and we hope the decision will have the effect of putting a stop to Auctions pretended to consist of the effects "of Bankrupts, etc."

2. Extracts from the Assize Records

Records of the Assize Courts are in the Public Record Office⁸. The records are arranged by Circuits: Berkshire is in the Oxford Circuit which includes Oxford, Worcesters, Gloucesters, Monmouths, Herefords, Staffords and Shropshire. The language used is formal English with some Latin abbreviations and may contain little extra information to that found in local newspaper reports. The PRO issue leaflet number 29 (free on personal collection) which explains this class of records (and the Latin bits) and there is also a section in *Tracing Your Ancestors in the Public Record Office* (4th ed. HMSO 1990)⁹.

Nothing was found in the Minute Books, the Depositions were not examined (only a few survive anyway) and the following was found in the Indictment bundle:¹⁰

Mon and Tues, 10 and 11 July 1820 - Oxford Circuit at Abingdon, Berks, before J Best and J Richardson:

Summons to the Assize - Notice to the Sheriff of Berkshire that you take

- Joseph Easwell, late of Tilehurst, lab
- James Quarterman of Thatcham, paper maker, etc.

and bring [them] to the next Assizes to answer various charges

Jurors listed "to inquire for the King and Country" included:

- Robert Southby, of Appleton, Esq.
- Robert Palmer of Holme Park, Esq.
- Edward Golding of Maiden Earley, Esq.
- Richard Powlett Wrighte Benyon Esq.

Jurors to try the Traverses and Prisoners from the separate Hundreds (not Theale):

- Horner - William Leaver of Cumnor - ap.
- Reading - John Blackall of Cholsey - cred.ill.

The King, Thomas Hale and Robert Godfrey -v- West Hanney: Francis Giles and John Robins, Surveyors of Highways:

- The Surveyors were appointed on 29 Sept 1819; since then they have laid more than 260 cart loads of stones and materials on part of the Common Highway in West Hanney called Bonney Lane, beginning at the west end of Bonney Common and ending at the west end of Little Bonney Meadow, about 402 yards long and 20 feet wide; they have spent £74 and upwards in

⁷ Traverse - A legal term meaning a formal denial of matter of fact alleged by the other side. To deny an indictment

⁸ PRO Ref. ASSI 1-10

⁹ Available from BFHS Bookstall at the Research Centre, at Branch meetings or by post - address on back cover.

¹⁰ PRO Ref. ASSI 5/140 pt.1.

the purchase of materials and for work and labour.

The Parish were indicted at the Lent Assizes 1818 for not carrying out repairs to the said Highway - now it is in very good repair.

William Ormond of Wantage, gent. said that on 4th July inst. - prosecutors:

Summons - The Jurors for our Lord the Now King upon their oaths present that:

1. Robert Leach (confesses) late of the parish of Basildon, Berks, labourer and Samuel Blackhall (pleads not guilty) of same, labourer on 19 Apr 1820 did with force of arms at the parish aforesaid, then and their being found felonously Did Steal, Take And Carry Away One Sheep, Value 40s, The Goods And Chattels Of Noah Lawrence, against the peace of the said Lord the King - Felony. A true bill.
2. Vide another indictment on which along sentenced. Samuel Blackhall, late of the parish of Yattendon, Berks, labourer and Robert Leach of same, labourer on 22 Apr 1820 did with force of arms at the parish aforesaid ... did steal, take and carry away 3 bee hives, value 3s and 3 stocks of bees, value 30s, the goods and chattels of Benjamin Wiggins, against the peace of the said Lord the King - Felony. A true Bill. Not tried on this being capitally convicted on another indictment.
3. Robert Leach (confesses - to be hanged) late of the parish of Basildon, Berks, labourer and Samuel Blackhall (guilty - to be hanged) late of same, labourer on 29 Apr 1820 - stole one sheep, value 40s, the property of Richard Powlett Wrighte Benyon, Esq. - did felonously kill with a felonous intent to steal the whole carcass of said sheep so killed

Note: It seems rather interesting that only the last of the three crimes listed, where the property belonged to one of the County Magistrates present at the Assizes, was tried and the two men convicted one hopes that justice was not too prejudiced ...

Biographical Notes

Samuel Blackall was baptised 2nd October 1791 in Basildon, Berks, son of Benjamin and Mary. He married firstly on 9th February 1813 (at Purley, Berks) Charlotte Jerome (1793-1844) and secondly in 1850 Caroline Ann Lamb, who died in 1877. Samuel died in Van Dieman's Land, on 29th December 1874, aged 82 years.

Samuel arrived in Hobart, Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) on the convict ship the "*Medway*" on 13th March 1821 when he was described as aged 27, of "*Basledon*", Berks, a farm labourer, 5 foot 5½ inches tall with brown hair and grey eyes, tried in Berkshire on 10th July 1820 and sentenced to life.¹¹ He received a Conditional Pardon on 8th March 1833 and a Free Pardon on 12th May 1841. His wife and five children had joined him by 1824 and she successfully applied for a grant of land two years later in New Norfolk. After 1841 he became a licenced victualler near Hobart and bought some land. Descendants of their daughter, Mary, born in Basildon about 1814 still live in Tasmania.

¹¹ **Also on the "*Medway*" was Henry Bren, aged 24, of Aldermaston, Berks, a farm labourer - 5 foot 5 inches tall with light brown hair and blue eyes - he too was tried in Berkshire on 10th July 1820 and sentenced for life, and received a conditional pardon in March 1833.

Editor's Notes

Thank you once again to all contributors to this issue. There are lots of things included this time, including the Microfiche of Members' Interests, the Renewal Form for 1998/1999, a form from the Computer Group and a flyer showing the location of the Research Centre. There are also forms to fill in if you wish to order Family Tree Magazine, Practical Family History or the Federation News and Digest, as well as the BIG-R 97. All in all plenty to do!!!

I am, as always, still needing articles. The next four deadlines are:

- 25th July (September 1998)
- 31st October (December 1998)
- 27th January (March 1999)
- 28th April (June 1999)

If you use a computer I should be pleased to receive your article on a 3½" disk in most IBM-compatible formats, (please enclose a printed copy of your article), or e-mail me on sharrington@compuserve.com. I am of course always delighted to receive articles, letters, items for the Help Wanted pages, comments or general feedback in whatever format you are able to send them!

VOLUNTEER WANTED!

- to write some book reviews for the Society - these need only be brief, but will give you an opportunity to study a publication in depth before writing your comments and deciding to buy it or saving your pennies/without spending anything!

The publications included are usually destined for the Society Reference Library or for sale on the Bookstall.

Contact Catherine Harrington, Magazine Editor (0118-943-1589),
or Jean Debney (0118-941-3223)

Catholics in Berkshire

Copies of the following register transcripts from the Catholic Family History Society are to be found in The Library of the Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London EC1 and the Catholic Central Library, Lancing Street, London NW1 1ND

Buckland	Baptisms	1753-1845	(SOG: BK/R 56)
	Marriages	1831-1855	
Ufton Court	Baptisms	1756-1828	(SOG: BK/R 32)
	Confirmations	1741-1788	
	Deaths & obituaries	1696-1775	
Woolhampton	Baptisms	1732-1800	(SOG: BK/R 32)
	Confirmations	1741-1811	

Details abstracted from the *Catholic Ancestor*, Vol.7 no.1, Feb 1998 page 6-7, and *Parish Register Copies in the Library of the Society of Genealogists* (Library Sources 1, 1992). [JD]

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Research Centre News

By Cliff Debney

The Library Tours for the next five months are as follows:

20 th July	2pm - 4pm
17 th August	7.30pm - 9.30pm
21 st September	2pm - 4pm
19 th October	7.30pm - 9.30pm
16 th November	2pm - 4pm (last one in 1998)

There is no booking system, just turn up at the stated time. The aim is to give you information on the contents of the Reference Library leaving about one hour for your personal research or browsing.

For those who cannot get to the Research Centre we have various Postal Search Services, which are advertised on the inside back cover of the Journal. May I firstly stress they are **SEARCH**, not **RESEARCH** services. Secondly these are carried out by volunteers who do the searches in their own time and neither could, nor should, be expected to reply by return post. It is safest to assume they will take up to six weeks to reply as in that way you will not be disappointed nor will the searcher get letters which make them feel like giving up. Please note that the Marriage Index is not owned by the Society and at present, due to family problems, a reply is not likely to be sent for three or even more months.

I am disappointed that at the time of writing this report June Dickason has not had any new members volunteering to become Library Assistants, those who open up and close the Research Centre and are generally available to help visitors. You do not have to be a highly trained researcher to volunteer, indeed you only need to have been on a library tour plus had instruction, usually by a current Library Assistant on your first duty, on the routines that

(inevitably) have to be run. If you can volunteer, say, monthly on a regular day, that is fine and if you can only carry out occasional duty that is also fine - the main requirement is that you volunteer to help other family historians by being there from time to time.

I promised to investigate opening the Centre on a Saturday, particularly for those members who either live too far away or whose work schedule prevents them making use of the current opening hours. The school has agreed to us opening the Centre on one Saturday a month commencing on 12th September 1998, and thereafter on the second Saturday of each month. The Centre will be open on the following dates from 10am to 4pm:

12 th September	12 th December
10 th October	9 th January 1999
14 th November	

Again - volunteer Library Assistants are **needed NOW** so we can plan the rota. Hopefully, because the opening day is a Saturday, members other than the existing volunteers will be able to contact June Dickason and offer their services. Please do it now before you forget as we do not want to call on those who are already giving their time to you.

To remind you, or inform those who have mislaid their Research Centre location map, a leaflet is included with this magazine.

The school goes on holiday in July but the buildings remain open throughout the summer months. This means that the Research Centre is open every week as usual on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for the whole of August and we shall be pleased to see you there busily researching.

Life and Death in Berkshire c1590-1720: the Evidence of the Berkshire Probate Accounts

By Ian Mortimer

Introduction

There are three parts to my article, which is based on the evidence of the Berkshire Probate Accounts. One part is about life in Berkshire, one part is about death and burial, and one part is about probate accounts. In focusing on each of these three aspects in reverse order I hope to give an indication of the richness of probate accounts as a source for social history as well as describing the cycle of events which took place when death cast its shadow across a seventeenth-century household.

What are Probate Accounts?

The term Probate Account is one of convenience coined by modern historians to describe collectively accounts made by both executors and administrators of deceased estates. Strictly speaking, Probate relates to the proving of a will but, since the accounts drawn up by the administrators of intestates are similar documents, drawn up in a similar form and differing only slightly in the wording used, it is much simpler to refer to both types of account with this one term.

What was the Purpose of these Accounts?

Generally an executor or administrator produced an account in order to show that he or she had acted properly in the winding-up of the affairs of the deceased. This was normally at the court's instigation but it could also be as a result of an accountant's initiative. By no means all deceased estates required an account - indeed, accounts were most usually made where there was a problem with the settling of an estate or a potential problem gave the court cause for concern. In short, calling for an account to be made was a legal safeguard in case an executorship or administration later fell into difficulties.

Very briefly, the procedure was as follows. After the burial of the deceased, the accountant travelled to the court. In the case of the

Berkshire probate accounts, this was the court of the Archdeacon of Berkshire, usually situated at Oxford but also at Newbury, Abingdon and Reading. There he or she swore an oath to administer the goods of the deceased "*well and truly*" and to make:

"an inventory of all and singular the goods of the deceased, and likewise an account, and to exhibit them both in the court when required".

The inventory referred to was exhibited in the court either at this time or (in later years) shortly afterwards, and a copy kept in the Archdeaconry court papers. Two sureties gave a bond for the observance of the oath. Then letters of administration were issued, or probate was granted, and the accountant told to return to the court when summoned by an apparitor, to give an account of all the transactions which he or she had undertaken. This was the account which, for presentation to the court, was engrossed by a clerk in the form we see today.

This is a simplification of the process. Sometimes an accountant put a caveat into the court before taking any other action (in order to prevent anybody else from taking on the administration without his or her knowledge), sometimes an executor could not attend the court and had to swear the oath at home, sometimes an executor renounced his or her duties altogether. However, the points to note are that the Probate Accounts which survive are nearly all copies of documents, presented in court under oath, to clear an accountant of further duties or obligations with regard to the deceased's estate.

With respect to estates for which there was a will, this accounting practice dated back to the thirteenth century. Indeed several executors' accounts survive from this time. Those which have been published in various volumes include the accounts of four late thirteenth and early fourteenth century bishops, a later fourteenth-

century layman, Roger de Northampton, and a fifteenth-century canon of York. These medieval accounts have much in common with the documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but one major difference should be noted: they were nearly always appendices or addenda to the inventories of the deceased's goods. With respect to intestates, administrators are not specified as being liable to be called to make an account until the Statute of Uses in 1540. Whether this legislation had any immediate effect on the number of accounts called for by the courts is not known, but from about 1560 the number of accounts surviving increases throughout the country, and it is interesting to note that the vast majority of these accounts are for the estates of intestates. To judge from the dates of the surviving documents, it is probable that, over the period 1560-1642, accounts were called for more and more frequently. The numbers decline sharply from 1642, due to the Civil War and cease to exist altogether between 1653 and 1660, when there were no church courts. After the Restoration the number of surviving accounts increases once more but never reaches the level of the early seventeenth century. In 1671 the Act for the Better Settling of Intestates' Estates reinforced the right of the archdeacon to call for accounts to be made, and a slight increase in the number of surviving accounts is to be noted. Then, in 1685, further legislation made it necessary to produce an account only where requested to do so (1) on behalf of a child, (2) by the next of kin, or (3) by a creditor of the deceased. Obviously accounts were only occasionally called for after this, as the number of surviving documents drops remarkably. Very few accounts in the Berkshire collection date from after 1700.

Who Were the Deceased?

Probate accounts engrossed and exhibited in the court of the Archdeacon of Berkshire relate to estates which lay entirely within the Archdeaconry. Had a deceased person's lands or chattels extended beyond the borders of the Archdeaconry, then his or her accountant would have had to gain probate or letters of

administration from a superior court. In addition to this, no married woman appears as the sole deceased party in these documents since husbands automatically had the right to act as their wives' executors and to keep their chattels. Four married women do feature, but these are all cases of husband and wife dying together or within a short time of each other, and their estates are treated as one. So, by and large, the deceased individuals who appear in these documents are all spinsters, widows or men, who had movable possessions of at least moderate value lying entirely within the Archdeaconry of Berkshire.

Despite these limits, it must be said that a very wide range of individuals is represented, from shepherds to the lesser gentry. In terms of wealth: the 166 accounts in the volume to be published later this year by the Berkshire Record Society vary as to the value of the estate between £3 15s and £1,203 6s 8d. After about 1625, occupations, status and (in the case of women) marital status are frequently given. As one might expect, the majority of those whose status is given were yeomen, worth between £35 and £1200, on average £242. There are a few men described as gentlemen, on average worth much the same as the yeomen. There are twenty-one widows and six spinsters, each on average having goods to the value of £100, and thirteen husbandmen, worth the same. In addition in the forthcoming volume there are accounts for an apothecary, a baker, a bargemaster, a bailiff, a blacksmith, a brewer, a carpenter, two clerks, two clothworkers, a dyer, three inn-holders, a joiner, two maltsters, two shepherds, a tanner, a turner and two vicars.

Who were the Accountants?

As the majority of the deceased were male, more often than not the accountants were their widows. Therefore more than half of the accountants included in the forthcoming volume were female. Also, because the relationship between the deceased and the accountant is nearly always expressed, it can be seen that in 90% of cases, the accountant was a blood relative, usually the widow, child, sister or brother, of the deceased. In the remaining 10%

of accounts, the accountants were executors appointed by the deceased, overseers of the poor, creditors of the deceased or accountants of the accountants who had themselves died before settling the estate.

To finish this introduction to the nature of probate accounts, I would like to re-emphasise that these are copies of documents. They were created by the executors and administrators of deceased householders and independent women, in order to prove their proper management of the estates for reasons which we may guess at but never know for certain. Also I would reiterate that they were drawn up in, and reflect, a time of crisis. Having cleared my conscience and delivered these caveats, I can now look at what these documents tell us about life and death in Berkshire.

How did Berkshire People Die?

As you would expect, there are a few murders, quite a few drownings because of the presence of a large and inviting river nearby, and a few serious accidents. However, by far the majority of individuals mentioned in these accounts were carried off by diseases. There are numerous payments to apothecaries, to physicians and to surgeons. Together these give us a substantial amount of information about the practice of medicine in Berkshire in the seventeenth century. Indeed of the 166 accounts transcribed in the forthcoming volume, nearly half of those who died a natural death sought medical help before they passed away. This is a point worth dwelling on. Firstly it highlights my point that, where these documents shed light on everyday life, it is everyday life at a time of crisis. Of course even the poorest people sought medical help when they were on their deathbeds, so it comes as no surprise to find that even the poorest people spent substantial sums on physic. However the fact that nearly half these individuals, from farmers to mere gentry, took some form of medical advice at a time of crisis indicates how widespread the application of medical science (though I use the term loosely) was in the seventeenth century. I have read that the popular opinion of seventeenth century medicine is that the doctors killed as many as

they cured. Some contemporary writers expressed this very thought. But how come then so many paid out substantial sums to the quacks when their turn came? The answer could either lie in the fact that seventeenth century doctors were more competent in the eyes of their patients than we suppose or that they were trusted at least to help their patients die with as little pain as possible. In the eighteenth century Sir Henry Hallford was so well thought of for his abilities to guide a patient to an easy death that one noblewoman declared that she would rather die under his care than recover under that of any other physician. This is likely also to have been the case in the seventeenth century, opium having been used in England to control pain since the time of John of Trevisa. It has been suggested also that doctors were appreciated for their ability to forecast death, to give the patient some idea of how long he had to live so he could set his affairs in order. If we look back to the probate accounts we see the seventeenth century evidence for this in several documents, physicians frequently being paid for advice. In addition, over the course of the seventeenth century doctors are named with increasing frequency. In some cases specific doctors are called to travel quite long distances to give advice. In some cases the advice of more than one doctor is called for. To sum up, the evidence of the Berkshire probate accounts suggests that by the end of the seventeenth century there was a well-developed network of physicians and apothecaries between the two centres of medical development, London and Oxford, used by all ranks of society and widely trusted either to aid recovery or to help the death process with advice and drugs.

Only two diseases are specifically named in the Berkshire probate accounts as being the cause of death: smallpox and plague. Against these the doctors could do little but tell the patient how long he had to live. With smallpox, doctors could and did advise the isolation of a victim from his family. Nurses attended him in his illness and, after his death, his house might be fumigated. However, with plague, containment was vital and took precedence over caring for the victim. In accordance with the orders of

1578, houses in which plague victims were resident were boarded up with the entire household inside. The probate accounts give many references to such incarcerations. What is really interesting is that they also give an indication of their possible duration. For example: food parcels worth 6s 6d per week were delivered to the plague-infected house of Thomas Smalbone from December to April 1608. After his death and that of his mother-in-law who lived in the same house, the account strongly suggests that the rest of the household was kept in for at least another five months, over the summer, making their incarceration a total of ten months in the same house.

In the case of a violent or accidental death, expenses concerning the coroner and fetching the body appear in the place of a physician's fee. The story of the death of Thomas Strange is an interesting example. This man died in 1629 having been thrown from his horse into the Thames, where he drowned. A member of his family was paid his expenses in finding the corpse. The miller was paid for retrieving it from the water. Two men carried the body from the waterside to the church. Two men were paid to keep watch over the corpse through the night to make sure that nobody tampered with the evidence. The coroner arrived the following day. He inspected the body and passed his verdict. It was then wrapped in a shroud and buried. Lastly, the horse itself was surrendered as a deodand. Any animal or object deemed being immediately the cause of death had to be forfeited to the crown for pious uses.

Murder not only demanded the presence of the coroner but also payments to the constable in tracking down the murderer and jailing him. Those accounts which show the process in full indicate that the price of justice could be high. Take the murder of the spinster Marian Keate for example. She was not a wealthy woman when she was killed in 1626 but her brother had to spend nearly a third of the £29 she was worth in various fees. These included taking the corpse from the place where it was found to the church, having it watched overnight, the coroner's inquest, victuals for the witnesses,

apprehending the prisoner, keeping him for three days and three nights, the diet and other charges of the jury and finally sending the prisoner to gaol with three men guarding him. Legal expenses could have increased this sum many times had legal advice been necessary.

From the point of view of being able to study the processes involved in obtaining justice, it is perhaps a pity that not more seventeenth century Berkshire people were murdered. It is fascinating piecing together the pattern of events which took place around a violent death. For a start most people were not murdered at home, so their corpses had to be located. Sometimes a group went to fetch a body. Sometimes there are references to messengers being sent to fetch the coroner, if he was distant at the time, or to inform members of the family. Always the coroner had to attend a violent or accidental death, even if the cause was plain beyond suspicion. Although the coroners at this time had no medical training it is interesting to note that occasionally they called for the advice of a surgeon or, in the case of murdered females, women to investigate the corpse. Lastly, it is the accounts of the victims of violent deaths which reveal most clearly the shaky hold our eight, nine and ten great-grandparents had on both their lives and property. In 1619, the corpse of John Wright, yeoman of Hurley was found in a shallow grave in a wood. Skins were obtained in order to bring his decomposing body back to the parish. His blind widow was informed and she had to take on the responsibility of executorship herself since the executor, the deceased's brother, had fled, being presumed the murderer. She had to enlist the help of a neighbour to help her. This neighbour acted as her surety in obtaining a commission for her oath to be sworn in her home parish but there was nothing he could do about a thirty pound lease which was found to be worthless. Nor could he help her trace the debts which were owing to her late husband but about which she could prove nothing. Nor could anything be done about the fact that this blind widow could not sell her husband's possessions for the amounts cited in the inventory, a fitch of bacon and a powdering trough for example only

fetching 43s rather than the £3 at which they were assessed. Because she was blind, every journey to the court in Oxford to present the commission or to get advice had to be made by someone else on her behalf, with the added cost of feeding them and paying for horsehire. Furthermore at the end of it, her husband was dead, his murderer was nowhere to be found, and what little money she was left had been spent. It is not altogether surprising to read in the parish register that she was herself dead within the year.

Funeral Customs

The first of the many necessary customs which comprised the funeral traditionally took place as the subject lay dying. This was the knell, or the passing bell, which was tolled to announce the imminent death to the parishioners. Nine times the bell would be tolled for the passing of a man, six times for a woman and three times for a child. In later years the knell was moved to the day of the funeral. It is not hard to see why - it cannot have been easy timing the church bell to coincide with the moment the soul flew heavenwards. The account of John Sone of Reading suggests there was such a problem with his knell, the bell being rung for him on four separate occasions at the same church. This gives rise to the speculation that he really could have asked "*for whom the bell tolls?*" on each occasion, only to be told by those watching over him "*for thee*".

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the funeral in the seventeenth century. Nearly all of the Berkshire accounts contain at least some reference to the expenses incurred in burying the deceased. Some are little more than accounts of the funeral itself. In these cases the amount spent was nearly equivalent to the entire value of the estate. However, even the poorest individuals had a shroud and (normally) their own coffin, with bells and a drinking. Nor were costs kept to a minimum where the administrator who was paying for the funeral was a creditor of the deceased. Robert Goulston's creditor spent more than twelve pounds on his funeral in 1620, including having him buried within the church itself. Eventually

this selfless individual spent more than the deceased was worth and did himself out of what he had been owed. Similarly about £5 was spent by George Blanch on the funeral of his debtor Thomas Gray and by the landlady and creditor of Daniel Hyde. Indeed, such was the importance of a proper burial that it surpassed not only personal debts but even overcame the dangers of the plague. The only time a boarded-up house was opened during a visitation of the plague was in order to bury a victim, little or no care being shown by the throng that followed the infected corpse to the church.

Having stressed the importance of the funeral to all classes, it has to be added that the correlation between an individual's wealth and funeral expenses was by no means direct. The 6s 8d spent on the funeral of Thomas Wood in 1631 represents a mere 1.5% of the value of his goods. By comparison, Margaret Marten's son spent 38% of her estate on her funeral and Humphrey Essex's funeral costs came to 45% of his estate (administered by his sister). However, these are insignificant compared to the funeral costs of the splendidly named Hannibal Baskerville Esq. Although it is not exactly clear what was owing before his death and what was owed as a result of his funeral, it appears that his son paid out £107 or thereabouts, more than 90% of the value of his deceased father's goods. How can we explain this wide variation? While the expenses of a heraldic funeral did inflate the relative cost of burying an armigerous person, at the bottom end of the scale there was the minimum cost of a decent funeral. Therefore I can only suggest that the variation in the proportion of the estate spent in burying the deceased is most probably explained simply by regard for the deceased and his or her standing in the community.

There is another explanation, of course, for this massive variation and that is the singular character of Hannibal Baskerville Esq. The reason why this man's possessions were barely enough to pay for his expensive funeral can perhaps be guessed from his entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. This states that he was an antiquary, that he travelled a

good deal on the continent and retired to Bayworth where he was visited by Anthony a Wood in 1658-9. He was said to be:

"a melancholy and retired man... who gave the third or fourth part of his estate to the poor. He was so great a cherisher of wandering beggars that he built for them a large place like a barn to receive them and hung up a little bell at his back door for them to ring when they wanted anything. Indeed, he had been several times indicted at Abingdon for harbouring beggars... He left sixteen sons and two daughters by his cousin Mary Baskerville..."

If the beggars didn't get his cash before he died, his sons did.

After the knell had been rung, the next task was the laying out of the corpse. This, like nursing the sick, was nearly always womens' work. It necessitated washing and shaving the body and winding it in a linen or (after 1678) a woollen shroud. This is worth noticing since elsewhere in the country, in Kent and Lincolnshire for example, actual sheets were used to wrap the body after it had been dressed in a shirt. A shirt is mentioned in the account of William Webb of Newbury, 10s being paid for a 'shirt and sheet' in which to bury him, but this is the only clear reference to such a shirt in the Berkshire accounts. I therefore suspect that the shroud took the place of both shirt and sheet in Berkshire burials.

Once shrouded-up, the corpse was placed in a coffin ready for transportation to the church. Not everyone was buried in a coffin, especially in the sixteenth century. Less than a quarter of the accounts dated 1600 or earlier mention one. Over the course of the seventeenth century they became used more frequently and could be purchased 'off the peg' but even at the end of the period several accounts which itemise funeral expenditure do not mention them at all. In all, coffins are mentioned in just under half of the accounts. Some parishes had a parish coffin which was used for the funerals of those who could not afford one of their own. In a few cases the coffin was a specially-made article. For example, the account of Thomas Hedges

mentions the sum of 6s 8d 'for his coffin & making the same'. Another account, that of Richard Elye, explains that an expenditure of 10s on a coffin was warranted with the words 'he being a very big and tall man'. Also the range of prices of coffins - from 2s in a 1612 account to 28s in 1685 - suggests that they could vary as wildly as the overall cost of the funeral, reflecting personal attachment and/or standing in the community.

On the day of the funeral the corpse had to be taken to the church for burial. Usually this meant carrying it on the parish bier, for which the bearers were sometimes paid. If the house was too far from the church, a parish hearse might be hired. Either way, a crowd would have followed the corpse to the church. As they made their way along the lanes, the church bells would be rung. If they crossed into another parish, the bells of that parish too would be rung. Although excessive ringing was not popular with the church authorities, attempts to limit it at funerals proved unsuccessful.

On arrival at the church the interior of the building was sometimes draped with black cloth. Purchase of the quantity of cloth necessary to drape a church was beyond the means of most individuals and where it is mentioned it relates to the hire of black cloth belonging to the parish. Most historians writing about seventeenth-century funerals seem to presume that this was a custom more often observed than not. It is interesting therefore to note that only the town burials in Berkshire accounts mention this item. Likewise it is often asserted that men wore black suits and hats with black hatbands and widows and other women wore mourning gowns. However, all mourning clothes were relatively expensive and kitting out an entire family in new black clothes was beyond the means of most mourners. Theophila Garrerd, widow of Thomas Garrerd, is the only example I have found. She paid 40s for a mourning gown for herself, black coats for her four children at a cost of 40s and black gowns for her grandmother-in-law and sister-in-law. The total cost of mourning clothes for this funeral was over £12 - a substantial amount of

money in 1618 and almost 10% of the value of her deceased husband's goods. Even the hats, gloves and scarves mentioned in other accounts were not cheap. Two hats and bands for the funeral of Hannibal Baskerville cost £1 6s in 1670. Gloves and hatbands for Lady Mary Gardner's funeral amounted to £4 11s 6d in 1642. The relative paucity of payments for funeral garments probably indicates that rarely were mourning clothes specially purchased for a funeral, most families in Berkshire making do with their Sunday best.

Maybe at this point you have a picture of the family of the deceased following the body as it was carried to the church, the bells ringing, the people formally dressed, if not actually in new mourning clothes. Maybe you also have a picture of the crowd walking along solemnly in the morning sunlight. This was no doubt frequently the case but, for the sake of accuracy, you also ought to imagine the same procession of mourners carrying torches along the lanes in darkness. Burial at night developed in the earlier part of this period as a means of circumventing the strict rules governing heraldic funerals set down by the College of Arms, i.e. they were an aristocratic cost-cutting measure. However, as soon as noblemen started being buried at night, a few members of the middle classes considered it reflected great dignity upon the deceased and started being buried after dark likewise. It is ironic therefore that, although it was devised as a way of saving money, middle-class people who opted for this type of funeral actually increased the cost to themselves, since they had to lay out money for torches and other lights over and above their other funeral expenses.

What other funeral costs might be incurred?

Well, depending on the strength of the deceased person's estate, imagination was the only limit. There were certain necessary expenses, of course, such as digging the grave, ringing the bells, the sermon, the minister's dues and, in later years, the affidavit that the deceased was buried in a woollen shroud. However, on top of these, one could pay for the minister not to preach, employing instead an outside preacher,

or one could pay extra for the body to be buried in the church, or even more for the body to be buried in the quire of the church. If the deceased was armigerous, then a painted hatchment might be called for. If the deceased was being buried within the church, then a tombstone could be commissioned. Tombstones were rarely placed outside in the first half of this period, a wooden cross sufficing in most cases for the family to know where their loved ones lay. Add to these the cost of gifts of bread and money to the poor on the day of the funeral, and ribbons to give away to the young people attending the service, the cost could mount up significantly.

The Wake!

There was one feature common to every funeral. This was the drinking. In some cases this entailed only a modest gathering of the family and close friends around the coffin in the home before taking the deceased to be buried. In other cases... suffice to say that a funeral was not necessarily a sober occasion. After the funeral of Robert Goulston of Cluer in 1620, those in attendance were supplied with a modest 16s worth of bread and beer, a not extravagant 12 dozen cakes (costing a penny each) and thirteen gallons of wine. If one supposes that the bread and beer were in proportion, and the effects of one cancelled out the effects of the other, then the guests at this funeral were treated to nearly a pint of wine for each penny cake they ate. Fair enough, the provision of 12 dozen penny cakes is by no means an accurate indication of how many guests there were, but this is not an isolated case. At the drinking after the funeral of our friend Hannibal Baskerville Esq, there were probably several hundred people present, since no less than £8 5s was laid out for cakes. Between them the guests downed approximately 300 gallons of beer and forty gallons of wine. I sincerely hope you will agree with me that this is a large amount of booze. However, it would be wrong of me to generalise and to suggest that all drinkings were like this. Many were far more frugal. Particularly notable for its modesty is the 5s spent on the drinking at the funeral of one Reading

clothworker, William Laud, whose son and namesake went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury.

Life in Berkshire

With the drinking we have reached the stage in this article where evidence about life in Berkshire becomes apparent. The deceased has died, the mourners have followed him or her to church, the priest has preached, the bells have been rung and the corpse is in the ground. The subsequent knees-up allows us to begin to look at aspects of everyday life without regarding them purely as aspects of death. I am thinking here of the evidence of the food consumed at the drinking. In the poorest cases this is plain fare - bread and beer, cheese and meat. As we go up the scale we have an inventory of what different classes of people ate from time to time: cakes, wine, sugar, butter, spices and fish. One sixteenth century account mentions oranges. Late seventeenth century accounts sometimes mention tobacco. The accounts of the comfortably-off mention biscuits. Where the deceased was himself a victualler of some description, an innholder for example, the nature of the food and drink provided at the drinking can be compared with the nature of stock purchased. The account of the innholder Thomas Blundy seems to list funeral expenses before other expenses, suggesting that his guests drank their way through eight gallons of sack and a few gallons of beer but did not touch the cider which he had in stock. Most poetic of all the funeral menus was that of Lady Mary Gardner. This drinking was held at the *Lamb Inn*, in Abingdon, and the account begins with the tab of all the wine ordered and a fee for all the pots that were broken and lost. The document then goes on to list cumfettes, biscuits, macaroons, marzipan, succade, pears, pippins, siterm, perast, aringoes, lettuce, plums, green almonds, quince and gooseberries as well as the comparatively mundane bread and cakes.

After the funeral and drinking, after the hangovers had worn off, the accountants of these documents and their families had to get on with their lives. However, their lives had not returned to normal. Indeed, had they done so,

there would have been no need to continue the account. The ways in which death more subtly affected family life can be seen in every entry in the account from now on. Businesses still had to be run or wound up but without the worker who had held the business together. Crops had to be harvested, sheep shorn, bullocks wintered, fences repaired, mares shod, withers drawn - all without the help of the man who ran the farm. Similarly children who had been dependent on their widowed mothers now found themselves alone.

Care of Children

When I started working with historical documents, in Devon, I listed a number of apprenticeship indentures. These were stitched in bundles in the order in which they had been drawn up. I can remember thinking to myself that it was strange that two or three children of varying ages but of the same family should suddenly be apprenticed at the same time. I pictured a fraught seventeenth century farmer's wife shrieking at her handful of filthy, high spirited children "*Right! That's it! I've had enough! Off to the shoemith/ blacksmith/ cordwainer with you all!*" Reference to the Berkshire probate accounts has made it clear to me that it was not because of a frayed temper that three brothers aged between eight and thirteen might simultaneously find themselves indentured as apprentices. When both parents died seeing to the children became a high priority.

Even if the mother survived, there were situations in which it became necessary to put the children apprentice. One reason was to get rid of them so a widow was free to remarry a man who did not want the responsibility of somebody else's family. Another was for the sake of the child's own education. Another was simply the amount it cost to keep them. Because a number of accounts were expressly called for by the children of the deceased when they had come of age, details are often given about their keep. Then as now, children could be expensive. The most expensive of those mentioned in the Berkshire accounts which I have examined was Abraham Pocock, one of

the children of the vicar of Chieveley, whose food, apparel, washing and education cost £74 over the six years to 1642. The most expensive daughter was Elizabeth Terrell, in the care of her uncle. Her upbringing cost about £45 for six years, pro rata, not including being placed apprentice, which in itself cost more than ten pounds. Why people might not lavish such large sums of their children is also shown by this case, accompanying documents indicating that the girl died shortly afterwards.

The amount spent on the upbringing of children in Berkshire varied greatly. On a year-by-year basis, it could be anywhere between £1 per child per year in 1596 and the £12 6s per year for the vicar's son mentioned above. The average was about £4 per child per year. What affected this? Obviously the level of education was a factor, the poorer children receiving little or none at all. Likewise the wealth of the father was also important. However, there were other factors too. Keeping a young child was cheaper than keeping an older one (unless the older child was able to work). Whether or not the remaining parent was alive or dead was also a factor - more money being spent on orphans than non-orphans. And more than any other factor, the number of brethren affected the amount available to spend on each child. It is no surprise that the children who were fed, clothed and educated best were solitary orphans with few or no brethren brought up by their uncles and aunts.

One remarkable document from 1615 shows that children did not always react well to their changing circumstances at these times. John Caporne, an only child, eight or nine years of age and an orphan of poor parents, was left in the care of a yeoman who received the £17 left by the deceased parents. He clothed and fed the boy, and managed to place him with a turner as an apprentice. The boy served two years before leaving the turner and returning to the yeoman. He was put apprentice again, this time to a trenchmaker. This cost the yeoman £4 in addition to the boy's clothes. The boy lasted only one year this time and came back again. Unable or unwilling to find him another

apprenticeship, the yeoman had given the boy work on his own land. After twelve years of this he concluded him to be unfit for any trade and unwilling to serve. At which the boy demanded an account to be made to show what had happened to his parent's £17. The yeoman, with whom I have some sympathy, showed that he had over the years spent more than £25 on his upbringing, £8 more than he had been given by the deceased parents.

Farming

Many aspects of the agricultural working life which John Caporne was reluctant to undertake are described in probate accounts. When Robert Clitterback of Remenham died in 1589, his widow had to organise the harvest work on the farm. The items mentioned on the account thus include the cutting of the hay and corn and fetching them home, mowing of barley, corn and hay, making the hay, cocking and raking of barley, reaping of wheat and rye and a new cart to carry the corn (costing 20s). Not only that, the food for the men and women working in the fields also had to be paid for. Meat, malt, wheat and rye in provisions for the workers came to £10 10s alone. Other harvesting tasks not mentioned in this particular account include threshing corn, sowing seed, hacking and carrying of peas and transport of everything to market. Other farm payments include purchase of harnesses, wintering of animals, pasture on the common, making wheels, shoeing horses, raising colts - the list is long and varied. One of the more unusual items is the payment by one administrator to himself *'for every seventh night's dung of his mother's 140 sheep'*.

Servants

One class of people who appear frequently in these accounts (but never as the deceased) were the household servants. They appear generally only in respect of their wages, which were not great. A manservant's wage in 1614 was about 15s per quarter; the same account notes a serving boy's wage was 5s per quarter. 8s 4d per quarter seems to have been about the norm for a maid servant's wage at this time, although there are examples of maids being paid less. A half year's wages paid to Elizabeth Blackwell in

1622 amounted only to 8s. This is perhaps understandable when one reflects that her employer, a husbandman, died leaving goods only to the value of £13. Even considering that the value of their movable goods may be a poor reflection of how wealthy a deceased person was, it makes the point that domestic labour was affordable, if not by all then by the majority of householders.

One thing these accounts make clear is that employment in a household at a quarterly rate did not guarantee quarterly payment. One maid in the late seventeenth century was paid nine pounds backpay for the past three years. Another received four pounds for diverse years past. This brings me on nicely to the last aspect of life in seventeenth century Berkshire: debt.

Debt and Credit

Everyone, it seems, could get into debt. Debts appear in these accounts in all shapes and forms. Large debts, small debts, mortgages, debts recorded in shopbooks, debts upon bonds, debts confessed upon the deathbed, wages owed to servants, debts owed as a consequence of animals dying, debts sued for in court - the level of indebtedness is surprising. True, financial encumbrance was one of the reasons why an account might be made in the first place, and so the proportion of these accounts which mention debts is not representative of every household in Berkshire, but even so these accounts furnish us with some remarkable examples of individual indebtedness and, in so doing, provide us with a good source for patterns of debt in the early modern period. Take for example James Bristowe, a yeoman of the parish of Tilehurst, who died in 1636. His inventory totalled £1,203 - the highest of any estate in the forthcoming volume. He owed £108 to a man in Alton, Hampshire, £108 to someone in Sandhurst, £250 to someone in Englefield, £21 to someone in Shinfield, £16 to someone in Yattendon, £15 to someone in Wokingham, £27 to someone in Tilehurst, £50 to someone in Chichester, £300 to someone in Farnham, £54 to someone in Sulhampstead Abbots, £43 to someone in Brightwell, £60 to someone in Little Wittenham, £10 to someone in Burghfield, £43

to a servant of the bishop of Rochester, and £5 to the Bishop of Rochester himself. In addition he owed £54 to someone of unknown address and a total of more than £125 to four Reading residents. These debts alone add up to £1,289. Combined with his funeral expenses, which were always paid before any debts, this man was in a poor financial state. Yet he had been able to borrow all this money, from individuals in several different counties, and this despite his description as nothing grander than '*Yeoman*'. These aspects of indebtedness, the amounts and geographical spread of debts, are supported by other accounts, some of which note that individuals died leaving debts more than twice the value of their goods while others record large debts in London, a vintner's debt of £23 for wine bought from a London merchant for example. This is particularly interesting since most large debts would be incurred upon a bond and the Archdeaconry court had limited authority to pass judgement on estates which included bonds which lay outside Berkshire.

Indebtedness is interesting for another reason. Those historians who have looked at probate inventories as a source have remarked that they can be misleading. If one were to see the inventory of the above mentioned James Bristowe of this account, one would be tempted to think that at £1,203 he was very well-off for a yeoman. The fact he was actually broke would not be mentioned.

Debt was important to an accountant not only in respect of money owed by the deceased but also money owed to the deceased which could not be retrieved. The very high number of desperate debts mentioned is striking. Berkshire, it seems, depended on credit. Considering that a servant might not be paid for three years, I'm inclined to have sympathy. However, the point is that when death struck, the everyday credit system fell apart. Large scale debts upon bonds might prove to be good, and were usually paid or contested in court, but the small debts of everyday life, such as money for commodities and consumables, failed to come to the family of a deceased creditor. Of these desperate debts, many fall into the category of being '*due upon*

the evidence of shopbooks'. The account of William Webb, mercer, of Newbury lists the expenditure of 26s 8d "for copying out the debts mentioned in the said deceased's shopbook, all of which or the most part of them are very doubtful and desperate..." The account of Richard Jenens of Harwell has a list of debts thought to be desperate, some of them included because the debtors were too poor to pay. It may well be that these small debts had been owing for a while and the death of the principal witness to the debt was used as an opportunity for individuals to avoid paying.

Conclusion

I have stressed several times in the course of this article that the life mentioned in these documents was life at a time of crisis. True, these documents do not shed any light on many aspects of everyday life - there is nothing about

manners and nothing about cleanliness - but they do represent the wishes of dying people, the carrying out of their will which expressed wishes borne in life, the daily necessities of farming, a view of their financial affairs at death. Therefore in many ways the evidence of these documents can be used, with other evidence, for building a picture of everyday life in the seventeenth century. When death was so common, when life expectation was hovering around the low to mid thirties, and when so much depended on the household living, what exactly was everyday life if devoid of the crises illustrated by these documents?

Sources

- **Berkshire Record Office:** Probate Accounts files D/A1/35 - D/A1/223
- **Berkshire Record Office:** Chapter Act books ref: D/A2/c19, D/A2/c24.

Berkshire Record Office News

The following items are reproduced from The Berkshire Echo - The Newsletter of Berkshire Record Office (No.5 Spring 1998).

What's New?

The Record Office is now run by Reading Borough Council on behalf of all the unitary authorities in Berkshire. Our new telephone number is **0118-901-5132**. **Please note that visitors will no longer have access to the shop and restaurant.**

We have recently acquired microfilm and microfiche copies of census returns 1841 - 1891 for the newer areas of Berkshire, which were not already covered by our holdings. The new returns cover the Caversham and the Slough areas (including Burnham, Datchet, Eton, Horton, Langley Marish, Upton cum Chalvey and Wraybury - and of course Slough itself, which was created out of several of these!). Incidentally also include some places still in Oxfordshire (such as Rotherfield Greys and Peppard, Henley and Eye and Dunsden) or in Buckinghamshire (such as Boveney, Dorney, Farnham Royal, Iver, and Stoke

Poges). So, if you are interested in a border parish, we may have it.

Just Catalogued!

We have recently received the papers of the Berkshire clients of the solicitor's firm, Morrell, Peel & Gamlen of Oxford (D/EMP). These consist of the Bowles family of Milton Hill and Streatley (mostly deeds of their Aldworth and Streatley estates, with some family and estate papers) 1594-1886, and the papers of the Leveson-Gower family of Bill Hill (on the borders of Wokingham and Hurst) 1728-1892. These, in contrast, have relatively few deeds, but are full for family, official and estate papers.

The distinguished careers in public service followed by many of the family are reflected, including the army career of General John Leveson-Gower (1774-1816), represented by papers covering his time as commander of a body of Volunteers in Suffolk in 1798-1799, when Britain feared invasion from France, these papers including details of pay and food,

and recipes for the fumigation of hospital areas; the proceedings of courts martial in 1804 and 1806; and letters and reports on the defences of the island of Goree (off the west coast of Africa) and the conquest from the French of the colony of Senegal, 1808-1810. There is even a fine coloured plan of the defences of Goree.

More locally the papers include overseers' accounts for the liberty of Broad Hinton, 1801, with a list of families receiving relief, their trade, marital status, numbers and ages of children, address, special circumstances such as illness or extreme age, and details of total income from earnings and poor relief. The family's personal lives are also revealed, with papers on the General's horse racing interests, 1801-1820, and others relating to the *Acorn*, the yacht of his grandson John Edward, 1876-1891, and passports recording European travels, 1838-9 and 1850. There are series of love letters to John Leveson-Gower from his wife Gertrude (known as Minnie) 1840-1849, and to their son John Edward (known as Jill) from his fiancée Harriet Jane (Duck) Hunter, 1849. The latter are counterpointed by a letter from John advising his son against an early marriage.

Another substantial estate collection to derive from a solicitor's office is the Carleton Holmes papers which comprise records of Buscot Park, 1669-1949 (D/ECH). These are a fine supplement to the Loveden papers already held and include papers passed by the Lovedens to the new owners in 1860, and additions to the estate by the Campbell and Henderson families who subsequently owned the estate.

Items of particular note include a fine plan of the estate in the conveyance of 1860 and an interesting survey based on a map of 1798 (not deposited) which includes Edward Loveden's acerbic comments on "*the most reluctant and shabby manner*" in which neighbour Lord Radnor sold him land he had purchased from a third party "*contrary*

to his solemn promise... not to interfere with" an agreement to sell it to Edward Loveden Loveden.

The papers from the time of the ownership of Australian tycoon Robert Campbell include a letter noting the progress of a war against "*the natives*" in New Zealand, 1864, and the collection includes deeds of property mostly in Buscot, Eaton Hastings, Great Coxwell and Faringdon.

A family feud is revealed in the exemplification of Chancery court proceedings concerning the will of Sir Robert Rich of Sonning, 1729-1730 (D/EX 1436). His widow, Dame Mary Rich, complained that her son Sir William

"doth sometimes pretend that the said Sir Richard Rich his father made no such will.. and at other times... that his said father was imposed upon in the making of the said will".

The problem was that Sir Robert had provided for his younger children at the eldest son's expense.

Other records relating to property which have been added to our holdings include Woolhampton manor jury presentments, 1624 (D/EZ 117); deeds of property in Crowthorne, 1891-1969 (D/EX 1428); and a sale catalogue of a Georgian mansion called The Grotto in Basildon, 1938 (D/EZ 115). A small miscellaneous collection of West Berkshire documents, 1768-1910, includes deeds relating to Chieveley, Enbome, Newbury, Speen and Thatcham (D/EZ 114).

Some parishes have made additions to their records, including Buscot, 1891-1912 (D/P30), Newbury, 1960-1986 (D/P89), Tilehurst St Michael, 1948-1951 (D/P132), and Warfield, 1929-1991, including a banns register, 1929-1966 (D/P144). Miscellanea include an abstract of overseers papers for parishes in Wantage Union (T/B 59) and an index of the log books of Grovelands Board school, Reading (T/B 60).

Wanted - John Rosamund - Highway Robber

By Barbara Young

On Monday, 7th September 1724, John Laxton, a maltster from Henley-upon-Thames, was riding along the King's Highway towards Windsor. By about 2 o'clock that afternoon he had reached Hurley Bottom, on the edge of Maidenhead Thicket, when he was set upon by two men on foot. One took his horse by the bridle, the other knocked him to the ground; then they robbed him of six shillings in his pocket, his bob wig and hat (worth 5s each) and his shoes (worth 2s).

Before riding off on his horse, the two men dragged their victim into nearby woods, bound his hands and tied him to a tree. However, after a little while, Laxton freed himself and struggled to a neighbouring house. Fortunately help was at hand. The robbers were promptly pursued and caught at Watlington, across the Thames in Oxfordshire.

The next day Richard Carter JP examined John Rosamund and William Ray, "*labourers from Wargrave*". Both men confessed to the robbery, made their marks on the statements and were held in the County Gaol.

The two robbers were convicted at the Lent Assizes, held on Monday 1st March 1724/5 at Reading. Their capital sentence was commuted to transportation for 14 years on 22nd June 1725; this order was confirmed at the Summer Assizes, held at Abingdon on 19th July 1725.

It was not until Thursday, 23rd September 1725, over a year after the crime, that they were eventually transported. With 132 other convicts, they sailed on the frigate "*Forward*" to Annapolis in Maryland.

The evidence for the above felony is deposited in the Assize records at PRO

Kew, and the transportation details are at the Corporation of London Record Office. Further information is proving extremely elusive and many questions remain unanswered.

Because the two men were caught so soon after the crime, there was no descriptive appeal for their capture. No contemporary newspaper has been found for either the robbery or the trial. However, a reward of £80 for "*apprehending and conviction*" was shared by John Laxton (£30), William Price (£20), Jonathan Nash (£15) and William Johnson (£15). No other details are given except that it was paid out on 4th March 1724/5.

Because the two men confessed to the crime, no further information or depositions were needed. No detailed gaol records have survived, and there is nothing to explain why a second indictment for the theft of a dark brown gelding (worth £5) from John Belcher, on the same day as the robbery, was not tried after the first conviction.

By 1737 John Rosamund is serving in the Maryland Militia, and after completing his sentence he went to Augusta County, Virginia. But no evidence has been found for his age, place of birth or his parents.

John Rosamund might have been an itinerant labourer, "*of Wargrave*" as stated on his indictment, but he was not a Berkshire boy. After an extensive search only one reference has been found in this county for his unusual surname - in 1702 a Leverland Rosamund, son of John Rosamund, a stranger, was baptised in Bray. There may be a link but, to date, this is unconfirmed.

If anyone comes across a John Rosamund (Rosaman etc.) who they identify with the

above, the author would be VERY pleased to hear from them. Please write to me at 39 Howard Road, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 2BX.

Sources

- **Public Record Office:** ASSI/5/45, ASSI/2/8 and T.53.32
- **Corporation of London Record Office:** MSS 57/7

Distribution of Berkshire Surnames

By Jean Debney

Following my comment in the September Berkshire Family Historian (Sep 1997 vol.21/1 page 36) I received two letters, one of which was reproduced in the March issue and the other is reproduced below with comments. Subsequently I have also received comments on the letter published in the March issue.

Shewry

Mrs Sheila Smith (2779) of "Tigh an Iasgair", Street of Kincardine, Boat of Garten, Inverness-shire, PH24 3BY wrote as follows:

My mother's maiden name was SHEWRY and her family came from West Ham in London's East End. I traced them back through Stepney and Bethnal Green to the Whitechapel/Bishopsgate area in about 1840. This is a typical migration pattern - Whitechapel then represented the lowest of the low and any move eastwards was a step up the ladder.

For a long time I was stuck in the East End, unable to find any of the family on the census who came from outside London. However, my searches at St Catherine's (now the Family Records Centre, Myddelton Place, Islington) revealed that out of 49 SHEWRY births registered between 1837 and 1857, 28 were in Faringdon and all but 3 of the remaining 21 have since been traced back to that area. At first I thought it was London but then realised it was Berkshire.

The IGI lists the largest numbers of SHEWRYs in Berkshire and London plus a few in Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, all traceable back to Berkshire. Out of over 30 variants the most common spellings are SHEW(E)R(E)Y, SHUR(E)Y and

SHURIE. Parish register entries in Marcham, West Hanney and Hinton Waldrist, Berks, in the early 16th to 17th centuries alternated between SHUR(E)Y and SHEWRY, with the earliest in Marcham as SURY and SURIE. Later branches in different villages settled on a specific spelling.

The earliest record found is the will of Thomas SURY of Marcham who died in 1543. As he was married with young children he was probably not very old and may have been born about 1500. He requested to be buried in Marcham churchyard next to his father, Richard, so it seems likely that the family were in the area from at least 1480 or before.

Even today a search through the telephone directories shows a marked predominance in the southern counties of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Gloucester and London. I have written to SHEWRYs in Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand and traced them all back to Berkshire.

There is an isolated mention to SHURIE in Orkney where it no longer occurs and there are only a few in Scotland. A mailshot of the UK telephone directories revealed a Liverpool family who said they had Scottish origins. Blacks *Surnames of Scotland* suggests that it of Norse origin deriving originally from SIGURDSON. I

very much doubt if there is any connection with the Berkshire family.

So it is a Berkshire name. None of the books published on the subject mention it. The author of place names of Berkshire and Oxfordshire doesn't think it derives from a placename. It is not occupational and it doesn't seem to be a nickname or a topographical name. So what are we left with? A derivation from a personal name? Two suggestions have been made to me by experts: there is in Reaney a mention of an obsolete old French name, SEAUARY, which he believes gave rise to the name SAVORY. As this name also appears in old Berkshire records it has to be a possibility. The other is an Old English name SEAWIG, believed to have given rise to SEAUWY and then to SEWY.

Although I never really intended to do a one-name study on this name I became so intrigued it just snowballed! It would be nice to tell you that all my SHUREYs, etc. fit into one big tree, but life isn't like that is it? All I can say is that, with the one exception of the Orkney SHURIES, they can all be traced back to a handful of villages around the Vale of White Horse, formerly in North Berkshire but since 1974 in Oxfordshire. My own line can only be traced back to 1734 when John SHEWRY of Buckland married Ann WAIN, but I live in the hope that I will find the missing link to get them back to about 1500 in Marcham.

Congratulations on all your research - you have certainly turned a lot of stones and uncovered some interesting material. I agree with you that your research suggests that SHEWRY/SHURIE, etc. originated in the White Horse area of North Berkshire and is probably derived from a lost pre-Conquest personal name, perhaps the SAEWIG you mention - which would, incidentally be pronounced "SHEWY". It

is unlikely to be a form of SAVORY - all the early names quoted by Reaney have the "S" initial letter with no "SH" examples.

You may also be interested in the following reference: Henry SURIE of Duxford is listed as a landholder in Hobbes Furlong and the East Race, etc. in Hinton Waldrist, Berkshire in 1634.¹²

Further to the abstract from Terence Lanfear's letters regarding his surname and its variants he has written again and asked that the following be added:

Thanks and acknowledgements are due to Harold H Lanfear of Sandown, IOW, who carried out the initial research into the LANFEARs in the 1980s and to my son, Dr Tim Lanfear. Anyone with access to the Internet and who would like more details about the family, etc. will find them on Tim's web page as follows: <http://www.costamagna.demon.co.uk>

From the latest edition of the Register of One-Name Studies (14th ed. 1998) published by the Guild of One-Name Studies,¹³ I notice that Terence is registered as a member of the Guild of One-Name Studies (GOONS No.2878) for his surname and its variants: LAMFEAR, LAMPHIER, LANDFEAR, LANGFEAR, LANPHIER.

The Millenium British Family History Conference will be held from 26th April to 30th April 2000 at Bath University hosted by Wiltshire Family History Society in association with the Federation of Family History Societies; details from:

Wiltshire FHS, Conference 2000, The Workroom, 10 Castle Lane, Devizes, Wilts SN10 3SB.

¹² Berkshire Glebe Terriers 1634, Berkshire Record Society Volume 2

¹³ Available from the BFHS Branch Bookstalls or by post from the Research Centre.

National Monument Record Centre, Swindon

By Colin Brown

I expect that most of BFHS members have heard of the National Monuments Record Office in Swindon, but I wonder if a large number are put off visiting it because they do not feel there is much that is relevant to the ordinary family.

There is a good collection of Local History books for all English counties ranging from the very learned to "Our Town in Pictures". There are also a number of Street Directories, such as Kelly's, covering the whole of the country, as well as an extraordinary number of maps in several scales. Photo maps from the air now cover the whole country and the oblique air photo collection is growing larger. These are photos taken from the air from an angle to show what the houses look like.

However the most important and valuable part of the collection is the photographs of streets and buildings from every town and village in England. They are housed in storage boxes on shelves and can be looked

at without fuss or form filling and there are a lot - there is about four foot of shelf for Liverpool alone - containing thousands of pictures, many of important buildings but also those taken by tramway companies, developers and shops etc. and therefore show how ordinary people's houses. Most pictures cover the period 1890-1940.

You can photocopy almost any picture for 20p on a help-yourself basis or have laser prints, which are more expensive.

For maps you need to take with you to save a lot of time the grid reference of the places you are interested in eg SU581.646 (obtained from the Ordnance Survey maps in the central library). For towns, it is a good idea to have the street name and the names of the surrounding streets. Some villages are lumped together i.e. Berks, Welford, also has Weston, Hoe Benham, Wickham Wick, but the system is very easy to use and the staff most helpful.

Elizabeth Brownell (2988) of The Dulaig, Grantown-on-Spey, Moray, PH26 3JF wrote as follows:

"I have been busy researching my father's family who lived around the Inverness area. They are MacDonalds and Frasers, not easy in this part of the world. Whilst looking through the Muster Roll of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's Army 1745, I came across the following:

Alexander MacDonald, Berkshire, Sgt. In the Duke of Perth's Regiment. Colonel of the Regiment, Duke of Perth, Lieutenant General James Drummond. He was captured at Carlisle 30.12.1745 where he might have died since there is no further reference to him.

I wondered what a Highland Scot was doing in Berkshire prior to 1745? I checked a 3 vol. set of books in Inverness Library that gives details of all known soldiers in the Muster Roll and it definitely says that Alexander MacDonald was from Berkshire. So I am assuming it means England.

I wonder if any member of the Berkshire FHS has any connection with this man or if he left a family in Berkshire. It would be interesting to know.

If I can assist anyone in tracing family from this part of the world, I would be happy to do so."

Help Wanted!

Mrs Stella Kent (3452) of 7 Ashman Road, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 4WD is researching the Maffey family who originated from Idmiston and Lockerley in Wiltshire and there was also a branch of this family at Midgham, Berkshire in the 1800s. She would like to know if anyone can shed light on the whereabouts of the following:

“The birth place of Sarah Amelia Matilda Bufter (later Maffey) born about 1787 she was the wife of Charles Maffey (they married 28th April 1810 in Hurstbourne Tarrant), Charles was born in 1782 at Idmiston in Wiltshire and died 28th March 1839 at Croydon Surrey. Also missing is Charles and Sarah’s daughter Mary Ann born 1811, who cannot be traced between the years 1848-1864. The family left Berkshire and travelled across to Surrey about 1835, later settling in Croydon. Mary has been found, I think, listed as a chandler at Brixton in 1865 age 78+, but I would dearly love to find the missing years, if at all possible. If there are any Maffey’s still living in the Berkshire area, I would also like to hear from them.”

Mrs Angela Hodges (3526) of Bag End, 45 High Street, Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset, TA14 6PR is looking for advice regarding the following problem:

“Is there anyone else who has had problems with made-up surnames? I searched for my great-great-grandmother’s birth and marriage certificates for years under the name of Singleton which was the maiden name she claimed on her children’s birth certificates, and also the name her mother went under. I eventually discovered her marriage certificate where her maiden name was Elton and her father’s name Henry St John (gentleman). I presume she was illegitimate and her mother covered this by

changing her name from Clara Elizabeth St John Elton to Clara Elizabeth Singleton.

Her mother, Cecilia Elton calls herself Clara’s aunt on the 1851 census in Reading when she stated that her birthplace was Sonning, Berkshire. She was a “*Landed Proprietor*” so perhaps Henry St John looked after her financially. I haven’t been able to find either her birth, or Clara’s, and the only Henry St John local to Reading appears to be a highly respectable vicar in Finchampstead!

Middle names given to subsequent children were Vernon, St John and Staverton.”

Noreen Morris (3591) of Turnberry, Front Street, South Clifton, Nr. Newark, Notts., has written asking:

“Does anyone have any family trees of the Pusey family of Berkshire. I am searching in particular of the birth of James Pusey (no e) who married Ann Street at Basildon on 31st December 1722. Please can anyone help!”

Margot Corbett (3650) of 4 Wealden View, Shrub Lane, Burwash, E.Sussex TN19 7BW is looking for someone who has detailed local knowledge of Bisham to help her with the following:

“My 4xgreat-grandfather Alexander Wells of Bisham stated on his marriage licence in 1780 that he was an innholder. He died in 1807. The Berkshire Record Office does not have licenced victuallers’ recognisances until 1814/5 for Bisham. At that date there were three inns, *The Angler, The Red Lion and The Bull*. What I would dearly like to know is; of which of the three inns was he the licensee? I have tried other possible sources to find the answer such as the Land Tax Assessments at the PRO, the Poll Book of 1796, all have been negative. Reading Local Studies Library have nothing to help, either.”

Bernard Hammond of 4 Woodberry Down, Epping Essex CM16 6RJ is trying to trace the family of his grandmother, who came from Buckland in Berkshire:

“They are recorded on the 1851 and 1861 censuses, but then the next generation disappears, leaving the original George Dreaper and his wife as the only Dreapers on the 1871 census. I do know that a Henrietta Dreaper (George Dreaper’s grand daughter) married a William Milburn Blakiston, in Luton in 1875: they had two children Eleanor and Henry; and that they were living in Strafford (East London) in 1891. James Dreaper, George Dreaper’s grandson, married and lived in Leytonstone East London but died, aged 42, in 1889.

Henrietta also had three sisters, one being my grandmother Clara who married a Richard Tensey (date and details unknown). Clara became widowed and then married my grandfather Richard Toplis in 1881. Details of Clara before this date are extremely illusive despite many years of trying on my part. Recently I have discovered that she may have come from Buckland, but I would like to be able to verify this. One difficulty has been the spelling of the name which seems to change on various documents i.e. Dreaper; Draeiper; Dreapier and also Draper. If anybody in the Buckland area has heard of the name Dreaper I would be grateful for any information.”

Slough Open Day

By Barbara Swiatek

Although the number of visitors to the Slough Branch Open Day on the 7th March 1998 at Kingsway United Reform Church, Slough was quite low, only 139, the atmosphere in the hall was friendly and the stall-holders did a roaring trade and every-one seemed pleased with the venue and the books etc. on offer. I understand that Berks FHS Bookstall did rather well.

There were more people in the morning than in the afternoon, no doubt most Slough men had gone to see Slough Town Football Club play at home (and they won!).

Our own society put on a most interesting display, as did the other societies Bucks, East Surrey & Bedfordshire. Other exhibitors were Slough Museum, Slough Library, Slough Civic Society, the Friends of the Royal Borough of Windsor Collection and also MW Micro, who supply microfiche readers and Stuart Tamblin who is compiling a register of criminals from records at Kew. It was Rev. Derek West’s display of his work on tracing the histories of the men who died in the First World War that created most interest, indeed he found that a visitor from Swindon had brought a photograph of one of the men, the headmaster of Chalvey Church School, and that made his day, and if these type of gatherings bring together people with extra information it makes the project worthwhile.

Slough Library has produced its own leaflet on what is available to family historians for consultation in the Reference Library.

In the Gallery Room upstairs, both the 1881 Census and the IGI were there for consultation and that was busy all day, in fact some people returned in the afternoon for another chance to consult the indexes.

Jan Cleeton and her daughter Catherine did sterling service in the Refreshment Bar, which was well placed for visitors to chat and reminisce about old times. Altogether a good day, a pity that more members weren’t able to come, but it showed that family history is doing well. So here’s to the next one wherever it may be.

Q and A with Jean

By Jean Debney

Q *Elwyn PRICE (2615), of Caversham: "I am trying to find details of the death of Richard or John PRICE who, according to his god-daughter and a newly found cousin of mine, died circa 1940 while serving in the Royal Navy in North Africa. We know that he was married with one daughter born in 1939 whom he never saw. I have written to HMS Centurion who replied they could help only if I provided further information - which I don't have. We do know, however, that his widow married a Pole man and we intend to search the marriage indexes at the Family Records Centre backwards from 1950. We also intend checking the Navy War Memorial at Plymouth for any clues."*

A Although most of the research books are relatively silent regarding anything about the Navy in World War Two you are certainly pursuing this man with enthusiasm.

While I was at the Family Records Centre recently I checked the index of **War Deaths - Naval Ratings - 1939-1948** and recorded the following with details of their rating, ship or unit, year of death and volume and page number:

John	PRICE	STO.1	Aldenham,	d.1944	8.3139
John A W	PRICE	Marine Commando	41 R.M,	d.1944	8.3139
John Edward	PRICE	STO.2	Cato	d.1944	8.3139
John H	PRICE	AB	Stronghold,	d.1942	8.3139
John T	PRICE	Ord. Sea	Glen Avon	d.1944	8.3139
Richard	PRICE	STO.1	Mahratta	d.1944	8.3140
Richard S	PRICE	STO.1	Repulse	d.1941	8.3140

The index of **War Deaths - Naval Officers 1939-1948** included John Allen Price, Payr.Lt.Cdr.RN, Resource III, who died 4 Oct 1939. There were no relevant entries under Pryce in either index.

I then checked the following on my bookshelf for any other sources of information: *Naval Records for Genealogists* by N A M Rogers (HMSO 1988), *Tracing your Ancestors in the Public Record Office* (HMSO 1990), *Dictionary of Genealogical Sources in the PRO*, by Stella Colwell (1992) and PRO Records Information Leaflet No.2: *Admiralty records as sources for biography and genealogy*. The suggested areas of enquiry in the Public Record Office are:

1. **AMD 104/102-108: Casualty Records/Medical Department Registers Indexes to separate series of registers of reports of death (1893-1950)** - These are alphabetical and include names of dockyard employees, marines, coastguards and other naval personnel and a note that the date and often the cause of death, in or out of service, of officers and ratings is almost always entered in the Service Registers
2. **ADM 104/122-126: Ratings - deaths by enemy action (1900-1941)** - Alphabetical rather than indexed registers of casualties which record deaths by enemy action only. They include Marine and other ranks and ratings of the naval reserves, but not commissioned or warrant officers. They are closed for 75 years.
3. **ADM 104/127-139: Ratings - death by enemy action (1939-1948)** - Casualty registers in

single alphabetical series of all naval and reserve ratings, warrant officers and Royal Marines other ranks who died from any cause; the information includes - name, number, rating, ship or unit, date and place of birth (?also home address), date, place and category of death - eg. 'Enemy action', 'missing', 'natural causes', etc.

4. **ADM 171: Campaign Medal Rolls (1793-1966/1972)**¹⁴ - Indexed under ship to 1914 and no personal name indexes. This records names of the officers & men who were awarded or claimed medals or clasps issued for gallantry or service in particular actions and campaigns. It is only available on microfilm.

For enquiries about entitlement to medals write to: Medal Section, Room 1027, HMS Centurion, Grange Road, Gosport, Hants PO13 9XA

It would therefore appear that the Admiralty records in the PRO could be a good source of information for your man. Let me know what you manage to find out and where from. Also I am sure you would be glad to receive any further suggestions from members.

Q *Mrs V J Swingewood of Bracknell: "I am researching my late husband's family but am at a loss to know where to begin: he was born in 1927 in Marylebone, London and adopted at the Wandsworth County Court in 1930. I have his birth and adoption papers with his single mother's name. How can I find out more about his mother and her family?"*

A It is not clear from your letter whether you have a copy of your late husband's original birth certificate. If you have details of his date of birth and birth name then you can apply for a copy birth certificate through the normal channels - i.e. by personal application at the Family Records Centre, 1 Myddelton Place, Islington, London EC1R 1UW, by post from The Office of National Statistics, Postal Applications Section, Smedley Hydro, Trafalgar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 2HH or the local registrar if known. If you do not have the necessary details then, as a relative, you can apply for the information necessary to obtain a birth certificate from the Chief Clerk of the relevant adoption court.

Once you have the original birth details, finding more about the mother and her family is likely to be a long and time-consuming task. Unless the mother's age is known then trawling backwards through the birth indexes will be lengthy but not totally impossible - as will the forward search for a possible marriage and her subsequent death. Electoral registers or local directories may identify a name and address perhaps of her parents - if they lived in the area where her child was born. A letter to the relevant local paper where the child was born might produce a relative or someone who knew the family.

As matter of interest, legal adoption in England and Wales only dates from 1st January 1927 - prior to that adoption and fostering was usually a private arrangement with nothing recorded. The index to the registers of adopted children (from 1927) are now at the Family Records Centre in Myddelton Place, Islington, London. The information on the certificates includes the child's date of birth and adoptive name, the names of the adoptive parents and which court the Adoption Order was made.

A useful publication is that by Georgina Stafford *Where to find adoption records - a guide for counsellors*, published by the British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering, 2nd ed. 1993; a copy of an earlier edition is in our Research Centre Reference Library.

A free leaflet (no. ACR.110): "*The Adoption Contact Register, information for people adopted*

¹⁴ The dates vary in the PRO Records Information Leaflet no.2 & Dictionary of Genealogical Sources

in England or Wales and their birth relatives" is produced free of charge by the Department of Health and the Office of National Statistics; a copy can be collected from the FRC (see above) - or, presumably, by post from The General Register Office, Adoption Section, Contact Register, Smedley Hydro, Trafalgar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 2HH. A free Federation Factsheet: "Tracing the Natural Parents of Adopted Persons" can be obtained from The Administrator, FFHS, The Benson Room, Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS in exchange for an sae & an extra 1st class stamp or 3 IRCs.

Q Felicity Gabrieli - from Caversham and Australia: "During his lifetime one of my ancestors was described as a brush maker; however, on his death certificate, dated 1896, he is described as "bass dresser" - what is this occupation?"

A The trouble with using dictionaries is that one word often leads to another - which is what happened this time. Starting with "bass", my Webster's International Dictionary says it comes from the Old English word "byrst" meaning bristle and, among other definitions including a type of edible spiny fish or a low pitched or deep sound, means the coarse leafstalks found at the base of many palms; it can also be any article, mat or basket, made of bast or similar material. Further down the page I found *bass broom* which is made from *piassava fibre*: this in turn is the coarse brown fibre from the leaf sheath at the base of a Brazilian palm used for making ropes, mats and brushes. Turning to *bristle*, I found seven definitions including "to scorch or parch something during cooking" (!) as well as the short, stiff hairs used in brush manufacture. My conclusion therefore is that, as a "bass dresser", your ancestor was involved in making brushes.

It has been pointed out to me that there are some good illustrations of a bass broom head and a bass sink brush in *The National Trust Book of Forgotten Household Crafts* by John Seymour (published by Dorling Kindersley, London, 1987) on pages 130 and 47 respectively. Also *The Book of Trades or Library of Useful Arts 1811* (Vol.2)¹⁵ includes a contemporary description of the trade and the newly published Gibson Guide *Specialist Indexes for Family Historians*¹⁰ includes - under the section on occupations - details of The Society of Brushmakers Descendants, a self-help and information group which publishes a Quarterly Journal with news, sources, features and indexes of brushmakers. Further information can be obtained by sending an s.a.e. to Ken Doughty, 13 Ashworth Place, Church Langley, Essex CM17 9PU.

Q Colin Brown (813) of Caversham, Berks: "While checking through the churchwardens' accounts of 1831 for Welford in the Berkshire Record Office I found a reference to an "apparitor" and would like to know what it means."

A An "apparitor" is an official in an ecclesiastical court who issued the summons for witnesses to attend and for the executors and administrators to produce probate inventories and other evidence in court; they were also known as "summoners". Because there are so many awkward words used in probate and other ecclesiastical court records I have compiled a list of "Words for Wills" which, it is hoped, will be published later this year.

¹⁵ Publication obtainable from the Berkshire FHS Bookstall at the Research Centre, at Branch meetings or by post (please include appropriate post & packing).

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Compiled by Robert Houseman

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No.	Surname	Place	Code	Period
3610	ALDRED	Bramfield	SFK	1800-1850
3642	ARCHER	Dunton Grandboro	BKM	1800-1990
3715	BANNING	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1996
3715	BANNING	Anywhere	HAM	1850-1996
3715	BANNING	Anywhere	WIL	1750-1850
3692	BECK	Anywhere	BRK	1710-1767
3692	BECK	Anywhere	HAM	1710-1767
3688	BEST	Anywhere	MDX	1066-1997
3715	BLACKALL	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3704	BOAM	Anywhere	BRK	1500-1900
3704	BOMAN	Anywhere	BRK	1500-1900
3704	BOWMAN	Anywhere	HAM	1500-1998
3743	BOYDE	Anywhere	COR	1800-1997
3743	BOYDE	Dummer	HAM	1860-1900
3743	BOYDE	Wasing	BRK	1806-1997
3723	BRYAN	Wigan	LAN	1800-1890
3723	BRYANT	Wigan	LAN	1800-1890
3684	BULLPITT	Anywhere	HAM	1600-1920
3684	BULPETT	Anywhere	HAM	1600-1920
3684	BULPIT	Anywhere	BRK	1400-1900
3684	BULPIT	Anywhere	HAM	1600-1920

3684	BULPITT	Anywhere	BRK	1400-1900
3684	BULPITT	Anywhere	HAM	1600-1920
3688	BURGE	Kingston St Mary	SOM	1066-1800
3688	BURGE	London	LND	1787-1950
3642	CARROLL	Oakley	BDF	1800-1990
3642	CHAPMAN	Amersham	BRK	1800-1990
3723	CHERRY	Windsor	BRK	1800-1850
3610	CLARE	Hendon	MDX	1800-1850
3718	CLARK(E)	Berkeley	GLS	1800-1880
3688	COTAGE	Anywhere	ALL	1066-1997
3642	COWELL	Bletchley	BKM	1800-1990
3684	CROSS	Anywhere	DOR	1066-1800
3721	DORSETT	Brentford	MDX	1825-1875
3692	DUNSDON	Anywhere	BRK	1750-1810
3692	DUNSDON	Anywhere	OXF	1750-1810
3704	EATWELL	Ramsbury	WIL	1500-1900
3715	EMERY	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3715	FASSETT	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3642	FRANKLIN	Chalfont St Giles	BKM	1800-1990
3642	GASKIN	Chalfont St Giles	BKM	1800-1990
3642	GASKIN	Leighton Buzzard	BDF	1800-1990
3721	GIBBS	Hambrook	GLS	1820-1920
3715	GODDARD	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3715	GOODALL	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3715	GOODGER	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3715	GROVE	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3610	HANSON	Pangbourne	BRK	1785-1997
3721	HATHWAY	Frenchay	GLS	1820-1920
3721	HATHWAY	Staplehill	GLS	1850-1950
3718	HEATH	Marlow	BKM	1770-1998
3718	HEATH	Wargrave	BRK	1650-1850
3642	IRVING	Reading	BRK	1850-1990
3715	JACOBS	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3684	JANAWAY	Anywhere	DOR	1066-1900
3684	JANAWAY	Anywhere	HAM	1066-1900
3715	JORDAN	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3723	KIBBLE	Windsor	BRK	1800-1850
3743	KNIGHT	Dummer	HAM	1770-1997
3642	LAMBOURNE	Reading	BRK	1800-1990
3721	LANDER	Lawrence Hill	GLS	1850-1930
3721	LANDER	Redfield	GLS	1870-1960
3747	LEE	Anywhere	BRK	1066-1998
3715	MARTIN	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3642	MASLIN	Reading	BRK	1850-1970
3684	MELMOTH	Anywhere	HAM	1066-1900
3642	NEWELL	Reading	BRK	1850-1990
3715	NORCUTT	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3688	PAINTER	Camberwell	LND	1066-1800
3721	PHELPS	Stapleton	GLS	1820-1920

3692	POOLE	Anywhere	BRK	1770-1860
3692	POOLE	Anywhere	OXF	1770-1860
3743	PRICE	Bucklebury	BRK	1886-1960
3743	PRICE	Cascob	RAD	1750-1997
3743	PRICE	Llanbister	RAD	1750-1997
3743	PRICE	Reading	BRK	1886-1960
3610	PRICKETT	Hendon	MDX	1800-1850
3723	PURDY	Barnes	SRY	1830-1930
3723	PURDY	Wimbledon	SRY	1770-1830
3610	RAVEN	Coggeshall	ESS	1800-1850
3610	READ	N Crawley	BKM	1800-1850
3684	RENDLE	Anywhere	DOR	1066-1900
3684	RENDLE	Anywhere	HAM	1066-1900
3718	SCARBOROUGH	Elston	NTT	1800-1998
3610	SEYMOUR	Pangbourne	BRK	1800-1997
3642	SHADES	Reading	BRK	1800-1900
3642	SHARP	Bedford	BDF	1800-1990
3688	SHARPE	Anywhere	ALL	1066-1997
3721	SLADE	Stapleton	GLS	1820-1920
3610	SMITH	Marston Moreton	BDF	1800-1850
3715	SMITH	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3684	SOTHCOTT	Anywhere	HAM	1750-1950
3684	SOTHCOTT	Anywhere	IOW	1600-1930
3684	SOUTHCOTT	Anywhere	HAM	1750-1950
3684	SOUTHCOTT	Anywhere	IOW	1600-1930
3743	THATCHER	Woodcote	OXF	1850-1997
3743	TRACE	Kings Langley	BRK	1870-1997
3743	TRACE	Midgeham	BRK	1870-1997
3688	TREADWELL	St Marylebone	MDX	1066-1820
3642	TURNEY	Chalfont St Giles	BKM	1800-1990
3692	UPSTONE	Anywhere	BRK	1800-1857
3692	UPSTONE	Anywhere	OXF	1800-1857
3642	VALLIS	Anywhere	BKM	1800-1990
3688	VIGOR	East London	LND	1700-1900
3721	WAKE	Bath	SOM	1850-1920
3721	WAKE	Bruton	SOM	1750-1850
3743	WASON	Evercreech	SOM	1850-1997
3743	WASON	Glastonbury	SOM	1850-1997
3743	WASON	Wincanton	SOM	1850-1997
3743	WATSON	Orleton	HEF	1826-1900
3715	WELLS	Anywhere	BRK	1600-1820
3610	WHITE	Wallingford	OXF	1825-1997
3642	WISE	Reading	BRK	1900-1990
3723	WOODROFF	Windsor	BRK	1770-1865
3723	WOODROFFE	Barnes	SRY	1860-1930
3723	WOODROFFE	Windsor	BRK	1770-1865
3723	WOODRUFF	Barnes	SRY	1860-1930
3723	WOODRUFF	Windsor	BRK	1770-1865
3718	WOOLLEY	Kelston	SOM	1800-1880



BERKSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

BIG - R 97

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Kent	Lancashire	Leicestershire & Rutland
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Norfolk	Northampton	Nottinghamshire
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A Family Historian's Lament

I've been doing family history for nearly thirty years,
Diligently tracing my illustrious forebears.
From Peterhead to Peterborough, Pendle to Penzance,
My merry band of ancestors has led me quite a dance.

There's crooks from Kent and guards from Gwent and chimney sweeps from
Chester.

There's even one daft fisherman lived all his life in Leicester.
There's no-one rich and famous, no, not even well-to-do,
Though a second cousin twice removed once played in goal for Crewe.

I've haunted record offices from Gillingham to Jarrow,
The little grey cells of my mind would humble Hercule Poirot.
I've deciphered bad writing that would shame a three-year-old,
And brought the black sheep of the family back into the fold.

My bride of just three minutes I left standing in the Church,
As I nipped into the graveyard for a spot of quick research,
Eventually, I found an uncle, sixty years deceased -
It was far more satisfying than a silly wedding feast.

After three whole weeks of wedded bliss, my wife became despondent,
She named the Public Record Office as the co-respondent.
I didn't even notice when she packed her bags and went -
I was looking for great granddad's will who'd died in Stoke-on-Trent.

But now my thirty-year obsession is lying in the bin,
Last Tuesday week, I heard the news that made me jack it in,
For my darling mother, who is not long on this earth,
Casually informed me they'd adopted me from birth!

The author of this lament is unknown. It was on display on the Notice Board at Cornwall FHS Headquarters/Library and was originally reproduced in the Cornwall FHS Journal No. 84 (June 1997). It was spotted by BFHS member Barbara Swiatek and is reproduced here by kind permission of Cornwall FHS.

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We are happy to search the following indexes. Please send your request and search fee, together with an s.a.e. or 2 IRC's, to the person whose name and address is given against the particular index of interest to you. If you want searches made into more than one index please send your enquiry to BFHS INDEXES, c/o Prospect Technology College, Honey End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG30 4EL, giving your membership number, if applicable. Enquiries for the Marriage Index must be sent separately.

BERKSHIRE NAME INDEX

The Name Index comprises about 100,000 slips of names found in documents, which are identified on the slip, e.g. the Berkshire Record Office reference number. A number of members' genealogies of countywide interest have also been slipped. The charge is £5 for up to 5 surnames with 30 record slips photocopied max. (5 A4 sheets) per enquiry. If you are not a member of the Society the search fee is £1 per surname plus the above. Please send 2 s.a.e.'s if you want an acknowledgement. Send your enquiry to The BNI, BFHS Indexes etc. as above.

1851 BERKSHIRE CENSUS

The Census is fully transcribed and held on computer. Print-outs can be supplied of any folio (the required references can be obtained from our published indexes) and the charge is 50p per folio with a minimum of £1, giving 2 folios. Alternatively we can search for any given surname and advise on the total number of folios required. The charges are £1 per search per surname and print-out charges are then as above.

BFHS, c/o Mr Geoff Mather, 18 Ravenswood Avenue, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6AY

1881 CENSUS for ENGLAND and WALES

This Census transcript has been produced by a nationwide effort. We have a complete set of fiche for each county. The charge for an estimate of the number of prints is £2 per county searched per surname, including two sample print-outs. Thereafter A4 print-outs are charged at 50p for each additional page. We can search and print out by "Surname in a County"; "Surname by Birth Place"; "Surname by Census Place"; "As Enumerated"; or from the "Miscellaneous - Notes, Institutions or Vessels" fiche sets.

BFHS, c/o Mr Ivan Dickason, 1 Mower Close, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1RZ

OTHER COUNTY CENSUS INDEXES

We hold copies of Census Indexes, mainly 1851 but from 1841 to 1891, for many other counties of England, Scotland and Wales in booklet form or on fiche. The charge for a search and an estimate of the cost of any print-outs is £2 per county searched per surname including two sample prints. Charges thereafter will depend upon the type of A4-size copies to be made and the number of prints involved.

Please write to Mr Ivan Dickason, as above.

BERKSHIRE MARRIAGE INDEX

This covers the pre-1974 county. The charges are £1.50 for each specific marriage enquiry (£2.50 if a non-member) with a maximum of 3 marriages per request - NO blanket searches undertaken. Details required are groom's full name, bride's if known and approximate date. Postal enquiries only. Please send an s.a.e. with extra 2nd class stamp or 3 IRC's; give your membership number; all cheques addressed to Mrs P Knight, NOT the Society. Currently allow about 4 months for a reply.

Mrs P Knight, Old Oak Cottage, The Pound, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 9QE

Payment is only accepted by means of a sterling cheque, drawn on a London clearing bank, and made payable to BFHS, except for the Berkshire Marriage Index - see above. Please allow 4-6 weeks for a reply.

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