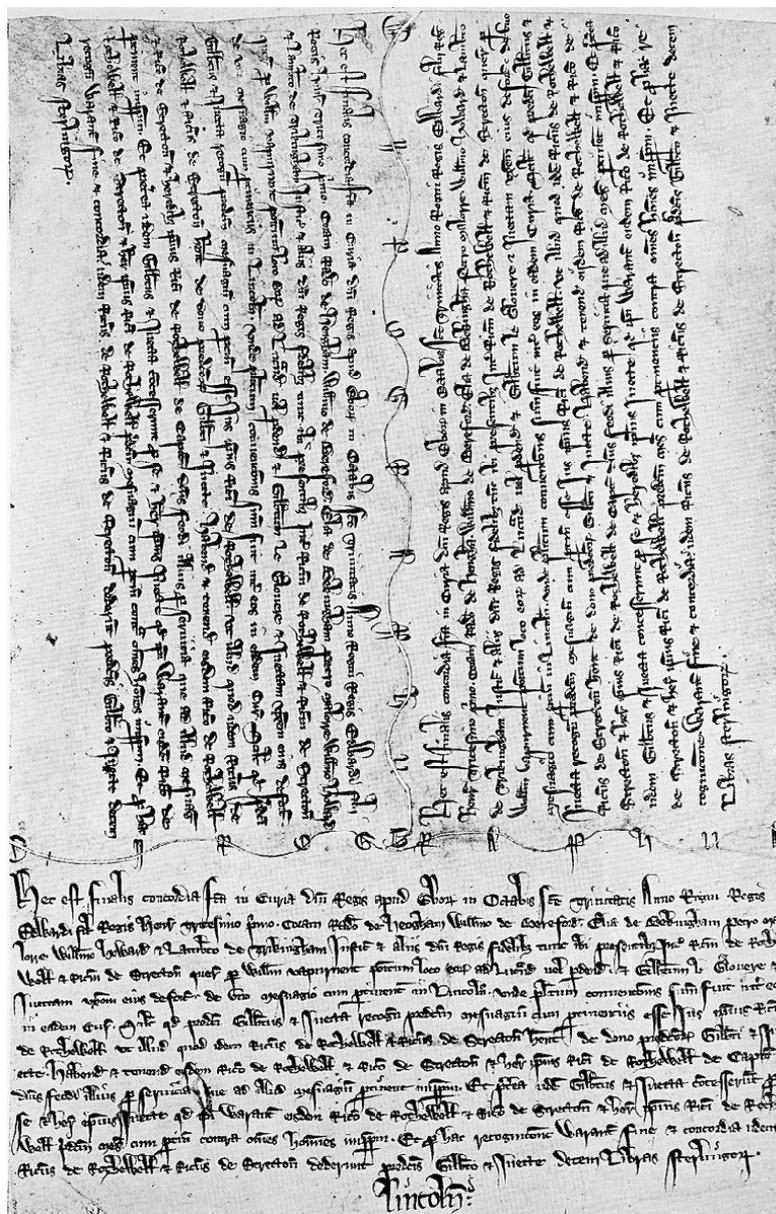


# Berkshire Local History Association



Newsletter No 120  
January 2018

***Berkshire Local History Association  
Newsletter***

Editor: John Chapman

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

Distribution: Dr Margaret Simons

Website      [www.blha.org.uk](http://www.blha.org.uk)

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.

Contributions should be e-mailed to:- [newsletter@blha.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@blha.org.uk) and arrive not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 - A rare example of a complete Final Concord from Lincoln in 1303 showing the three parts and the wavy lines (see page 7)***

# *Chairman's Corner*

Yesterday afternoon I found myself in Waterstone's in the middle of Reading, queuing at the counter to place an order. It was a Saturday in early December, and Christmas was obviously on the way.

Whilst waiting, my thoughts turned to how, in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, when you went to a bookshop to order a book, the retail price was set by the publisher, and you would be told that the book would take a month to six weeks to arrive.

The book I was after told the story of a surgeon in my home town in Cheshire, during a time of rapid expansion and prosperity in the silk industry. His apprentice was obviously more interested in carving wood and stone than sawing bones, so the surgeon offered to sponsor his studies. His faith in the budding sculptor was justified: Thomas Thornycroft became famous nationally, and was the father and grandfather of other famous sculptors. Hardly a best seller, though. Nevertheless, a commercial publisher was putting it out, and it was likely to contain a great amount of social history.

The price on the Amazon website was just over £20; Waterstone's wanted about £6 more. Being a rather old-fashioned soul, and remembering my many happy hours spent browsing in bookshops, I decided to pay the full price. The delivery time was just a couple of days.

This autumn I have myself added to the pre-Christmas flood-tide of local history books by having a book about Reading cinemas published by Two Rivers Press in the town. For better or worse, I decided not to ask for a royalty. But I have another, more substantial work, about the town of my birth, currently at the printer's, which I intend to publish myself. I think I'll be lucky to shift 50 copies, but we'll see. It won't be out until next year, and I expect self-publishing and all that goes with it will be an interesting experience.

Whilst on the subject of new books, the latest edition of the newsletter of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust has been e-mailed to me. It gives news of progress on volume 20, *The South Chilterns*, due to be published in 2021. This is the volume that will include some of the Thames-side parishes, including Newnham Murren, Crowmarsh Gifford, Mapledurham, Shiplake, and Caversham. Most of Caversham, and part of Mapledurham, are now part of Reading Borough.

The draft texts for some parishes – including Mapledurham – are already viewable on the Trust's website. There will be a good many people waiting for the Caversham section to appear, and I've been told by the editor that the research is progressing.

The Trust was set up in 1997, to raise funds to enable all of the 23 projected volumes to be published. Eighteen have so far appeared. Over the last ten years,



£1.6m has been raised.

The four Berkshire volumes were published between 1906 and 1924, with an index volume in 1927. Local history has moved on since then, and the modern volumes have much more information on the local economy and the lives of “ordinary” people, whilst still giving the ecclesiastical and manorial history. The modern volumes also have useful maps. Would there be the local pride and enthusiasm in Berkshire for such a Trust, to raise the necessary millions for a revised and enlarged edition of the Berkshire volumes? And would there be the scholars willing and able to carry out the research?

For the Association, the highlight of 2017 was probably the seminar held in the church at Ewelme in October. The village was chosen on account of the medieval monuments in the church, and since it's in Oxfordshire, members of the Oxfordshire Local History Association were invited . . . and they came. We had around 100 people altogether. The three speakers were excellent, though they did all overrun their allotted spaces, which was a bit of a worry for me. On the other hand, though, they all left me wanting to hear more. Particular thanks are due to Elias Kupfermann who took the bookings, to Sally Fehr who looks after events at the church, to Margery Slatter, head teacher at the school who showed us around the school buildings, and above all to our Treasurer, David Lewis, who invited the speakers and made the arrangements with the church.

Looking forward to 2018, arrangements are being made for the AGM in Maidenhead on Saturday, March 10th. The booking form will be included in this edition of the Newsletter.

Later in the year, on Sunday June 3, there will be a visit to the village of East Hendred, near Wantage, to include a visit to Hendred House and its medieval chapel. The house is not open to the public, and we may have to limit numbers. The visit will be a joint one with the Oxfordshire L.H.A., and thanks are due to Tony Hadland, my counterpart on the other side of the river, for making arrangements here. There are also two churches to see in East Hendred, and another medieval chapel – the Chapel of Jesus of Bethlehem. It now serves as the village museum, is usually known as Champs Chapel, and is only open on Sundays, hence the choice of day.

Also during the year, and probably in the autumn, we look forward to the publication of the *Gazetteer of Berkshire Schools, c. 1700-c. 1830*, from the Berkshire Record Society. The research was carried out by a team of volunteers, and the Association has offered to support the publication financially.

The volunteer researchers and editor are now ready to embark on a new project – looking at new school buildings across the county, 1870-1914. This is the era in which universal elementary education became compulsory, and many board schools were built. It seems likely that the resulting volume will be copiously illustrated, considering the wealth of the material in the Berkshire Record Office. As before, the

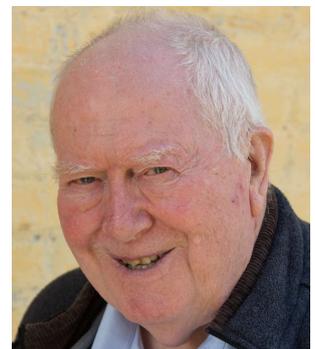
Association has offered its support, and it is likely that as before, two committee members from the Association will represent us on its management board. Our September edition carried an invitation to new volunteer researchers, who will be working mainly in the Record Office in Reading. There are various sources of information which will need to be examined – if you are interested, please contact Peter Durrant – [peter.durrant@reading.gov.uk](mailto:peter.durrant@reading.gov.uk).

So, we have much to look forward to. It is my hope that a new secretary can be found before too long – or at least an extra person to take on an active role on the committee. There is a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment among the existing members, but at present we could do with one or two more!

*David Cliffe*

## ***A Word from the Editor***

I got into computers in the very early days in the mid 1950s when it was all about science and engineering plus a few businesses like Joe Lyons and his Corner Houses who had been using punched card machines and thought they might be able to make some limited use of the new technology.



We went from roomfuls of equipment to things that sat on a desk but still needed so-called experts to look after them. We went through computer languages like Algol and Cobol to operating systems and mind blowing programmes; but then things changed as lots of different technologies converged. Photography went digital, telephones did not need huge buildings with mechanical exchanges; television, film, x-rays, printing and even control of one's refrigerator can be controlled by a chip! The computer got smaller and smaller, faster and faster and could hold more and more data.

What has all this got to do with local history you may ask. Well just from a practical point of view I am composing this on my computer, I do not have to find a lino-type operator to set it into lead plates for printing, people can send me their contributions by e-mail with me not having to transcribe it and when it is done I simply send it by e-mail to our distributor and all she has to do is put it into an envelope and post it unless you are taking the electronic version when even that last bit of hard work is not necessary.

But the real benefit to local historians is that you do not need to visit archives to access vast amounts of information. Most local historians can find things out about their local area by simply asking the right questions of Google and, if they need to visit an archive, go to exactly the document they want instead of trawling through hundreds before alighting on a single crumb.

What this means is that the amount and depth of knowledge is exploding. We are filling back-up discs, clouds and memory sticks with thousands of gigabytes of data

and within ten years the technology will have changed so that it is all lost and future historians will have to start all over again.

Unless! - This is an appeal to all our local societies to gather material together, analyse and document your findings and publish them in a form which is likely to survive. Collect together your local material and set up an archive, don't just toss it into a box and hope someone will find it, you need to organise it and provide a catalogue of what you have and where it can be found.

In the next edition I would like to publish details of what some of our local societies are doing to preserve their past so please have a think and let me know what you are doing about it.

*John Chapman*

## **Miscellanea**

### ***New premises for Berkshire Family History Society***

Berkshire Family History Society (and its subsidiary Berkshire Family History Enterprises Ltd) has left its premises at Yeomanry House, Castle Hill, Reading and from 5th December 2017 both will be from new premises at the address below:

Berkshire Family History Society

The Centre for Heritage and Family History  
2nd floor, Reading Central Library  
Abbey Square  
Reading, Berkshire RG1 3BQ

Our telephone number remains as 0118 950 9553; our website as [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) and now we can be reached by email to [centre@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:centre@berksfhs.org.uk)

Opening hours to visitors initially be:

Tuesdays 10.30 to 16.00 and 19.00 to 21.00

Wednesdays 10.30 to 16.00

Saturdays 10.30 to 16.00

And last Thursday in the month 10.30 to 16.00

Visitors in person are advised to check these hours before making their journey.

In addition to our regular services to visitors we will be holding a range of other events at the centre e.g. lunchtime drop-in advice sessions, workshops on specific topics, walks, themed talks and beginners courses.

We hope that we may meet you at The Centre for Heritage and Family History soon.

### ***Can you help identify this Land Holding?***

In the Berkshire Domesday there is a reference to Burley which seems to have been unidentified to date. It appears three times in Domesday, all in Reading Hundred. Under Henry of Ferrers it had one hide with one villager, one small holder, one

plough, a fishery at 8d, two acres of meadow, woodland for five pigs and was previously held by Leofwin of King Edward. Under Odo and other Thanes it used to have one hide and now nothing, one and a half ploughs and was held by Aubrey, the Queen's chamberlain. The third entry was also originally for one hide and now nothing, again land for one and a half ploughs, three villagers, one plough and woodland for five pigs. It was originally held by Aelfeva, now by Harding, both of Queen Edith.

In later documents eg item 367 in the feet of fines (see below) there is a reference to Letthyng with one messuage, one mill, 2 virgates of land and 16s rent; in other documents it is spelled Lething or Leghing.

The Parish of Purley had three manors; Purley Magna, centred around the church, Purley Parva centred around Springs Farm and La Hyde centred around Home Fam Sulham. But there is a small parcel of land roughly where Beech Road and Purley Rise now are which has an ancient boundary bund to the south separating it from lands of La Hyde. In later years this seems to have been occupied by small farmers, craftsmen such as a blacksmith and wheelwright and provided services to passers by on the main road from Reading via Wallingford to Oxford. We have no indication of Lords of the manor, other than possibly John de St Philibert who is named in the fine and we know held other land in the area.

The three lands of Burley seem to be so similar that we wonder whether they were actually all the same holding, duplicated in Domesday. Also the spelling is so similar to Purley and never appears again whereas Lething does and seems similar.

We believe that this is the location of Lething and possibly also of Burley. But does anyone else have any thoughts or ideas on where these places might have been? We would dearly love to hear from you.

*John Chapman*

### ***Lambourn Gas Works***

The May 2017 edition of the newsletter carried an appeal for information about the works, which was said to have been founded, owned and run by women. While it hasn't so far been possible to answer the "run by women" question, a bit of online searching has come up with several useful pointers for our enquirer, who thought that the works started in 1867, and closed about 1945.

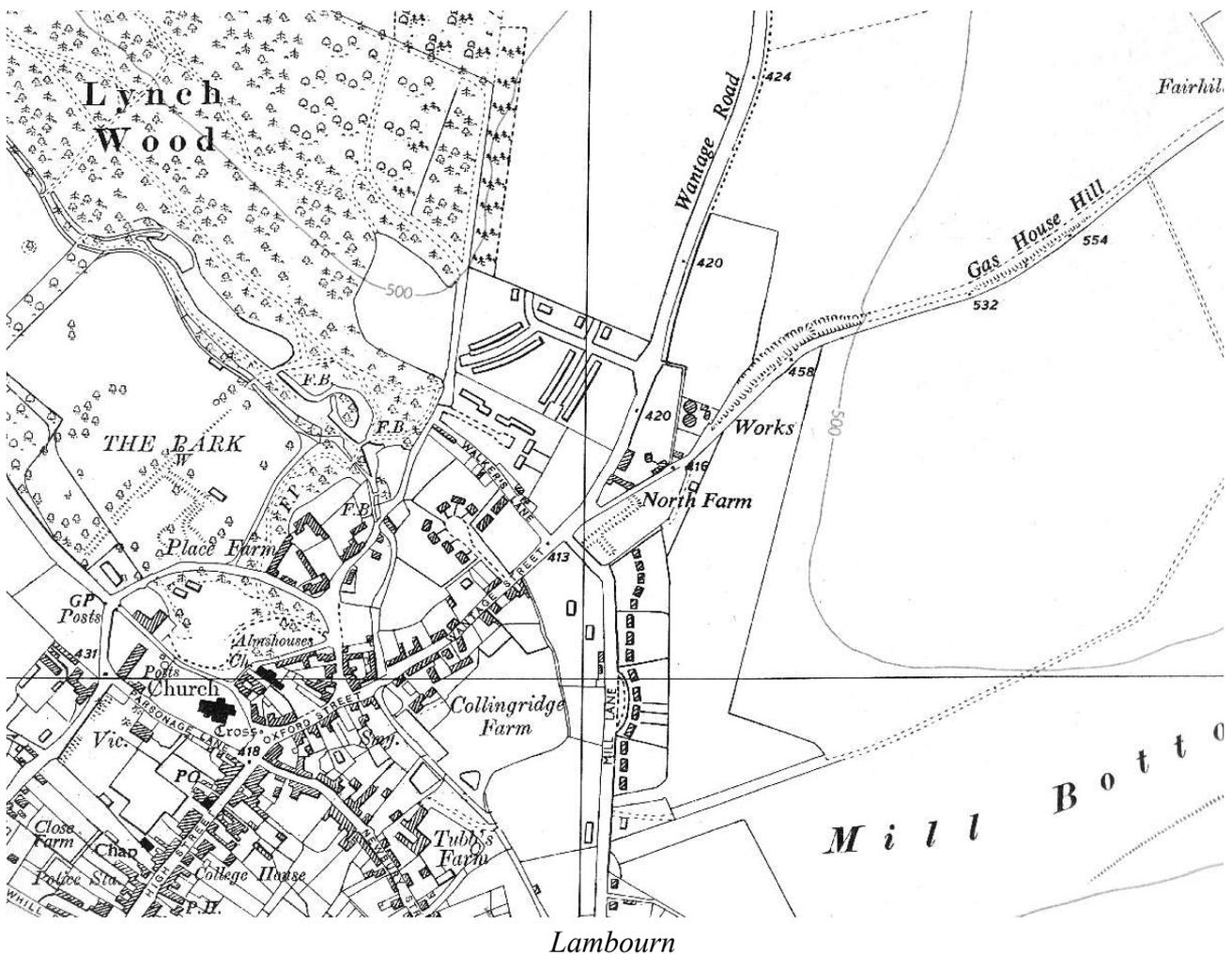
It now seems that if that was the case, two companies must have been involved. The National Archives at Kew have a file of papers from the Lambourn Gas, Coke and Lime Company Limited, BT 31/1327/3474. It was incorporated in 1867, but went into voluntary liquidation in 1912.

A series of reports and advertisements in The Reading Mercury illustrate the start of the works, and the extension of its mains. In October 1917, the police station was to be lighted with gas. In the following months, the company was advertising for the supply of cast iron lamp standards – eight or ten in November, and fourteen in

December. Then in 1870, the system was being extended, with 422 yards of mains and 173 yards of service pipe.

For the rest of the nineteenth century, the annual shareholders' meetings, held in the Red Lion Hotel, were reported. At the meeting in February 1894, the vicar was "in the chair."

The London Gazette shows that the company was wound up in 1912. On 30 August, it reported that "At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the said Company, duly convened, held at the Red Lion Hotel, at Lambourn, in the County of Berks., on



the 25th day of January, 1912, the following Special Resolution was duly passed; and at a subsequent Extraordinary General Meeting of the said Company, also duly convened and held at the same place, on the 20th day of August 1912, the following Special Resolution was duly confirmed: that the Company be wound up voluntarily, under the Companies (Consolidation) Act, 1908, and that Alfred Howard Charcot, of Lambourn aforesaid, jeweller, be hereby appointed Liquidator for the purposes of such winding up. J. Stokes Griffin, Chairman."

The appointment of a jeweller as liquidator seems unusual – liquidators were usually either solicitors or accountants. The papers concerning the winding up should

also be at The National Archives, and may reveal who took the concern over. Kelly's directory for 1915 says that Lambourn was lighted by gas "supplied by a company," which suggests that the works continued.

Another possible source of information is the National Gas Archive in Warrington. It keeps documents from before and after nationalisation. Unfortunately, its website is temporarily unavailable at the time of writing – [www.gasarchive.org](http://www.gasarchive.org).

Please note that I have standardised the spelling of "Lambourn" to accord with that used by the Ordnance Survey – in the old documents it's often spelled Lambourne.

Incidentally, this information is all available on line. It would not have been half so available only a few years ago! Thanks are due to Peter Delaney of the Wargrave Local History Society, who was intrigued by the original article, and took the trouble to do some research and to reply.

*David Cliffe.*

## ***New Books and Reviews***

### ***Berkshire Feet of Fines 1307-1509***

Published by the Berkshire Record Society in two volumes ISBN 978-0-9573937-4-5 and 978-0-9573937-5-2 and edited by Margaret Yates.

In the period covered you could not own land. It was created by and 'owned' by God. It was 'held' by the King who could then allow his underlings to hold the land from him and so on down the social chain. However this established 'rights' which had value and when one wanted to pass those rights to someone else the only legal way of doing it was by a fictitious lawsuit known as a Final Concord.

This was done in the King's Court and the agreement was written out three times so that both parties could have an identical copy with a copy lodged in the King's Court. The sheet of parchment was cut in wavy lines so that it was impossible to produce a forgery and therefore beyond dispute. The bottom part which was retained by the court was known as the *pedum finium* or foot of fines.

While many of the documents taken by the two parties have long since vanished, the feet have survived in their thousands in the National Archives. Many other counties have published details of their Fines and now we have a comprehensive list of those pertaining to Berkshire, no less than 1581 just from this period. They provide a fascinating insight into land holdings, land use and agriculture and the value placed upon the rights as well as naming many individuals who might otherwise have been forgotten.

As with many legal documents of the period, they are very formulaic, repetitive and monotonous, therefore, Margaret has extracted the key information from all these documents and presented us with a collection of information which will be invaluable to anyone doing research on their local area. It is accompanied by three comprehens-



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Berkshire Record Office, 9 Coley Avenue, Reading RG1 6AF



ive indexes of people, places and subjects which means it is very easy to find what you may be looking for.

Having had all the volumes published so far in the Berkshire Record Society series I can honestly say that this is the most useful and best of the lot. We owe Margaret a huge debt of gratitude.

*John Chapman*

### ***Our Boys, Shinfield Then And Now***

Shinfield & District Local History Society collaborated with Shinfield St. Mary's Church to produce a book which would fall within the scope of the Heritage Lottery Fund's "First World War: Then and Now" programme. The objective was to tell the stories of the men from the First World War named on the Shinfield Village War Memorial and to set these in the context of village life and how this was impacted by the war.

The book is divided into chapters describing the village before, during and after the war and setting this in the national context using information gleaned mainly from local newspapers and trade directories.

The largest section of the book is devoted to the stories of each of the men named on the War Memorial, plus a few who are not named, as far as it has been possible to gather information. This is followed by lists of men from the village who were serving in the armed forces, as noted in local newspapers.

The final chapter gives a brief summary of changes in the village from the end of

the war to the present day.

Copies are obtainable at the price of £8.00 from Henry Street Garden Centre, Arborfield, and Dobbies Garden Centre, Shinfield. Also from Amazon (delivery charge applies) using the link: <http://amzn.to/2Bo6H9H>

Our Boys: Shinfield and the Great War: Amazon.co.uk: Shinfield and District Local History Society, Barbara Farrow, Edward Farrow: 9781546739593:

### **SPOTLIGHT ON**

## ***The Berkshire Record Society***

In 2018 Berkshire Record Society will celebrate its silver jubilee. Twenty-five years ago a small group of historians met together under the leadership of Professor Donald Matthew of the University of Reading to launch a new society dedicated to the publication of texts of important Berkshire documents. The first volume – an edition of the correspondence of the Foundling Hospital Inspectors in Berkshire – was published in 1994, and since then a further 23 have appeared. Subjects covered include landholding and distribution, a medieval gild merchant, probate, the poor, church history (both Anglican and non-conformist), transport, and the improvement of the river Thames. The documents include accounts, minutes, diaries, surveys, and poor law case papers, and range in date from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. In addition, the Society has published a survey of enclosure in Berkshire, 1485-1885, a three-volume index to probate records, 1480-1652, and two editions of an historical atlas of Berkshire. Altogether this amounts to over 4,000 pages of edited text, 1500 pages of index and 600 pages of introduction.

I wrote about some of our earlier volumes in the this newsletter in 2015, mentioning the insights into the impact of the reformation on St Laurence's church, Reading, to be found in the churchwardens' accounts, and the colourful evidence for the life and work of an eighteenth-century gentleman and magistrate (and sometime high sheriff) revealed in the diaries of Robert Lee of Binfield. Since then we have published Sabina Sutherland's edition of Archdeacon Randall's church inspection notebook, with its often vivid descriptions of the state of the Anglican church in the mid nineteenth century; Jeremy Sims' edition of the minutes and accounts of the Newbury and Chilton Pond turnpike trust, showing the problems encountered by the trustees in setting up and running a new turnpike road; and Margaret Yates' edition of Berkshire feet of fines, 1307-1509, containing summaries of over 1500 fines, and providing an amazingly rich source for the study of landholding (and land holders) in late medieval Berkshire.

In 2018 we plan to publish three more volumes. The first to appear will be Brian Kemp's edition of selected Reading Abbey documents, including an account (with some wonderful detail) of the miracles attributed to the hand of St James, and which is

timed to coincide with the reopening of the ruins after the completion of conservation work. This will be followed by a survey of Berkshire schools, 1666-1833, containing much new evidence about schools and schoolmasters and mistresses in that that period, and a edition of selected records relating to the 'Swing' riots in Berkshire, 1831-1832, which includes eye-witness accounts of some of the rioting and destruction which took place.

Record publishing has a long and distinguished history in this country, with some societies tracing their origins into the nineteenth century. Some have queried whether, at a time when access to original sources, often in their original form, is easier than ever before, there is still a place for traditional record publishing. The answer surely is an emphatic yes. Record Societies offer not only reliable, carefully edited texts, but also, with their critical apparatus, commentary and extended introductions, help to explain those texts, offering both context and insight which add immeasurably to our understanding of what we read.

Berkshire Record Society may be a relative late-comer on the scene, but it already has an impressive list of titles to its credit, and it has ambitious plans for the future. However, if it is to achieve its ambitions it needs a secure membership base. You can help by joining us as a member. For a modest subscription (currently £14.50 a year) you will receive a copy of each volume as it is published. Full details and forms are on the website ([www.berkshirerecordsociety.org.uk](http://www.berkshirerecordsociety.org.uk)), or contact our membership secretary, William Wintle, at [inform@berkshirerecordsociety.org.uk](mailto:inform@berkshirerecordsociety.org.uk).

*Peter Durrant*

## **Articles**

### ***Jottings from Maidenhead***

In the summer of 1956, Sir Stanley Spencer and Diana Dors happened to meet at a London Garden Party. Afterwards, Sir Stanley remarked that he would quite like to paint her portrait as he thought she had a simple beauty and her pouting lips were particularly pretty.

Naturally the press wanted to know if she would pose nude. This was not because of her show-biz image, but because Sir Stanley had just had two of his paintings condemned by Sir Alfred Munnings as obscene. For her part, Diana diplomatically replied that she thought that Sir Stanley was a very nice man and that she would love to have her portrait painted by him, however there was no question of her posing nude.

Sadly the archivists at the Stanley Spencer Gallery have no record of the portrait being painted, which is a shame because I am sure they would have had fun chatting during the sittings.

The former pub, The Norfolk Arms in Cookham Road has now been replaced by an apartment block. It had been built in the 1870's and took its name from the Norfolk

Park estate. This was developed from the 1850's by Benjamin Cail, who later built Queen Street. The Norfolk Arms continued as a pub for a century, then became a restaurant, variously operated as Morrisons, Capers, Corner Bar and finally Diwa.

In 1889, an article in the Maidenhead Advertiser described Norfolk Park as a “pretentious architectural mushroom which had no right to call itself Norfolk anything”.

However it conceded that it was now a “busy, cleanly town of itself, lying in the shadow, almost, of St.Lukes Church” (built 1866). So it would seem that the estate had nothing to do with either Duke or County but was given a name which the developer thought would attract potential buyers! Nothing changes!

Berkshire House is a late 1960's building is the tallest in the town and generally regarded as the ugliest. When built, the Council glowingly described it as a landmark building representing the future. It is said that they were dismayed when one of the shops became a “chippie” (Seafare Restaurant). When Market Street was redeveloped they were concerned that it should still appear dead central to the vista from that street.

In 2013 it was bought by Essential Living who intended converting the offices into flats. Their first design featured a shape-changing superstructure of glass and stainless steel girders. This was rejected and we now have a more modest facelift to the exterior featuring grey panels, hopefully non-flammable.

The developers description makes the building sound like a student hall of residence for Crossrail commuters, with social spaces and a fitness centre. After a hard day on the computer at their work station, a resident will arrive home to their evening meal – ordered by smartphone from the train and delivered to the door. They will then open their laptop to exchange messages, play games and watch sport and films. No need to go out until next morning. How will future social historians describe their existence?

*Brian Boulter*

## **Society News**

### ***Berkshire Archaeological Society***

Berkshire Archaeological Society continues its investigations into the Saxon era and is planning to publish a series of essays. Following the Iron Age exhibition held at Brock Keep, Oxford Road, Reading in the autumn, the Keep has been booked for future meetings as it has space for parking and is on convenient bus routes.

Chapters for the next Berkshire Archaeological Journal - Land of the Atrebatas - are nearing completion. This will be of great interest to Society members who visited or worked at Insula IX, led by our President, Professor Michael Fulford CBE.

Following field work this year at Blounts Court, Arborfield, Tidmarsh and Cholsey, we are looking new ventures this summer. Readers who have suspicious

bumps in their lawns or premises with historical aspects are invited to discuss them with our Councillors with investigation in mind.

*Ann Griffin*

### ***Berkshire Family History Society***

The society completed a successful move! see page 4

Subject to existing commitments and by prior arrangement, it can also offer a good value central meeting venue for local historical groups — with seating for up to 40 people and refreshment facilities also readily accessible. Groups may wish to request tours of The Centre (again with prior notice), with an associated talk or opportunities for individual research built in if required.

You will find full details at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk)

There is also a programme of afternoon talks with tea, cake and expert speakers - See Opportunities Page 20

The ‘What’s on this quarter?’ leaflet gives details of all Centre events, and full information is at [www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Events/events.html](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/cms/Events/events.html)

Branch meetings resume in January - in Abingdon, Bracknell, Newbury, Reading, Windsor and Woodley - embracing an eclectic and inviting mix of topics, with much to interest researchers of all levels of experience.

During 2018, the society is looking forward to meeting many more researchers both locally and at The Centre for Heritage and Family History, (whether or not they are currently members of the society). Take a look on [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) at all that is happening on the family history front — you might have a very pleasant surprise.

*Derek Trinder*

### ***East Ilsley Local History Society***

The East Ilsley Local History Society has developed a tradition of holding an annual Open Day when we make all our resources and research available for the public to study. This is accompanied by an exhibition on a local topic.

This year, on 7th October, we held our Open Day at the local Swan Hotel and put up a display of pictures and documents entitled ‘Sport and Leisure in East Ilsley’. This traced the history of sports such as hunting and hare coursing, and the more genteel pastimes such as cricket and football. There seems to have been a strong tradition of villagers making their own entertainment, with at one time, a flourishing brass band, concerts, outings, and, of course, fairs.

The display, which was on view over the weekend of 7th & 8th October, provoked much interest. However, the number of people who took advantage of our resources was disappointingly small.

*Eric Saxton*

## *Hungerford Historical Association*

Our talk on the 22nd November was by Alan Heasman entitled "The Oldest Profession in Aldbourne?: Warrening"

Following weather forecasting in the RAF, Alan joined the Meteorological Service at the HQ at Bracknell, where he retired as Manager of the National Library and Archives. He has retained his career-long interest in the history of meteorology. On retiring to Aldbourne he became deeply interested in its history, and was a prime mover in establishing the Community Heritage Group, which explores topics of historical interest and importance, e.g. industry and agriculture. It manages a small museum, which attracts many visitors, especially from the US, the famous US 101st Airborne Division having been based with its HQ in Aldbourne in WW2.

A chance meeting with a "warrener" and his ferrets led Alan to his local history study of the 1,000 year old practice of "warrening". The chalk downland surrounding the village is an ideal habitat for rabbit breeding; they eat the scrub and maintain the grass.

Rabbits existed in Britain at the end of the Great Ice Age. The Romans introduced them as a staple food source but the Normans developed the "industrial scale" breeding by "warrening" to provide a large replenishing supply of delicate meat and fur for clothing. Grey rabbits were bred for meat and black for fur. Warrens were established in rough spare areas of land and were contained by walls constructed from the surrounding flints and turf. Later artificial tunnels were built to divert water from flooding the rabbit nurseries.

Rabbit husbandry by means of warrens entailed a low-cost outlay and a high yield, and became very profitable in the medieval period and a major contribution to the village economy. The post of "warrener" was very important.

Warrens would be sold or rented out in terms of rabbits and at one time silver "tokens" were used with embossed rabbits, acknowledged as a local currency! In 1389 John o' Gaunt ordered "30 pairs of rabbits fresh, reasonable and best quality" for the King's House at Savoy Palace", and the estimated equivalent income in the 13th/14th centuries was £500,000 pa; rabbits were a major input to the village economy. In 1730 rabbits would sell in London for the equivalent of £95 a dozen.

There had been an extensive "diswarrening" to curb the rabbit population from the 18th/19th centuries onwards, as land utilization for arable farming - growing food crops and enclosing the land for sheep and cattle - was incompatible with "warrening", and a vast rabbit population which was a threat to food production. They were shot and culled.

By 1940, it was estimated that there were over 100 million rabbits nationally and this was a threat to the more intensive food production. In 1970 the policy of culling by the dreaded myxomatosis disease was imported from the US It drastically reduced the population and 99% were wiped out. Rabbits today are culled by shooting and

ferrets. Rabbit is no longer a staple of the country diet.

The talk was most interesting, illustrating the centuries-old warrening tradition in the downland landscape with residual walls, enclosures and “pillow mounds” and local warren fences added to the interest of this most impressive illustrated account of a local history project.

Next meeting, January 24th 2018: Roger Day – “Motoring Emergencies – A History of the Automobile Association”.

*Daphne Priestley*

### ***Maidenhead Heritage Centre***

At the AGM on 25th October, Richard Poad reported on another successful year. Visitor numbers were slightly up with many commenting on the friendly atmosphere. The Air Transport Auxillary display continues to attract visitors from all over the world. There are now over 130 ATA Pilots' Log Books available for research. Three temporary exhibitions were shown, all with sponsorship. Publicity has been in the form of press articles, radio interviews and social media. The Centre now has 800 Facebook members.

Nick Ford has submitted the operational details required for renewal of Accreditation. He is continuing to audit the collection which now has approaching 10,000 items. They are all being photographed so that visitors can see an item on the MODES catalogue, not just a description. This will be especially useful for photographs which form a large part of the collection.

Jon Dance-Groom has arranged visits to and from a wide range of schools. He has also arranged visits from youth groups and the popular family fun sessions. There are opportunities to be involved in all these activities, for which training will be given. The future is still undecided but good progress is being made in discussions with Countryside, the Borough Venture Partner. Three options are emerging. The first is to stay where we are, compulsory purchase being possible but unlikely. The second is to have a “pavilion” type building in St Ives Road near to the Library. The third, and currently favoured option, is to occupy the ground floor of one of the apartment blocks. This would form a cultural attraction for residents.

Engineers have now taken subsoil samples from the West Street and Town Hall car parks, so things are happening. They told me that the gravel terrace is only a few metres deep, below that is solid chalk, so no trouble with foundations.

*Brian Boulter*

### ***Newbury District Field Club***

Autumn was a busy time for the Field Club. Firstly, the 5th Annual History Day on 2 September focused on The City - a small but characterful section of the town. Seven talks made it a very full day and a tight schedule; over seventy attendees enjoyed talks on City Life, St Bartholomew's Hospital, the Bombing of Newbury, the Changing Face of the City, the Excavation of a Mediaeval Grave Yard, Church & Childs' Almshouses, and Dr Walter Essex Wynter. Next year the History Day will be on 1

September and will concentrate on Victorian Newbury (speakers: David Peacock, Jane Burrell, Ellie Thorne, Dick Godfrey, Ros Clow and Phil Wood).

September also saw the recommencement of the Field Club's programme of talks with an entertaining evening from Terry Gilligan and friends on the Aldbourne Bell Foundry – including a demonstration of hand-bell ringing. In November an old friend of the Club, Steve Clark of BARG, updated the Club's evening meeting on the exciting finds of the Roman Boxford project. Other talks from Dick Godfrey (Swing Riots in West Berkshire), Dr David Russell (The Story of the Calendar) and Phil Wood (Newbury 1917) were all well received, as was the Christmas Quiz in December.

'Newbury Remembers' held the fourth of its five exhibitions on Newbury's experiences of the war 100 years ago. Over 900 visitors took the opportunity to visit and view displays at the Town Hall by the Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery, the Sandham Memorial Chapel and Newbury District Field Club's Phil Wood. Phil's research into the lives of over 250 Newbury casualties was available but his displays concentrated on Newbury in 1917, the history of Newbury's war memorials, and highlights from the previous exhibitions on the years 1914-16. At the opening of the exhibition Phil gave a short talk on the town in 1917.

The afternoon and evening programmes of talks continue in the New Year – details at [www.ndfc.org.uk](http://www.ndfc.org.uk)

*Phil Wood*

### ***Project Purley***

Our first overseas visit took place in September when we visited the Ypres and Somme battlefields and managed to fly the new Berkshire flag over several sites including a hotel in Belgium. We stopped at several cemeteries to remember some of the men from Purley who died in WW1 with what turned out to be very moving little ceremonies.

The Watlington Hoard has certainly had plenty of publicity. It is the first Viking hoard to be found in Oxfordshire, and only the 17th to be found in the country. James Mather took us through the finds in September and told us of some of the history behind it.

October brought us Jameson Wooders talking about English Calendar customs and snippets of history which were new to most of us.

In November John Chapman spoke about a piece of land in Purley which had been donated to Reading Abbey at the end of the 12th century and had a history very different from the rest of the parish with hints of Templars, the naming of Purley in Surrey, the Boyles of Boyles Law fame, and connections with Sir Oswald Mosley.

We had our usual December visit from the Rain or Shine Theatre Company who put on a spine chilling performance of Dracula to a packed audience in the Barn and helped to raise a tidy sum for charity.

The Christmas Social was preceded by the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church where we displayed a very original design illustrating the Christmas Truce of 1914 put together by Gillian Wallace. This was also on display at our Christmas Social where members were baffled by a quiz on arches and bridges which included Paddington Station.

*John Chapman*

### ***Shinfield & District Local History Society***

Our September meeting was held in Shinfield View Care Home as our usual meeting place, the Parish Hall, was being refurbished. Paul Lacey gave a talk on Smith's Coaches of Reading based on his research for a book on the subject he is aiming to publish in 2018. The company was started in 1922 by Alf Smith whose first charabanc was an ex-army chassis with a coach body built on. It was painted blue and called "The Bluebird". Later coaches had a rainbow painted on the back and the company was called Smith's Rainbow Coaches, then just Smith's Coaches. The fleet was expanded by buying additional coaches each year and by taking over other operators in Reading, of which there were approximately 50 by 1939. As the company expanded it required larger premises and, having started just off Southampton Street it moved to Letcombe Street and then to Katesgrove Lane, which became the main base until the late 1940s. Coaches were requisitioned in World War II and after the war Alf Smith bought a number of de-requisitioned vehicles, all requiring a lot of rebuilding following their wartime service. Post-war, double-deckers were used for works contracts carrying employees to and from local large employment establishments. The peak period for the company was in the 1960s but it finally ceased operating under the name of Smith's Coaches when it was sold to Aureole Investments in 1979 and amalgamated with Windsorian Coaches. It was subsequently acquired by Horseman Coaches.

Paul's talk brought back memories to some members of the audience of day trips and holidays made possible by Smith's Coaches in the days before mass ownership of motor cars.

Our speaker in November was John Brearley who gave a presentation on "Mediaeval Craftsmanship and the rise of the Guilds". John arrived dressed as a typical craftsman peasant from the period of Edward II/Edward III. His talk began with examples from Bavaria of work from this period, the majority of British examples having disappeared. The 12th Century saw a lot of building in stone, mainly castles and cathedrals, and there was a huge amount of trade with the Continent requiring large numbers of craftsmen. The guild system had its origins in Saxon times and evolved with the Normans. The guilds demanded high standards of workmanship and protected the interests of guild members. Apprentices lived with a master craftsman and served for 7 years before becoming journeymen. This meant they had to leave the town in which they trained in order to seek employment and establish themselves as master craftsmen elsewhere as there could be only one master craftsman in any town. As trade developed shops were set up to sell products made by the

craftsman who lived over the premises. Various examples of mediaeval craftsmanship were shown including Crosby Hall in London, Lavenham Guild Hall and Little Moreton Hall. John ended his presentation with some pictures of items of furniture he had made in the mediaeval style. This was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative presentation by someone with an obvious passion for the subject and a high level of practical skill.

The book about Shinfield and World War 1, titled “Our Boys”, which we helped to research in conjunction with Shinfield St. Mary’s Church has recently been published.

*George Taylor*

### ***Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society***

After the summer break, our first speaker was Malcolm Nelson who came in September to talk about ‘Forty Years of Smuggling’. (It would have been more accurate to call the talk ‘Forty Years of Trying to Catch Smugglers’). Mr Nelson had spent his career at Heathrow Airport, and with a great sense of humour and some wonderful anecdotes, he described how Customs Officers in the Green Channel try to catch drug smugglers. We had a very interesting and entertaining evening.

In October Sue Milton’s subject was ‘Swan Upping on the River Thames’, and with some splendid photographs and engraving, some dating back to the 19th century, she described what is probably the oldest tradition in this country, one which always takes place the third week in July. This was a fascinating talk on what is perhaps a little-known subject.

Catherine Samson, in November, took us on a tour of some of the obscure churches in the Berkshire and South Oxfordshire area, illustrating her talk with some excellent photos. Some of these churches are so remote that an Ordnance Survey Map would be helpful in finding them, but each one had a special interest or history and Catherine provided us with a wealth of detail which stimulated great interest. We had a really enjoyable evening.

The judges in the Britain in Bloom competition in the summer loved our Heritage Osier Bed. We now await the harvesting of the withies after the leaves have fallen.

*Denise Wilkin*

### ***Wargrave Local History Society***

In September, the Wargrave Local History Society heard about 100 years plus of the Women’s Institute from Wendy England and Judy Palmer, from the Berkshire Federation of the WI. The Women’s Institute was founded to educate women in rural areas (although there are now also branches in towns and cities). Begun in Canada, a branch was started at Anglesey in 1915, with the first in Berkshire opening at Hurst in 1916. Members have been involved in many projects – from preserving fruit or resettling evacuated children during World War 2, initiating campaigns such as Keep Britain Tidy, to creating a college near Abingdon for educating women in a variety of skills and crafts. The WI continues to thrive, based on the principles of fellowship, truth,

tolerance and justice, where education, fun and friendship still prevail, having well over 200,000 members in this country.

Martin Andrews gave a fascinating talk in October on the pioneer photographer Henry Fox Talbot and the Reading Establishment. Martin explained that the two essentials for producing photographs were the optics and the chemistry. The optics of the 'camera obscura', had been known to the ancient Greeks, and by the mid 16th century were popular as an artist's drawing aid. The chemistry depended on silver based salts which darken on exposure to light. Various experimenters had made images, but all had limitations. However, Henry Fox Talbot managed to produce permanent positive pictures, and could make multiple copies. To show the possibilities, he set up his "Reading Establishment". It was incredibly prolific, making 50,000 prints in 3 years. Also produced there was "The Pencil of Nature", the first book anywhere to include "photographs". Fox Talbot's work had an 'unbelievable impact on the world' – although Reading's part in the history of photography is largely ignored.

The social history of bell ringing was the subject for John Harrison's talk in November. He explained the way bells were hung for the English style of ringing, allowed the bells to rise more, or less, so the time when the bell sounded could be controlled to within a few hundredths of a second. From about 1600, changes were rung, in which the bells swap order in a definite sequence, the entire pattern being rung from memory. In the middle ages, bells were rung for secular purposes as well as for church needs, and this enabled ringing to survive changes in religious practice in the 16th & 17th centuries, the ringers becoming independent of the Church, although acquiring a reputation for being unruly and often drunk! The early 19th century, saw a time of "Belfry Reform", initiated by some of the clergy, bringing the ringers more in touch with the Church, and reviving interest in change ringing, which continues to thrive.

The December Christmas Party included the customary Festive Fare, prepared by Wendy Smith, and an "end of year quiz" for members, based on the Society's activities during 2017.

Contact Peter Delaney, on 0118 9403121 or by visiting [www.wargravehistory.org.uk/](http://www.wargravehistory.org.uk/) for more information about the Society.

*Peter Delaney*

## ***Museums and Libraries***

### ***News from the Berkshire Record Office***

#### ***What new archives are now available at the BRO?***

Of interest to family historians will be the latest parish registers for Binfield: burials,

1957-1992 (D/P18); Bourton: marriages, 1860-2000 (D/P112D); Brimpton: marriages, 1982-2010; banns, 1909-2007 (D/P26); Compton Beauchamp: banns, 1824-2010 (D/P42); Reading Christ Church: baptisms, 1963-1998; marriages, 1990-2007 (D/P170); Speen: marriages, 1992-2016 (D/P116); Shrivenham: baptisms, 1941-1980; marriages, 1813-2007; banns, 1958-1991 (D/P112); Sutton Courtenay: marriages, 1986-2005; banns, 1968-2010 (D/P128); Uffington: marriages, 1989-2016 (D/P134); Watchfield: marriages, 1960-1974 (D/P112C). For those with non-CofE ancestors: Bracknell Pentecostal Assembly: marriages, 1983-2009 (D/N62); Newbury United Reformed Church: baptisms, 1988-2011, and marriages, 1985-2014 (D/N32); Sandhurst Baptist Church: marriages, 1981-2010 (D/N61); Three Mile Cross Wesleyan Methodist Church: baptisms, 1908-1986 (D/MS75).

In terms of other records, we have catalogued countless deeds relating to areas such as Bray, 1742 (D/EX2598); Burghfield, 1858 (D/EX2554); Longcot 1617-1905 (D/EX2595); Reading, 1797-1913 (D/EX2572); Sparsholt, 1799 (D/EZ190); and Thatcham, 1669-1818 (D/EX11). There is also a survey and rental of Benham Lovell manor in Speen, 1547 (D/EX306); estate records of the Grenfell family of Taplow Court, relating mainly to Bray and Cookham, 1877-1962 (D/EX2510) and some estate records from the Monck family of Coley Park, Reading, c.1700-1938 (R/D5). Some miscellaneous material collected by local historian Llewellyn Treacher has been transferred here from Reading Local Studies Library, 17th to the 20th centuries (D/EX2474). We also have various records from clubs and societies such as Reading Athletic Club, 1884-2006 (D/EX2096) and Reading Guild of Artists, 1958-2015 (D/EX1656).

Of general interest are the Clerk's Department files (C/CL/G). The Clerk to the Council was the equivalent of today's Chief Executives and the collection includes over 500 files on various activities, such as the police, the closure of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal and providing help for disabled ex-servicemen after the First World War. The BRO collects records relating to the whole of Berkshire, so to find out what we may have, take a look at our online catalogue: <http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/search-archives/>.

If you're interested in seeing any of this material, why not get in touch and make a visit? Please see our website for information on our opening hours and how to find us. You can also discover more about family or local history in general, read our latest monthly highlight as well as our newsletter, The Berkshire Echo: <http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/>.

We're always adding events such as courses and behind the scenes tours, so to keep up to date on what's going on, visit our 'Events' page on our website: <http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/events/>.

Don't forget to find us on Facebook : The Berkshire Record Office and follow us on Twitter : @berksarchives.

*Ivone Turnbull Senior Archivist*

### ***West Berkshire Museum***

West Berkshire museum has lots of interesting Special Exhibitions alongside the permanent exhibition: “Greenham; Tracks across the Common” explores the history of Greenham Common from 1199 when it was given to the Knights Hospitaller through to more recent political events in the 1980s. “Paper, People and Print.” looks at the history of paper making in West Berkshire and focuses on the photographs of people working at Fields Packaging in Colthrop. “Crime and Punishment” looks at some of the interesting crimes committed in West Berkshire with exhibits including the leg iron from the gibbet at Mortimer and the Criminal Registry from the area which features the photographs of criminals and details of their crimes from the turn of the century.

*Ruth Howard*

## ***Opportunities***

### ***Orphans of the Sea***

***On until 16th February 2018, during normal opening hours at the Berkshire Record Office***

Orphans of the Sea: The History of the Royal Merchant Navy Education Foundation in London and Berkshire is an exhibition celebrating the 190th anniversary of one of Britain’s foremost maritime charities. Explore the story of the Foundation and the children that it has helped. Available during our opening hours (Tuesday and Wednesday 9am to 5pm, Thursday 9 am to 9 pm and Friday 9 am to 4.30 pm). FREE admission. Why not come along and take a look?

### ***Roman Silchester***

***Weds 17th January at the West Berkshire Museum***

Michael Fulford is giving a talk about Roman Silchester about how recent excavations have shed light on its pre-Roman origins.

### ***Street Organs***

***17th January at The Heritage Centre (Reading Central Library)***

The Centre for Heritage and Family History is staging a series of fortnightly talks, tickets for which can be booked in person at The Centre or online. (see page 4) Tickets are just £5 inclusive of all refreshments (£4 for society members). All five talks in the quarter may be booked for the price of four, member or not. The first is by John Hunt on Street Organs - their history and demonstration of several barrel organs.

This series is already proving popular and you should book promptly to secure your place.

### ***The Marsh and the Visitor***

***18th January at the Museum of English Rural Life***

A midday talk by Alexandra Harris - details from MERL for more information contact [merl@reading.ac.uk](mailto:merl@reading.ac.uk)

### ***Behind the Scenes at the BRO***

***Monday 22nd January 2018, time 10.30 to 11.30 and Monday 19th March 2018, time 18.00 to 19.00***

Ever wanted to know what goes on behind the scenes at the Berkshire Record Office? Come along and find out. You will be shown how we store our documents and given an insight to the job of our conservator. It's FREE and there are 12 spaces available on each tour. Booking is essential. Please email [arch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:arch@reading.gov.uk) or call 0118 937 5132.

### ***An Exhibition on Hoards***

Opens at the end of January at the West Berkshire Museum.

### ***Edwardians on the Move***

***31st January at the Heritage Centre***

A look at travel both national and international some 100 years ago with Mike Hurst - see 17 Jan and page 4.

### ***Beginners' Family History Course***

***Starting 6th February***

The Berkshire Family History Society offers a four-session introduction to family history research, starting fortnightly from Tuesday 6th February at The Centre for Heritage & Family History. Places are limited and must be pre-booked via [www.berkshfs.org.uk](http://www.berkshfs.org.uk). The cost is £30 for the four sessions (£24 for society members).

### ***The History of Reading Cinemas***

***14th February at the Heritage Centre***

David Cliffe will be talking about cinema in Reading from travelling shows to multiscreen entertainment and will be signing copies of his new book. see 17 Jan and page 4.

### ***Newbury's lost Roman Cemetery***

***21st February at the West Berkshire Museum***

David Peacock will give a talk about Newbury's Lost Roman Cemetery.

Details on website: [westberkshireheritage.org.uk](http://westberkshireheritage.org.uk)

### ***Family History Websites***

***24th February at the Heritage Centre***

Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens will be conducting a workshop at the Heritage Centre on building and searching family history websites. Tickets £10 booking essential as places are limited - see page 4.

### ***Mapledurham Mill***

***28th February at the Heritage Centre***

Corry Starling will be telling of the history of the last commercially operated mill on the River Thames. see 17th Jan and page 4

### ***How to Read Old Handwriting***

***At the Berkshire Record Office 26th February 2018, time 10.15-14.45***

Always wanted to know how to read old handwriting? Come along to our introduction to reading handwriting found in documents at the BRO from c.1500 to 1700. The cost is £20 per person. There are 10 places available and booking is essential. Please email [arch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:arch@reading.gov.uk) or call 0118 937 5132.

### ***Preserving your Family Memorabilia***

***3rd March 2018, time 12.00-16.00 at the Berkshire Record Office***

Discover how to take care of, protect and preserve cherished keepsakes, family history items and more with our conservator. Cost is £25 per person. There are 6 places available and booking is essential. Please email [arch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:arch@reading.gov.uk) or call 0118 937 5132.

### ***Greenham Common over the years***

***14th March at the Heritage Centre***

Varied history from Redcoats via refugees, golf, gliders, furze gathering and films, bare knuckle prize fights to bomb storage and peace camps. Penny Stokes will also be signing her book. See 17th Jan and page 4

## ***Colours More than Sentences***

***14th March to 8th June 2018, during normal opening hours***

Colours More than Sentences: Illustrated Editions of The Ballad of Reading Gaol is a national first for Reading – an exhibition of artists' interpretations of Oscar Wilde's classic poem, drawn from around the world. Available during our opening hours (Tuesday and Wednesday 9am to 5pm, Thursday 9am to 9pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm). FREE admission. Why not come along and take a look?

## ***Guided Tour of Forbury Area***

***On Friday, 23rd March at 2 pm***

Joan Dils will lead a guided walk of the Forbury Gardens area, tracing its colourful history through religious and political changes to its present pleasure garden status. Places must be booked beforehand at the Family History Centre. (see Page 4)

## ***Berkshire Archaeological Day School***

***Saturday 14 April 2018 at St. Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury, RG14 5HG***

The draft Programme for the day is

10.00-10.05 - **Welcome** by Ann Griffin, Chairman Berkshire Archaeological Society

10.05-10.20 - **Recent work in West Berkshire** by Sarah Orr, West Berkshire Historic Environment Officer

10.20-10.40 - **Recent discoveries in East Berkshire** by Kathelen Leary, East Berkshire Archaeological Officer

10.40-11.00 **COFFEE**

11.00-11.20 - **Recent discoveries at Riding Court Farm, Datchet** by John Powell, Wessex Archaeology

11.20-11.40 - **Roman Boxford: a farm, a villa, and a mosaic** by Steve Clark of BARG

11.40-12.00 - **Silchester: The new temple and Nero's brickworks** by Professor M. Fulford, University of Reading.

12.00-13.15 **LUNCH**

13.15-13.45 - **Recent geological research on the Mesolithic in the Kennet Valley** by Professor Martin Bell, University of Reading

13.45-14.15 - **River Thames Flood relief scheme, stage 1 excavations** by Gareth Davies and Philippa Puzey-Broomhead, York Archaeological Trust

14.15-14.45 **TEA**

14.45-15.15 - **London's Roman tools: artefacts at work** by Owen Humphreys, a PhD student at the University of Reading

15.15-15.45 - **Wallingford Winterbrook: Excavations of a multi-period site with Prehistoric and Early Saxon settlement** by Carl Chapness, Oxford Archaeology

15.45-16.00 **Questions and Conclusions** by Ann Griffin

## ***SERIAC 2018***

### ***21st April 2018 At Windsor Boys School***

The South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference this year is being hosted by the Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group and will be held at Windsor Boys School on the 21st April 2018. A booking form is now available from their website <http://biag.org.uk/event/seriac-2018/>

The BIAG committee have put a lot of effort and thought into preparing what looks to be an interesting and varied day, do please support us and make a booking.

There will be six presentations:

The Miles Aircraft Factory of Woodley by Ken Fostekew

Jabez Hare, Commercial Wood Engraver by Martin Andrews

Specialist Paper Making in Berks, Hants and South Bucks by Sheila Viner

Tubney Wood Gun Barrel Factory by Rosemary Kitto

Preservation of Public Transport in the Thames Valley by Colin Billington

Slough Industrial Estate and its Railways by Jaye Isherwood

To be followed by two optional Walking Tours, a site visit or a Transport Film Show.

Any questions please email either [contact@biag.org.uk](mailto:contact@biag.org.uk) or [secretary@biag.org.uk](mailto:secretary@biag.org.uk)

## ***And Finally***



*The new Berkshire flag flying over a hotel in Belgium - see Project Purley page 15*

# 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](http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk)
- Berkshire Archaeological Society**, Andrew Hutt, 19 Challenor Close, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 4UJ, [info@berksarch.co.uk]
- Berkshire Archaeology Research Group**, Richard Firth, The Bailiff's Cottage, Barkham, Wokingham RG41 4TG, [tel 0118 978 7434 ]
- Berkshire Family History Society**, Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ, [tel 0118 950 9553] [[www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://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](http://www.eastilsleyhistory.com)]
- Eton Wick Local History Group**, Teresa Stanton, 35 Eton Wick Road, Eton Wick, Windsor, SL4 6LU, tel 01753 860591 [teresams35@virginmedia.com] [[www.etonwickhistory.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk)]
- Hungerford Historical Association**, Secretary Mark Martin, 23 Fairview Road, Hungerford RG17 0BP, Tel: 01488 682932, [mandm.martin21@btinternet.com], [[www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk](http://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.mtahs@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, [secretary@project-purley.eu], [www.project-purley.eu]
- Shinfield & District Local History Society**, Eileen Taylor, Long Meadow, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Berks, RG7 1TB. tel 0118 9883580. Reporter George Taylor [george.taylor2-9@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, RG19 3YU, tel 01635 863536, [enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk], [www.thatchamhistorical-society.org.uk]
- Theale Local History Society**, Graham Reeves, 52 Parkers Corner, Englefield, RG7 5JR, [thealehistory@aol.com]
- Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society**, Jean Poulter, 17 Weir Pool Court, Silk Lane, Twyford RG10 9GY, [jeanpoulter@tiscali.co.uk], reporter Denise Wilkin
- Wargrave Local History Society**, Peter Delaney, 6 East View Close, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8BJ, tel 0118 940 3121, [secretary@wargravehistory.co.uk], [www.wargravehistory.org.uk]
- Windsor Local History Group**, Sue Ashley, 49 York Avenue, Windsor, SL4 3PA, [nutritionsashley@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, 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,**

## **Officers**

### **Chairman**

**David Cliffe**

1 Priest Hill, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RZ

tel: 0118-948-3354,

e-mail [chairman@blha.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:@blha.org.uk)

### **Secretary**

**vacant**

e-mail secretary [@blha.org.uk](mailto:@blha.org.uk)

## **Committee Members**

**Dr Jonathan Brown** (Journal Editor)

**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 individuals 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](http://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 2018 are:-

	version of newsletter		no of copies	
	electronic	hard copy	Journal	Newsletter
<b>Institutional</b>	£18.00	£20.00	2	3
<b>Society</b>	£18.00	£20.00	2	3
<b>Individual and Family</b>	£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](mailto:membership@blha.org.uk)

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## ***The 41st Annual General Meeting***

***Saturday 10th March 2018***

***At the Maidenhead Community Centre, 42 York Road, Maidenhead SL6 1SH***

11.00 Arrival and Refreshments

11.30 Annual General Meeting

Guest Speaker - tba

Presidential Address by Brian Boulter - ***The Origins of Maidenhead***

Lunch (please bring your own or visit local outlets)

Guided Walk

Visit to Maidenhead Heritage Centre

For Societies wishing to set up displays the Centre will be open from 10.00

Parking in the Town Hall Car Park opposite the Centre or 10 minutes walk from Station

Booking Form included with this Newsletter - please respond by 2nd March There is no charge for attending.

There are limited disabled parking spaces - please reserve when you book.

## ***Next Newsletter***

The next Newsletter is due to be published in May 2018.

The DEADLINE for copy is 15th April 2018 - 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](mailto:newsletter@blha.org.uk) and copy it to [j.chapman458@btinternet.com](mailto:j.chapman458@btinternet.com)