



Berkshire Local History Association



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**Berkshire Local History Association
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THE DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS 1 August 2011.

Front Cover. Ann McCormack. Former entrance to Ascot Racecourse. These Grade II listed ornamental gates and railings are situated next to Golden Gate Lodge on Cheapside Road, at the beginning of the old mile course. They mark the one-time official royal entrance to the course. Erected in the nineteenth century, they were first used by Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1878.

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Chairman's Corner

The AGM has been and gone, and with more than 70 people present, it must have been the best attended ever!

I was sorry that those sitting towards the back of the Purley Barn found it difficult to hear what was going on at the front. The new committee will have to bear this in mind for future meetings.

The new committee is not much different from the old committee – though we now have a new Membership Secretary, Amanda Harvey, to whom I would like to extend a warm welcome.

From what transpired at the meeting, it appears that the BLHA is more than holding its own, with 40 societies, 21 institutions and 81 individuals in membership.

There are concerns over rising expenses and a fairly static membership, and there were discussions as to how we might reduce expenditure and hold subscriptions at the same rate. Prices for paper, printing and postage are increasing all the time, and if members were happy to receive the Newsletter electronically, it would reduce expenditure – and the work of some of the committee members.

Much has been achieved over the past year – the Berkshire History Prize was awarded for the first time, one of the research projects we have supported has come to a successful conclusion, and another has made a promising start. Here I refer to the wills and probate project, where the three published volumes were there for all to see, and the schools gazetteer, where volunteer researchers are just beginning their work.

The Newsletter and “Berkshire Old and New” maintain their high standards, thanks to their editors and contributors.

Sue Burnay could not be present, but sent a progress report: the Berkshire Bibliography should appear on the website soon.

Thanks are due also to Dave Osborne. The website now has a clean new look, with a logo in colour. Some work remains to be done, but much has been improved, with more information about what we do, and about the awards and prizes we are able to make. The membership forms allow the Association to reclaim tax where appropriate, and allow for payments by standing order. The website currently receives about 180 “hits” a month.

The archive visits arranged by David Lewis have been enjoyed by those who took part, and we may decide to do more. Then in July this year, there will be a local history study day arranged jointly by the BLHA and Reading Borough Libraries – which is advertised elsewhere in the newsletter, and I’m sure that your committee will be giving thought to future workshops and day schools in the light of comments we have received.



The usefulness of e-mail bulletins came up at the meeting: on a show of hands, it was disappointing to see how few of those present were signed up to receive them. We had collected some more e-mail addresses by the end of the day.

At the meeting there was the usual concern about the effects on services of spending cuts by central and local government – and I was heartened to hear that people were concerned for the future of the large local studies collection at Reading Central Library, after my retirement in September. I gave what assurances I could – at present there are no plans to limit access or break up the collection.

The Presidential address was delayed until after the lunch break – we didn't want the fish and chips getting cold! Our President, Professor Collins, told us of his involvement in some landscape detective work at Swallowfield Park. He had concluded that the "canal" across the park between the Rivers Blackwater and Loddon must have been constructed to assist drainage and to relieve flooding: it could never have been a navigation channel, as has sometimes been supposed.



After the address, the walk from the barn to St. Mary's Church was a delight. We were offered conducted tours of the church, and tea and home-made cake were available.

Many thanks are due to John Chapman and Project Purley for the success of the day. The organisation was exemplary, and we were well looked after from start to finish. I particularly liked the souvenir menus on the tables, and the specially prepared leaflet on Purley village, for the use of those walking from the barn to the church.

David Cliffe, Chairman, BLHA

Words from the Editor

I consider myself very privileged to be editing the 100th edition of the BLHA Newsletter; following in the footsteps of those who have done the job before I would not be writing this today without their efforts. In preparation for this edition I looked back at the original Newsletter, edited by Raymond South in 1976, it comprised seven sides of A4 and was produced in that format. The chair at the time was Anthony Cross and vice chair Canon Basil Clark; Judith Hunter, Chair 1980, wrote an article "I Wouldn't Know Where to Begin", on getting started in local history and Angela Perkins, the record keeper, contributed a piece on Writing the Story of Sonning. It occurred to me that although the Newsletter has come a long way since these early days, not least because of the changing technology, the same values and ideals are still at the heart of what the Newsletter is all about and that is local history. Disseminating news, information and short articles to those interested in the history of the county is its main purpose, a role which is central to the work of the Association.

There are a number of short articles in the Special Feature section this time which I hope you enjoy reading, some are in keeping with the 100 theme. It seems there is much to celebrate generally out and about in our county in 2011, so I hope you enjoy this edition of the Newsletter and your summer programmes.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have responded to my requests for copy, your time and effort are much appreciated.

Margaret Simons

Requests for Information

Mr. Brian Tyrrell has been carrying out research on the following individuals. He wonders if any readers can help with further information, including anything about coats-of-arms or family crests. If so, he can be contacted at the following temporary address: P.O. Box 3118, Macken Street, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland.

Ancestry of JOHN KIMBER, YEOMAN OF Easy Hanney, married 1611 Katherine, daughter of John DOE of East Lockinge (died between 1629 and 1632).

Ancestry of KATHERINE or CATHERINE DOE, daughter of John DOE of East Lockinge, died 1626, he being a descendent of Sir Richard Doo of Steventon who lived in the 1400s.

Ancestry of BRIDGET HEWET, daughter of JOHN HEWET, yeoman of Kingston Bagpuize, died 1684.

Ancestry of MARY WOODWARD, daughter of ROBERT WOODWARD, weaver of Radley, died 1708, a descendent of LIONELL WOODWARD of Abingdon, died 1545.

Ancestry of HENRY KENT, yeoman of Hinton Waldrist, died 1708, son of GEORGE KENT, died 1662. Ancestry of MARY SHERWOOD, daughter of RALPH SHERWOOD, yeoman of Shippon/Drayton, married 1685 Elizabeth WINGE of Brightweel, RALPH SHERWOOD a descendent of THOMAS SHERWOOD of Drayton, living in 1570.

Notice Board

Caversham 100 Years On

2011 marks the 100 years of the incorporation of Caversham into the Borough of Reading. Although a somewhat contentious anniversary it is an ideal opportunity for Caversham's history and heritage to be celebrated. If you are interested to find out what's going on during the year go to <http://www.caversham100yearson.org.uk>

We must remember that a large slice of Tilehurst also came into the borough in 1911 and together both areas increased the acreage of the borough by 3,238 acres to 9,106.

Margaret Simons

Electronic Access to Newsletter

Our most recent copy of the Newsletter is now available electronically via our website. However, access will only be available to members via a password; any member interested should contact our membership secretary, details on back page.

Margaret Simons

Harris Garden, Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading

Sunday 22 May 2011, 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Join us for a special event to mark the relaunch of the beautiful Harris Garden at the University of Reading. Once the home paddock of 'The Wilderness', (a Victorian house built in the remains of a famous landscape garden created at Whiteknights by George, Marquis of Blandford between 1798 and 1819), the Harris Garden is a botanic garden covering approximately five hectares. It was established in the 1970s and extended over the coming years as a teaching and research resource for the University. Since 2010 the Garden has undergone significant development work including the planting of 50,000 bulbs and the University together with the Friends of the Harris Garden are delighted to be relaunching this fantastic resource to the public. The garden is now open to all with recreation and conservation being its primary function. This celebration event for all the family will offer a unique opportunity to explore the garden at your leisure or take a guided tour. You can also relax and enjoy refreshments on the lawn, pose your gardening questions to one of our expert horticulturalists and uncover some of the secrets of the garden's wildlife!

Free – all welcome

There is no need to register for this event, but if you would like further information please email: events@reading.ac.uk

Local & Community History Month

This will be held during May 2011. It will again be organised by The Historical Association. Go to www.history.org.uk for details of how you can publicise your events and download a free poster template.

Brian Boulter

Individual Membership

If you are a member of a society, but would like to receive your own copy of our Newsletter and the journal *Berkshire Old and New*, why not take out an individual membership? For just £9.00 per annum you will receive three issues of the Newsletter (in January, May and September) and one copy of the Journal. All enquiries should be made to our membership secretary Amanda Harvey.

Local History Day 13th July “Catholic Reading”

The day is being promoted jointly by the BLHA and Reading Borough Libraries, and the theme is “Catholic Reading.”

The morning, a Wednesday, will be spent in the cenacle of the Church of Our Lady and St. Anne in South View Avenue, Caversham, where we shall hear three talks. The first will deal with the Middle Ages, the second with persecution and recusancy, and the third with the return of “legal” Catholicism. The speakers will be Dr. Julia Boorman, Senior Lecturer at The University of Reading, and Chairman of the Friends of Reading Abbey; Sheila Ephraim, lecturer for the Workers’ Educational Association; and John Mullaney, author of “St. James’s Catholic Church and School in the Abbey Ruins.”

After lunch, we shall visit the church itself, which contains stones from one of the medieval chapels on Caversham Bridge, and then make our way over the river, on foot, to St. James’s Church in Reading, where we can admire Pugin’s architecture, and the ornate carving of the “Abbey Stone.” If time and weather permit, we shall also look at the remains of Reading Abbey which are accessible at the time – parts will be under repair.

Numbers for the day are limited, tickets must be bought in advance from Reading Central Library by dropping in, contacting events@readinglibraries.org.uk or you can telephone 0118 901 5950. They will be available from Wednesday 1st June, price £15 – which includes tea, coffee, and a sandwich lunch.

Our subject is vast, especially if we include Caversham. Among much else we shall consider the large and important abbey in Reading, the four parish churches, the friary, the shrine of St. Mary of Caversham, the holy well of St. Anne in Caversham, the Holy Ghost Chapel and St. Anne’s Chapel on the bridge, the leading Catholic families in the countryside nearby – the Vachells, the Blounts, the Englefields and the Perkinses – French émigré priests, the Wheble family, and the present-day churches.

David Cliffe

Walking the Past London Walks

London – modern, vibrant and cosmopolitan, and one of the world’s greatest cities, with a rich, colourful and intriguing past.

Walking is the best way to find out about London’s history and **Walking The Past London Walks** brings you a series of informative, innovative and interactive self-guided walks through some of the most interesting parts of the city.

A Royal Walk guides you from Whitehall to Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace. Discover Sloane Square, The Royal Hospital, Cheyne Walk and the King’s Road on **A Chelsea Walk**. Learn about the fascinating history of the most famous part of the West End on **A Soho Walk**. Explore major thoroughfares, passages, yards and alleyways on **A City Walk** from the Temple, down Fleet Street to St. Paul’s.

All the walks are downloadable from the website, www.walkingthepast.co.uk priced £5.99 each, and are suitable for people of all ages.

WEA West Berkshire Branch

It is heartening to hear, in such difficult times, that opportunities for further education in the area are still growing. In the west of our county the very new West Berkshire branch of the WEA are currently working hard to establish a programme to suit the interests of the local population. However, as a new and embryonic group they need support, both for the courses they are offering and with administration, so if you are interested in attending a course or feel you would like to join the other volunteers on the committee do get in touch. Contact details can be found by googling WEA West Berkshire Branch or by contacting the editor, details on back page.

Margaret Simons

Workshop Ideas

Your executive committee have been discussing the idea of running either a one off workshop or a series of skills workshops that may be of help either in individual or group research projects. If you would like to obtain skills in dating old photographs, finding your way around the census, deciphering old handwriting or even how to organise a group research project, then get in touch. Similarly if you have skills in a particular area and would like to run a session then we need to hear from you. Contact me by at newsletter@blha.org or write to me at the address on the back page and we will organise a workshop that meets our members' needs.

Margaret Simons

Special Anniversary Features

Ascot Racecourse – 300 years of horse racing

2011 marks the three hundredth anniversary of the first race meeting at Ascot. It was Queen Anne (1665-1714) who is credited with establishing horseracing on this site. The Queen was a keen horsewoman. She spent most of her summers at Windsor and hunted with hounds in the surrounding forests. Even when she could no longer ride, she continued to participate by riding in a chariot. Local road names such as Kennel Avenue and Kennel Ride testify to the presence of the royal hounds. While hunting in Windsor Forest she came across open space at Ascot Heath (then known as East Cote) and decided this would be perfect for the galloping of horses.

On Saturday, 11 August 1711 the first competition was held for 'Her Majesty's Plate'. This was worth 100 guineas and open to any horse, mare or gelding, over the age of six. Each horse was required to carry a weight of 12 stone and seven runners

took part. The first four-day meeting took place in 1768 and the Gold Cup was inaugurated in 1807. These two races remain a feature of modern day Royal Ascot meeting held in June. Queen Anne is commemorated in the opening event on Royal Ascot Tuesday, the Queen Anne Stakes, and the Gold Cup is the highlight of the week and is held on Thursday.

Ascot Races became a focal point for high society. The first royal procession was held in 1825, instituted by George IV (1762-1830). The races also proved a magnet for other levels of society and, as local historian, Christine Weightman, has shown, attracted a milieu of gypsies, fortune-tellers, street entertainers and thieves, to the annual event.

Anne's reign was somewhat troubled and she had to contend with family feuds, religious controversy, issues of succession and a range of political and military issues in Canada, Scotland, Ireland, Holland and France. Despite all of this, she found time to relax in the Berkshire countryside and it's worth pointing out that 'the sport of kings' was inaugurated in this corner of the county by a queen, the last of the Stuart monarchs.

Ascot Racecourse: <http://www.ascot.co.uk>

Edward Gregg, 'Anne (1665-1714), queen of Great Britain and Ireland' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

Christine Weightman, *Cheapside in the Forest of Windsor* (Cheapside, 2000).

Ann McCormack

Celebrating Local History

BLHA's Newsletter celebrates its 100th edition - and 35th birthday - this year, having been founded in 1976 - a time when local history was becoming more popular. A number of local history societies date from soon after the formation of the BLHA - Twyford and Ruscombe in 1977 and Wargrave in 1981 being close to where I was working at the time. Amongst other things, BLHA has provided a forum where the various village and town societies can keep in touch with each other - its 'Speakers and Members Special Interests' lists being well thumbed documents - notably by society secretaries planning their programmes!

My own 'local history research' began at about that time, and the 'process' was rather different to today. There were no computer aids, catalogues or sources available to researchers. Locally, material was held in the Reading Library and the Berkshire Record Office, but both were rather different to today's facilities. The library was still located beside the Town Hall, with local studies material in a dingy small room towards the back on the ground floor. Most books and documents - including local newspapers in large bound volumes - were produced from a separate room by the librarian on request - very little was 'readily accessible'. The Berkshire Record Office search room was located in the basement of the old Shire Hall, behind the Abbey Gateway - again rather dingy, with a couple of large wooden tables for researchers, with access to documents by using a card index.

How times have changed! - we now have computerised catalogues, available via A2A - enabling us to locate 'Berkshire related' items in other repositories - a task that would have been only possible by a speculative visit in 1976. Many of the more popular documents, such as parish registers, or the local newspapers at the library, are now viewed in microform, whilst it is also possible to view documents online without even visiting the Record Office (the superb set of Berkshire Enclosure maps being particularly good). There is a wider range of material available - some of which did not even exist when BLHA was formed (the BRO has, for example, records about the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations of 1977 from Aldermaston to Wargrave).

Although as local historians we are invariably 'looking back', we have also had to learn new skills and techniques to search and research. The wide availability of photocopiers, digital cameras and so on means that it is not always necessary to laboriously copy out - in pencil - every word of a document in the search room, but a copy can be made to study 'at leisure' elsewhere. Personally, I hope we have also remembered the 'old skills' as - although 'very clever' - some computerised sources or indexes do tend to produce 'misleading' results ! Throughout that time, the BLHA Newsletter has kept us in touch with our local sources, with researchers and archivists.

Who knows what the research methodology will be when we reach BLHA Newsletter 200?

Peter Delaney

The First (known) 100 Sheriffs of Berkshire

Continuing with our theme of hundreds here is a list of the first one hundred sheriffs of Berkshire known by name. The list is taken from *The High Sheriffs of Berkshire* (1997) published by the Berkshire Record Office.

The sheriff or shire-reeve was originally an officer of the Crown with responsibility for the monarch's business in the county especially with regard to peace-keeping, and judicial duties, and the collection of the 'farm' - the fixed annual sum of money due each year at the Exchequer. It should be noted that it is not always possible to establish for certain where those holding office in several different years (and here listed under one name) are, indeed, the same person. The first name on the list appears in Domesday Book.

Before 1066	Godric	1097; 1100 x 1110	Hugh of Buckland
After 1066	?Henry de Ferrers	1100 x 1105	?Aubrey de Vere
1066 x 1086	Froger	?1112	?Alfred
c. 1071	?Robert d'Oilly and/or Roger de Pitres	Before 1118 1119	?Ralph William of Buckland
1086	?Aiulf	Before 1126	?John Belet
1090 x 1094	?Gilbert de Brettevilla	Before 1126	Baldwin son of Clarus

1127-1129	Anselm, Vicomte of Rouen	1217	Richard son of the king
1129-1130	William de Pont de l'Arche	1220; 1229 1226	Henry de Scaccario Hugh the Dispenser
1136 x 1154	?Jordan de Podiis	1333	William of Sparsholt
1153; 1154	Henry of Oxford	1335;1341;1352	John de Alveton
1155	Richard de Camville	1341	Robert Fitz Ellis of Waterperry
1156	Adam		
1157	Gilbert de Pinkney	1347	John Laundeles of Bampton
1160	Adam of Catmore		
1170	Hugh of Buckland	1354	Richard of Williamscot
1176	Hugh of St Germain		
1186	Roger son of Reinfrey	1355 1355	Thomas de Besiles John de Nowers
1189	Robert de la Mare	1355	John Laundeles
1190; 1193; 1201	William Brewer	1360;1365;1372	Roger de Elmerugg
1193	Philip Brewer	1362;1368	Roger of Cottisford
1194; 1195	Philip son of Robert	1365	John de Trillowe
1197	Stephen of Thornham	1369	Thomas de la Mare of Aldermaston
1199	Nicholas de Kenet	1371;1374;1387	Gilbert Wace of Ewelme
1200	Fulk de Cantelu		
1202	Hubert de Burgh		
1204 x 1215	John of Wiggenholt		

Adrian Ailes

The Hundreds of Berkshire

The hundred was one of the longest-established divisions of the ancient county. It was the basic division of the shire (Saxon) or county (Norman) and by the tenth century it was the unit for judicial and financial administration in most of southern and midland England. In Berkshire, as in other shires of southern England, the hundreds varied greatly in size, from as few as twenty to more than five hundred hides. Their origins are obscure. Perhaps they began as ancient groupings of a hundred heads of families responsible for law and order, or as units for organising the costs of defence during the Danish attacks.

Taxation

In 951 the Danegeld (a tax used to 'buy off' the raiding Norsemen) was levied for the first time. Each shire was assessed on a round number of hides and then the amount due divided among the hundreds. The usefulness of using the hundred and the hide as the unit of assessment was that the tax rate could be varied according to need. The hundred was still being used for the subsidies (taxes) of the later middle ages. The returns of the 1334 subsidy record the tax paid by each community but with no

reference to hides. The total paid was recorded for each community, then as a total for the hundred and finally for the county.

The records of the poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381 were also arranged by hundreds. For Berkshire, details of only the 1381 tax survive, apart from a fragment from 1379. The tax was one shilling per head of all men and women over the age of 15. The total collected from the county and in most cases the sum from each hundred is recorded. On this evidence Berkshire had a population of 15,696 over the age of 15. In the early sixteenth century the basis of assessment was different, each taxpayer being assessed on his or her wealth. Here again the totals for each hundred were recorded in the returns in addition to those for each parish or vill, making it possible for modern researchers to assess the relative wealth of the different areas of the county.

Law and Order

The judicial functions of the hundred took place in the hundred court, the lowest competent court to which Anglo-Saxons had access; above it was the shire court and later the royal courts. It probably began as a folk moot or meeting and became such an essential part of the judicial system that it was retained by the Normans. In the tenth century the hundred courts met every four weeks, later increased to every three weeks. They dealt with Anglo-Saxon folk law. When the king's travelling (itinerant) justices came to hold royal courts in the county, juries from the hundreds were summoned to answer on oath certain questions concerning the administration and maintenance of justice. Royal officials used hundred juries to elicit information on royal rights in each county.

Hundred Names and Numbers

In the early Anglo-Saxon period the shire court and that of the hundred met in the open air. Some meeting places gave their names to the hundred; in Berkshire, the cross marking the place where its court met gave the name Faircross to the Hundred; the pool of the 'ripel' (a strip of woodland) to Ripplesmere; the royal manor of Cocham to Cookham.

Domesday Book records twenty-two hundreds in the county. In general they were compact areas of varying size, some large like Reading and Charlton, others small like Shrivenham and Eagle. By the time of the lay subsidy of 1334 the number had increased to twenty-four. Records of the Tudor lay subsidies show the number reduced to fifteen. These changes came about by the division of large hundreds, or the amalgamation or absorption of smaller ones.

Hundred divisions continued to be used into the nineteenth century. In many early nineteenth-century reports including those on the old poor law and census abstracts, parishes are grouped into hundreds. By this time there were twenty. With the creation of Poor law Unions and Registration Districts the hundred began to appear less often in local records though trade directories continued to include their names in village entries right to the end of the century and the Victoria County History of Berkshire, compiled in the 1920s still used this way of organising parish entries.

Given this confusing history, the local historian might question the need to acknowledge the existence of the hundred, yet it was one of the earliest and most local of all the institutions of England. At a time when politicians believe they are inventing localism, it is no bad thing to remember how very local Berkshire once was.

Joan Dils

Peter Allen Memorial Lectures

The Peter Allen Memorial Lectures (PAML) for 2011 launched earlier today (7th May). The event is organised by Thatcham Historical Society & friends. Thatcham Town Mayor, Lee Dillon, launched the event with a short speech:

Welcome to the Peter Allen Memorial Lectures. This now annual event, celebrates not only National History month, but more importantly for many of us, it is a way for us to remember the late Peter Allen. Peter was known throughout Thatcham and further afield. A few of his accomplishments include

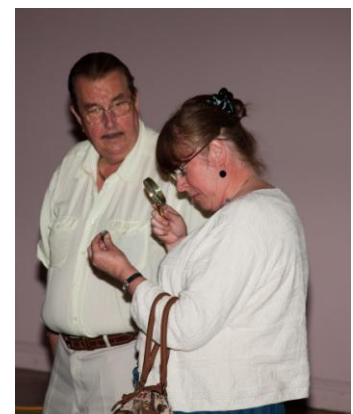
- Taught at Kennet School for 34 years
- Written books on history of Thatcham, Newbury & Cherwell Railway
- Chaired Thatcham Historical Society & Old Bluecoat School
- Project manager for Thatcham Vision and much more...

Peter was not only well known but also well liked. Indeed his facebook page, with over 2000 members, is populated with comments from a vast majority of his most recent pupils and all have nothing but praise. Indeed after asking various people and comments, in the concluding talk of 2010, Nick summed Peter up in one word - "Legend"

Malcolm Langford, a local metal detectorist provided the first talk, "Thatcham in Stone and Metal." Malcolm walked the audience through Thatcham's rich past which started over 12,000 years ago. He showed examples of the tools used from his own vast collection of artefacts. Some important dates and places were highlighted such as the Mesolithic (middle stone age) site in Lower Way which is one of the best examples in the country.

During a short break, members of the audience were able to browse through Malcolm's collection. Refreshments were provided by Tesco (Leanne Corcoran).

The second talk was by Chris Ellis from Wessex Archaeology. Chris spoke about a site he had excavated at Battlesbury. Although not a local site (this is the only non local talk), much of what Chris talked about does and could apply to Thatcham and surrounding area. The site is primarily a Hill Fort and Iron Age. Chris showed the extent of the finds, and that many had changed the way things were looked at.



Chris noted that some pits were being called rubbish. However other research that had been done questioned what rubbish was and indeed if some of it could have been associated with rituals. During the excavation work Chris had undertaken, there were several burials excavated, one of which had been buried with Neolithic (new stone age) items. Chris argued that as the item would have been several thousand years old that the chances of it ending up buried in a grave of a later date by chance is remote and that this may be a ritual of some kind. The talk highlighted that it is difficult to identify rubbish from ritual.

The event ended with Dr Nick Young (Chair Thatcham Historical Society) thanking the speakers, guests and supporters (Thatcham Town Council, Tesco, DevZen, Business Training Solutions and Newbury Building Society) for their continued support. Nick said “it is fantastic to see such a turn out (around 50 people) to not only support us, but also as a way to remember Peter, raise money in his memory and to learn about local history.”

The next event in this series is on 14th May 2011 at Thatcham Memorial Hall. The talk is a two part, first part is on the “Baily Family” and the second part on “Getting started in family history.” Although the latter has the same title as a previous talk, it is by a different speaker and looks at family history from a different angle.

Nick Young

Sporting Pubs

A number of Reading pubs currently have sporting connections, not only through popular pub games such as darts, cribbage and bar billiards, but also as centres of support for the town’s teams, particularly Reading FC and London Irish RUFC, where a number of pubs cooperate to provide a bus to home matches and are happy to receive the fans’ custom afterwards. Such connections are by no means new as the following instances may demonstrate.

The World Turned Upside Down on Basingstoke Rd, often known locally as the Upsydown, is now a Harvester with attached Forte Travelodge and thus with a strong emphasis on hospitality and food. Former sporting connections include Berto Eggo, who captained the famous Reading team that won promotion to the old Division 2 in 1926. He was publican for several years in the 1930s following his retirement from the beautiful game. He played over 300 games for the Royals from 1921-8, scoring 2 goals, and died in 1977.

The Truro Brewery Tap in Castle St continued in existence till 1973 but the site is now occupied by the Police Station. Billy. Beats, a former England football captain and later Reading coach, was landlord from 1917-36 and one of the later landlords was Alf Messer, a former Reading Royals player. From a later generation the legendary Robin Friday patronized the **Foresters** in West Reading and the front bar of the pub is named after him.

The Osborne Arms in Greyfriars Rd. was demolished to be replaced by offices in the 1980s. In the 1960s the pub was kept by a Mr. Graham whose brother, Dick, distinguished himself in the world of football, playing goal for Crystal Palace from 1945-

50 and later managing the side between 1962-6, leading them into the Second Division in 1964. The landlord's son, David, was a member of the Four Pennies, whose single, Juliet, reached no 1 in 1964.

The Spread Eagle in Norfolk Rd. was for many years the natural resort of football supporters visiting Elm Park and despite the redevelopment of the former football ground a 2007 poll of Reading FC supporters revealed that it was still their favourite pub ten years after the new stadium opened. It is alleged, however, that a former landlord in the 1980s named Len Crooke refused to admit football supporters and then strenuously opposed licence applications for the Supporters Club!

Less happily the **Captain's Cabin** in West St. was vandalised by football louts in the 1980s with the name changed to the Admiral thereafter to give it a new image. It is now a fast food outlet.

John Dearing

New Books

BELL, Jim. *A Short History of Five Wokingham Families*. (The Barford, Gadd, Heelas, Martin and Nicholson families) Jim Bell, 2011, £3.00.

BROWN, Jonathan. *Barrett, Exall and Andrewes: the Reading Iron Works: the Firm and its Products*, research by Roy Green, written by Jonathan Brown, with Tony Corley. The Road Locomotive Society, £5.00.

CROMARTY, Anne Marie (and others). *Late Bronze Age Ritual and Habitation on a Thames Eyot at Whitecross Farm, Wallingford: the Archaeology of the Wallingford Bypass, 1986-92*. Oxford Archaeology, 2006, £26.95. 9780947816674

NAYLOR, Pat (editor). *Berkshire Archdeaconry Probate Records, 1480-1652*. 3 volumes. Berkshire Record Society, 2011, £65, until 30 November; £67.50 thereafter.

NORTH, John. *God's Clockmaker: Richard of Wallingford and the Invention of Time*. Continuum, 2005, £39.99. 9781852855710 (Richard de Wallingford (1292-1336) was born at Wallingford, and became an Oxford scholar, and Abbot of St. Albans, where he built a clock)

OAKES, John. *Kitchener's Lost Boys: from the Playing Fields to the Killing Fields*. The History Press, 2009, £20.00. (The enlistment of schoolboys in the First World War, with particular reference to Reading School) 9780752449302

PINE, Jo. *Archaeological Investigations along the Line of Ermin Street in West Berkshire, 1992-2008: Exploring Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval settlement in West Berkshire*. Thames Valley Archaeological Services, £7.00. 97809561974054

PITCHER, Darren J. *Spitfires and Autogiros: a History of Upper Culham Farm, R.A.F. Henley-on-Thames*. (The farm is in Wargrave Civil Parish) Robert Boyd Publications, £12.00. 9781899536771

PRESTON, Steve (editor). *Archaeological Investigations to the South of Reading, 2002-2008: Exploring Late Iron Age and Roman settlement South of Reading, Berkshire*. Thames Valley Archaeological Services, £7.00. 9780956197412

SAMPSON, Catherine (editor). *Purley in Old Images*. Goosecroft Publications, £24.99.

The Theale I Remember. Theale Local History Group, £2.50.

TREVOR, Robert. *Blitz Boy: Testament of an Evacuee*. Woodfield Publishing, £9.95. 9781846830990 (The author and his sister were evacuated to Pangbourne in the Second World War)

Vanished Windsor. Windsor Local History Group. £10.00.
9780950556772

WEBB, Mary Curtis. *Ideas and Images in Twelfth-century Sculpture: the Transmission of Ideas and their Visual Images from the First to the Twelfth Centuries*. Privately published, 2010. (Many of the examples considered are believed to have come from the workshops of Reading Abbey.

WILLIAMS, Clive. *The Nabobs of Berkshire*. (The men from this country who, having made fortunes in India, returned and made their homes in Berkshire)
Goosecroft Publications, £20.00. 9780956634115

JOURNALS

Berkshire Archaeological Journal, Vol. 79, 2010. "Prehistoric Settlement at Southlea Farm, Datchet," by Julia Martin.

The Stanford Historian, Autumn 2019. Contains "A North Berkshire Disaster, Autumn 1940" [bombing at Hatford]; "Shellingford Airfield"; "A Walk down Horsecroft"; and "An index of pre-1858 Wills and Inventories for Stanford-in-the-Vale and Local Parishes."

Local History Society Journal of the Twyford and Ruscombe, Winter 2010. Includes "Twyford Shops (Part 4)" and "A Walk around Wargrave Village."

David Cliffe

LACEY, Paul. *The Newbury and District Motor Services Story*

224 A4 pages, perfect bound in laminated covers, with 300 half-tone illustrations, full fleet list, fleet lists for absorbed operators, route maps, and appendices detailing working arrangements and premises. This highly detailed and evocative account delves deeply into the complex transport history of the vast hinterland focussed on Newbury, with the experience of over 40 years of research from many primary sources, fully illustrated with many unpublished photos.

Retail Price: £25 BLHA members can order a copy for £20.

Other titles currently available

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A History of the Thames Valley Traction Co. Ltd., 1946 – 1960

Retail Price: £25

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Thackray's Way – A Family in Road Transport

Retail Price: £10

Special Offer Price: £5

50 Years of South Midland, 1921 – 1970

Written by David Flitton

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Paul Lacey, 17 Sparrow Close, Woosehill, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 3HT, cheque payable to Paul Lacey -(post & packing inclusive).

Society News

Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group

Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group (BIAG) recently moved its meeting place from MERL to Watlington House. This old building is now run as a charitable trust. Our meetings start at 7.30 pm on the third Monday of the month. More details of this will be announced later on the BIAG web site: www.biag.org.uk

Dennis Johnson

Goring and Streatley Local History Society

In December Alastair Lack, a former BBC broadcaster and Blue Badge guide to the city, gave a very polished presentation entitled 'Intriguing Oxford'. He covered many aspects of the place such as customs, churches and pubs, as well as the obvious topics of the university and its colleges.

The January meeting saw a very different kind of talk when Stephen Done, who is not only the curator of Liverpool Football Club Museum but also a railway buff with a special interest in the now sadly defunct Great Central Railway, spoke about how he researches and plots his Inspector Vignoles railway mysteries. These are set in the grim days of austerity just after WW2 and Stephen uses both books, first-hand accounts and films of the era to ensure the accuracy of his settings. The talk was enlivened by readings from some of the novels, including a preview of the one currently in gestation.

Our 'Members' Evening', which gives the opportunity for members to talk about their own experiences and research, took place in February. David Watts, an estate agent before he retired, worked for the firm involved in the sale of the Streatley Estate in 1940. The death of Mrs Morrell of the well-known brewery family of Oxford, who owned much property in the village, shortly followed by her son meant that the estate had to be sold to pay death duties. Such a sale at the time of the Battle of Britain was a strange affair as David described, illustrated with entries from the catalogue and photographs of the lots, both old and new.

We were pleased to welcome back Kate Tiller to our March meeting. She told us all about the Oxfordshire Historical Atlas, a book published by the Oxford Record Society that she edited. This covers a huge range of county-wide topics in two-page spreads, each illustrated by a map. Copies at a discounted rate were soon snapped up! Activities of the Transport History Group have slowed down during the winter and a smaller number than usual ventured to the London Transport Museum at Covent Garden on a rainy day at the end of February. It was a very good trip though, with much to see. Nearly 30 members have booked for the outing to Brooklands in mid April and the visit to the Isle of Wight Steam Railway by train and ferry in June promises to be fun.

The Society has a large archive of books, documents and photographs, all of it carefully catalogued and indexed. We held an open morning at Goring Community Centre on 19 March to show off a selection of the treasures, including some recent acquisitions. The sun shone and after a slow start, over 50 members and visitors came along to pore over the displays. Refreshments were available and it was a very pleasant occasion.

We are hoping to put on a bigger exhibition next year, to mark the 60th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne. Also at the planning stage are some guided walks around the two villages.

For further information on the Society, please contact me.

Janet Hurst, Secretary (email gslhs@w-mark.demon.co.uk)

History of Reading Society

Our programme for 2010 drew to a close on 8th December, when we received our annual Presidential Address from Joan Dils. This time her subject was 'Berkshire Historical Atlas'. It had been hoped that this long-awaited new edition would have been published but there had been some inordinate delays with the cartography. When eventually published, this book will carry an immense amount of historical information on any number of subjects connected with Berkshire (as it was prior to 1974) and will prove of great value and interest.

We started our 2011 programme on 19th January, when Gillian Clark, authoress of the book of the same name, spoke on 'Down by the River'. Born into a family which built and hired boats from premises along that section of the Thames between Caversham Bridge and Caversham Lock, her detailed study of the history of popular boating on the Thames during the past century and a half, the punts and skiffs, etc., and the several businesses that thrived along just that reach of the Thames, proved to be of great interest.

Another author of a recently published local book gave us an illustrated talk on 16th February entitled 'The History of Eastern Avenue'. Philip Vaughan gave a very detailed account of how the road came to be built along part of the pre-1882 eastern boundary of Reading borough, including original land owners, how the land was divided, the various persons, some notable, who commissioned houses to be built, and some of the later occupants. It was also extremely interesting to learn how and when

certain of the adjacent roads came into being, Erleigh Road and Crescent Road in particular.

Our Annual General Meeting took place on 16th March, during which John Dearing resigned after 12 years as Chairman, being replaced by the well-known local historian David Cliffe. The retiring Chairman remains on the Committee, which is also enhanced by the election of Sean Duggan. The AGM was followed by a detailed talk by Sarah Charlton, archivist at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies at Aylesbury on her extensive study and collation of the country's surviving Manorial Records, but with particular reference to Berkshire.

We have been saddened in recent weeks by the deaths of two of our honorary members, well-known Norman Wicks on 1st February aged 99, who was a regular until Christmas 2009; and Joan Hutchinson on 14th March, past committee member and wife of the late Bob Hutchinson, who was the Society's Treasurer for a number of years.

Leaflets detailing our meetings through to the end of 2011 can be found in certain bookshops, all libraries and other selected outlets throughout the Reading area. Meetings are on Wednesday evenings mid-month at Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square starting at 7.30pm prompt and ending around 9.00pm. Entry is free to members; Non-members £2.00. Secure free car parking is available for members nearby – if you prefer using your car. The annual subscription for 2011 is £9.00 per person. Ring 0118 947 2470 or eMail Edward.W.Hooper@btinternet.com for further details of the Society.

John Whitehead

Project Purley

Project Purley's January meeting was, as usual, devoted to members' contributions and the topic this year was weddings. We learned about many different types of ceremony from Hindu marriage customs to Serbian Orthodox and Afrikaner weddings. Also Baptist and, the most common, Anglican – we were shown the Archbishop's Licence needed because a couple wanted an English Church wedding but were both living in Canada at the time.

There were lots of photos and other memorabilia and we heard about hardships in the austerity period after the war. Several members contrasted their and their parent's weddings with those of their children and grandchildren.

At our February meeting, Trevor Ottlewski talked about some of the features in Berkshire that are not well known. Trevor is Chairman of the Wokingham History Group and has recently published a book about Wokingham and Bracknell. He started in Windsor looking at the Guildhall and a strange iron extension from the pavement which stopped carriages rolling down the hill. Then, after a quick tour of some of the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, we moved on to a few Roman roads, or what is left of them. Wells and odd roadside signs brought us to ancient barns and churches; then a variety of war memorials. We were brought up to date at the Coleshill Estate and the preserved secret shelter built during WW2 to train would-be saboteurs should there be

a German invasion. Finally we heard about a number of works of art ranging from mediaeval wall paintings to modern sculptures.

Following completion of business at our AGM in March, Catherine Sampson told us about some of the photographers she had encountered whilst editing Project Purley's book, Purley in Old Images. They ranged from gifted amateurs, through postcard makers to pioneers and professionals covering over 100 years of photography. She began with Henry Taunt who produced over 60,000 plate images as he roamed up and down the Thames by boat, moved on to the Marshall brothers who took what is perhaps the only photograph of Purley's Horse Ferry and then to Frances Dann, who had to register her business in her husband's name. The Rev. Henry Wilder was a real pioneer taking photographs of family groups of Purley Hall estate workers. She then went on to tell us about Philip Collier, Eric Guy and Herbert Tidbury who were mainly concerned with postcards and finished with Ian Nash who lived and worked in Purley and on the railway. He took pictures of everyday activities in the village, i.e. dairy cows and the bottling of the milk, people going about their jobs and many railway scenes.

Ann Betts

Sandhurst Historical Society

Both January's and February's talks on Victorian Millionaires and their Riverside Mansions and Berkshire's Lady Flyers respectively proved both interesting and enlightening.

March's talk by David Hunt on an introduction to the National Trust was accompanied with plenty of slides of various National Trust properties, gardens and land, many of which were familiar to those of us belonging to the Trust.

April's meeting brings Brigadier Michael Aris to give us a talk on the History of Stratfield Saye and in May John Hook will be speaking to us about The Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard.

In March we also had an afternoon outing to Eagle House. Mr. Douglas Buchanan, an ex-maths teacher at Eagle House, kindly gave up his afternoon to give us a tour round. We were shown the Tudor House in the grounds of the school. This was a school project which was started in 2003 and Prince Charles came to see it when it was completed. He was instrumental in providing much of the funding for the building of the house. We were also shown the chapel and the cellars where the boys spent time during the war years. The afternoon was rounded off with a most welcome cup of tea accompanied by some very appetizing sandwiches and cake. All in all a most enjoyable afternoon.

Should you feel like joining us at one of our meetings come along to the Sandhurst Community Hall on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Visitors are always made welcome. For any further information please visit our website at www.sandhurst-historical-society.org.

Janice Burlton

Sonning and Sonning Eye Society

Despite the fact that St Andrew's was icy, we had a good turn-out for Rob Needham's talk on the bells on 19 March, made all the more poignant because the bells have been silent and the bell-tower out of action for some 6 weeks due to emergency repairs to a major beam as well as the fact that we couldn't hear Rob's recording of the bells due to a technical failure. Rob offered many interesting anecdotes about our bells as well as telling us a lot about the specialism of English change ringing.

Our next event will be a Thames-side walk on Monday 2 May with Alastair Driver, whose knowledge and role as National Conservation Manager at the Environment Agency gives participants such a fascinating insight into our natural history. Then in June we are offering a 'Champagne Tea' for members in one of the lovely gardens of Sonning Eye.

Issue 26 of *bridge* was delivered in late February and carried articles on our plans for a competition to snap the Jubilee Year and a piece on the tree policy of the West Drive residents' association. Back issues of the most recent issues of *bridge* are available from Red House Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning, Reading RG4 6UH or on our website, <http://www.sonning.org>. As we distribute new issues, we now email a copy to various local societies in nearby parishes and communities – if your Society would like to receive an electronic copy, please contact the Editor on 0118 969 2132 or diana.coulter@mac.com. If you would like to contact us, here are some details.

Events:

Diana Coulter 01189692132
diana.coulter@mac.com

Diane Coulter

Membership Secretary:

Carole Barnett 01189696693
carole.barnett@talktalk.net

Thatcham Historical Society

A large audience gathered tonight, 28th March 2011, to hear Judy Dewey presenting "Wallingford: Burgh to Borough Project." Judy started with a little background about the town itself, noting that Wallingford, apart from originally being part of Berkshire, is an Anglo-Saxon settlement and has, or rather had, a Castle with a motte and bailey.

Most towns build up on the site of existing structures, however in Wallingford there are several large areas that have not been built on and the main town is to the south of the castle. Hence there is a fantastic opportunity for discovery. Hence in 2002 Leicester University, together with The Wallingford Historical & Archaeological Society (TWHAS) and Wallingford Museum formed a project to look at the history of Wallingford. The project pulls together all of the historical documentation as well as conducting surveys and excavations. Dr Neil Christie from Leicester University was in charge of the project; however, the project has been a truly joint venture with all ages and levels of expertise working side by side.

Judy noted some of the finds that have been made such as 200 Medieval and 20 Anglo-Saxon burials under the Waitrose store which would have been from one of eleven churches. Wallingford also contains some of the best 13th Century documents in the country.

The project also involved what Judy termed “Garden Archaeology.” This is where a small team enter people’s gardens, with permission, and excavate a test pit. The test pits typically measure 1m x 1.5m and takes around 3 days. To date 41 pits have been excavated and over 6000pieces of pottery extracted. Other work included geophysical surveys, some of which showed previously unknown structures, others showed nothing new although something was found when excavations were carried out. New excavations were carried out in various locations including at the castle, The Bullcroft and The Kinecroft. The project has held many open days which have allowed members of the public not only to see what is happening but also to get involved. Judy noted that the project is continuing to this day, the project has showed the history to the public, allowed documents to be collated and transcribed and provided new materials via excavations.

A vote of thanks was given by committee member Dr Nick Young

Nick Young

Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society

The Christmas Party had been a success. The Players, portraying tow of The Canterbury Tales had given an impressive performance.

In January Jeff Beckett gave an interesting talk entitled “The Lady Fliers of Berkshire”, about those brave ladies who gave such sterling support to the Air Force during the war. By ferrying the planes to where they were required they saved valuable man power, often in very difficult circumstances and bad weather. Lettice Curtis, a former society member, now sadly unable to attend, was a particularly intrepid member of this crew.

February brought Tony Weston to talk on the life of Madame Tussaud. A full and very interesting account of this character was given. Born in Strasbourg, she was adopted at a young age by Dr Philippe Courtius of Paris who introduced her to the waxwork business, from whom she inherited his museums on his death. After the Revolution she made death masks of the severed heads of the guillotined victims. Her marriage to a soldier ended when she visited England in the company of another entertainer. Before long, however, her waxworks became the main attraction and she toured extensively with her collection in this country before finally settling in Baker Street, London. After a time her two sons followed her to England, eventually taking over the business. It is a false rumour that Madame Tussaud is buried in Wargrave churchyard; it is thought to be the wife of one of her sons.

The A.G.M. on the 14th March proved to be a pleasant occasion. It was regrettable that the President, Bob Stoney was unable to attend, having fairly recently undergone serious surgery. He had sent greeting and his good wishes. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were re-elected, and also the Committee who were re-elected *en bloc*. A social gathering concluded the evening.

Edna Bowman

Wargrave Local History Society

In January, Duncan Mackay gave a fascinating illustrated presentation about *The Secret Thames*. Having worked for the Countryside Commission designating the Thames Path National Trail, he was subsequently commissioned to write a book on 'aspects of the Thames that nobody had ever written about before'. The Thames Path is 180 miles from its source to the Thames Barrier. Duncan showed how the illustrations had been obtained - with 3 or more remotely controlled cameras suspended from a helium filled balloon. Hundreds of pictures had been taken, showing remote places or different angles of familiar ones. We saw a selection of these, starting in the Cotswolds and working downstream to the Thames Barrier. The aerial view of Wargrave, showing the river below the railway bridge, in the snow, with the reflected light on the water's surface producing a golden glow was quite 'different' to the usual views!

Trevor Ottlewski gave a most illuminating talk to the February meeting, on the *History of Domestic Lighting*. He explained that we now take lighting for granted - with electric lighting in the home or office, street lights etc., there is so much light, it is difficult to get away from it. This is a relatively recent situation. People used to live differently, basing their working day on the daylight hours, and going to bed when it got dark. Gaslight only became available in this area from the mid-19th century, and until then candles, or oil lights, were the normal provided both inside and outside the home. Trevor demonstrated just how little light these provided. There were two basic forms of candle - either made from fat (tallow) or wax. Tallow candles were much cheaper, and could be made at home, but the wax ones burnt more cleanly. An alternative light-source were rushes; a piece of rush which had absorbed cooking fat created a long thin taper. It burnt like a candle, but was rather smoky, although probably the most common source of light in working people's cottages. Trevor also showed us many and varied styles of candlesticks and lamps.

The March meeting began with the AGM, when the past year was reviewed, the committee for the coming year elected, and details of the 2011-12 programme given to members. For the rest of the evening, members were shown how the Society's new book is being prepared. This is planned for publication during the 2011 Village Festival, and will be mainly a selection of photographs from our archives.

All are welcome to our meetings, which start at 8 pm in the Hannen Room, Mill Green. Contact me, Peter Delaney, on 0118 940 3121, or see our website www.wargravehistory.org.uk/ for more information about the Society.

Peter Delaney

Winnersh and District Historical Society

In January, Tony King reminded us of the Swinging Sixties. Life style then was Wall's ice cream, blancmange, Scotch Oats and Jacob's crackers. Cigarettes, Meccano, Rupert Annuals and Parker's inkpens were popular. Carnaby St. was the centre of fashion; the mini-dress and a beehive hair style were must haves, and Twiggy was the biggest fashion icon charging fees of £80 per hour. Cars were mostly British with the

mini and Triumph Herald, and in 1965 1,000,000 Morris Minors were produced. Holiday makers went to Blackpool, Butlins or camping. Beatlemania was very popular with Brian Epstein, Cilla Black and the Rolling Stones. Ban the Bomb became a regular cry from activists protesting against nuclear weapons, and in 1963 the annual CND march that went from Aldermaston to London was particularly problematic. In 1966, Pickles the dog, found the Football World Cup. The first cash machine was in 1967 and immigration was a big issue. Neil Armstrong was the first man to stand on the moon in 1969.

February saw Tony Weston tell us the story of Brownsea Island, which became a secret island near to Poole. In 1539, Henry VIII claimed it as a crown property, and it became a defense of the South Coast. In 1693, Robert Clayton acquired it and later William Benson acquired the lease for £300, but it was still crown property. Sir Humphrey Stuart built a castle there on a grand scale and by 1852 Col. William Waugh, using a mortgage, hoped to find clay to make china. However, it was only good for drainpipes and bricks, financial collapse followed and he fled to Spain. In 1896 a fire gutted the castle and in 1907 land was offered to Robert Baden-Powell for scouts where they still have camps today. Mrs. Mary Bonham-Carter evicted the islanders and Brownsea returned to nature. In 1961, Mrs. Bonham-Carter died at 98, and her grandson gave Brownsea, in lieu of death duties, to the National Trust which promised the Scout movement a lease and the castle was rented to the John Lewis Partnership in 1965. Members from John Lewis are fortunate to be able to have holidays there.

Our chairman Brian Eighteen told us about the Royal Agriculture Show, started by Lord Spencer at Oxford in 1839, 20,000 people attended the first show. The size of the Royal Show was 7-10 acres, and later 250 acres, with prizes which included 400 silver trophies, and 6,000 rosettes. The shows were at Bristol (1842), Windsor Castle (1851), Oxford (1870), and in other counties. Souvenir cards were given at Bristol in 1913 where the King was inspecting veterans. Suttons Seeds were also on show there. In July 2009, The Royal Agricultural Show ended after 170 years.

Stella Young

Heritage, Family History, Museums and Libraries

Berkshire Record Office

Centenary Fever: A Look Back in Time

For the BRO's contribution to the newsletter centenary, I thought it might be fun to look back one hundred years, and see what was exercising our local councillors at that time. To that end, I have had a read through the Berkshire County Council minute book for 1911, and found evidence of both change and a lack of it.

Traffic management was a live issue. In February, ten miles per hour speed limits were introduced in Old Windsor and Sunninghill. Caution posts, directing motorists to drive slowly, were put up by schools in Easthampstead and Winkfield,

and at either end of Beedon village. There was plenty of improvement works planned too: £60,000 was allotted to reconstruct much of what we now know as the A4 and the A329.

The idea of strategic planning was still in its infancy, and it was only really roads and bridges schemes that took up the time that would be given to major developments today. One thing that catches the eye is the constancy of telecommunications, for instead of mobile phone masts, the County Council was asked to give its consent to telegraph poles in Kintbury and Old Windsor – to be sited at the discretion of the County Surveyor.

A significant amount of business is taken up with animal diseases, a reflection on the importance of agriculture in the County at the time. Anthrax was found in places as widespread as Earley, Wallingford and Kingston Bagpuize; there was an outbreak of parasitic mange in farms around Maidenhead; and glanders, an infectious disease in horses, broke out at Mr Chandler's farm in Pusey. Seven horses were slaughtered and cremated, including a brown gelding called Turpin, and a black mare called Blossom.

Nineteen-eleven also saw a royal event, though not a royal wedding. It was the Coronation of George V in June, and the Local Government Board allowed the County Council to use 'reasonable expenses' for its celebration. In the event, bunting was hung from County buildings, and medals presented to all members of the County Police with more than ten years' service.

Educating Berkshire before 1833

Our latest volunteer research project, a joint venture with the BLHA, has just begun. This aims to achieve a gazetteer of all the schools in Berkshire that existed before central Government grants for education began. We will document details about the schools, the masters and mistresses and what they taught. The end result will be published by the Berkshire Record Society.

We estimate that the project will take about three years to complete. Around a dozen volunteers have committed to spending roughly one day a fortnight working on original sources, mostly at the BRO or Reading Library, though our work will also take us to archive repositories in Oxford, Wiltshire and London. We will try and provide updates as the project continues.

Mark Stevens, Senior Archivist

Museum of English Rural Life



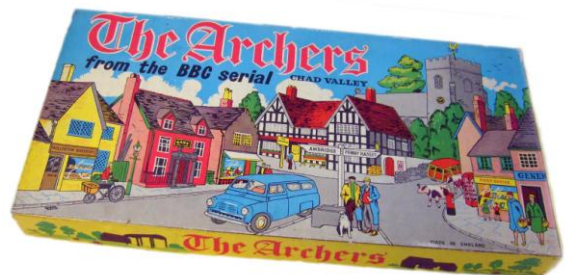
Celebrating 60 years of The Archers and MERL

the changing countryside and to capture the ebb and flow of rural 2011 marks sixty years since the foundation of the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), an institution which has aimed over these decades to record experience. Although its collections seek to represent the national face of farming and food production, the Museum has always maintained strong local connections. The pioneering agricultural department of its parent institution—the University of Reading—has strong links with the surrounding countryside. Over the years such

connections have helped MERL find its place as the logical repository for materials relating to the history of rural Berkshire and its people. From shepherds to craftspeople, tradesmen to agricultural engineers, field labourers to farmers' wives, MERL harbours archives, artefacts, and photographs to bring all their stories to life.

After the Second World War the English countryside underwent a period of immense and widespread change. This was a time of great social and technological transition, with the shift from horsepower to mechanisation, the decline of the threshing machine, and rise of the combine harvester. Along with other modern innovations, these developments marked a wholesale and irreversible shift in the agricultural world. Old equipment was being discarded, seen as fit only for the scrap heap or the bonfire. In Reading, one university lecturer, John Higgs, recognised the need to collect and preserve this vanishing heritage. With the support of colleagues he submitted a proposal for the University to create a Museum of English Rural Life. His idea was accepted and the Museum is now able to look back on 60 years charting the diverse and dynamic story of English country life: collecting, sorting, and displaying this narrative to the people of Berkshire.

MERL was founded to look to the past, exploring bucolic ways of life that were dying out. Other media, meanwhile, were looking to the future of the countryside, finding ways to promote new methods to the farming world. In Birmingham, a BBC producer had been considering how to provide farmers with information on the latest agricultural developments in an accessible and entertaining way. In late 1950 the BBC piloted five episodes on the Midland Home Service of a radio serial about a farming family called The Archers. The first nationally- broadcast episode of this much-loved soap aired the following year. The confluence of the foundation of these two influential and enduring institutions—MERL and The Archers—was no mistake. As such, their timely and respective establishments form the centrepiece of an exhibition and programme of events to celebrate all that the Museum has achieved between 1951 and the present day.



Alongside significant items and archival materials related to the history of The Archers, the exhibition will tell the story of MERL from its early days through to present, touching on its connections to local communities and showing images and artefacts drawn from the South East and beyond.

The anniversary events programme includes a 50s night on May 14th, part of the national Museums at Night campaign, and a traditional Village Fete on June 4th, which will be attended by Trevor Harrison (Eddie Grundy) and Hedli Niklaus (Kathy Perks), as well as family activities during the school holidays. Details can be found on the Museum website at www.reading.ac.uk/merl

Ollie Douglas, Assistant Curator

Reading Central Library

Over the summer there will be a number of exhibitions likely to interest local historians:

May 3 – 21 “Broad Street 1881” – scale drawings by James Gafford showing every building along Reading’s main shopping street, as it would have appeared in 1881, with captions to indicate who occupied the buildings 130 years ago, and what is on the site now.

June 6 – 25 “The Way We Were – Places, People and Humour” – a nostalgic exhibition of photographs of Reading in the 1970s and 1980s by Terry Allsop.

August 1 – 20 Exhibition by the U3A (The University of the Third Age) resulting from their oral history project on that part of Reading which was swept away in the 1960s to make way for the Civic Offices, The Hexagon, and The Butts Shopping Centre.

September 5 – 24 “A Circle and a Century” - a photographic panorama of central Reading, taken from the top of the water tower in Mill Lane in the 1890s, with recent photographs taken from a similar vantage point on top of The Oracle shopping centre. Presented in association with Reading Civic Society, and The Museum of English Rural Life (where it was on show last year).

Then in July, the Library is presenting another local history study day, jointly with the BLHA – which is advertised elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Reading Festival of Crime Writing will be later in the year this time – November 10 – 13. The two Reading “crime walks” held in past years will be repeated. This is where we walk around the streets and at appropriate points stop to hear about murders, prisons and executions. For details, see the website www.readingfestivalofcrimewriting.org.uk, or pick up a leaflet in the library later in the year.

David Cliffe, Local Studies Manager

Reading Museum Service

Exhibitions

Reading, Steady Go! Life through the eyes of a 1960s Mod

Saturday 9 April – Sunday 9 October

Situated close to London and Windsor with good transport links to the south coast, Reading was a major hub for Mods during the 1960s. The town’s teenagers soaked up all the influences and latest trends, listening to Soul and R’n’B artists, wearing smooth cropped hairstyles, tailored jackets and neat Italian rounded collar shirts.

This exhibition will bring to life 1960s Mod culture

BROAD STREET 1881



The Clarence Hotel
Charles Roberts
Now Monsoon

John Rose
Pawnbroker and Silversmith
Now East

Entrance to the
Covered Market
Now Sainsbury

An exhibition of scale drawings by James Gafford showing every building in broad street, Reading, as it would have appeared around 1881.

Reading Central Library
3–21 May 2011



through Reading based memorabilia including scooters, clothing, concert posters, flyers and even a fully working 1960s jukebox.

A Sense of Culture

Saturday 14 May – Sunday 24 July

This is a new exhibition created by local photographer Neil Horne, who is focusing his camera on Reading's Cultural Heritage.

The exhibition will feature the diversity of creative talent and culture that has emanated from Reading, from people such as Kate Winslet and Ricky Gervais to rising stars like Ashley Horne (The Midnight Beast) and visual artist Mirren Kessling.

Talks and Walks

(all start from the museum are free, drop in unless otherwise stated)

Saturday 14 May

Town Centre Walk – What Reading's Made Of

An easy walk to look at the origins and features of building materials used in Reading town centre, from locally made Victorian brick to modern exotic facing stone. Led by Lesley Dunlop of Berkshire Geoconservation Group. All ages, 10.30am – 12.30pm.

Wednesday 18 May

60s Studio Craft: Ceramics

Informal handling session considering pots from the museum's collection with curator Elaine Blake. Adults, 1.00pm – 1.45pm. Booking essential (0118 937 3400)

Wednesday 15 June

60s Studio Craft: Textiles

Informal handling session considering embroidered pictures and weavings from the museum's collection with curator Elaine Blake.

Adults, 1.00pm – 1.45pm. Booking essential (0118 937 3400)

Wednesday 6 July

History and Horticulture

Enjoy a walk in the Forbury Gardens looking at the history and plants around you. With Roland Staines and Jill Greenaway. 1.00pm – 1.45pm.

Wednesday 13 July

Reading Abbey, Reconstructed

Take a close look at important events at Reading Abbey as recorded by early twentieth century painters. With Jill Greenaway. 1.00pm – 1.45pm.

These are just some of the events that may be of interest to BLHA members. For details of all our forthcoming events and exhibition details please go to www.readingmuseum.org.uk

To receive our latest 'what's on' guide join our free mailing list, just click on email alerts on our website home page.

Matthew Williams, Senior Curator

History Societies

- Arborfield Local History Society:** Patricia Steed, The Old Post House, Eversley Road, Arborfield Cross, Reading, Berks, RG2 9PG
- Berkshire Archaeology Society:** Andrew Hutt, 19, Challenor Close, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 4UJ
- Berkshire Family History Society:** Research Centre, Yeomanry House, Castle Hill, Reading, RG1 7TJ [www.berksfhs.org.uk]
- Berkshire Industrial Archaeological Group:** Secretary, Peter Trout, 7 West Chiltern, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 OSG or Mr. Weber, [bentwebershops@waitrose.com]
- Blewbury Local History Group:** Audrey Long, Spring Cottage, Church Road, Blewbury, Oxon, OX11 9PY tel 01235 850427 [audrey.long@waitrose.com]
- Bracknell & District Local Historical Society:** Jeff Wood, 1 King Edwards Road, Ascot, SL5 8PD tel 01344 883325
- Burnham Historians:** Mary Bentley, 38 Conway Road, Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 0LD tel 01628 665932 [burnhamhistorians@btinternet]
- Cox Green Local History Group:** Pat Barlow, 29 Bissley Drive, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 3UX. tel 01628 823890 weekends only.
- Datchet Village Society:** Marjorie Clasper, 3 Riverbank, Southlea Road, Datchet, Berks tel 01753 545110 [www.datchet.com]
- East Ilsley Local History Society:** Sue Burnay, White Hollow, High St, E.Ilsley, Berks RG20 7LE tel 01635 281308 [east.ilsley@btinternet.com]
- Eton Wick Local History Group:** Teresa Stanton, 35 Eton Wick Road, Eton Wick, Windsor, SL4 6LU tel 01753 860591 [teresa.stanton@talktalk.net] [www.etonwickhistory.co.uk]
- Faringdon & District Historical Society:** Rosemary Church, 1 Orchard Hill, Faringdon, SN7 7EH tel 01367 240885 [www.faringdon.org/hysoc]
- Finchampstead Society:** Fiona Murray, Watchfield, Church Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4LN tel 0118 973 3457 [femurray14@hotmail.com].
- Goring & Streatley Local History Society:** Janet Hurst, 6 Nun's Acre, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 9BE tel 01491 871022 (evenings only) [gslhs@w-mark.demon.co.uk]
- The Hanneys Local History Society:** Ann Fewins, 'Lilac Cottage', East Hanney, Wantage, OX12 0HX. tel 01235 868372 [annfewins@beeb.net]
- The History of Reading Society:** Edward Hooper, 6 Tower Close, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8UU tel 0118 9472470
- Hungerford Historical Association:** Secretary Mr Mark Martin, 23 Fairview Road, Hungerford. RG17 0BP. Tel: 01488 682932. [mandm.martin.t21@btinternet.com] [www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk]; Dr Lois Pihlens, 2 Canal Walk, Hungerford, RG17 0EQ [lois@pihlens.co.uk]; Archives Fred Bailey, 15 Homefield Way, Hungerford, RG17 0JZ [fred@hungerford.fsnet.co.uk] [www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk]
- Longworth & District History Society:** Pam Woodward, 22 Cherrytree Close, Southmoor, Abingdon, OX13 5BE. tel 01865 820500 [prwoodward@btinternet.com] [http://www.longworth-district-history-society.org.uk/]
- Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society:** Trevor Jones, 70 Lambourne Drive, Maidenhead, SL6 3HG tel 01628 672196
- Mid Thames Archaeological & Historical Society:** Sheila Orton, 1 Saffron Close, Datchet, Slough, SL3 9DU tel 01753 543636
- Mortimer Local History Group:** June Woodward, 19 Victoria Road, Mortimer, RG7 3SH. tel 0118 9332819 [woodward.mortimer@virgin.net]
- Newbury District Field Club:** Tony Higgott, Hope Cottage, Ashmore Green, Thatcham, RG18 9HD tel 01635 861010

Oxfordshire Family History Society: Tony Hadland, 4 Barcote Cottages, Buckland, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 8PP

Pangbourne Heritage Group: Rosie Newrick, 1 Thames Avenue, Pangbourne, RG8 7BU tel 0118 9842565

Project Purley: Catherine Sampson, 32 Waterside Drive, Purley on Thames, Berks, RG8 8AQ tel 0118 9422 255 [clspurley@aol.com]

Sandhurst Historical Society: Mrs Jennifer Odgen, 46, High Street, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 8DY

Shinfield & District Local History Society: Ann Young, 'Roselyn', School Green, Shinfield, Reading, Berks RG2 9EH. tel 0118 9882120.

Sonning & Sonning Eye History Society: Diana Coulter, Red House Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berks, RG4 6UF tel 0118 9692132

Standford in the Vale & District Local History Society: Philip Morris, 71 Van Diemens, Standford in the Vale, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 8HW tel 01367 710285

Swallowfield Local History Society: Ken Hussey, 'Kimberley', Swallowfield, Reading, RG7 1QX. tel 0118 9883650

Tadley Local History Society: PO Box 7264, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 3FA [www.tadshistory.com]

Thatcham Historical Society: Alf Wheeler, 22 Park Lane, Thatcham, RG10 3PJ tel 01635 863536 [enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk]; [www.thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk]

Theale Local History Society: A.D. Spurling, 7 Broadlands Close, Calcot Park, Reading RG31 7RP [thealehistory@aol.com]

Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society: Audrey Curtis, Chantry Cottage, Halls Lane, Waltham St Lawrence, RG10 0JD tel 0118 9343260 [audreycurt@googlemail.com]

Friends of Wantage Vale & Downland Museum: Church Street, Wantage, OX12 8BL tel 01235 760991 [museum@wantage.com]

Wargrave Local History Society: Peter Delaney, 6 East View Close, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8BJ tel 0118 9403121 [peter.delaney2@btinternet.com]

Windsor Local History Group: Sue Ashley, 49 York Avenue, Windsor, SL4 3PA [nutritionsashley@hotmail.com]; [www.windlesora.org.uk]

Friends of the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum Pamela Marson, 256 Dedworth Road, Windsor, SL4 4JR [pamela.marson@btinternet.com]; [www.windsormuseumappeal.org.uk]

Winnersh & District Historical Society: Brian Eighteen, 50 Watmore Lane, Winnersh, Berks, RG41 5JT [b.eighteen@btinternet.com]

Wokingham History Group: Trevor Ottlewski, Uani, Holly Bush Ride, Wokingham, Berks tel 01344 775920.

Wraysbury History Group: Gillian Hopkins, 45 Staines Road, Wraysbury, Staines, TW19 5BY tel 01784 482947 [gillian_hopkins@tiscali.co.uk]

Archives, Libraries & Museums

Abingdon Library: The Charter, Abingdon, OX14 3LY. tel 01235 520374 [abingdon_library@yahoo.co.uk]

Allen County Public Library: Genealogy, PO Box 2270, Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA tel 001 468 012270

Berkshire Medical Heritage Centre: Medical Museum, 32 Pitts Lane, Reading, Berks, RG6 1BT tel 0118 9262724 [marshall.barr@btinternet.com]

Berkshire Record Office: 9 Coley Avenue, Reading, RG1 6AF tel 0118 901 5132 [www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk]

Bracknell Library Local Studies: Hue Lewis, Town Square, Bracknell, RG12 1BH. tel 01344 352400

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies: County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UU. Archives: tel 01296 382 587 [archives@buckscc.gov.uk] Local Studies: tel 01296 382 250 [localstudies@buckscc.gov.uk]

Centre for Oxfordshire Studies: Helen Drury, Central Library, Westgate, Oxford, OX1 1DJ tel 01865 815741

Eton College Library: Eton College, Windsor, SL4 6DB

Guildhall Library: Andrew Harvey, Principal Library Assistant Printed Books, Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC2V 7HH. [Andrew.Harvey@cityoflondon.gov.uk] [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/guildhalllibrary]

Maidenhead Heritage Trust: Fran Edwards, 18 Park Street, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 1SL.

Maidenhead & Windsor Local Studies Library: Chris Atkins, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1QU tel 01628 796981 [chris.atkins@rbwm.gov.uk]

Newbury Reference Library: Fiona Davies, Newbury Central Library, The Wharf, Newbury, RG14 5AU tel 01635 519900

Reading Central Library: Local Studies Manager, David Cliffe, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ tel 0118 9015965

Reading Museum Services: The Curator, Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading, RG1 1QH. tel 0118 9399800 [www.readingmuseum.org.uk]

Reading University Library: Val Davis, Library Assistant, PO Box 223, Whiteknights, RG6 6AE. tel 0118 378 8785 [v.j.davis@reading.ac.uk]

Museum of English Rural Life: The University of Reading, Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5EX. tel 0118 378 8660 fax: 0118 378 5632 [merl@reading.ac.uk] [www.merl.org.uk]

Windsor & Royal Borough Museum, Tinkers Lane, Windsor, SL4 4LR. tel 01628 796846 [museum.collections@rbwm.gov.uk] [www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/museum_index.htm]

Slough Library Local Studies: Tony Pilmer, Slough Library, High Street, Slough, SL1 1EA. tel 01753 787511 [library@slough.gov.uk www.slough.gov.uk/libraries]

Slough Museum: 278-286 High Street, Slough, SL1 1NB tel 01753 526422 [info@sloughmuseum.co.uk]

West Berkshire Museum: The Wharf, Newbury, RG14 5AS. tel 01635 30511 [museum@westberks.gov.uk]

Wokingham Library Local Studies: Denmark Street, Wokingham, RG40 2BB. tel 0118 9781368.

Berkshire Local History Association
Registered Charity 1097355

President, Professor E.J.T., Collins

Vice-Presidents, Brian Boulter, Clifford Debney, Mrs Joan Dils, Peter Johnson, Dr. Margaret Yates

BLHA Website: www.blha.org.uk

Committee Members 2010

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Web designer, Dave Osborne. Email webdesigner@blha.org.uk

Journal Editor, Dr. Jonathan Brown

Membership Rates for 2011.

Corporate £18.00, Individual and Family £9.00.

Membership includes an annual copy of *Berkshire Old & New* and a copy of the Newsletter thrice yearly; corporate members receive three copies of each issue of the Newsletter and two copies of the Journal.

The next Newsletter will be published in September 2011 (Copy by 1 August 2011). A word limit of 400/450 words is in place to allow for as many of you to contribute as possible, please note that when space is limited contributions over this amount will be subject to the editorial pencil! Email: newsletter@blha.org.uk or post to Dr. M. Simons 80, Reeds Avenue, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 5SR.

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