



Berkshire Local History Association



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Berkshire Local History Association
Newsletter

Editor: John Chapman

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We ask all member societies and institutions to provide a short report on their activities for inclusion in the Newsletter. We are always interested in brief news reports on other matters and notice of events likely to be of interest to our members.

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!

Contributions should be e-mailed to:- newsletter@blha.org.uk and arrive not later than the 15th of the month preceding publication (January, May and September) Word, Text or pdf copy is acceptable, but keep it simple and please do not use spaces or tabs to lay out presentations. Photographs and images should be sent separately

Alternatively material may be posted to the Editor: John Chapman, 5 Cecil Aldin Drive, Tilehurst, Berks, RG31 6YP

Cover picture - **The flag for Berkshire**

Chairman's Corner

The weather was fine as people turned up from the various corners of the county for the 40th Annual General Meeting of the BLHA.

As soon as you walked in through the door of St. Nicolas' Church Hall, you were welcomed, and it was apparent that our hosts, Newbury District Field Club, had matters well in hand. The room was spacious, the seating comfortable, and everything worked as it should. (see Spotlight page 6)



The formalities were quickly over. I was able to add an item to my Chairman's Report: a date had been fixed for our autumn seminar at Ewelme Church, where we will be joined by members of the Oxfordshire Local History Association. It will be on Saturday, October 7th – see below for more details.

After nineteen years as President, Prof. Ted Collins was stepping down, but he agreed to remain on the BLHA executive committee as a Vice-President. The other Vice-Presidents are Joan Dils and Margaret Yates. Brian Boulter was elected as the next President, and Ann Smith was elected to the committee. Ann's election was just as well: since because we are at present without a Secretary, she had kindly offered to take the minutes for the meeting! On top of that, Ann has agreed to take over as Membership Secretary.

Instead of the usual Presidential Address, the AGM was followed by three short talks by the outgoing President, the in-coming President, and myself. We were considering happenings and trends in Berkshire local history over the last forty years, since the Association was founded. Brian was a founder member and was able to tell us what led to the formation of BLHA. Prof. Collins showed how the source materials for local history had become more accessible, and how the study and writing of local history had changed. My own contribution considered improvements in access at Reading Central Library and the Berkshire Record Office. I also mentioned some of the idiosyncrasies in the running of BLHA that I discovered when I first became involved.

It has been suggested that the talks should be edited, amalgamated, and written up as an article for "Berkshire Old and New" next year. I have rashly offered to put it together.

The final section of the "sitting down" part of the meeting was a talk by Phil Wood, the President of the Newbury District Field Club, on its history. He explained what a "field club" did, and that it was one of the earliest such clubs in the country, founded in 1870. We heard of the many eminent people associated with the club, of its publications, and its role in the building of the Falkland Memorial and the creation of the museum in Newbury.



Dr David Peacock explaining Newbury history to the walking tour

Photo Phil Wood

Lunch followed. It was generous and of good quality. Later on, we were able to watch a film about the role of the “Newbury Weekly News” in recording the history of the town and its hinterland, and to visit the display tables of the various local history societies, and to make purchases.

After the lunch break, there was an “armchair tour” of historic Newbury for the less energetic, while others opted for the walking tour, led by David Peacock, with Phil Wood making sure that no-one got left behind. We couldn’t have wished for better weather or a better guide. We learned a lot about Jack of Newbury and the cloth trade, and the Speenhamland System of poor relief. I was a bit surprised that many people seemed not to have looked round Newbury before. They were surprised to discover what a picturesque and historic town it is – and that, after all, was the purpose of the tour.

At the end of the afternoon there was a welcome cup of tea and a piece of cake back at the church hall before we drifted homewards, and Brian Boulter thanked our hosts for a splendid day.

Next year, we shall be at Maidenhead.

David Cliffe

A Word from the Editor

Thank you to all those who contributed to this edition. I would like to see more book reviews and articles and news of other things happening on the heritage scene.

We have two great conferences coming up in October (see Opportunities) They are both taking place in Oxfordshire but have a great Berkshire appeal.



John Chapman

Miscellanea

Help Wanted!

Is your group looking for a new project? The latest Local History News offers two opportunities, both internet based.

The first is for map addicts. The GB1900 project aims to transcribe all the place names which occur on the 2nd Edition 6-inch maps published around 1900. The plan is to list all the place, farm and other names so that it will be possible to analyse their distribution. Go to gbhgis@port.ac.uk to find out more.

The second request is from Historic England. They wish to add more detail to the descriptions of some of the listed houses, gardens, parks etc. So your group's knowledge of local places could be shared with a wider public. Go to historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list for details.

Let us know how you get on.

Brian Boulter

A Flag for Berkshire

In February many societies across Berkshire were asked for support for a flag for Berkshire. It turned out that Berkshire was one of the few counties of England that did not have a flag. There was an excellent response to the request and recently we heard the result from Brady Ellis:-

From: Asst County Flags Officer of ABC <abcflagsasst@outlook.com>

Date: 2 March 2017 10:01:15 GMT

Subject: Berkshire County Flag to be Registered!

Dear Supporters,

I have received a message from the Communities Vexillologist, Philip Tibbetts, at the Flag Institute. I am therefore pleased and proud to announce that the proposed flag is going to be Registered as the official flag of the county very soon!!!

Thank you ever so much to all the local groups who supported this project, it most definitely couldn't have been done with out you! A particular thank you to Anne Harrison at the Berkshire Archaeological Society for submitting the formal request to register the flag.

A big thank you must also go to the county's Lord Lieutenant, James Puxley for formally supporting the Berkshire Flag. Without his support, Berkshire wouldn't be able to register the flag with the Flag Institute.

Twenty-one supporter groups is a record number for registering a county flag, beating the last record of eighteen (Staffordshire). The support for this flag is unbelievable, the community should be very proud. I shall send you a link to the Berkshire County Flag when it appears on the UK Flag Registry in the next couple of days. I shall also forward links to flag manufactures, when they start to produce the county flag.

It is very important that the support for the county's flag continues and the flag is seen flying right across Berkshire! Photos of it flying would be very welcome indeed.

Thank you all once again,

All the best,

Brady

See the front cover for the design - Very similar to our badge, red deer, yellow background, brown tree and green field. Several societies have indicated they will purchase one to fly. Note that it refers to the historic county not the administrative areas so 'occupied Berkshire' South of the Thames is in and Slough goes with Buckinghamshire.

New Books and Reviews

Wood's Radley College Diary (1855-1861)

Edited by Mark Spurrell, Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. 70, 2016. Ixii + 327pp. ISBN 978 0902509 83 2. £25.

Everyone likes a good diary, one that goes beyond the weather and a record of appointments to tell a story about the writer and his world. The diary of the Revd William Wood does that. He was sub-warden (deputy head) of Radley College in the 1850s and '60s. The school was of recent foundation (1847), still finding its way in the world, but it was attracting pupils from the ranks of gentry, aristocracy and wealthy middle classes. At the time of this diary the school was ruled by the Revd Dr William Sewell, who had founded it and was now warden (headmaster). The masters (fellows) were mainly young men in their twenties, many educated at Oxford. William Wood was one of those, a fellow of Trinity College.

His diary tells of relationships with the boys – matters of discipline, choice of prefects, their progress to university – and with the other masters. It tells of family matters, although some sensitive issues are skated over, and of the life of a non-resident fellow of Trinity. Wood was going in to Oxford once or twice a week, walking, riding (his troubles with horses read just like a car-owner's fables), travelling by cab, train, occasionally omnibus.

The big story in the diary, however, is the relationship of masters and head. Radley was founded as a college, hence the nomenclature of warden, fellows, and so on, and was supposed to be governed collegiately. But Dr Sewell, as founder, treated it as his own. The result was continual disagreement about matters great and small, where the fellows thought they had been disregarded and made to look unfavourably before the boys. Discipline, and academic work were among the causes of dispute: Wood thought that Sewell gave too many half holidays and times for play at the expense of scholarship. But, worse was the way the warden handled the money. Dr Sewell and his brother, who acted as finance manager, ran the school extravagantly, almost bankrupting the place, until it was rescued and refounded in 1861.

You do not have to be a specialist in Victorian education to enjoy this. There's drama in the story – a play could be written from it – which makes it well worth the read and the publication. Mark Spurrell has done an excellent job of editing, making sure we know who the characters are and writing an introduction that sets the whole perfectly in context.

Jonathan Brown

Early Closing Day - Air Raids on Reading 1939-1945

by Mike Cooper ISBN 978-09935512-1-5 published by Scallop Shell Press

This book is a must for anyone with an interest in the History of Reading or in the Home Front of World War II. I had a real problem with the book however in that it brought back so many memories that I couldn't put it down. On page 3 he makes the remark *'Memory, subsequent experience, reading about the subject and the very real pleasure of talking and being listened to can all distort the record given.'* How true that is. As a school boy growing up amidst the bombing of Birmingham in 1940 I thought it was all great fun. But it wasn't - people were getting killed and injured but I was too young to understand.

Reading suffered fairly lightly during the war so Mike has been able to dig out almost all the known facts about the subject and regretting that Luftwaffe Records are not available for much of the time. He provides us with background on the measures taken by Authority to protect the public although his account of Anderson shelters misses the point that they were next to useless for as soon as it began to rain they flooded and there was no way to dry out the gooey mud that stayed there for days.

He takes us through a summary of the raids in the greater Reading area and then deals with the event that seems to dominate Reading's memory - ie the bombing of Martha's Pantry on the 10th February 1943 - the only event for which we have a memorial plaque. He goes on to discuss some of the consequences of the raids and reflects on the memories that Reading folk have given him of the events covered. Finally we get tables giving details of casualties, arrangements, ARP posts and even details of wages paid. The index was a bit of a disappointment in that parts are not in alphabetical order and several entries are missing - eg Pangbourne which gets several mentions in the text but nothing in the index.

However Reading should be grateful for such a comprehensive account and particularly for the references to places to go for further information outside the scope of this book. Copies are available at Reading Central Library for £19.50.

John Chapman

Proctors for Parliament, Clergy, Community and Politics

Canterbury & York Society ISBN 978-0-907239-80-2

The latest publication by the Society was edited by Phil Bradford and Alison McHardy and itemises 2646 letters held at the National Archives in SC10. We tend to forget that the bishops and other senior clergy were summoned to attend parliament in the period covered (1248-1539) and these letters are mostly apologies for absence, naming a proctor who will represent them. This is the first of two volumes and we will have to wait for volume 2 to get the index. By and large most of bishops and abbots are well known but what these letters reveal are the names of lesser clergy who were sent in their stead, for example John de Blewbury, rector of Shillingford who deputises

several times for the Abbot of Abingdon. Robert de Aylestone, rector of Buckland deputised for Bishop Roger Martival at the Parliament called at York for the 6th May 1319. It seems Roger did not relish the long trip to the north. This is not a book for bedtime reading but it gives a comprehensive list of mediaeval parliaments and names men who probably do not appear in other records. Copies can be obtained from Boydell and Brewer PO box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF.

John Chapman

Spotlight on

Newbury District Field Club

The Field Club was founded in 1870; the Club's Rule No 1 set out its aims: "That a Society be formed under the name of "Newbury District Field Club" for the practical study in all its branches of the Natural History and Antiquities of West Berks and North Hants, and districts immediately adjacent." To meet these aims the Club encouraged all forms of study, providing a means to disseminate the results through lectures to the Club and through the Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club a publication that has continued, albeit intermittently, until the current day. The Transactions tell the history of the Club and show that various interests waxed and waned; long lists of plant species or lepidoptera reflecting members' enthusiasm for natural history, while reports of archaeological investigation, studies of historic buildings and the general aspects of local history are there from the start.

Over the years there have been rivals and schisms that saw the focus for some specific areas of study pass to specialist societies covering for instance: Ornithology, Botany, Geology and Archaeology. Today's Club maintains as wide a range of interests as the founders, but the emphasis in recent years has clearly been local history, specifically that of Newbury itself since many of the villages in the district have active local history societies of their own.

So who were the founders? A look at the list of officers of the Club printed in the first volume of the Transactions in 1871 tells us a lot about the Club. The Patron was the Earl of Carnarvon – from Highclere in Hampshire - reflecting the Clubs determination not to be limited by the County boundary. The first President (Chairman) was the Rector of Newbury, James Randall (later the first Bishop of Reading). The list of Vice-Presidents reads as if the Committee had determined to raise the profile of the Club as high as possible: Auberon Herbert MP, son of the Earl of Carnarvon and nationally renowned political thinker; Thomas Hughes, another MP, lived locally in Donnington Priory and was well known for his interest in local customs and folklore – but is best known as the author of Tom Brown's Schooldays; and Charles Kingsley, Rector of Eversley, but far better known as an author, notably of The Water Babies and Westward Ho! (no fewer than fourteen clerics feature among the long list of Officers of the Club). It was very much a club for gentlemen, new members had to be

invited to join (a practice that continued until the 1960s), a subscription was required (sadly still the case), and a basic tenet of the Club (then and now) was that “Theological and political questions of the present day shall be studiously avoided.”

Through the Club’s history certain members stand out through the pages of the Transactions as making major contributions, none more so than Walter Money, the prolific antiquarian, whose History of Newbury written in 1887 remains the most comprehensive history of the Borough available. His Battles of Newbury set a new standard for histories of the Civil War and remains relevant today despite many subsequent books on the subject. He also wrote a Popular History of Newbury and numerous articles and publications relating to nearby parishes- yet he still found time to become a town councillor and Secretary of the Field Club, a post he held for many years.

In 1875 he determined that there should be a monument to mark the site of the First Battle of Newbury and, through the Field Club, raised the necessary funds, purchased the site, and commissioned an architect (cheaply we suspect because it was his brother, James) and built the Falkland Memorial in southern Newbury. Another Club member, Dave Stubbs, recently followed a slightly less complicated route to get an information panel erected alongside the memorial – which was unveiled in 2015 by the current Lord Falkland and Dame Helen Ghosh, Chairman of the National Trust (to whom the Field Club had conveyed ownership of the memorial). Following Money’s death in 1929 the Club raised money for an extension to the Borough Museum in his memory.

Other notable members through the years have included : artist Victor Corden and architect Arthur Campbell Cooper whose paintings and sketches are often the only record of lost parts of the town; Walter Essex Wynter, surgeon and philanthropist who transformed Argyle Road into a haven for retired nurses – in almshouses built to conform with Essex Wynter’s own passion for all things Tudor; Brigadier Southby lepidopterist extraordinaire; Harold Peake and Tony Higgott – curators of the Newbury Museum and great supporters of the Club; Evelyn Kaines-Thomas, Margaret Wood, O G S Crawford, Stan Ford, Norman Fox, and Paul Cannon, all prolific contributors to the Transactions some with international reputations, some only known locally – but all greatly valued by the Club.

Today the Newbury District Field Club is, essentially, a small local history society – very much standing on the shoulders of giants – they are a very hard act to follow! The most recent innovation has been the establishment in 2013 of an annual ‘History Day’ at which five or six talks on a common theme are given to an ever-increasing audience. This year’s event will be on September 2nd when the theme will be the area of Newbury known as ‘The City’.

Articles

The Reading Abbey Quarter

Reading Borough Council's Museum team is developing an exciting plan to transform Reading's Abbey precinct into a unique historical and cultural destination. The Abbey Quarter plans will pull together a number of important historic sites, buildings and structures under a single, co-ordinated approach.

Many of the Quarter's historic features are recognised as having national and local importance, being designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings. Reading Museum's significant collections relating to the Abbey are of international importance and reflect Reading's long history of global links. What started out as a move to make safe the Abbey ruins in Reading has turned into a major cultural and historical project which will bring together many features of historic Reading.

The main conservation priorities are the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Gateway, both Scheduled Monuments on the Historic England 'Heritage at Risk Register'. In June 2014 the Council secured initial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and developed more detailed plans for its Reading Abbey Revealed project that were submitted to the HLF in September 2015. In December 2015 HLF confirmed that our second round application had been successful and work will start on conservation work in January 2017. Separate funding has already improved Town Hall Square in 2013, while work to restore St Laurence's churchyard wall was completed in August 2015.

The project to conserve the Abbey was initiated after public access to the ruins was closed in summer 2009 when a condition survey highlighted the 'poor and rapidly deteriorating condition of the walls'. Survey work has recently been carried out by specialist building surveyors, taking high-tech images of the ruins. Following a study of these 3D scans, architects have created a detailed picture map of each area to help identify the extent of the conservation required. They have also reviewed the work required on other areas including the Abbey Gateway.

In October 2014, work to install a temporary scaffold roof on the Abbey Gateway was completed. A condition survey on the building in 2013, with support from Historic England, revealed that the current roof was no longer watertight and blocked drainage pipes had led to water damage of the fabric. The temporary roof sits on top of the current roof and is not visible from ground level. This has allowed the building to dry out and prevent any further damage to the Abbey Gate until permanent repairs begin in 2017.

As part of creating a wider strategic framework for Reading's heritage, the Council prepared a draft Heritage Statement. This is provided context and input in the development of Reading's Cultural and Heritage Strategy.

The Quarter shows evidence of all periods since the Abbey's dissolution: a Tudor royal residence, civil war defences, Jane Austen's school, the impressive municipal buildings, Victorian public gardens and Oscar Wilde's infamous Reading Gaol. There are buildings by famous architects including Sir John Soane, A.W.N. Pugin, Alfred Waterhouse and Sir George Gilbert Scott. Significant public sculpture within the Quarter includes George Blackall Simonds' Maiwand Lion and statue of Queen Victoria, and contemporary artworks such as the Oscar Wilde Memorial Walk.

The Hidden Abbey project

The Hidden Abbey Project was established to discover the extent and nature of the underground evidence of Reading Abbey and its burials. The Project is contemporary with, but not part of the Reading Abbey Revealed Project (RAR). However its findings will help inform the RAR interpretation of the Reading Abbey Quarter as well as the Ministry of Justice's sale of Reading Gaol.

Reading Borough Council is coordinating the project, in tandem with the RC Diocese of Portsmouth and the Ministry of Justice, as the principal public landowners in the Abbey Quarter site, together with the Friends of Reading Abbey, Darlow Smithson Productions, and Philippa Langley of Little Marilyn Productions Ltd.

The aim of the Project was to use ground-penetrating radar to locate the boundaries and extent of Reading Abbey in its current modern setting and to survey the site to better interpret the Abbey Ruins whilst locating possible sites for future investigation. The survey was carried out in summer 2016. The results of this survey were presented within a report showing the location of a number of geophysical anomalies probably related to the abbey's construction, and possible graves, as well as a number of other potential archaeological targets. Other features identified include a former road, disturbance from tree roots and utilities.

Reading Abbey Ruins and The Blade

In December 2015 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed a grant of £1.77 million for Reading Borough Council's Reading Abbey Revealed project, with Council match funding of £1.38 million. This means the Council can finally fulfil its long-standing ambition to re-open the Abbey Ruins and Gateway to the public.

In January 2017 we appointed CRL Restoration as the main contractor responsible for implementing the conservation plans which start in February 2017. Alongside these extensive conservation works we have a programme of events and educational activities breathing new life into Reading's most important historic gem. This programme is being co-ordinated by newly appointed specialist staff based at Reading Museum in collaboration with a variety of organisations and partners. These activities will range from hard-hat tours during the conservation work to a high profile opening event.

Site-wide interpretation of the Abbey Quarter will include a new display at Reading Museum opening in 2018. The new interpretation information that will

uncover the Quarter's hidden heritage and reveal its pivotal significance to Reading's history.

Local people and visitors from further afield will also benefit from the Museum's well known track-record in both community engagement and volunteering. The Museum has recently successfully renewed its 'Investing in Volunteer' status and has started its Abbey volunteering programme to engage 35 new regular volunteers who will contribute across a broad range of activities to care for and share the Abbey's heritage.

The conservation proposals were prepared and approved following detailed condition surveys and trial repairs undertaken during the project's development phase with specialists, architects and in close relationship with Historic England. The events programme was developed following extensive public consultation, in which more than 1,000 Reading residents responded to an online survey.

Lambourn Gasworks

The BLHA Chairman receives all sorts of e-mail communications, most of them inappropriate and not worth passing on, but the one about the gasworks in Lambourn was more interesting than most, and I'm wondering if any of our readers can help. According to the enquirer, there is a story that the Lambourn gasworks was founded, owned, and operated by women.

In England, it seems that every town had at least one gasworks, and even some villages had one. They were started by private companies, sometimes by large employers who ran pipes from their factories to the houses of employees. Later on, the undertakings were often bought out and run by local authorities. At Lambourn, the works was independent until the end. Lambourn is one of those places that was once considered a town, and is now usually thought of as a village, nestling in the Berkshire Downs.

Gas production is believed to have started in 1867, so the coal must have come in by horse and cart. The Lambourn Valley Railway didn't open until 1898. Kevin Robertson and Roger Simmonds, in their 1984 book on the railway, say that in later years, deliveries of coal for the Lambourn Gas Company were made to Lambourn Station. "This was a small concern, with neither wagons of their own nor an office. Instead, they stored their paperwork in a corner of the goods shed."

Production stopped in 1945, perhaps because of the nationalisation of the gas industry. Records of the company have so far proved elusive. From old Berkshire directories it is possible to find the names of the proprietor, or sometimes the secretary, of the company. They are often the names of men. It would be good to know the origin of the "run by women" story, and to know about the founding, running and closure of the enterprise. Please contact the editor if you have information or can point the way to information.

David Cliffe.

Society News

Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group

Our BIAG Newsletter 40 Winter 2016 is now available as a download from our website (note it's not the current issue!) <http://biag.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BIAG-Newsletter-40-Winter-2016.pdf>. To receive the latest you'll need to join our group <http://biag.org.uk/membership/> it has just been published together with the following covering email.

Thanks once again to our editor John Coulson who juggles putting together our quarterly newsletters and volunteering at Crofton Beam Engines (<http://www.crofton-beamengines.org/>). The site is opening the 2017 season on Saturday 8th April following a major repair and boiler rebuild so do go and support them. A train from Reading to Bedwyn followed by a short walk down the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath to reach the site is an enjoyable way to spend a Saturday (or Sunday); it beats traipsing around shops! If you have time you could also visit Wilton Windmill (<http://www.wiltonwindmill.co.uk/>), however, their season doesn't start until 15th April 2017, so this needs a little more planning.

Graham Smith has taken the mantle of secretary of the group from Peter Trout ... Peter remains our group chairman. If you should wish or need to contact Graham please use (secretary@biag.org.uk).

We are in the early stages of planning a Day Excursion to Swanage and Corfe Castle; if you're interested in attending please let me know (contact@biag.org.uk). The visit flyer will be available at the end of May once Graham and I have done the reccy; but put a date in the diary for 5th August.

Also, but in more embryonic form, is a day excursion to Gloucester Docks and the National Waterways Museum, 23rd September, another day for the diary. The flyer should also be available at the end of May. Bookings for both being taken now! As always, husbands, wives and partners are welcome to join us for both events. If you have little interest in railways or docks and canals there's always Corfe Castle, Swanage, Gloucester with its excellent shopping centre with many independent shops and of course its cathedral with 1,300 years of history!

As always, John is on the look-out for newsworthy items & snippets of IA information and longer articles to help fill our newsletters and entertain our readers. So if you have anything that you'd like to share with others please forward for consideration john.coulson10@btinternet.com. If there's anyone who's is attending an event in the next few months (SERIAC, SW&WERIAC etc.) and can pen a few words John would appreciate copy; it doesn't have to be perfect in spelling or grammar as this can be corrected at the editorial stage. Anything of IA interest that you have spotted on your travels; again, a few words preferably with a photograph would be welcome. Maybe a museum or event trip that you consider worth the group knowing about. They don't have to be lengthy article.

Don't forget to view our website, it's always being updated www.biag.org.uk.

If you'd like to join us or attend one of our meetings you'll always be welcome. Take a look at our website

Bob Haskins

Berkshire Archaeological Society

The Annual Society Day School was held on 4 March 2017 in the east of the County at The Cornerstone, Wokingham, where we were informed and interested by a variety of speakers.

The morning was launched by descriptions of the projects underway, largely due to building development, by the Archaeological Officers, Sarah Orr and Roland Smith, for East and West Berkshire. This was followed by Jessica Barnsley describing her PhD work in determining the origins of a female burial in a hollowed out log, which she decided was not a boat adapted for the purpose.

Andrew Hutt described the Society's work in investigating Berkshire Saxon era and their excavation in a joint project with the Reserch Group at Blounts Court. This was followed by Steve Ford of TVAS displaying his company's Iron Age excavation results at Hatch Farm and Matthews Green Farm, Wokingham where the circular drip trenches from three houses and the field boundaries were clearly discernible.

Helen Vernon from the MOLAS revealed their findings when excavating the burial yard of the 18th century Congregational Church in Maidenhead. Many of those buried in this narrow excavation were women, some of whom were wearing gold earrings and wedding rings.

Jim Leary from the University of Reading related his findings in the Round Mounds Project this emanated from his participation in the engineering project that dissected Silbury Hill.

In conclusion, Janette Platt from MOLAS explained how the archaeological assets are managed in mineral extraction areas by focusing on the mineral rich area of East Berkshire.

In retrospect, we were given much to reflect on from a wealth of information given by a splendid range of speakers and topics. Our thanks go to Trevor Coombs for organising the day for the Society.

Ann Griffin

Goring Gap Local History Society

In January our monthly speaker was Alan Turton who told us about the Sieges of Basing House. Alan was the curator of the house for many years and is an expert on its history. The mansion was a focus of fighting in the English Civil War. Originally an 11th century castle, the fervently Catholic 5th Marquis of Winchester built a large Tudor house on the site in 1535. The Parliamentary troops attacked the Royalist stronghold of Basing House several times but were only successful in breaching the

walls on the third attempt in 1645. The house, now a ruin, is open to the public.

A favourite speaker, Liz Woolley, spoke to us in February about Leisure and entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford. She explained to us that from the mid 19th century onwards, improvements in wages and working conditions enabled ordinary people to take up leisure pursuits. Apart from visiting the pub, sports facilities were popular and facilities such as new theatres and libraries allowed for intellectual development. Of course, fun was also on the agenda and fairs and circuses did not lose their popular appeal.

In March we enjoyed a fascinating talk by Julie Ann Godson on the Water Gypsy, Betty Ridge, who, born a Thames fisherman's daughter, married a viscount, William Ashbrook and founded a dynasty of successful descendants, one of whom became the Duchess of Marlborough and lived at Blenheim Palace.

The Transport History Group's 2017 programme of outings kicked off in February with a visit to the newly refurbished Museum of English Rural Life at Reading. Travelling to the venue by public transport and stopping en route for an enjoyable pub lunch, a record crowd of nearly 40 members was treated to a tour of the displays by two excellent and lively volunteer guides, before exploring the collections in detail at leisure. By pre-arrangement the archivist had put out a selection of documents and photographs relating to the Goring Gap for our inspection, which proved absolutely fascinating. Many thanks to the museum staff for looking after our somewhat exuberant group so well. A visit is highly recommended to other local history societies.

Only a couple of weeks elapsed before we were off again –this time by train to Gloucester to the British Waterways Museum in the docks there. This institution has also recently had a refurbishment, but instead of increasing the amount of material on show as we found at Reading, the displays had shrunk! Nevertheless it was an interesting trip and with more time to spare than they expected, many of the participants took the opportunity to visit the wonderful cathedral where they were given excellent guided tours. I believe a pub lunch featured in this outing too.

The third outing of this action-packed season was to Southampton where a pre-booked party of 20 visited the Eastleigh Carriage Works. This site is only open very occasionally to the public and so the Transport Group was lucky to be allocated a slot. Formerly under the stewardship of British Rail, the works is now in private ownership and restores vintage diesel locomotives and old rolling stock. Following yet another pub lunch (the Group should buy shares in Wetherspoons!) most of the party walked to the Lakeside Railway and enjoyed rides on the miniature trains before heading for home.

Outings are planned each month until November, to a wide variety of venues involving trains, planes, boats and cars. Details are available on the Society's website: www.goringgaphistory.org.uk where the Transport Group newsletters may also be seen.

Our annual coach outing this year takes place on 27 June when we will visit Stratford on Avon.

Janet Hurst, Secretary

History of Reading Society

The January talk was presented by Liz Tait a retired school teacher. The subject was the Hidden History of Reading's Great War Graves and Memorials. Liz founded the Reading Remembrance Trust in 2001 to research and publish the names of the town's men and women who lost their lives during the First World War. She is particularly interested in the war graves at Reading's Wokingham Road Cemetery.

The February talk was presented by Stephen Burt a meteorologist at the University of Reading. The subject was 100 Years of Reading's Weather. University College, University of Reading's predecessor, first began recording the town's weather in 1903. Today the University's Department of Meteorology is based at the Whiteknights campus where it monitors the town's weather 365 days of the year and is the largest such department in Europe with an international reputation.

The March talk was presented by Mike Cooper a well known speaker and author on local and military history. The subject was the history of the Reading suburb of Southcote. In 2016 Mike published a booklet on the area's history as part of Reading Borough Council's project to promote local history to a wider audience through publications and public talks.

For 2017 the Society has produced a calendar with images from Reading Central Library's collection of colourful advertisements for old Reading firms. Future projects include: hopefully to produce a CD version of the Reading insurance maps that were produced between the 1890s and the 1950s which are in the Central Library and Berkshire Record Office's collections. The Society will publish a book on the history of Reading's cinemas by our chairman, David Cliffe. A book on the public houses of Reading is being considered.

More information at our website: www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk

Sean Duggan

Hedgerley Historical Society

Following our AGM on Wednesday 19th April Nigel Smales presented his talk on Nancy Astor and the Cliveden set. The Cliveden Set were a group of prominent individuals who were politically influential in the 1930's and who were in the circle of Nancy Astor, Viscountess Astor. The name comes from Cliveden the stately home in Taplow Buckinghamshire which was then Astor's country residence.

Nigel Smales was born in Ealing and moved to Taplow in 1997. Nigel began his career as an Architect before becoming a Management Consultant. When Nigel retired in 2011 he published a biography of his father Eddy 'Smiler' Smales and then he wrote a detailed history of his village 'Taplow Moments' that was published in 2015.

Our 2017/18 Programme has now been published and copies sent to members

with the AGM Agenda /Subscription Renewal Notice.

We have several outings planned for the summer including an Afternoon cruise on the Thames from Runnymede, A visit to the Fawley Hill Railway and Museum and a day trip to Cardiff on the GWR.

Hedgerley Historical Society meet at Hedgerley Memorial Hall Kiln Lane Hedgerley SL2 3UZ.

Further details from John Lovelock 01753-647187 / jdlovelock@btinternet.com

John Lovelock

Pangbourne Heritage Group

During 2016 we submitted a proposal to the West Berkshire Heritage Forum that the Pangbourne Police Station be placed on West Berkshire Council's Local List of Heritage Assets. The building dates from 1911, and was described in Pevsner's Buildings of England, Berkshire, as "handsome, neo-Georgian but with a two-gabled projection at the front." We submitted our proposal to the Forum in May 2016, and the expert panel at a meeting of the Forum in September recommended the Police Station, (external front facade only), for Local Listing. It was added to the Local List by the West Berkshire Council's Head of Planning on 2nd March this year. This will mean that it can be taken into consideration in deciding any planning application affecting that façade.

Turning to our regular programme since our last report, we had our usual annual village walk , on 13th July 2016. On that occasion the walk was to be along the Thames riverside in Pangbourne from Whitchurch Bridge along Shooter's Hill to the parish boundary at Sots Hole. In the event we got less than half way as we had permission from the Environment Agency for members only to visit the Whitchurch Lock and Weir. The keeper and volunteer assistant lock keeper kept us so interested in what they had to say about its history and operation that we postponed the rest of the walk for a talk the following year by Lyn Davies, to be on 10th May 2017.

The programme continued in September with memories of a bygone era in Sulham, Tidmarsh and Pangbourne, by Jean Harland. It took the form of an informal display and general discussion of her large collection of old photographs since about 1900. In November, Henry Russell, director of the Programme in Conservation of the Historic Environment at Reading University, and an expert in the field of church architecture, talked about the parish church, St James the Less, which, this year, is celebrating the 150th anniversary since its reconstruction in 1867.

Our meetings so far in 2016 have had a practical interest. In January we set out a display of maps and photographs from our own archive, focusing on Pangbourne as a business and shopping centre, inviting members to contribute their own memorabilia as part of a possible future project. Sue Ellis took time off from her work with the West Berkshire Heritage Forum in February to give us a detailed account of her experience in researching her own family history, with practical advice. And in April, Alison Carter, a former resident of Pangbourne, discussed how old photographs can be

dated using the clues in people's clothes and other personal features, drawing on her own family since the 1860s, as well as more general history of dress. By contrast, March gave us a welcome return visit by Nick Brazil of Whitchurch, this time with his full length video of the village of Aldworth, its community life and in particular the "giants" in the village church of St Mary's.

Finally, we had a small display at the Annual General Meeting of the Berkshire Local History Association in Newbury and will also be present at the Heritage Roadshow on 22nd April at the West Berkshire Museum in Newbury.

Our regular meetings continue at 7.30 every 2nd Wednesday each month at Rosewood Hall, Whitchurch Road, Pangbourne. Visitors are welcome unless otherwise notified.

Lyn Davies

Project Purley

Most of our members had heard of Salters Steamers and many had travelled on them but it was a revelation when Simon Wenham gave us a potted history of the company at our January Meeting. John and Stephen Salter set up a boatyard at Folly Bridge in Oxford in 1858 and it is still there.

Salters expanded into building different and bigger boats. One of the more interesting was a paddle steamer for transportation overland to the Congo for a missionary society. There were tie-ups with the railways in the 1950s and 60s for circular rail/river tours, and peak years for passenger numbers were in the 1970s. The passenger boats are still popular, with staff and customers alike, and the Salter boats are a very familiar sight on our stretch of the Thames.

Stephen Fisher was the speaker at the February meeting on the subject of the Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War. Stephen is a researcher on the Forgotten Wrecks project, being delivered by the Maritime Archaeology Trust to contribute to the Imperial War Museum's Lives of the First World War initiative. His talk started with some facts about the First World War at sea: 4,223 ships lost: 2,479 merchants, 254 warships, 675 fishing boats, 815 auxiliaries; about 57,000 lives lost, including approximately 30,000 with no known grave.

Our AGM took place in March with a new committee elected and John Chapman taking over as Chairman.

It was followed by Jean Harland talking of *Growing up in Sulham and Tidmarsh*. We learnt of the Wilder family and how well they looked after their employees with housing and schooling for the children. We were fascinated by their first car which took to the road around the turn of the 20th Century and was driven around to impress. But it was the domestic information which fascinated us the most. Life was far from idyllic by modern standards but people were happy and got on with their lives.

John Chapman

Shinfield & District Local History Society

Our January meeting was our AGM at which all officers were re-elected to serve for a further year. Following the AGM we briefly discussed progress with the book on Shinfield in World War 1 we are hoping to produce. The Chairman then gave a presentation on some private research he has been doing concerning the *history of his home in Swallowfield*.

At our February meeting we reviewed further progress in producing the proposed book on Shinfield in World War 1. Following this one of our members, Barry Boulton, gave a short talk on two private research projects he has been undertaking. The first concerned *Adam de Stratton*, referenced in the Victoria County History of Berkshire, as rector of Shinfield St. Mary's Church in 1280. This appears to be at variance with information on the brass plate in the church listing vicars of the parish where the vicar from 1280 to 1302 is shown as William de Stratton. Adam and William were brothers and it is possible that both were vicars of Shinfield at some time in 1280, William succeeding Adam, but Adam's name not being on the plate. Barry has found that Adam de Stratton was rector of 23 parishes so Shinfield could have been one of those. However, of greater interest is Adam's career as a money lender in which capacity he employed some very unscrupulous tactics to extract money from a variety of individuals. He was finally brought to justice and ended his days in the Tower of London.

The second project concerned Barry's attempt to trace the route of the Roman road from Silchester to Reading. Based on records of Roman artefacts found over the years he believes he has established a likely route.

The major part of our March meeting was taken up with reviewing an initial draft of our book on Shinfield in World War 1. This is now coming together well but there is still more work to do, particularly in searching local newspapers of the time for any news of Shinfield and the effects of the war.

In April Dr Margaret Simons returned to give an excellent presentation on "Reading Women and the War", the war in question being WW1. She began with reference to the 1911 census which revealed that of the nearly 10,000 women recorded for Reading as being employed some 37% were in domestic service, 15% in clothing manufacture, 11% in bread and biscuit making, 5% in teaching, 4% in clerical work and 2.6% in medical work. At the outbreak of war many women were left in financial difficulty as their husbands enlisted in the armed services and they began to seek employment to provide some income to the family. Work undertaken included nursing, postal deliveries, manufacture of medical supplies and clerical work but as the war progressed and the shortage of male labour became more acute women undertook more heavy manual work. This included the manufacture of munitions in companies such as Huntley & Palmer, Huntley Boorne and Stevens and Pulsometer Engineering Company where the women were known as Munionettes. Women from all classes worked on the land, many of them trained at Reading University College Farm in Shinfield. Despite doing work previously done by men, women were paid only half of

the male rate. The presentation closed with a comparison of the breakdown of women's employment in 1921 with that in 1911. The total employed had risen to nearly 12,000 but noticeably there were fewer domestic servants but more teachers and clerks.

Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

At the end of last year, we explored our early connections to Old Sarum and Salisbury. The Manor of Sonning, including the Bishops Palace, became part of the Diocese in the 11th century and Stephen Dunn, the Head Guide at Salisbury Cathedral gave details of how the building changed over the years to reflect the tastes and needs of its community. Sonning was transferred to the Oxford Diocese in 1846 but the talk continued with details of the latest modern alterations, leaving members with an excellent example of a medieval building that is still exciting and useful in the 21st century.

Wargrave, our neighbouring village by contrast, provided the topic for our February lecture. We wanted to compare the two Thames-side villages as both had Saxon origins, fine Tudor buildings and an ancient Parish Church, and Peter Delaunay, from the local History Society proved to be a very knowledgeable and entertaining speaker.

Agriculture, fishing and the production of a wide range of goods was evidently an important factor in Wargrave's development, resulting in a thriving community and a great variety of shops until very recent times. The Church had to be rebuilt after a fire in 1914 but Mill Green and many of Wargrave's fine Georgian houses remain. We heard details about a late 18th century theatre in the heart of the village, noted the impact of the railway and took a close look at the well-known Woodclyffe Hall built in 1904. The village expanded greatly in the 20th century but over the years has been home, like Sonning, to many important patrons. Robert Palmer in Victorian times and Robert Piggott in 1940 both funded educational establishments and their legacies continue to made a valuable contribution to the local area.

For more information on both villages see – “The Book of Sonning” – revised edition published in 1999, “The Book of Wargrave” published in 1987 or “The Second Book of Wargrave” published in 1998

Pauline Simmonds

Swallowfield Local History Society

On 16th February we all enjoyed our evening with Tony King who stepped in at the last minute to give us his talk: ‘*Things Aren't What They Used To Be*’ - or is it just nostalgia? Looking back to the time when we were younger! Memories were evoked, surprised expressions by many of us who were transported back to a time before the internet, mobile phones and the incredible technology available today.

The AGM in March was an evening when after the official business was over we

had time to spend discussing and bouncing ideas from one to the other. A unique opportunity for Members to add their ideas and thoughts to those of the Committee and we plan to introduce some of these suggestions and initiatives into our programme.

April will see us welcome Janet Firth Chairman of the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group to talk to us about their work and the 'digs' and history discovered in our local area.

In May we are pleased that Sally Ballard who had to cancel her visit in February is able to come and talk to us about her childhood memories of living in Swallowfield. This fits in well with our continual quest to find people who can tell us more about the Parish in the past.

A Tea Party on June 15th in the afternoon when we are inviting some people, who have spent their lives in the Parish of Swallowfield, to talk about their memories, anecdotes, knowledge and stories, some of which may have been passed down through the generations, maybe they will bring photographs and other memorabilia. Our plan is to capture and gather this important information – this will be the first of several Tea Parties – and to eventually write a booklet with all the fascinating facts we have gleaned, and ensure these stories are not lost but recorded for posterity.

Sally Ballard has agreed to take us for a walk on Tuesday 18th July (a change of day from our usual Thursday) around the village of Swallowfield which is brimming with interesting historical facts, myths and legends. She is an experienced guide and excellent raconteur, which will undoubtedly add to the enjoyment of everyone who joins us.

Our Web site www.slhsoc.org.uk will give you all the details of our forthcoming Programme. Visitors are always welcome, if a subject attracts your attention, just come along and join us for the evening. The Rose Room, Swallowfield Parish Hall, 7.45 for 8 pm. If you would like to know more about the History Society please contact either Ken Hussey (Chairman) on 0118 988 3650 or Maggie Uttley (Secretary) on 0118 988 2954 or email kcuttley@aol.com

Wargrave Local History Society

In January Daniel Wood, who grew up in Wargrave, gave an interesting and enjoyable account of his experiences as a boatman on the Thames – the upper reaches, the lower reaches, and sometimes in coastal waters. For the last 15 years, he has been associated with one particular boat – the Cambridge University umpire's launch, Amaryllis. Using time lapse photography, he showed how these launches were used. Daniel was also invited to join the Royal Household in 2014, as one of the Queen's Swan-uppers, and he showed what the ceremony involved. He ended by recounting his trip with Amaryllis to the 2012 Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.

The Lambourn Valley Railway was Graham Jones' subject in February, when the

illustrations included some rare film of the line. The valley had hardly changed from Saxon times until the railway arrived in the late 19th century. Economically, the case for a line was that instead of taking all day, people and goods could be moved down the valley in 45 minutes. The first scheme was begun in 1873, but – after several setbacks that Graham explained - it was 1898 before a line opened. The GWR took over in 1905, making many improvements. Unsurprisingly, horses were the principal traffic, although after WW2 a different special freight was carried – ammunition to the US base at Welford.

Following the formal AGM business, Peter Symons gave an illustrated presentation in March outlining the history of the *Wargrave and Shiplake Regatta* – the 3rd largest on the Thames. The earliest recorded regatta, organised by the Wargrave Yacht Club, took place 150 years ago, in August 1867 consisted of 7 races in all, with ‘amateurs’ competing for silver trophies and ‘professionals’ (ie in trade) for money. The event now takes place over 2 days – with a maximum of 420 races in 2004, one every 3 – 4 minutes without breaks over 14 hours each day. Summer floods caused a cancellation (for safety) in 2007 and subsequently this “two days of fun in a field by the river” has been closer to 360 races.

In April, George Rawlinson shared his memories of *growing up in Wargrave*. His illustrated, and thought provoking, talk looked at the influences on him – parents, older siblings, teachers, the community – such as the Sunday School, the amateur dramatics etc. He became more adventurous once he had a bike, exploring at first the local area, and then further afield – all experiences shaping his future, when he trained for the merchant navy, and travelled the wider world.

Our meetings start at 8 pm in the meeting room at the Old Pavilion on Wargrave Recreation Ground. For more information about the Society, see www.wargravehistory.org.uk/ or contact me, Peter Delaney, on 0118 940 3121.

Museums and Libraries

News from the Berkshire Record Office

What’s new to the archives?

We have catalogued a great many records over the past year including those relating to poverty in early 20th century Reading in records of the Reading Distress Committee, 1905-1921 (R/AS3) as well as the Berkshire County Council’s Public Assistance Department (C/PA) which relate to poor relief and health matters from the abolition of the Boards of Guardians in 1930 to the establishment of the Welfare State in 1948. Other County Council records now available include files relating to the administration of the World War Two evacuation scheme where children were evacuated to Berkshire (C/CD/B) including attendance registers for those from London schools (C/ED/H).

Other records include the personal papers of Phoebe Cusden (D/EX1485), mayor

of Reading in 1947; papers of local architect Conrad Willcocks (D/EWK), which include records of the Berkshire Local History Recording Scheme, Berkshire Architectural Records Committee and Reading and District Civic Society; the Wantage Improvement Commissioners records, 1828 to 1887 (WT/AS) [formerly at the Oxfordshire History Centre]; papers of the Quarter Sessions Licencing Committee, 1903-1928, (Q/AC6); the usual additions to parish registers and the completion the catalogue of the Community of St John Baptist (D/EX1675) which was established in 1852. They ran orphanages, children's homes, boarding schools, hospitals and convalescent homes around the country as well as carrying out missionary work, but are probably best known in Berkshire for the House of Mercy in Hatch Lane, Clewer. More information on this collection together with other newly available records for the rest of Berkshire can be found in our newsletter, *The Berkshire Echo*. You can view this online on our website: <http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/berkshire-echo/>. If you would like to receive the *Echo* directly, just drop us a line and join our mailing list: email arch@reading.gov.uk.

World War I blog

The blog continues to grow on a daily basis. Each post relates to that day or month 100 years earlier, as the 1914-1918 war unfolds before Berkshire eyes. Why not take a look: <http://berkshirevoiceswwi.wordpress.com/>

New online gallery

The BRO exhibition from 2014/15 entitled 'Oscar Wilde and Reading Gaol' is now available to view on our website gallery pages. Find out more about the man and the Victorian institution: <http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/albums/oscar-wilde-and-reading-gaol/>

Don't forget to look at our website www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk for general information, our online catalogue and the latest news. You can also find us on Facebook (The Berkshire Record Office) and follow us on Twitter (@berksarchives).

Ivone Turnbull Senior Archivist

Maidenhead Heritage Centre

Opening on 3 May 2017 is a new exhibition "Maidenhead in the 1950's" This will include sections on the Vanwall Racing Car and the Fairey Rotodyne – the world's first vertical take-off airliner. Both were conceived and made in the town.

We shall be taking part in the "Festival of Archaeology" during July with a special display "Found in the Ground". This will show that finds do not have to be old or valuable to be interesting. During the Festival there will be a screening of the 1959 film of the excavation of Cox Green Roman villa. There will also be a finds identification day with David Williams, our local Finds Liaison Officer.

We are now taking bookings for our River Thames Cruises on 5 and 11 September. A chance to sit back and enjoy the beautiful river from Maidenhead to Marlow and back with a commentary on the history, wildlife and scandals. As Charles

Dickens wrote in 1888, “Whether for the angler, the artist, the oarsman or the simple tourist; whether for picknicking, and it has even been whispered “spooning”, to say nothing of camping out, there are few places in England to beat Cliveden Reach at Maidenhead”.

Contact our Administrator for details.

Brian Boulter

Slough Libraries

This season, Slough Libraries has put together some great events with a historical theme and we think you might be interested in attending. All our talks are free but we do have a limited capacity so if you could please book online at <http://slough.spydus.co.uk/Events> we'd greatly appreciate it. - See Opportunities

You may remember last year Slough took part in CityRead London, where the whole of London (with Slough, and this year also Reading) are encouraged to read one book. This year's book is full of court intrigue in Tudor Times and its main character is a real person from history – Giordano Bruno. The book is Prophecy by SJ Parris, who also works as a journalist.

During April, across London, Slough and Reading you can pick up a FREE copy of the book at your local library, including libraries in Slough, and there will be events as well.

Gaby Koenig

West Berkshire Museum

New permanent exhibition – Lives and Landscapes

Our new permanent exhibition tells the story of West Berkshire, from the rocks under our feet to the stories of the people have lived here. From our early unknown ancestors, well known characters like Jack of Newbury to our most recent families – together they have created the towns and villages, roads and canals, fields and farms, industries, pastimes and organisations that we know today.

The exhibition looks at historical local events which had had international resonance such as the Greenham Common protests and national events such as the battles of Newbury which are featured alongside quieter leisure pursuits such as horse racing and theatre going.

Entry is free but donations are welcomed.

Ruth Howard Curator

Opportunities

Capability Brown in Berkshire Exhibition

26th April to 30th June

Celebrating the tercentenary of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the Berkshire Record Office is providing another chance to see the Berkshire Gardens Trust's exhibition originally displayed at Caversham Park in 2016. Additional archival treasures from the BRO relating to Brown in Berkshire will also be on display.

The Exhibition is FREE and available during our opening hours (Tue & Wed 09.00-17.00; Thu 09.00-21.00, Fri 09.00-16.30) between 26th April and 30th June .

Family History Sources

Wednesday 10 May

A talk at Slough Library 2-3pm - A great guide to what's available from the Berkshire Record Office

Thatcham in Old Photographs

Wednesday 17th May

A talk at West Berkshire Museum 19:00-20:00 by Dr Nick Young to tie-in with our current exhibition, Thatcham Remembered. The talk will include a tour around Thatcham in old picture postcards. Familiar and not so familiar buildings, locations and events will be seen with historical information. Views of the Broadway in the 1860s, Chapel Street in 1890s and Bath Road in the 1910s are just some of the scenes to be looked at along with many events such as the Anvil Firing.

Tickets cost £5. Available at the museum or online at westberkshireheritage.org-/whats-on

Victorian Prisons

Friday 19 May

A talk by Mark Stevens at Slough Library 11am-12pm

For King and another country

Monday 22 May

A talk 2-3pm by Shrabani Basu at Slough Library – about Shrabani's research on Indian soldiers fighting in World War 1

Slough between Wars

Thurs 25 May

At Slough Library 2-3 pm – who was right? The Times or Betjeman? With local historian Grant Masom

Lambourn Seven Barrows Walk

Sunday 23rd July 2017

Through this short guided walk (half a mile), West Berkshire Heritage (West Berkshire Council) with West Berkshire Countryside Society will demonstrate how important archaeology and chalkland wildlife are, and how they can be managed together. The walk starts at Seven Barrows Nature Reserve car park on B4001, which is also the core of the Bronze Age cemetery. No need to book, free event organised as part of the Festival of Archaeology 2017. Meeting place: Seven Barrows Nature reserve car park on B4001 at 14:00

Death and Commemoration in the Middle Ages*

A BLHA Study day at Ewelme Saturday 7th October

We will be holding a study day at the Church of St Mary the Virgin Ewelme

Arrive between midday and 2 pm and eat your own packed lunch in tranquil church grounds, and explore the interior of the church. If the weather's bad, lunch can be eaten inside the church - as long as there aren't any crisps dropped on the floor.

The programme will include talks by notable academics, focussing on the role of Ewelme in the middle ages. More details in the October Newsletter

David Lewis

From the Cotswolds to the Chilterns

The Historic Landscapes of Oxfordshire

A joint conference hosted by the Society for Landscape Studies and Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, to be held on **Saturday 21st October 2017** at St. Annes College, Oxford from 0930 to 1700.

The programme will include talks on the origins of Wessex and the Victoria County History project as well as on the evidence of the past we can get from studying today's landscapes.

Basic Fee: £35. For full time students and members of Society for Landscape Studies, Oxfordshire Architectural and History Society or Oxfordshire Local History Association the fee is £30.

The fee includes a buffet lunch and light refreshments in the morning and afternoon breaks.

Please email Brian Rich: brianrich457@btinternet.com for a copy of the programme and a booking form.

History Societies

- Arborfield Local History Society:** Secretary Tina Kemp, Kenneys Farm, Maggs Green, Arborfield RG2 9JZ [tina@geoffkemp.force).co.uk] see www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk
- Berkshire Archaeological Society:** Andrew Hutt, 19, Challenor Close, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 4UJ [info@berksarch.co.uk]
- 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]
- Berkshire Record Society,** Secretary Margaret Simons, 80 Reeds Ave, Earley, Reading RG6 5SR [margaretsimons@hotmail.co.uk]
- 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:** Mrs Jane Moss, 31 Huntsman's Meadow, Ascot, SL5 7PF [MossSandalwood@aol.com]
- Burnham Historians:** Mary Bentley, 38 Conway Road, Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 0LD tel 01628 665932 [burnhamhistorians@btinternet.com]
- Cox Green Local History Group:** Pat Barlow, 29 Bissley Drive, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 3UX. tel 01628 823890 weekends only. [alan.barlow2@btinternet.com]
- East Garston Local History Society:** Jonathan Haw, Goldhill House, Front Street, East Garston, Hungerford, RG17 7EU [jonathanhaw@btopenworld.com]
- East Ilsley Local History Society:** Sue Burnay, White Hollow, High St, E.Ilsley, Berks RG20 7LE tel 01635 281308 [info@eastilsleyhistory.com] [www.eastilsleyhistory.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]
- Finchampstead Society:** Mohan Banerji, 3 Tanglewood, Finchampstead, Berks, RG40 3PR tel 0118 9730479.
- Goring Gap Local History Society:** Janet Hurst, 6 Nun's Acre, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 9BE tel 01491 871022 [goringgaphistory@gmail.com] [www.goringgaphistory.org.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:** Vicki Chesterman, 7 Norman Road, Caversham RG4 5JN [vickichesterman@yahoo.co.uk] [www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk]
- Hungerford Historical Association: Secretary:** Secretary Mark Martin, 23 Fairview Road, Hungerford RG17 0BP. Tel: 01488 682932. [mandm.martin21@btinternet.com] [www.hungerfordhistorical.org.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:** Brian Madge, 11 Boulters Court, Maidenhead, SL6 8TH [bandgmadge@btinternet.com]
- Mid Thames Archaeological & Historical Society:** Jane Wall, 143 Vine Road, Stoke Poges, SL2 4DH [sec.mtaha@yahoo.co.uk]
- Mortimer Local History Group:** Mrs Janet Munson, The Laurels, Ravensworth Road, Mortimer, RG7 3UD [munsonsinmortimer@yahoo.co.uk]
- Newbury District Field Club:** Jane Burrell, Walnut Tree Cottage, Oxford Rd, Donnington, Newbury, RG14 3AG [tel 01635-46497] [secretary@ndfc.org.uk][www.ndfc.org.uk]

Oxfordshire Family History Society: Wendy Archer, The Old Nursery, Pump Lane, Marlow, SL7 3RS [chairman@ofhs.org.uk]

Pangbourne Heritage Group: Lyn Davies, 1 Hartslock Court, Pangbourne, RG8 7BJ [lyndav87@aol.com]

Project Purley: Catherine Sampson, 32 Waterside Drive, Purley on Thames, Berks, RG8 8AQ tel 0118 9422 255 [chairman@project-purley.eu] [www.project-purley.eu]

Sandhurst Historical Society: Mrs Jennie Ogden, 46 High St, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 8DY [j.ogden08@tiscali.co.uk][www.sandhurst-historical-society.org]

Shinfield & District Local History Society: Ann Young, 'Roselyn', School Green, Shinfield, Reading, Berks RG2 9EH. tel 0118 9882120. Reporter George Taylor [georgetaylor29@btinternet.com]

Sonning & Sonning Eye History Society: Diana Coulter, Red House Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berks, RG4 6UF tel 0118 9692132 [diana.coulter@orange.net]

Stanford in the Vale & District Local History Society: Dr David Axford, Honey End, 14 Ock Meadow, Stanford in the Vale, Oxon SN7 8LN tel 01367 718480 [dnax@btinternet.com]

Swallowfield Local History Society: Ken Hussey, Kimberley, Swallowfield RG7 1QX [www.slhsoc.org.uk]

Tadley Local History Society: 5 Church Road, Pamber Heath, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 3DP [www.tadshistory.com]

Thatcham Historical Society: Mr P Laverack, 2 Ashworth Drive, Thatcham, Berks, G19 3YU tel 01635 863536 [enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk] [www.thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk]

Theale Local History Society: Graham Reeves, 52 Parkers Corner, Englefield, RG7 5JR [thealehistory@aol.com]

Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society: Audrey Curtis, 39 New Road, Ruscombe RG10 9LN tel 0118 9343260 [audreycurt@googlemail.com] reporter Denise Wilkin

Wargrave Local History Society: Peter Delaney, 6 East View Close, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8BJ tel 0118 9403121 [secretary@wargravehistory.co.uk] [www.wargravehistory.org.uk]

Windsor Local History Group: Sue Ashley, 49 York Avenue, Windsor, SL4 3PA [nutritionsas-hley@hotmail.com] [www.windsorhistory.org.uk]

Friends of Windsor and Royal Borough Museum: Malcolm Lock, 1 Duncannon Crescent, Windsor, SL4 4YP [malcolmlock@hotmail.com] [www.friendsofwindsormuseum.org.uk]

Would you all please check these entries and let us know of any changes. The entry should show:-

The name, postal address and e-mail address for formal correspondence with the society and optionally a telephone contact number.

Your website url (if you have one)

Optionally the name and e-mail address of the person who will send in reports of your society's activities (if different from official contact)

e-mail changes and corrections to membership@blha.org.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 [www.genealogycenter.org]

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

Bracknell Library Local Studies: Hue Lewis, Town Square, Bracknell, RG12 1BH. tel 01344 352400 [bracknell.library@bracknell-forest.gov.uk]

Eton College Library: Eton College, Windsor, SL4 6DB [archivist@etoncollege.org.uk]

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

Hungerford Virtual Museum: – [www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk]

Maidenhead Heritage Trust: Fran Edwards, 18 Park Street, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 1SL.
[administration@mhc1.demon.co.uk]

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

Oxfordshire History Centre: St Luke's Church, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2HT
tel. 01865 398200 e-mail: oxhist@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Reading Central Library: Local Studies Librarian, 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: Kate Devaney, PO box 223, Whiteknights, RG6 6AE. tel 0118 378 8785 [k.r.devaney@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]

Oxfordshire County Council Library Service fao Marco Lazzarini, Library Support Services, Holton Wheatley, Oxon OX33 1QQ [askalibrarian@oxfordshire.gov.uk]

Windsor & Royal Borough Museum: The Guildhall, Windsor, SL4 1LR. tel 01628 796846
[museum.collections@rbwm.gov.uk] [www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/museum_index.htm]

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

Slough Museum: Ground Floor, High Street, Slough, SL1 1EA tel 01753 526422
[info@sloughmuseum.co.uk]

West Berkshire Museum: The Wharf, Newbury, RG14 4AU [museum@westberks.gov.uk]

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

Berkshire Local History Association

Registered Charity 1097355

President: **Brian Boulter**

**Vice-Presidents:- Prof E J T Collins, Joan Dils,
Dr Margaret Yates**

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Chairman **David Cliffe**

1 Priest Hill, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RZ
tel: 0118-948-3354,
e-mail chairman@blha.org.uk

Treasurer **Dr David Lewis ACA**

5 Gloucester Place, Windsor, Berks SL4 2AJ
tel 01753-864935,
e-mail treasurer @blha.org.uk

Secretary **vacant**

e-mail secretary@blha.org.uk

Committee Members

Dr Jonathan Brown (Journal Editor)

Sue Burnay (Berkshire Bibliography)

John Chapman (Newsletter Editor)

Dave Osborne (Web Designer)

Dr Margaret Simons (Newsletter Distributor)

Elias Kupfermann

Dr David Axford

Ann Smith (Membership Secretary)

Membership

Berkshire Local History Association exists to provide a meeting place for all those interested in the history and heritage of the Royal County of Berkshire. We cover the areas of Berkshire both before and after the 1974 review of local government. We are a registered charity.

We have three classes of membership

Institutional - for institutions, including libraries, archives and museums

Society - for local history and similar societies

Individual - for individual or couples living at the same address

We publish a **Journal** (Berkshire Old and New) once a year containing detailed articles on Berkshire's past - all members get one copy

We publish a **newsletter** three times a year in January, May and September and you can opt for a hard copy version by post or an electronic version by e-mail

We hold an **Annual General Meeting** in Spring each year with an exhibition and followed by a **Presidential Lecture**

We usually hold a **Day School** in the autumn with a number of eminent speakers

We organise **day trips** to visit archives and places of interest (usually with privileged access to material)

We award a number of **prizes** to authors of articles and students at the University.

We offer **grants** to assist authors to publish their results.

We maintain a **website** to keep you up-to-date with society activities [www.blha.org.uk]

We maintain a **Bibliography** of publications held in our public libraries relating to the history of Berkshire

We work with a variety of organisations to protect and document the heritage of Berkshire

Membership fees

The rates for 2014 are:-

	version of newsletter		no of copies	
	electronic	hard copy	Journal	Newsletter
Institutional	£18.00	£20.00	2	3
Society	£18.00	£20.00	2	3
Individual and Family	£9.00.	£12.00	1	1

A surcharge of £2 will also be levied on those who opt to pay by cheque.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary membership@blha.org.uk

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Forthcoming Events

see also Opportunities Pages 23-24

BLHA Symposium at Ewelme 7th October

We do not list meetings of our local societies, but see our website www.blha.org.uk

Next Newsletter

The next Newsletter is due to be published in September 2017.

The DEADLINE for copy is 15th August 2017 - preferably we would like to have it much earlier. To avoid some of the problems we have had recently could you please address e-mails to newsletter@blha.org.uk and copy it to j.chapman458@btinternet.com