



Berkshire Local History Association



Newsletter No. 96

January 2010

Berkshire Local History Association Registered Charity 1097355

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THE DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS 1 April 2010.

Front Cover. Queen's Nursing Sister Jean Young holding her monthly clinic in East Garston in April 1947 **ref** P FW PH1/S&G75177 by courtesy of MERL

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Chairman's Corner

Sadly, our application to the Pilgrim Trust has fallen on stony ground. The Association has been looking for funding for a three-year project, to be run by a professional researcher, who will lead a team of amateur volunteers. Together, they will scour historical records in the B.R.O., old newspapers in Reading Central Library, and material in other places to compile the most complete gazetteer possible of schools across Berkshire which existed before 1833. (The year 1833 was chosen as being the start of the era when the government began to intervene in education.)

Our aim is to produce a database, and a hard-copy book, to be published by the Berkshire Record Society. Photographs, prints and other illustrations will be included, where appropriate.

This will give amateur historians valuable hands-on experience of working with old documents, reading old handwriting, and writing up the results of your searching with access to expert guidance. This is very much in line with the objectives of our Association – helping amateur historians develop skills, and to work together with professionals. Incidental to this activity, of course, is the social side of things – you meet with people with the same interests as yourself, and you help one another – sometimes known as “networking.”

The committee is now looking for other sources of funding. We realise we may have to look in several directions, rather than the one, as we had hoped. “Watch this space,” as they say.

Berkshire Record Office – and Mark Stevens in particular – have given us tremendous support in the application to the Pilgrim Trust. Mark has guided several successful applications in the past: it would appear that the criteria of the Trust have changed in these times of economic difficulty.

On a more positive note, there has been good progress on our joint project with the B.R.O. to complete the Berkshire Probate Index. Also, the setting up of the annual prize for the best University of Reading undergraduate dissertation to have made substantial use of records in the B.R.O. is now complete.

At the time of writing, I’m looking forward to “People and Places in Tudor and Stuart Berkshire,” the study day arranged by the Berkshire Record Society in partnership with our Association, on January 30th. It promises to be a day full of interest, in good company, with plenty of opportunity for more “networking.”

David Cliffe, Chairman, BLHA

Words from the Editor

When I started compiling this latest issue of the Newsletter we were in the midst of that very heavy snow fall which brought much of Berkshire to a standstill during those days in the run up to Christmas. As I finish the task we are once again under a very thick blanket of yet more snow, but with the festivities now out of the way it is your January meetings that are at the mercy of the latest forecasts, let us hope that your 2010 programmes get off to a good start.

I would like to bring to your attention to a new feature –Berkshire Bibliography – a list of recent publications compiled by our Chairman and Local Studies librarian David Cliffe, I hope you find it useful.

Our front picture this time is from the recently completed MERL ‘Digitisation of Countryside Images’ project and is one of the many pictures from *Farmers Weekly*.

The AGM, which is only just over two months away, is this year taking place in Twyford and it would be nice to see as many members there as can make it.

Margaret Simons

Request for Information

This intriguing request for information has come to me via our Journal editor Jonathan Brown.

Chris Page has been researching beetroot distilleries of the 1850s-60s, and has published a couple of articles in Lincolnshire Past & Present, since that was where a few of these works were based. He has found reference to one in Reading and wonders if any Berkshire local historians know anything of it. He cannot get over to Reading to have a look at local newspapers for the 1857 - 1859 period when he thinks it was in operation. The Excise returns show that it did produce spirits and that they used the Dray equipment.

If there is anyone out there who thinks that they may be able to help please contact the editor.

Margaret Simons

Notice Board

AGM 13th March 2010

Please make sure you make a note of the date in your diaries and look at the insert for the AGM; if you wish to attend fill in the form and return it to Mrs Joan Dils with an SAE. The event this year is hosted this year by the Wargrave Local History Society and the Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society Society at The Lady Elizabeth Centre, Twyford, so why not come along and spend a few hours in the company of like minded individuals.

Are you publishing local history?

We are interested in any small publications or articles that individuals or societies are producing and would like you to send copies to our secretary for review. It is intended to introduce annual awards for research and publication in local history for the county, to be awarded annually at our AGM.

Berkshire Probate Index Project

Those of you who have tried to use the Phillimore Index to Berkshire wills 1508-1653 will be well aware of its many inadequacies. Take heart. A new full index to all the probate documents: wills, inventories, admmons., accounts etc. is nearly complete. Pat Naylor has been working for over a year, funded by a substantial grant, supplemented by a contribution of £2000 from the Berkshire Family History Association and £1000 from BLHA. The completed index will be published by the Berkshire Record Society. The committee hopes that you approve of this use of our funds which will help fulfil one of the objects of the Association, namely promoting the study of Berkshire's history.

Joan Dils

British Association for Local History

As an affiliated member society of the BALH our members are welcome to join in their activities. They pay visits to less accessible places and collections and all activities are advertised in the Local History News and on the web site ww.balh.co.uk where booking forms can be found.

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

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 Gill Clark.

Margaret Simons

Invitation to members

You have been able to read in this newsletter, and in the previous one, about the history of Caversham Court and its reopening last August after substantial refurbishment. The Friends of Caversham Court are pleased to be able to provide volunteers to take groups around the gardens to talk about the history of the site and about the garden. If your association, or you as an individual member, would like to arrange to be shown round between Easter and October 2010, please contact the Friends to arrange this. The gardens are open to the public every day from 8am to dusk and representatives of the Friends will also be on hand at weekends in the summer to answer questions and to offer informal tours. Please email [friendsofcavershamcourt@googlemail.com] for further information and watch out for the website www.fccg.org.uk

Gill Clark

Local History Day School

People and Places in Tudor and Stuart Berkshire - Saturday 30th January 2010.

The day school in association with the OUDCE, Berkshire Record Society and the Berkshire Local History Association is to be held at the Museum of English Rural Life, Redlands Road, Reading. Chair: Joan Dils.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brought challenge and change to many communities, and recent research has thrown light on some of the ways in which Berkshire was affected. The day school will discuss varied themes including sources for local research, patterns of consumption, the role of the church courts and the contribution of women to the domestic and local economy. Papers will be given by Pat Naylor of the Berkshire Records Office, Professor Ralph Houlbrooke of the University of Reading, Jamieson Wooders and Joan Dils.

The day begins at 9.45am and ends at 4.15pm with the usual breaks for tea, coffee and lunch. **There are still places available if you are interested.**

Joan Dils

Memories

Just after the last Newsletter had gone to press I had a call from a member regarding a programme she had watched about evacuation, 2009 being the seventieth anniversary of this momentous event in twentieth century British history. The programme stirred some personal memories of exam results and evacuees in Maidenhead; my thanks to Pat Preece for sharing these with us.

I was fifteen at the time just having passed the school Certificate, the equivalent of the GCSE. The war had been looming at the time when the results came out and unlike today little notice was taken of them.

All the girls who were available from the Upper 5th and 6th forms at Maidenhead County Girls School, were recruited to help at the Boys School with the evacuees from London. (The Girls school in those days was in Castle Hill and the headmistress was a Miss Mayne.) How we heard about what we had to do I do not know, we unlike most people were on the phone as my father was on call from the railway, but I imagine somebody must have come round to tell me to present myself at Maidenhead County Boys School.

Maidenhead County Boys School then was about a quarter of a mile from the station across fields, I remember we had to collect children from the station, all carrying either small cases or parcels and all with labels. We took them to the school, where they were allocating them to various houses, I recall there were various children who were considered to be unbilleteable – not house trained and very dirty. In those days the slums of London were pretty grim. The unbilleteable were sent to a house somewhere, as far as I remember. I remember taking groups of children up the road through the fields and explaining that the animals in the fields were cows – some of them had neither seen nor heard of them! Most of the children were very quiet and bewildered and I seem to recall trying to comfort them.

We worked hard that day conducting the children from the station to the school and I believe taking some of them to their billets. One recollection I have was that it was the first time in my life that I was absolutely tired out and when I got home mother made me lie down on the sofa – that was unusual in itself! Incidentally my home was full of relatives from London. I believe many of the evacuees went back home – including our relatives!

If you have similar memories that you think you would like to share please contact the editor and perhaps we can set up a regular feature.

Margaret Simons

Special Feature

Caversham Court: a brief history - Part 2



The Old Rectory cellars uncovered unexpectedly during the 2009 restoration! The Regency wine cellar is in the foreground and the vaulted Tudor beer cellars are in the background (right). These have now been covered up again, and are located under the house footprint.

About the time of the Civil War, the catholic Browne family appear to have lived at the Old Rectory. George Browne (1590-1664) married Eleanor Blount from Mapledurham House in 1618. Two of their sons were knighted in recognition of their support of King Charles II – George (d.1678) was created a Knight of the Bath and John (1628-1680) was made a Baronet.

In 1665 Richard Jones of Welford Park, near Newbury, leased the house for a short period. His own house was being re-modelled at the time.

Toward the end of 1665 the Old Rectory lease was bought by Thomas Loveday (c.1619-1681), a wealthy goldsmith from London, who wanted a country house for his family at the time of the Great Plague. His son, Thomas jr. (1679-1720), was able to live the life of a wealthy gentleman. Thomas jr. married Sarah Lethleullier (1682-1761), one of a family of rich merchants trading with Turkey.

John Loveday (1711-1789), Thomas jr.'s son, was a noted antiquary and traveller. He studied at Reading School, and then at Oxford University, and amassed a large and important library of books. John's diaries provide a rich source of information about the life of an 18th century gentleman. One of John's first purchases on his marriage was a 'chariot and harness with four horses', which cost him £69, 'so that he could drive sedately with his wife beside him'. He liked to keep open house for his wide circle of friends, and he always gave everyone a warm welcome.

Penelope Loveday (1759-1846), John's daughter, also kept diaries which provide a delightful female perspective on life in Caversham. With her sister Sarah she entered into local society and enjoyed dancing at the Reading balls. Pen went away quite often, and when in London met many well-known men and women in London society. However she wrote that nothing was better than to drive through the big gates into the courtyard of the 'Striped House' at Caversham, and to see her parents running out to welcome her home.

John's son, Dr John Loveday (1742-1846), already owned a large family house near Banbury. He decided to sell the lease to the Old Rectory as well as most of its contents. Everything is carefully listed in the 200 year old sales catalogue, so we know how the house was furnished, and the names of the rooms.

William Blackall Simonds (1762-1834), the Reading brewer, bought the freehold for the Old Rectory at the end of the 18th century from Christ Church Oxford. William extensively re-modelled the house in the favoured Picturesque style of Regency times. This was the first major change to the house for two hundred years.

William's son, Blackall (1784-1875), was a keen sportsman and a keener businessman. He used his time when hunting to identify places where new beer houses could be opened. He bought all the dwellings within the immediate area of his proposed beer houses, so that his competitors were at a disadvantage! He was also an enthusiastic sailor and retired childless to the Isle of Wight, where he built a house that he named 'Caversham House'. Blackall let the Old Rectory to local families including Lady Mary Monck, widow of the Reading MP John Berkeley Monck of Coley Park.

Henry John Simonds (1828-1896), nephew of Blackall, inherited the Old Rectory in the 1870's. He had studied at Cambridge University, was a lawyer, and was fluent in Latin and Greek. He was both a personal friend and bitter political opponent of the Prime Minister of the time, William Gladstone. The two men corresponded, taking equal delight in criticising each other. Henry John enlarged the house, adding a Billiard Room, a Fernery and extra accommodation. He also commissioned extensive glasshouses in the gardens.

After inheriting the Old Rectory, Henry Caversham Simonds (1867-1918) hosted glamorous gatherings at the house. The kitchen maid recalled that during Ascot week, servants produced picnics, tied up with blue ribbons, which included soup, chicken, duck, game, fish, potatoes cooked in four different ways, trifles, gateaux, jellies and champagne. The Ascot party would leave in a horse and carriage and would return for a dance in the evening. At the beginning of the 20th century Henry Caversham started to break up the Old Rectory estate. Henry moved away, divorced and remarried, and the house was put up for auction in both 1909 and 1911.

At the start of WWI the rectorial rights were removed from the Old Rectory, and it was renamed Caversham Court. The new resident was Lady Elizabeth Mosley (1853-1938), grandmother of Oswald Mosley who was notorious for his involvement with Hitler in WWII. Lady Mosley was known for her good works during WWI. She hosted outings for wounded soldiers and used one of her staff cottages on Buckside to house needy local people. Lady Elizabeth also upgraded Caversham Court with central heating and bathrooms.

Thaddeus Arathoon, an Armenian wealthy jute merchant from Calcutta, enjoyed the life of an English country gentleman at Caversham Court for a few years after the war. His daughter, Rosalie or Rosebud, married a Canadian RAF pilot at St Peter's Church on Christmas Eve 1920. Unfortunately the damp weather did not suit one of Thaddeus's daughter's health, so the family moved to Monte Carlo.

William de Pledge, a retired timber merchant from Liverpool, bought Caversham Court and enjoyed life in retirement as a successful racehorse owner. His daughter, Mary, bred dogs in the stables. She initiated one of the most celebrated lines in Pekinese dog breeding: by the late 1950s, the Caversham kennel of Mary de Pledge had spread the name of 'Caversham' across the entire dog show world.

Following Mary de Pledge's departure to a larger house in Shinfield, the house was bought by the Caversham Court Company Limited and appears to have been used for a short time as residential accommodation for people of more limited means. In the early 1930s the house was opened as a private club – the Oxfordshire County Club. It appears that the club did not thrive in the Great Depression, and Reading Corporation was able to buy the house for a very low price. The house was demolished in 1933, after much disagreement about its fate. In 1934 the gardens were opened to the public and park keepers maintained very high horticultural standards. The public were expected to enjoy the gardens while walking and sitting quietly. Children were tolerated but playing was not!

During World War II the Auxiliary Fire Service were stationed in the stable yard and an Anderson Shelter was built in the gardens. The old kitchen garden was used for growing vegetables for the Dig for Victory campaign.

After the war the garden continued to be cared for by committed 'parkies' and it provided a much loved retreat for local people. Entertainment was provided in the form of country dancing, fetes and plays. But from the 1970s the gardens suffered from the general decline of public parks. They were vandalised and the high level of maintenance was reduced. Local people were saddened to see the continuing decline of their garden.

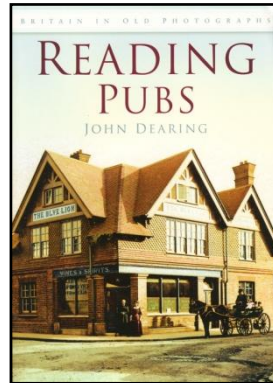
The site was saved from total dereliction by the efforts of local people, who set up the Caversham Court Gazebo Trust. Reading Borough Council was finally able to secure funding for Caversham Court's restoration from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the gardens were re-opened in August 2009.

Anne Keenan – Project Development Officer

New Books

Dearing, J., *Reading Pubs* (Stroud, 2009) £12.99 ISBN 9780752452876

For anyone who has memories of or an interest in Reading's brewing industry and its public houses this publication by John Dearing would make an interesting read. Published by the History Press in the series Britain in Old Photographs text definitely takes second place to the photographs in this publication. Many of the images will no doubt awaken



memories of times past, but will also inform and educate those with a thirst for knowledge on this significant part of Reading's history. The images also reveal the changing role of the public house from the meeting place and social centre at the heart of many of the town's communities, to the larger establishments that have made their homes in some of the town's older industrial and retail buildings.

There is no index to this book and it is probably not in keeping with the format of the series, but a list of the inns and pubs and dates would have been a useful tool for reference.

Margaret Simons

Thatcham: an historic town in a changing world

The publication summarises the historical processes and events that have resulted in the town we know today. It also highlights some areas that many might not recognise as 'heritage', but which are fundamental to the form and character of the town. The publication aims to not only highlight the rich history of Thatcham, but also to identify features or areas of Thatcham that should be preserved. It provides the historical context from which the town can plan for the future, ensuring that current residents understand that the place they live in has deep roots and that the decisions we take today will impact on the quality of life and sense of place for future residents.

The publication, a 72 page full colour soft back book, is split into four main sections:

- ***Thatcham – The oldest place in the country?***
 - *By Peter Allen*
- ***Transport & Industry***
 - *By Dr Nick Young*
- ***The development of Thatcham in the 20th century***
 - *By Sue Broughton*
- ***Historic Buildings and Monuments***
 - *By Tony Higgott*

The publication is a direct result of a study that was instigated by the late Peter Allen under his role as the Thatcham Vision Project Manager and has been undertaken jointly by Thatcham Vision (www.thatchamonline.net) and Thatcham Historical Society (www.thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk).



Sadly Peter passed away in May and the whole team has put every effort into making this publication something Peter would have been proud of and have dedicated it to him. The book is dedicated to the memory of Peter Allen. There are few people that can make such a positive impression on the people they meet as Peter did, especially across all the different age groups and topics that he did. Available from: **Thatcham Town Council**, Council Offices, Brownsfield Road Thatcham, RG18 3HF or enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk 02032875102 (voice mail)

Nick Young

Society News

Friends of Windsor & Royal Borough Museum

Beryl Hedges of the Friends has written to the Association and asked us to bring to the attention of our members details of their latest venture – Windsor Footsteps. The venture is a fund raising activity which uses mobile phone technology to take visitors and locals alike on a walking tour of the town at their own pace. Commentaries are available at various points of interest along the route and these can be accessed via a mobile phone at the standard network mobile fee.

Take a walking tour of Windsor with your mobile

We want you to be able to enjoy Windsor's history at your own pace so we have designed this tour for you.

We have provided these commentaries which will only cost you your standard network mobile fee to listen to.

Look for a building marked on the map, for example The Guildhall (No. 5).

Call +44 (0) 20 7098 7050, and when prompted, enter the number of the location or building that you want to know the history of... then listen and enjoy!

If you find this interesting you may wish to visit more of the marked sites and listen to more history.

We hope in time to extend the scheme and have a second route with other sites to hear about.

Thank you for using Windsor Footsteps

Your Map Guide

- 1 Windsor Royal Station
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 1
- 2 Harts & Garter Hotel
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 2
- 3 Edinborough Woollen Mill
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 3
- 4 Market Cross House
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 4
- 5 The Guildhall
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 5
- 6 Engine House
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 6
- 7 Masonic Hall
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 7
- 8 Air Mail Post Box
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 8
- 9 13 High Street Windsor - Leaping
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 9
- 10 Parish Church
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 10
- 11 HSBC
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 11
- 12 Breakneck Alley (Goswell Hill)
Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 & enter 12

You will only be charged your standard network fee to make the call

Call + 44 (0)20 7098 7050 - followed by the number on the map

For further details of the collection and the museum service phone: 01628 796846 or visit www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/museum_index.htm

Goring and Streatley Local History Society

Quite a lot has been going on since I last managed to meet the Editor's deadline and submit a report on our activities.

Our programme of talks has covered many fascinating topics, starting off in January with Trevor Ottelewski who spoke on timber framed buildings. He described the different types of wood that were used and the construction of the various timber frames and also demonstrated how little carpenters' tools had changed in their design over 200 years. In March Liz Woolley took us on a fascinating virtual tour of the parish of St Thomas the Martyr in Oxford and its largely impoverished inhabitants. The next month was our Members' Evening when Mike and Janet Hurst told us about Percy Goddard Stone, an architect, amateur poet and writer who not only built a big house for himself in Goring following the coming of the railway in 1840, but was also responsible for designing several other important buildings, such as the village hall in which we were sitting. Percy played a full part in local life and contributed large chunks of writing to the late Victorian parish magazines. April saw Carl Boardman, Oxfordshire County Archivist, describing some villains and sinners from the county. In May our speaker was taken ill on the way to Goring (we hope it wasn't at the prospect of speaking to the Society) and Mike Hurst filled in at very short notice with a presentation on getting around in Goring and Streatley through the ages. This talk had actually been prepared for Year 5 at Streatley Primary School, but the rather older audience enjoyed it nevertheless.

The annual outing in 2009 was to Waddesdon Manor near Aylesbury. The weather was rather miserable and although we were not able to spend much time in the magnificent gardens, there was plenty to occupy the party in the house inspecting Baron de Rothschild's collections of art treasures.

The AGM came round again in July and, probably in common with many other societies, we were unable to fill all the vacancies on the committee. After welcoming one new member, the old stalwarts consoled themselves with the wine on offer and the challenges set by Mike Brodie's picture quiz.

Another problem that we no doubt share with others is that many of the original, keen members of the Society are getting very elderly. For various reasons they can rarely come to meetings and are unable to help run activities. Some move away to nursing homes near their families and others, sadly, die. To address this issue we work hard at publicising the Society and in July took some space in a tent at the Goring and Streatley Regatta with a display of old photos and some books to sell. A new initiative due to the enthusiasm of Mike Hurst for steam trains also seems set to bring in new (slightly 'younger') members. This is the formation of a Special Interest Transport Group within the Society. The first outing to Didcot Railway Centre in late July was a great success and the next trip to the Oxfordshire Bus Museum at Hanborough in December is well subscribed.

Dr Simon Townley of the Victoria County History kicked off the new season of talks in September with a fascinating presentation on Henley. It was less enjoyable to learn that of all the villages in Oxfordshire yet to be covered by a "big red book", Goring is likely to be one of the last to be researched. To make matters worse, funding has not

been secured either. (Streatley, in Berkshire, received a fairly superficial treatment by the VCH many decades ago.) In October Martin Bishop told us about the history of Huntley and Palmers, biscuit-makers of Reading, and the following month Judy Dewey of Wallingford Museum described the surprisingly large number of medieval churches in the town, of which very few remain.

Our other activities include the publication of an annual *Journal* and the maintenance of an archive of books, photographs and documents. We also deal with many enquiries from both locals and overseas and are pleased to provide people with information. Further details of the Society are available – telephone 01491 871022.

Janet Hurst

History of Reading Society

The Society's monthly meetings resumed on 16th September after the summer break with an illustrated talk by Rex Hora on the Huntley and Palmers Railway. Rex, who had been at the forefront of a recent unsuccessful attempt to acquire, restore and put on display in the town the only survivor of the pair of 1931-vintage Bagnell fireless industrial locos, traced the history and development of the factory railway system and expanded his talk into how fireless locos worked. We were also treated to moving images of industrial locos preserved in working order by enthusiasts at Southall and to fleeting reference to other industrial railways that once existed in Reading, at the Cop Jam Factory, Fobney and Earley Power Station.

On 21st October, Ann McCormack gave a talk entitled The Irish in 19C Reading. Although authoress Mary Mitford recounted seeing a few Irishmen in the Reading district in the early years of the century, re-establishment of Roman Catholicism in the town was devoid of an Irish connection and neither the building the Great Western Railway nor the potato famine in Ireland some years later resulted in any vast increase in Irish settlers in Reading. However, although available statistics suggest a steady influx from 1851 from all parts of Ireland, a detailed study of the various Census returns reveals that none of them appear to have remained in the town for very long - they had moved on by the next Census! By the end of the century, however, the town had begun to absorb a still fairly small Irish population. It is on record; however, that during the 19th Century because Reading was on the route between Bristol and London which was favoured by Irish travellers, there was always a fairly constant two-way traffic.

Dr Margaret Simons came to talk to us on 18th November about Three Men in a Post – the stories of the three men, John Shea, Alfred Ashby and Henry Milligan, who held the position of Medical Officer of Health in Reading from its creation in 1872 through to the outbreak of war in 1939. Appointed following the introduction of the Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875, they were Medical rather than Public Officers of Health but it was mainly due to them that the quality of life in Reading's urban environment improved enormously. All manner of subjects came under their control

or were referred to them for comment before such-and-such a policy was adopted. In time this contributed to an improved overall health condition of the town's inhabitants. Importantly, too, the information they gathered was painstakingly recorded in statistics and in well-detailed Annual Reports, which today is a valuable uninterrupted 70-year record for anyone researching a local history project as it gives a different insight into Reading as it was.

Cards detailing our meetings programme through to December 2010 are now available 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, with outside meetings (for members only) in June and July and no meeting in August. Entry is free to members; Non-members £2.00. Specially arranged secure free car parking is available for members nearby – useful if you prefer using your own transport. Ring 0118 947 2470 or email Edward.W.Hooper@btinternet.com for further details of the Society. The annual subscription for 2008-2009 is £9.00 per person. Readers are invited to ring 0118 947 2470 or email Edward.W.Hooper@btinternet.com for further details of the Society.

John Whitehead

Hungerford Historical Association

400 Years of Schooling in Hungerford – Dr Hugh Pihlens

A packed house gathered for the first Hungerford Historical Association talk of the new season by the ever-popular local historian Dr Hugh Pihlens. This fascinating talk took us from the first grammar school, located in The Croft area in 1635, through the many small private schools to the first national school in 1814, and finishing with the founding of the Hungerford Primary School in 1910 and John O' Gaunt in 1963.

The occasion also marked the launch of the late Norman Hidden's book 'Aspects of the Early History of Hungerford' published by the HHA. Norman's widow Joyce had travelled to Hungerford for the launch and was no doubt pleased to see how many of the members bought the book on the night. Copies are available at £8.95 at any of the HHA talks or from The Hungerford Bookshop.

Alex Milne-White

Pangbourne Heritage Group

We had a very entertaining talk in September given by one of our members Bob Dearden, whose subject was 'A Brief History of Surnames'. He was stunningly accurate in my case, and produced some amazing technology.

Since then, we have been concentrating on our forthcoming exhibition 'Pangbourne: A Snapshot of Change 1830-1930.' Lyn Davies gave the third of his talks on the

Breedon Estate, this time focusing on the sale of much of the land and property in 1894.

The effect of this on the village was significant, and without giving too much away about the content of the exhibition, due to take place in Pangbourne Village Hall on 15th and 16 May 2010, I can reveal that the development of the village as we know it today, dated from the 1894 sale.

Other factors came into play, and changes in lifestyle that were happening nationwide, contributed to the rapid expansion of house building and the subsequent need for more services in the village. We decided to continue on until 1930 with our investigations because this period invoked the devastation caused by the First World War, and the recovery afterwards. Our previous exhibition in 2005 had looked at Pangbourne during the Second World War, so in a sense we are ending on a note of optimism this time, following a time of relative peace and prosperity.

Make a date to visit the Pangbourne exhibition during that weekend next May, and we hope you will find our interpretation of village life 1830 to 1930 of interest. If you wish to know more about the Pangbourne group, please contact Rosie Nurick on 0118 9842565.

Lesley Crimp

Project Purley

Project Purley commenced in September, its new season of monthly meetings, when a distinguished local history speaker, Clive Williams, provided an interesting power pointed talk on the two battles of Newbury, and we had a good turnout of over 30 members to learn more of this fascinating past.

Rick Jones, one of our members and Chairman of the Parish Council, was the speaker in October, talking on the 'Canal Through Reading' and in November, another of our members and a past Chairman, Jean Debney, provided a thought provoking presentation on 'The Meaning of Surnames'. Project Purley's Christmas Party is being held once again at The Gatehouse, Purley, on 18th December, and our first meeting of the New Year takes place at The Barn, Purley on Thames, on Friday 15th January 2010.

Anthony Trendle

Sandhurst Historical Society

Our AGM in September was, as always, short and to the point. This was followed by a Fun Auction which really was fun plus raising some much needed funds for the society.

October's meeting brought along David Hunt to talk to us on British Bridges through the ages. We learned about bridges ranging in age, style and complexity from a few

stones across a stream to larger and more modern bridges such as the Humber suspension bridge, the Millennium Bridge and the Severn Crossing.

In November Janet Hilderley gave us a very comprehensive talk on the life of Yvonne Arnaud. This lady was a great actress with an inimitable gift for comedy and she was also a superb musician. Janet has written a biography on Yvonne Arnaud.

We are still waiting for someone to fill the vacancy for a Secretary. We are also without a Chairman at present as Jack Martin has resigned. Hopefully both these positions will be filled some time in 2010.

Our meetings are usually held on the last Thursday of each month in the Sandhurst Community Hall at 7.30pm. For further information please visit our website at www.sandhurst-historical-society.org

Janice Burlton

Sonning and Sonning Eye Society

We were delighted to welcome more than 1,000 visitors to the *Village Voices* exhibition held in the Pearson Hall in September during Heritage Open Days Weekend, 11 -13 September. Comments in the Visitor Book were very enthusiastic, ranging from "Fascinating", "Brilliant", "Excellent", "Very interesting", and "Most moving", through to "Absolutely wonderful". Others commented, "A great reminder of all the things we loved and treasured in Sonning"; "Very professionally presented with impressive collection of memorabilia"; "Fabulous exhibition - a wonderful heritage"; "I've really enjoyed my visit and look forward to watching the DVD with my husband"; "Something that should be repeated across England to give young people a sense of our life and history"; "Keep popping in for another memory. Brilliant IT set-up"; and "A lovely nostalgia trip".

We are delighted to report that the exhibition in modified form transfers to the Museum of English Rural Life from 9 January – 25 April 2010 inclusive, an exposure that we are really pleased with. The Society is planning two group visits on the afternoons of Friday 19 February and Saturday 20 March when we hope some of our contributors will be present to talk with the groups. To ensure sufficient space, we will ask people to book to attend via 0118 969 2132. Alternatively you can book directly on <http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl/whatson/merl-booking.aspx>.

If you are interested in the DVD and booklet, these are available at £8.00 and £1.00 respectively from Mary Chapman on 0118 969 7398 or from Diana Coulter 0118 969 2132.

Issue 20 of *bridge* was a special 5th anniversary edition, which looked at past achievements, and carried articles on Deanery Garden, (a reference to our inaugural

talk in 2004), and on the heraldry of the temporarily lost inn sign for The Bull. Other issues have contained articles on Windows (Part II - *bridge* 19, Summer 2009); and most recently, a review of the Village Voices exhibition by one of the contributors. Back issues of *bridge* are available from Red House Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning, Reading RG4 6UH or on our website, www.sonning.org.

Diane Coulter

Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society

Although Ken Hussey had unfortunately been unable to give his lecture on Swallowfield Park at the September meeting, it had been possible to enlist the help of John Whiting, Janet Sharp and Bill Crane who together entertained with 'Memories of Yesteryear in Twyford and Ruscombe' recounting their childhood memoirs. Pauline Humphreys ably guided the discussion and Graham Starky provided the technical equipment.

In October it was most interesting to hear Rupert Willoughby talk on the 'World of Jane Austen'. Not only did we hear about the author's life, but that of her family and neighbours and the eminent people who would have inhabited Jane Austen's world.

A packed room greeted Peter Dart in November for his talk on Stanlake House. Commencing with the beginning of the estate around 1166, when the land was held by the earl of Salisbury, it continued on through the Tudor and Stuart periods with a close connection with Windsor Castle. The area around Stanlake Park was quite heavily involved in the various battles which took place at this period in history. Richard Aldworth purchased the estate in 1610 and it was during the Aldworth ownership that the Reading Bluecoat School was founded. Although wine making was introduced into this country by the Romans it was not until 1979 that a trial area of vines was introduced into the Stanlake Estate, what has now become a flourishing enterprise, Mr Dart in the five year of ownership of Stanlake has made improvements and he was able to give a full description of all the current wines in stock. One of Peter Dart's future projects is to excavate a tunnel discovered under one of the buildings.

Edna Bowman

Wargrave Local History Society

Martin Bishop spoke on *Bats Balls and Biscuits* in September - the social life of Huntley and Palmers. Joseph Huntley had started his bakery shop in 1822 at 72 London Street, and by 1826, with 16 staff, concentrated on biscuit production. By 1850, the workforce had grown to 300, and over 5000 people worked there by 1898. Martin outlined the 'social life' of the people, including the formation of a Mutual Improvement Society in 1854. The first mention of cricket was during a factory excursion to Park Place, Henley, in 1855, when the 'married men' played the 'single men'. This was the catalyst for many internal cricket matches, and by the 1880s the Reading Biscuit Factory Cricket Club had an extensive fixture list. Mechanisation in

the 1960s led to a drop in employee numbers, and hence the interest in cricket, so the club merged with Purley Cricket Club in 1986.

In October, Sarah Charlton, talked about *Berkshire Manorial Records*. Identifying the manorial records for the two counties had taken 2 years. Sarah had researched all 145 of the ancient parishes in the old Berkshire. The holding of a manor court defined what a manor was as such, rather than in name only. Of the 347 manors found in Berkshire, records survive for 265 (although, strangely, none previously belonging to Abingdon Abbey). Sarah showed us how to discover where these records can be found, using Wargrave as her example. The Victoria County History says Wargrave had 5 manors, but only 2 held courts - Wargrave and Culham. The earliest documents include a 1288 survey, and a register of customs and rents, from about 1200.

In November, Bill Bookless and Nigel Board gave an entertaining presentation about *Wargrave Scouts*, celebrating their centenary this year. Bill outlined the origins of the Scout Movement - Robert Baden Powell holding the initial camp on Brownsea Island in August 1907. In Wargrave, moves to establish a Scout group began in December 1908, and it was formed on 24th February 1909 - Leonard Gower being the first troop leader. Many young people from the village have been involved with Scouting over the past 100 years. There are about 90 members of the Wargrave Scout group currently - and the focus is on providing fun, friendship and adventure for the young people (although it was obvious that the adult leaders also get a lot of enjoyment from it!).

Our traditional Christmas Party followed in December, with Geoff Briggs' audio-visual presentation accompanying the usual 'festive fare.'

All are welcome to our meetings, which begin at 8 pm in the Hannen Room, Mill Green, Wargrave. For more information, visit www.wargrave.net/history, or contact Peter Delaney, on 0118 940 3121.

All are welcome to our meetings, which begin at 8 pm - normally in the Hannen Room, Mill Green, Wargrave. For more information about the Society, visit www.wargrave.net/history, or contact me, Peter Delaney, on 0118 9403121

Peter Delaney

Winnersh and District Historical Society

In September, John Edwards gave us a very interesting talk on the almshouses in Hurst. In 1905, they had been in a poor state and at that time, the male residents were given 7/6 per week and a suit every other year. Much later, land was sold for the improvement of the almshouses, and opened in 1966 by Lady Ingram. Further almshouses were built later, with two rooms and a plot. The first Jumble Sale in Hurst was in 1892, and the Horticultural Show in 1893. The King James bible is presented to leavers of St. Nicholas School.

Peter Delaney came in October to tell us some history of Wargrave. It is thought that the Church was earlier than Reading Abbey, and Anglo Saxon artefacts were found by the Church. The ancient manor belonged to the King, then the Bishop of Winchester, and later to the Neville Family. The Bishops of Winchester planted trees, plus pigs. The tower was built in 1635, and still there! Wargrave is popular for people to stay there, and the buildings are very interesting. The Piggott School is named after Robert Piggott, and on the way to Henley is Conway's Bridge where General Conway lived. Although there is a ferry, it only crosses the Thames once per year!

In November, we had the history of the cinema by Tony King. In 1881, Thomas Edison used a machine with continuous movement, and Buffalo Bill with Annie Oakley were the first actors on film. Alice in Wonderland was in London in 1896 and the first pictures the Boer War in 1899. There was no speaking or colour. By 1925, many Jews went to America, setting up Universal Studios and 20th Century Fox, etc. New techniques were used for sound, with Greta Garbo best for talking. Colour in 1926 was tinted, and became better in 1935. Wokingham had the 'Electric Theatre' for some time (now the Nationwide)

The Odeon Cinemas had their own style, and curtains were used similar to a stage. The ceilings were very impressive, and usually an organ playing before the film. The 40s to 50s had 'Casablanca', and 'In Which we Serve' etc. James Stewart in 'Winchester 73' wanted a share in profit/ producing films. 'The Robe' in 1953 was in Cinemascope with widescreen. Multi-Plex now has 12 screens and the film 'Bolt' in 3D and needs glasses!

Stella Young

Heritage, Family History, Museums and Libraries

Berkshire Record Office

Sports Records Survey

BRO is undertaking a survey of all sports clubs in Berkshire, to find out what historical records they hold, and to encourage clubs to deposit them. All current sports clubs in Berkshire will be contacted over the next two years and will be asked to complete an online survey about their holdings. We are hoping to build a substantial collection of sporting records for Berkshire. We will celebrate the completion of the project with an exhibition at the Museum of Reading during the 2012 Olympics.

If you have any records for a club, or know of a club that might be interested, you can complete a survey form direct at

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=v2HizvSVMCE_2fprmGOq4e2A_3d_3d

Or contact us on 0118 9015132 to have a chat about your records. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who has records for part of Berkshire's sporting history.

Pre-1833 Schooling

Elsewhere in the BLHA newsletter you may have read about our plan to work with the BLHA and produce a gazetteer to early Berkshire schools, masters and scholars. Sadly we did not receive the necessary funding from The Pilgrim Trust to begin this work, but we are still keen to make progress with what we believe is a very interesting and worthwhile project. We will continue discussions with the BLHA executive to try and find alternative ways to undertake it. If you are interested in this sort of county-wide research project, please do make contact with the BLHA committee or the Record Office.

Mark Stevens, Senior Archivist

Maidenhead Heritage Centre

We have now been awarded Accredited Museum status, and feel that we have come of age. Our 2010 programme begins with “The Magpies Story”, charting the ups and downs of Maidenhead United Football Club. MUFC has the distinction of having played on the same home ground longer than any other club. The football ground was originally the park where cricket was played, and this accounts for our address (Park Street) and the former name of our building (The Cricketers Arms).

One of the original craftsmen, Leslie Knight, has given us his collection of items from the Odney Pottery. This was set up in 1942, in the grounds of the John Lewis Partnership’s Odney Club in Cookham, and pots were sold through John Lewis stores. John Bew, who ran the pottery, assembled and trained a team of local artists and potters, and there were plans for an adult education college there after the war. Bew had studied under Bernard Leach, and his pieces, made from local clay, were plain and functional. Examples were acquired by the V&A, and the collection includes a teapot exhibited at the 1951 Festival of Britain. The enterprise closed in 1956 in tragic circumstances, after John Bew was found drowned in the Thames. We are very grateful for this donation, which also includes archive photographs.

Member societies may like to note that we will be running our Historic Thames Cruises again in 2010, with special rates for block bookings. Contact our Administrator, Fran Edwards, for details.

Brian Boulter, Hon. Curator

Museum of English Rural Life

The new edition of the What’s On guide is due to be delivered any day now, and we’re gearing up for a busy, interesting few months at MERL. With a week of activities at half term, a packed programme of workshops, talks and seminars and a new series of folk concerts, there’s certainly plenty to look forward to! Visit www.reading.ac.uk/merl for details.

Our first temporary exhibition of 2010 takes a look at the history of one of Berkshire's most beautiful Berkshire villages. Created by Sonning and Sonning Eye Society, this exhibition charts the changes experienced by local residents throughout the twentieth century. It captures the essence of daily village life through oral history recordings, showing how memories can foster a feeling of community belonging. Originally shown in the village hall, the displays represent a mere fraction of the fascinating oral histories gathered; a full set of which are now held in the MERL archives for future generations. The exhibition at MERL runs from 12th January to 25th April (closed 31st March to 7th April)

Perhaps one of the most exciting projects we're involved in this year is the British Museum and BBC's collaboration, which aims to tell 'A History of the World' through objects in public collections. Along with other local museums, MERL has contributed two objects from the collections, which will help tell the history of the world from a local perspective. Find out which of our objects helped Berkshire change the world by visiting our website, listening to BBC Radio Berkshire and following the project on www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld

For those interested in finding out more about two of Berkshire most famous firms, there will be a display of Suttons publicity materials in the staircase hall at MERL from 16th Feb until April and at 1pm on 3rd March, staff from the Department of Typography at the University will give a talk about Suttons and Ransome's catalogues.

The JISC-funded 'Digitisation of Countryside Images' project has now been completed, with 130,000 images from the Farmers Weekly and Farmer and Stockbreeder archives now available at www.reading.ac.uk/merl/countrysideimages. Work has now started on moving records into our new cataloguing system, and users will begin to see improvements to the online catalogues later in the year.

Finally, if you use our reading room, please note that from 5 October 2009, a restricted service has operated on Mondays, and it now opens later (at 10am). Only open-shelf library materials and pre-ordered archive and rare book materials may be consulted. We strongly recommend that readers contact us in advance of their visit. Please contact us at merl@reading.ac.uk or by calling 0118 378 8660

Alison Hilton, Marketing Officer

Reading Central Library

Autumn 2009 has been eventful. The "crime walk," part of the Reading Festival of Crime Writing, was blessed with a fine and warm September evening. We looked at prisons, and former prisons, and places connected with murders in Reading and Caversham. We started at St. Mary's, Castle Street, which was built on top of a gaol, and ended at The Sun Inn next door. (Incidentally, I see that a book on crime in

Reading has just been published, called *Foul Deeds and Suspicious Acts in Reading*. I have it on order for the library.)

In November, we had an exhibition of old photographs and maps of the New Town area of Reading. This coincided with a local history study day, on November 28. The study day on New Town was a one-off event: we don't usually have the space to sit people down while they enjoy talks and audio-visual presentations when the library is open, but since we had the space at the time, I thought I'd try it. In the morning, we had three guest speakers, and myself, giving presentations. We looked at New Town, and its development, at who bought the land, who built the houses, and the extent to which Huntley and Palmers and the Palmer family were involved in the development. In the afternoon, we were again blessed with good weather for our walk around the New Town area, and our visit to New Town School (Victorian) and the Anglican Church of St. John with St. Stephen (20th century, but with Victorian origins). It proved a very happy day, with a lot of taking of photographs, especially by people who were keen to re-visit their old school. I must say, I was delighted by the warm reception we had, both at the school and the church, and I'm grateful to the speakers and all who helped make the day the success it was.

Already, I'm thinking about 2010. In September, to coincide with the heritage open days, I'm planning an exhibition on "Reading's Forgotten Industries" in the library. We'll put "The Three B's" on one side, and look at firms like Bradley's the printers, Philbrick's the tanners, Burberry's raincoats, Soundy's the millers, Collier's brickworks and Reading, Green & Marvell, who made green pigment for paint. We'll have photographs, letter-heads, advertising, and extracts from trade catalogues.

On the heritage weekend itself, September 10-12, the Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group are planning walks to look at the sites of some of the industries which were once so important to the local economy.

Also, 2010 will be the bicentenary of the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal. There must be scope there for a few guided walks, exhibitions, study days – and maybe even a boat-ride!

David Cliffe, Local Studies Manager

Reading Museum Service

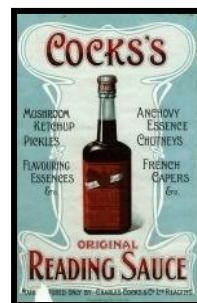
Exhibitions

Reading A-Z 5 December to 18 April 2010

Reading has too often been dismissed as being a modern place with little history. This exhibition shows that our 'much-maligned town' is a fascinating and diverse place with its own unique character and long history. Each letter, from A to Z, is illustrated by some well-known and some more unexpected objects and artworks from the

Museum's extensive collection of local history, art and archaeology. So expect to find everything from Abbey to Austen to Zaandam and Zinzan.

Explore the people, places and products that have influenced how Reading is today. What would you include? What have we left out? Come and share your own ideas!



The Life and Times of Paddington Bear™ 27 March to 4 July 2010

Celebrating the famous bear from Darkest Peru and his creator, Michael Bond, who spent his childhood in Reading. This exhibition tells the story from the very first book *A Bear Called Paddington*, published in 1958, to the most recent title in the series *Paddington: Here and Now*, published in 2008 - exactly fifty years later.

Explore the adventures of the marmalade loving, duffel-coat wearing Paddington Bear, whose books have sold more than 35 million copies worldwide and been translated into over 40 languages.

Lunchtime Talks

A Sunday Painter or Professional Tuesday 19 January 1.00pm – 2.00pm

A glimpse into the life of RGA member Albert Cooper by Martin Andrews.

FREE, booking essential (0118 939 9800)

Growing Up with Paddington Bear Tuesday 13 April 1.00pm – 2.00pm All ages

Visit 'The Life and Times of Paddington Bear' Exhibition and find out what 'Growing up with Paddington Bear' was like with a talk by Karen Jankel, the daughter of Michael Bond.

FREE, booking essential (0118 939 9800)

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/news

To receive our latest 'what's on' diary why not join our free mailing list, call us on 0118 939 9800.

Matthew Williams, Senior Curator

Slough Library's Local Studies Collection & www.SloughHistoryOnline.org.uk
www.SloughHistoryOnline.org.uk has just reached another milestone. The website was launched as an online collection of Slough Observer newspapers dating between

1883 and 1929 and since then our band of volunteers have been reading the papers and indexing names, subjects and places for stories covering Slough, Windsor, Maidenhead and the surrounding villages. We completed the index of Births, Marriages and Deaths columns a couple of years ago, however December 2009 saw us passing the half-way point of our main project, with 24 of the 48 years of the newspapers now searchable. You just need to go to www.SloughHistoryOnline.org.uk; type the name or subject you are looking for in the search box and the pages with those terms will be found. However there is still much more work to go, if only because as the years went on, the number of pages per newspaper increased.

We have also been uploading more photographs onto www.SloughHistoryOnline.org.uk. Amongst the highlights this quarter is a collection of old photographs of Chalvey and the first part of a collection of postcards of twentieth century Slough.

Slough Library has joined forces with a local history group called STEAM and has turned two of our successful guided walks around our Borough into self-guided pamphlets. Priced at £1.50 each, the full colour walks explain the amazing stories behind the buildings in Victorian Upton and the Salt Hill and Baylis areas of Slough. The walks are available from Slough Library and Slough Museum and they are the perfect way to losing those few pounds you gained over Christmas.

Tony Pilmer, Local Studies Librarian

West Berkshire Heritage Service

Civil War Week: The Truth is Revealed

Shaw House 13th – 21st February, everyday 11am – 4pm

West Berkshire Archaeology

An exhibition at West Berkshire Museum

1st April – 27th June, Thursday to Saturday 10:30am - 5pm. Sunday 11am – 4pm

Civil War Weekend: Family Feuds

With Past Pleasures Live Historical Interpretation at Shaw House

1st May, 11am – 5pm

Family Picnic Day

Shaw House 31st May, 11am – 5pm

Shaw House reopens in 2010

Shaw House will reopen on 13th February with a new Special Exhibition on the Civil War, focusing on the events of the Second Battle of Newbury in October 1644 as told in contemporary accounts.

From 13th February until 19th December Shaw House will be open every weekend and various days in school holidays. Please contact us or visit our website for details, www.shawhouse.org.uk

West Berkshire Museum Redevelopment

Disappointingly the Heritage Lottery Fund's South East England Committee did not award a first-round pass and development grant at their meeting on 2 December. However, they were apparently very positive about the Museum and the opportunity and need for improvements, and were keen for their regional officers to help us put together a further application which better demonstrates the opportunities for learning and participation that the redevelopment would provide.

We hope to be meeting with HLF officers on 12 January, where we will be able to assess how much additional work is needed to submit a revised Round One application. We hope that we can do so in time for the HLF meeting in June 2010.

Lucy Rumens, Marketing and Tourism Manager

Berkshire Bibliography

Dates of publication are 2009, unless otherwise stated.

Books

Jim Bell. *Wokingham Remembers the Second World War*. The author, £3.00.

Warren Berry. *The Kennet and Avon Navigation: a History*. Phillimore, 2009, £18.99. ISBN 9781860775642

Brian Eade. *The Changing Thames*. The History Press, £12.99 ("then and now" photographs)

Janet Firth. *Digging Up the Past: a History of the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group*. The Group, £8.00.

Howse, Violet M. *Hatford: a Parish Record*. Stanford in the Vale and District Local History Society, reprinted 2009, £5.00.

Eddie and Peter Jaggard. *Mr. Garth's Hounds: the Story of the Garth Hunt*. Priestwood Books, price not given.

Josephine Jeremiah. *The Middle and Lower Thames, from Sonning to Teddington: a Pictorial History*. Phillimore, £16.99. 9781860775833

Josephine Jeremiah. *The Upper and Middle Thames, from Source to Reading: a Pictorial History*. Phillimore, 2006, £16.99. 9781860774607

Brian May and Elena Vidal. *A Village Lost and Found: a Complete Annotated Collection of the Original 1850s stereoscopic series, "Scenes in Our Village," by T. R. Williams*. Frances Lincoln, £35.00. 9780711230392 (photographs of Hinton Waldrist; the book comes in a slip-case with a stereoscopic viewer)

Kevin Robertson. *Steam around Reading*. The History Press, second edition, £14.99. 9780752453309 (Britain's Railways in Old Photographs series)

Andrew Simmonds and others. *Archaeology in the Park: Excavations at Jennett's Park, Bracknell, Berkshire*. Oxford Archaeology, 2009, £10.00.

Ron Smith. *British Built Aircraft, vol. 3: South Eastern England*. The History Press, 2004, £19.99. 9780752429939

Tony Tinkel. *Cardinal Newman's School: 150 Years of The Oratory School, Reading*. Third Millennium Publishing, £35.00. ISBN 9781906507091

Journals

Great Western Railway Journal, No. 71, summer 2009. Includes *Goods Operations at Reading West Junction New Up and Down Yards*, by John Copsey and Chris Turner.

King Pole, No. 175, September 2009. Includes *Captain Herbert Vincent Clarke: Pat Collins' Lion Tamer*, by Stuart Williams. (Captain Clarke was born in Reading in 1883)

SOAG Bulletin, No. 63, 2009. (South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group) Includes *Gatehampton Farm [Goring] Roman Villa Excavation: Interim Report 2008*, by Hazel Williams; *Problems of Water in the Oxfordshire Chilterns*, by Pat Preece; and *The Lilley Farm [Mapledurham] Dig* by Janet Sharpe.

The Stanford Historian, No. 15, autumn 2009. Includes *Some Local County Histories; Evacuation to Berkshire 1940-42; Waterman Furlong, Stanford in the Vale; and Lieutenant James's Horse Blister*.

Courses

Oxford

The Oxford University Department of Continuing Education have a number of part-time courses in their 2010 prospectus. For more information please call 01865 270360, email pp@conted.ox.ac.uk or look at the website on www.conted.ox.ac.uk

Workers' Educational Association

The Reading Branch of the WEA has gone from strength to strength since it rose phoenix like from the ashes last summer in the wake of the announcement of the closure of Reading University's closure of the Department of Continuing Education. The AGM in December was well attended and Chairman Paul Kingston introduced us all to the origins of the movement with original accounts from students and supporters.

Anyone wishing to embark on a course either in the spring or summer should consult the brochure, which is available in libraries or on line at southern.wea.org.uk, declare their interest and book a place asap, either by calling now to WEA Reading on 0118 946 4137, or by email to WEAreading@googlemail.com.

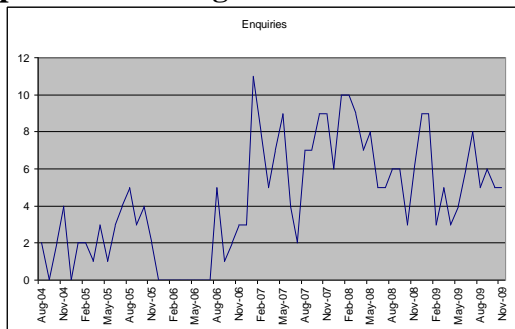
BLHA Website (www.blha.org.uk)

Unique visitors*

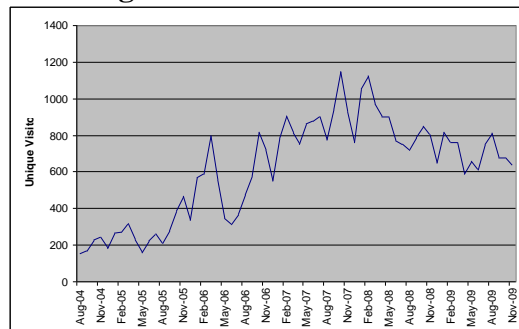
Total unique visitors since 1 August 2004	39562
Average daily visitors	20.3
Average weekly visitors	142
Year	Number of unique visitors
2004 Total	983
2005 Total	3405
2006 Total	6680
2007 Total	10456
2008 Total	10287
Month	
Aug-09	813
Sept-09	678
Oct-09	679
Nov-09	633

* *Unique visitors means that it is not counting when a visitor returns to the site.*

The number of enquiries over the period since August 04 until now.



Visitor activity to the BLHA website since August 2004



Geographical breakdown (of last 100 visitors)

	Num	Perc.	Country Name	
▼	69	83.13%	United Kingdom	
▼	4	4.82%	France	
▼	4	4.82%	United States	
▼	3	3.61%	Unknown	-
▼	3	3.61%	New Zealand	

The statistical analysis shows that the most popular pages on the website (aside from the home page) are the queries page and the newsletters page.

Dave Osborne, websitedesigner@blha.org.uk

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 Archaeology Research Group:** Isabel MacLean, 48 Hawsbury Drive, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7ZR [isabelmaclean2@aol.com]
- 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 [bhme@gme.prestel.co.uk]
- 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 History & Heritage Group:** Mr Neil Doody, The Forge, The *Village*, Finchampstead, Berks RG40 4JN tel: 0118 973 4236 doody.neil@goosemail.com
- Goring & Streatley Local History Society:** Janet Hurst, 6 Nun's Acre, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 9BE tel 01491 871183 (evenings only)
- 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:** Jane Francis, 5A Park Street, Hungerford, RG17 0EF tel 01488 685259; 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]
- Longworth & District History Society:** Pam Woodward, 22 Cherrytree Close, Southmoor, Abingdon, OX13 5BE. tel 01865 820500 [prwoodward@btinternet.com]
- 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: Janice Burlton, 16, Scotland Hill, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 8JR tel 01252 872504

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 Windsor & Maidenhead RBCM, Pamela Marson, 256 Dedworth Road, Windsor, SL4 4JR [pamela.marson@btinternet.com], [www.rbwm.gov.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 Society: 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

Crosfields School: Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 9BL

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 Centre: 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.

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The next Newsletter will be published in May 2010 (Copy by 1 April 2010). 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.

PRINTED BY:- Reprographics Department,
Whiteknights House, University of Reading,
Reading, Berkshire RG6 6AH