



# **Berkshire Local History Association**



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# *Berkshire Local History Association*

## *Newsletter*

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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.

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* - **Shinfield School** founded by Richard Piggott in 1707      - see page 4

# ***Chairman's Corner***

2018 has been an eventful year for me, in several ways.

As someone interested in local history who has lived in Caversham for 35 years, I was asked to read through and comment on the draft text of the Caversham section of the forthcoming vol. XX of the Victoria History of Oxfordshire. This has given me great pleasure, and I have been able to meet the author, Dr. Stephen Miles. The BLHA committee gave a grant towards the publication of this volume, and at the forthcoming AGM, those present will be asked if they wish to make a further grant to the trust which is overseeing the production of the book. In return, BLHA members will be offered a discount on the price of the “big red book,” and I hope that in time we can have a much more affordable separate Caversham volume, with extra illustrations, as a spin-off. In the mean time, you can read the draft of the text as it now stands, with the results of my endeavours, and make comments. You can find it at [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk).



And since I've been visiting the drinking-houses of Reading for even more years than I've lived in Caversham, I have been able to contribute towards another book in progress, The A-Z of Reading Pubs. The book will also deal with the breweries, and will try to go back to the earliest times. Our small group of three authors has discovered around 500 establishments so far.

Then I've been asked by Two Rivers Press to consider writing a book about Reading ephemera. Since I established an ephemera collection at Reading Central Library whilst tidying up the local collection when I worked there, I have accepted the invitation and started work.

Another book, to be launched on February 25th, is A Gazetteer of Berkshire Schools before 1833. It will be a further volume in the Berkshire Record Society's series, and unusually, much of the research work was done by a team of volunteers. Joan Dils and I have been on the board that guided the work, and BLHA has contributed financially towards its publication. As a result, members of the Association and its member local societies can order copies at a reduced price, by using the form included in this journal and returning it with their payment by the end of January.

The Heritage Open Days in Reading this year included a building opened to the public for the first time – the house formerly belonging to the Palmer family of biscuit fame, known as The Acacias, in London Road. It now houses the Senior Common Room of the University. I was there, and enjoyed a peep at the

derelict fernery, and a conducted tour round the house. Unfortunately, the tour did not include a look into the almost legendary university wine cellars!

One disappointment for me in 2018 has been the inability to add new pictures to the Reading Libraries website, until the software they use has been updated. The update has now been promised for some time in 2019, but until it happens I have over 2,000 images of interest to local historians from different parts of Berkshire, ready scanned and waiting to be added. Many of these are the original material collected by local historians who are now no longer with us.

The BLHA committee spent a long time deciding what we should do about the new General Data Protection Regulations – as did the church council and the other committees of which I'm chairman, president or secretary. Was it really necessary to obtain from every member permission to contact them, using the postal and e-mail addresses they had already freely given? And was it necessary to have and retain evidence that the permission had been given? Advice was often unhelpful. I had thought it was sufficient to put out a statement to all members under the "legitimate interest" provisions of the Regulations. Almost everyone decided to play it safe, and collect the evidence of consent – including BLHA.

Last year's AGM at Maidenhead was most enjoyable, though a bit sad because we were effectively saying a fond farewell to Brian Boulter, our President, who was moving out of the area. The visit to Hendred House, the Anglican and Catholic churches in the village and the museum in Champs Chapel was, as far as I was concerned, glorious. The "Wilfred Owen Walk" around Dunsden was also enjoyable. Ann Smith, who organised it, has promised another local history walk with pub lunch for 2019.

Please note that, following some resignations last year, there are spaces on the committee for a few more members. It would be good to be able to share out the various jobs, most of them fairly minor, among more people, and we shall need new people to take over from the office holders in due course. After all, our constitution says that committee members should "normally" retire after five years, but some of our existing office holders feel that they can't or shouldn't, because there is no-one obvious to take over. It's normally three committee meetings a year, plus the A.G.M. Relations are harmonious, meetings are almost fun, and serious discussion is often interspersed with laughter.

One bright spot in 2018 was finding our new Secretary, Carol Dixon-Smith. I hope that she'll be happy with us for years to come. She will need to be elected to the committee at the AGM on April 6th.

This AGM will be in the hall in the garden of Watlington House, close to the centre of Reading. The house claims to be the oldest secular building in

town which is still standing, and it is listed, Grade II\*. Details of how to join us for the meeting are included in this newsletter and a booking form is included with this newsletter.

In the BLHA pipeline, as it were, are a workshop for local societies and individuals with their own collections of local history material, and a film show. A small group of us are set to meet next week to plan the workshop, which will offer advice on preserving, storing, cataloguing, making digital copies, and making collections available to researchers. As for the film show, a couple of committee members will be off to the Wessex Film and Sound Archive in the New Year to select some of the material. The archive, based in Winchester, is one of a series which cover the country. The show will comprise short films and clips from longer ones which were taken in different parts of Berkshire in the past, and will give some idea of the range of what is available, in the archive and from elsewhere.

Finally, I should like to wish a happy and prosperous New Year to all our local societies, and to our members!

*David Cliffe*

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



A happy New Year to everyone - I hope you all make a New Year's Resolution to send in items for the Newsletter and make sure you come to the AGM. We are working on a seminar on



archiving for local history societies to be held in the Autumn - hopefully we will have more details in the May edition. There are two key messages to get across: first that if you hold any original documents of historic importance you should think about offering them to the Berkshire Record Office and second while it is desirable that everything you hold should be well looked after it is not generally possible to follow professional archiving standards especially if the items you are holding are things like modern programmes and booklets of which there are many copies around.

*John Chapman*

# ***New Books and Reviews***

## ***A Gazetteer of Berkshire Schools before 1833***

This, the latest publication from the Berkshire Record Society, is due to be launched on February 25th next year.

There is a general introduction, outlining the development of education up to the time when the central government began to take a hand in education provision, and to make grants, in 1833, but the main part of the book is the gazetteer. It is a parish-by-parish account of all schools that are known to have existed across the county – the long-established grammar schools, the private schools, the charity schools and dame schools are all included. Of course, there is a lot more information available about some schools than others, and of course, from this publisher, the book is fully referenced and indexed. It should prove useful for local historians for many years.

It has taken around six years to research and write, and it has been very much a collaborative effort, steered by Dr. Peter Durrant, who was County Archivist at the time of its inception. In this, he was helped by a small team, comprising Mark Stevens, the present-day County Archivist, Joan Dils and David Cliffe, and Dr. Sue Clifford, who did most of the editing, writing and indexing.

The only sad part in the book's production was the unexpected and untimely death of Sue Clifford in the summer of 2018. By this time, she had virtually completed the work, but did not live to see the result. The small team enjoyed working with Sue, and will miss her, especially since another research project has started. Her expertise, and good humour, will be especially missed.

The extraordinary aspect of the way in which the book was produced is that the vast bulk of the research was carried out by volunteers. If you have been a BLHA member for the last six years, you may remember Sue coming to an A.G.M. inviting members to volunteer, and how the progress was reported, year by year, in my "Chairman's Corner" in the newsletter. There has always been a core of around a dozen volunteers, with people occasionally leaving and joining. The fact that some of them want to continue researching is another measure of the project's success. Their next project is another gazetteer – this time of school buildings across the county, built between the time of the 1870 Education Act and the outbreak of war in 1914. This was the era of the school boards, but schools of all kinds are included. The emphasis will be on the buildings themselves, and the book will be illustrated with drawings, photographs and

plans.

The BLHA has made a financial contribution towards the production of the first of the books, and in return, its members, and the members of affiliated societies, can obtain copies at a discounted price - £17 rather than £25. To obtain the discount, please complete the form included with this newsletter., and send it with a cheque, to arrive by the end of January. You can collect your copy from the Berkshire Record Office after the launch date, 25th February, or you can have it posted to you for £2.50 extra

## **Articles**

### *A Treasury for Local and Family Historians*

In 1978 I was contacted by the late Lord Langton Iliffe and invited to examine a collection of historic documents that belonged to Yattendon Estate. They were clearly of considerable historic interest and I suggested that they should be lodged with the Berkshire Record Office where Lord Iliffe already had a small collection and this was agreed. To facilitate the deposit I made a catalogue of the collection (355 records) in index card format and this was included in the deposit. In general I found that the documents were mainly concerned with land transactions in the parishes of Bucklebury, Frilsham, Stanford Dingley and Yattendon although there were also marriage settlements; farm leases and wills – all of considerable interest to social and landscape historians. The earliest record was a sale of land between John Norreys Esq. and John Clark dated 1527. The one exception was the complete Manor Court record of the Manor of Dunsford in Wandsworth, London from the reign of Mary Tudor in the 16th century until the manor was dissolved in the late 19th century. This was deposited in the appropriate London Record Office.

In 1984 another and much larger collection was found in the loft of The Homestead in Yattendon. This house had been the Estate Office until an existing Music Room was converted to provide more space for the Estate staff. The find was delivered to me without warning and completely filled the back of a small van. The documents were in random order and were delivered in feed sacks, carrier bags, cardboard boxes and in loose piles. Once again I found that they were mainly concerned with land transactions with a similar addition of marriage settlements, leases and wills. The majority were to do with the Basildon Estate. Once again the current owner, Lord Robert Iliffe of Yattendon, agreed to deposit them with the Berkshire Record Office and this was done on the 2nd of July this year.

This time I made the catalogue as a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. The

large number of documents (704) made it impractical to sort them before starting cataloguing and so the initial spreadsheet was unordered. I recorded the key features of each record as Record Number, Date, Parish, Manor, Title, Personal Names, Placenames, Remarks. With 'Personal Names' only the key names are recorded since many documents contain excessively long lists. 'Place names' contains many field names. I photographed – in .jpg format - particularly interesting documents with number labels attached linking them to the spreadsheet entry. These images were supplied as a separate digital file folder. I have not attempted to hyperlink them to the spreadsheet. Both the spreadsheet and the image file were delivered to the Berkshire Record Office with the documents.

Having completed this spreadsheet I typed up the card index of the 1978 collection using the same layout and added it to the main catalogue. I then sorted the combined file by parish and each individual parish block by date. Documents referring to more than one parish had their entry repeated with the various parishes inserted. This then collated all the references to a particular parish even when the item in question was not in the primary parish and the reference relatively trivial – such as a bequest to a distant relative. This may sound complicated but it has allowed the web of business and family links to be established. (See the Appendix). Parish names use the modern spelling in the 'Parish' column but the original spelling elsewhere. Boundary changes frequently mean that the modern county does not match the name given on the document. I considered that most researchers would use their modern county when looking for references.

Searches using the 'edit, find' facility will find individual names but varying spellings must be expected. For examples of this I searched for my own family name. 'Greenaway' produced a Thomas Greenaway at Basildon in 1624 who was fined for keeping an ale house without a licence and a Richard [Dick] Greenaway in 1626 who was also in trouble with the Basildon Manor Court. The 'Greenway' search found the respectable members of the family. In 1699 John Greenway witnessed a legal document with an elegant and cultured signature. In 1736 Randolph Greenway was a lawyer and in 1754 another John Greenway was a Registrar in Reading.

I am sure that the collections will be of great value to local, agricultural and family historians and I commend it to economic historians as well. We tend to assume that rural communities in the 16th to 19th centuries were largely self-contained but this collection shows that this assumption is far from justified. The list of associated parishes in the appendix shows investors, mortgage providers, brides, lawyers, small businessmen and others scattered all over the British Isles

from the Isle of Wight to Westmoreland, from Cornwall to Essex and from Ireland to Kent; all working with people in the eastern part of West Berkshire.

All enquiries concerning the catalogue and the documents should be made to the Berkshire Record Office. The County Archivist has asked me to explain that the collection has not yet been fully entered into their system. In the meantime enquiries should mention Reference Number D/EX2717.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the generosity and historical appreciation of Lords Langton and Robert Iliffe for making these collections available to historians.

*Dick Greenaway*

### ***A Domesday Mystery***

In the Berkshire Domesday there are three entries which have never seemed to have been identified with a parish or town which we would recognise today. They are all for a holding called Burley within the Reading Hundred and they all seem to have had Royal connections. I hope that this note will help to point to a solution.

Before we start we need to discuss a number of concepts which seem to get mixed up and confused by local historians. We need to start with Alfred the Great and his system of defence against the Danes which we know as the Fyrd (the army) and the Burgh (the stronghold) The idea was that when threatened the populace of a well-defined area could bring their livestock to a Burgh and their menfolk could patrol the ramparts to keep the Danes at bay. It was all very carefully worked out with four men to five paces of the rampart and the length of the rampart calculated from the number of settlements that it had to cater for.

The Fyrd on the other hand could be called out to form a larger army which seems to have been based upon the Roman military system, ie with centuries and cohorts to form a legion. The century was not 100 men as people often believe but 80 with spare 20 men going to form a headquarters unit or supplement the first century which was always a double-century of 160 men.

We now need to look at the territory protected by a Burgh. This could be looked at having three types of population centre which we can refer to as a town, a settlement or a hamlet. It is easiest to start with a settlement. This started with a family moving into a vacant area during the migrations to farm the land around and essentially sustain themselves. Sometimes a settlement's territory was bounded by a physical boundary such as a river but for simplicity's sake we can see it as a central area with houses and barns surrounded by arable land. The dimensions of this arable land were limited by a man's ability to start ploughing at dawn, work until noon and then return to the centre by sundown. Obviously

this would vary by the quality of the soil and the time of year the ploughing took place but it appears that this distance was somewhere between 1.5 and 2 Km.

If the population of a settlement grew too much then someone would have to leave and set up a new settlement and the next nearest spot to start would be between 3 and 4 Km from the old centre. If one looks at old large scale maps of Wessex and Mercia one is struck by this being the average distance between the centres of modern villages.

Towns were a somewhat different consideration. They were generally situated on a trade route at an auspicious point which could be where a river crossing started or where two trade routes intersected. They were usually characterised by having a market to which local villagers came to trade agricultural produce for tools and utensils made by craftsmen who operated from the town. This meant that the size of the town could vary tremendously depending on its location and importance. Hamlets on the other hand tended to be places where a specialist pursued his trade outside the town or settlement but did not indulge in arable agriculture. This could range from a fisherman to a miller, a shepherd, a charcoal burner or miner.

Each place covered by a Burgh was assessed as to the number of men it had to provide in the event of an invasion. A typical unit would be a man at arms plus four retainers. This unit would be referred to a five hides. Smaller or larger centres of population would be assessed as a different number of hides and occasionally a joint onus was placed upon neighbouring places with each assessed at a something and a half hide. If we take as typical, an area of 1.5 Km radius this would define  $3.14 \times 1.5 \times 1.5$  sqKm ie around 7 sqKm. or 172 acres. The point is though, that the assessment was based on the manpower available, not acreage as supposed by many local historians.

As well as the arable land many settlements would have woodland or grazing around their territory, sometimes exclusive and sometimes shared with neighbouring settlements.

The second obligation to consider was the tithe. This had been defined as ten percent of the yield of land or enterprise and was to go to the nearest church or monastery. In 909 King Edmund decreed that each church must define the boundaries for the lands from which their tithes were due. This had been a somewhat haphazard affair beforehand with pagan Danes not feeling obliged and many Christians seeking to avoid their obligations. The result was the establishment of the Parish which had little if any relationship with settlements as a parish could incorporate several or only part of a settlement.

By the time of Domesday things had changed considerably. With Christian-

ity becoming universal around 850 and almost all settlements having their own church, the concept of land holding was accepted by all. This postulated that all land was created by and therefore 'owned' by God. An individual could only 'hold' land. There was considerable dispute as to whether the land of a kingdom was held from God directly by the King or the Pope who could delegate the holding to a King or ecclesiastical foundation. In late Saxon times the typical arrangement was that the land of a county was held by an earl who delegated to lesser lords down to the lord of a manor, which could be a village, several villages or just part of a village. This made earls potentially very powerful as evidenced by the Godwins who were earls of Berkshire and seized the crown after the death of Edward the Confessor.

When William the Conqueror became king he was under no doubt that he held all the land directly from God and was determined that when he handed out land to his supporters or allowed previous lords to retain their holdings that everyone got parcels of land scattered all over the country and therefore of no threat to the crown. It was upon this basis that Domesday was compiled, county by county and landholder by landholder, taking little account of parishes although within landholder it was arranged by Hundred.

After I had read Maitland's 'Domesday Book and beyond' I was intrigued to see if I could reconstruct the parishes of the Reading Hundred by adding together the holding of each lord, parish by parish. On the whole it came out pretty conclusively with most modern parishes reconstructing with one, two or three multiples of five hides.

I was then intrigued by the three entries for Burley and a boundary bank to the south of the Goosecroft recreation ground in Purley. At the time of Domesday, there was a clear north/south boundary between Pangbourne and Tidmarsh to the west and Purley and Sulham to the east. This left the three well known manors of Purley Magna, Purley Parva and La Hyde as parts of Purley and Sulham and Nunhide as parts of Sulham.

The Burley entries were:-

*Lands of Henry of Ferrers in Reading Hundred*

1 hide. Leofwin held it from King Edward. He could go wherever he would. He still holds it. Then and now it answered for 1 hide. 1 villager and 21 smallholding with 1 plough; a fishery at 8d; meadow 2 acres woodland at 5 pigs The value was 10s, now 20s.

*Lands of Odo and other Thanes in Reading Hundred*

Aubrey the Queen's chamberlain holds 1 hide from the queen in Burley. Alward held it from King Edward. He could go where he would Then it answered for one hide now for nothing. Land for 1 ½ ploughs. The value was 30s now 20s

Harding holds 1 hide in Burley. He held it himself from Queen Edith. Aelfeva held it before 1066 she could go where she would, Then for 1 hide now for nothing Land for 1 ½ ploughs

Nothing in lordship but 3 villagers have 1 plough woodland at 5 pigs The value was 20s  
now 12s

When one compares these three with each other it seems fairly clear than we are in fact talking about the same piece of land. They all refer to 1 hide and woodlands for 5 pigs. There is some doubt about who holds it but it would appear to be held by Aubrey who held it from Queen Edith. When one considers how the information was obtained you realise that the enquirer was struggling to find anyone who knew precisely about lordship and values. This is what one would expect when there was no lord so he was questioning some locals who recognised Harding as the current steward but were vague as to who it had been. After all it was 20 years since the Conquest which would have been a long time in the lives of people in 1086.

Now consider the Feet of Fines entry for 1329. This referred to the manors of Sulham, La Hyde, Pangbourne and Purley together with Lething which had one mill 2 virgates of land and 16 shillings of rent. John de St Philibert, his wife Ada and son Thomas were granting the holdings to Richard Thurestyn. This suggests that at the very least Lething was lumped in with the other manors and would not have been miles away from them. It is also noteworthy to see the holder as John de St Philibert who was the then current Lord of the manor of La Hyde which abutted the land we are considering.

The descriptions fit fairly closely with the area of Purley which straddles the road from Reading to Wallingford from west of the junction with Long Lane. We have no history of activity before the 16th century when it had for a long time been the home of craftsmen including a forge and a wheelwright. There is a large and ancient bank separating this area from lands to the south identifiable with La Hyde. Although we can find no evidence of such activity before the 16th century, it seemed a good prospect that it was a craftsman's hamlet plying for trade on a main thoroughfare.

By the start of the 14th century Purley Magna was in the hands of the Huscarles, Purley Parva with the Malyns and La Hyde with the St Philberts. When Margaret Yates brought us the details of Feet of Fines 1307-1399, we found a series of entries relating to the area naming these families. It seems to me at least that its mediaeval name was Lething and is exactly the same piece of unnamed land referred to as 'in Burley' which is as close to Purley as you are going to get. In the 1930s it became known as the Purley Rise estate.

Mystery solved?

*John Chapman*

# Spotlight on

## *The Berkshire Gardens Trust: Moving Forward*

The Berkshire Gardens Trust (BGT) aims to promote the conservation and management of historically-significant parks and gardens across the Royal County of Berkshire. That might sound rather grandiose and lofty, but it is really important as the pressure to develop land for new homes and businesses keeps intensifying. This article explains what we actually do and why you should consider joining our group.

Berkshire has a wealth of historically-important parks and gardens. These range from nationally important sites such as Benham Park, West Berkshire (Grade II on the Historic England Register) and Eton College, Windsor & Maidenhead (Grade II), public parks like The Forbury Gardens, Reading (Grade II) and Herschel Park (Grade II), Slough. Many of the regionally and locally important landscapes of which we are aware are private or commercial residences, such as Bagnor Manor, Newbury, Shottesbrooke Park (the Landmark Trust) near White Waltham, Maidenhead and Woodside, Crimp Hill near Windsor (which we understand is one of Elton John's residences!).

Part of our aim is to allow more people to appreciate our landscape heritage. We do this by organising lectures and garden visits for our members. In brief, we have a Spring and Autumn lecture which are open to all (with members' preferential rates). There is an annual programme of visits to designed landscapes where we provide a bespoke guided tour, as well as refreshments. Over the past 10 years we have visited a number of Berkshire's parks and gardens, starting with Waltham Place, Twyford and including Eton College and the 'Capability' Brown landscape of Caversham Park, until recently home to the BBC Monitoring Service and local radio. This summer we visited Rooksnest, West Berkshire and Buscot House, now in Oxfordshire. Events anticipated for 2019 include a celebratory '10 years on' garden tour and tea at Englefield House, West Berkshire. BGT was formally launched with an event at Englefield House in July 2009, so it seems fitting that we have our 10-year celebration there! For more information about our events, please visit our website at [www.berkshiregardenstrust.org](http://www.berkshiregardenstrust.org) which also provides more background on the Trust.

The other part of what BGT does is to understand the importance of Berkshire's parks and gardens so we can comment on planning applications that might negatively impact them. As BGT does not own any of Berkshire's

designed landscapes, we need to liaise with and influence others to recognise their value and significance. We currently have 186 designed landscapes listed in an initial Gazetteer, which we would like to develop through research in order to help us comment on and contribute to planning applications which may affect them or their neighbourhood. These range from sites which feature on the Historic England Register as being of national importance to those which are or may be regionally or locally important, due either to their owner, designer, their particular style(s), and their setting. BGT is always keen to make positive points about any such proposals whenever possible, as well as alerting planning authorities to features and views which we feel may be adversely affected by development or changes.

While there is lots of publicly available data about the design, evolution and ownership of some of the better-known sites, we know very little about others including parks and gardens which may have changed substantially over the years. We are therefore keen to liaise with others across the county, including the owners of the landscapes concerned, to learn as much as possible about our gardening heritage before it disappears.

If you are interested in knowing more about and helping to conserve the historical landscapes of Berkshire, then please ask us to come along and give your organisation a presentation about our work – we love talking about it! If you would like to join the Berkshire Gardens Trust, a membership form is available on our website.

*Fiona Hope, Executive Secretary*

## **Society News**

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

The Society has enjoyed three interesting lectures this Autumn on ‘The Donkey in Human History’ given by Professor Peter Mitchell, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Conquest of England’ given by Professor Jim Storr and ‘Secrets of the Anglo-Saxon goldsmith: analysis of the Staffordshire hoard’.

In October and November more than 20 members of the Society were able to work on finds in Reading Museum store from excavations at Old Windsor led by the late Dr Brian Hope Taylor in the 1950s. There are 355 boxes of pottery, animal bone, shells, stones, etc in the store and their contents needed to be quantified. Members’ work showed there are over 38,600 sherds of pottery weighing over 622.5 kg and 40,453 pieces of animal bone weighing 243.4 kg. This project is sponsored by Reading Museum, Berkshire Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology.

*Anne Harrison*

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

It's been a busy few months in the Centre for Heritage and Family History with visitor numbers growing and a record number of events. From the 1st October, opening hours in the Research Zone changed to Mondays (11am to 4pm), Tuesdays (10.30am to 4pm), Saturdays (10.30am to 4pm) and the last Thursday of the month (10.30am to 4pm). This was necessary following changes to the opening hours and days of Reading Central Library.

During the summer the society was delighted to be able to provide research assistance to a number of individuals and also a local history society in Norfolk who was attempting to trace living relatives of four aircrew killed in a crash in the village during the Second World War. One of our volunteer research assistants successfully traced the nephews of the Reading-based co-pilot, who were able to travel to Cawston for a special service to unveil a plaque to their late uncle.

The society's quarterly tea, cakes and talks programme continues to grow in popularity. Quarter Four's theme was "The Armistice" and we enjoyed talks on "Tracks to the Trenches" by Mike Hurst, "Hidden History of Reading's War Graves" by Liz Tait, who also led a walk around the London Road Cemetery for the society a week later, "The end of the First World War and its aftermath" by Mike Cooper, "Medals and Decorations" by David Downs and on a more general theme "Putting Berkshire on the Map" by John Leighfield. Thanks go to all of the speakers, who all gave well-researched and interesting talks. One of the society's key objectives is education and recently we have hosted workshops on understanding parish registers, writing up your family history, DNA, and military records as well as our second Beginners' Family History Course of the year. Next year's programme includes a course on understanding old handwriting led by Joan Dils, and workshops on wills, merchant navy records, census records and something a little different – scrapbooking for family historians.

The society's bookshop continues to offer a range of books and data CDs for sale. Newly launched – Berkshire War Memorials Edition 2 CD (£20, upgrade from edition 1 for £5) and Memorial Inscriptions Collection 3 CD (£10). The latter includes monuments at Avington St Mark and St Luke, Enborne St Mary, Grove St John, Hungerford St Lawrence, Theale Holy Trinity, Winterbourne St James, Grazeley Holy Trinity and Shurlock Row All Saints (both of which are now private houses), and the former Reading Baptist burial ground, which no longer exists. For further details see [ww.berksfhs.org.uk](http://ww.berksfhs.org.uk) and follow the link for shop.

*Catherine Sampson*

## *Project Purley*

The society's autumn talks' programme began in September with Katie Amos talking about the history of Prospect Park Mansion, a property closely connected with the Liebenrood family of Purley and one known to the vast majority of the audience. In October, Jane Burrell spoke about "Poets of the Somme", a very moving talk which was opened up to the wider community to attend, as part of Purley's commemoration events to mark the centenary of the Armistice. The talk brought back memories of last year's battlefields trip by the society, during which we visited some of the sites mentioned during the talk. A month later, Mike Cooper took us to the Second World War, with his talk on 'Early Closing Day, the bombings of Reading in February 1943. A Purley man was killed in the People's Pantry bombing, and in the post-talk discussion several of those present recalled his widow and their daughters. In December, the society held its normal Christmas party with a quiz, photographs, and bring and share buffet.

Like many other societies, Project Purley's focus during October and early November was commemorating the centenary of the Armistice. Members of the society formed the core of an Armistice Working Group for Purley, which coordinated the village's events. A 'soldiers' trail' proved very popular with young and old alike. Eleven silhouettes of soldiers, each with a name plaque of a man killed during the First World War, were placed around the village, outside their former homes, or in some cases, the site where it once stood. A trail leaflet outlined a circular walk taking in all eleven figures and giving a little background to each man. A large number of people completed the whole trail, including at least one primary school class, and many visited individual figures, and for weeks after they were first erected facebook was full of photographs of the men and general discussion. A number of family members also made the trip to Purley to see the figures, some of whom laid poppies and flowers by their ancestor.

Over the weekend of 3 and 4 November, Project Purley mounted an exhibition as part of a larger commemoration event in the parishes' 18th century Barn. The Barn was a very appropriate venue, as it was utilised as a remount depot during the war. "Purley Remembers the War" attracted well over a thousand people, and included drama sessions, specialist talks about aspects of the war, 'make do and mend' workshops, a reading area, specialist advice on medals, collectibles and family research, a fifty plus board exhibition on the war and Purley, and stands from local and national organisations. A substantial amount of research was undertaken to prepare for the exhibition, and we now have a far greater understanding of what was happening in Purley between 1914 and 1918. Over £400 was collected during the two days for the Royal British Legion.

On the evening of November 11th, as part of the celebrations of peace at St Mary's Church, which included the ringing of bells and lighting of a beacon, twelve stands from the exhibition were once again displayed for people to browse during a rousing evening of silver band music, singing and refreshments. It is planned to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice with two permanent markers in the village, both to be sited in the grounds of the village's Memorial Hall. Money to erect a memorial bench has been raised by crowd funding, and a Verdun Oak will be planted, when the sapling is sufficiently established, which has been grown from an acorn collected by Project Purley members last September at Ecoivres CWGC Cemetery, near Vimy Ridge, where one of our war dead Dudley Cecil Aldin is buried.

In late November, the society once again hosted the Rain or Shine Theatre Company who performed their outstandingly funny "Sherlock Holmes and the curious case of Dr Jekyll and Miss Hyde". There was a record audience of over 130 who seemed to thoroughly enjoy the performance and gave generously to a leaving collection in aid of Alzheimer's Research. In total, together with profits from the society's share of the ticket sales and refreshments, over £500 was raised.

Next year's talk's programme brings a variety of speakers and subjects and two summer visits.

*Catherine Sampson*

### ***History of Reading Society***

In September Angela Buckley, the Chair of the Society of Genealogists, gave a talk about Amelia Dyer and the Baby Farm Murders in late-Victorian Reading.

At Caversham Lock in March 1896 two bargeman discovered a parcel floating in the river Thames; after removing the wrapping they discovered within it a brick and the body of a baby: the body was wrapped in newspapers and had a cord tied tightly around the neck.

The alarm was raised and the police removed the body to the mortuary at London Street where it was examined by a surgeon, Dr William Maurice. He concluded that the little girl had died of strangulation; a murder investigation was launched, it was led by superintendent George Tewsley. A search found more bodies of babies in the river at Caversham.

A name, address and railway company stamp discovered on the parcel led the investigation to the home of Amelia Dyer at Kensington Road, Reading. Incriminating evidence was found at the premises and Dyer was arrested. Dyer's principal source of income was to care for the children of parents forced to give

them up for adoption; she charged a fee of £10. Many were allowed to die of malnutrition, later, she turned to infanticide as a means of disposing of them.

After her trial in London she was found guilty of the murders of three babies and sentenced to death; Amelia Dyer was hanged at Newgate Prison in June 1896.

In October Joy Pibworth, a committee member, gave a talk about the Forbury in Reading. In the year 843 the land between St.Laurence's Churchyard and the Abbey Ruins was the setting for a battle between the Anglo-Saxons and the invading Danish army; they chose it as the vanguard for their invasion of Wessex.

In 1121, King Henry I founded a Benedictine abbey at the site; after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 it reverted to common land and much of the building's fabric was pillaged by the locals. During the siege of Reading in the English Civil Wars of the 1640s, the abbey sustained further damage.

By 1831 the abbey was a 'picturesque ruin' and a plan proposed its demolition and replacement with houses. Public outrage caused Reading Corporation to act and most of the site was saved; part of the site would become a church and a prison. Later, the remainder of the site was purchased by the Corporation and turned into a public park, today's Forbury Gardens.

In November Dr Megan Aldrich gave a talk about the history of Caversham's architecture. For much of its existence the Reading suburb of Caversham was a village in the county of Oxfordshire and quite independent of its larger neighbour; in 1911, its built-up area was absorbed into Reading Borough.

Caversham evolved around its parish church of St.Peter; the church's history is traced back to 1132 though much of the present building is Victorian. Opposite the church is Caversham Court Gardens: this was the site of the old rectory built in the 1450s, sadly, it was demolished by Reading Corporation in 1935 and its grounds became a public park.

On higher ground to the east stands Caversham Park. The present house, erected in the 1850s, was designed by Horace Jones for the industrialist, William Crawshay; it was the first country house in England built around an iron frame.

Among Caversham's public buildings the library in Church Street is notable: it was designed in 1906 by William Lewton in a florid Art Nouveau style. In the 21st century the latest addition to Caversham's architectural heritage is the new footbridge across the Thames at Christchurch Meadows.

In October Malcolm Summers agreed to become the Society's new treasurer. Originally from Birmingham, Malcolm settled in Reading in 1981, after a

career in teaching he retired in 2017. He has published a number of books notably a history of Greyfriars Church in Reading; he is currently working on a book about the stories behind the various memorials around Reading to be published in 2019.

The programme of talks starts again on 16th January the subject the Influence of Victorian Mourning in Reading Cemetery. More information about future meetings and membership can be obtained from our website:

[www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk](http://www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk)

*Sean Duggan*

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

The speaker at our October meeting was Katie Amos, lead librarian at Reading Central Library, Local Studies Department. Katie gave a very interesting, and useful, presentation on the Local Studies Illustrations Collection, beginning with an explanation of how to access the collection catalogue online. This was followed by many examples of the variety of illustrations held in the collection, mostly photographs but some paintings and engravings. Subjects ranged from local buildings, mostly in the Reading area, to local views and portraits of famous, and not-so-famous, people. We were delighted to find that Katie had adapted her standard presentation to include some illustrations of buildings, views and even people in the Shinfield area.

In November, Professor Richard Hoyle gave a presentation on “Discovering Britain in the 18th Century”. Professor Hoyle began by explaining that, before the 18th century, little information was available on Britain in general, other than that collected by Government for administrative and political purposes. The State had no need to know the population of the country or the value of property and had no interest in agriculture as the country was self-sufficient, with any excess production being exported. This lack of official information affects what local historians are able to find about these earlier periods.

Mapping of the country improved during the 18th century. Earlier maps by Christopher Saxton show a low level of detail and lack roads and county boundaries. By contrast, John Rocques 18th century maps are very detailed, showing field boundaries and land usage. Tours of various parts of Britain were made by a number of people, notably Daniel Defoe, Celia Fiennes, Dr Samuel Johnson and Arthur Young. Their observations on different aspects of agriculture, industry and the economy were recorded and published. Towards the end of the century the Government decided to initiate a census to establish the size and details of the population. After much debate the first census was held in 1801 and it was discovered that the population was 50% greater than previously estimated.

This was a very enlightening presentation and contained much more detail than it is possible to report on here.

Shinfield Pubs - We are currently undertaking, in conjunction with members of Spencers Wood Local History Group, research into the history of pubs of Shinfield Parish with a view to publishing a book on the subject. While we can get a lot of details from official records, we would welcome any additional information regarding the pubs, both past and present, that might help in this quest. If anyone has any information about pubs that have existed, or still exist, anywhere in Shinfield Parish, (including Shinfield village, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross, Grazeley, Shinfield Rise, Great Lea), we would be pleased to hear from them.

If you have any photographs (especially of pub interiors), memories of landlords, documents, anecdotes or anything else of interest, you would be willing to share with us please contact our Secretary or Chairman on 0118 9 883580.

*George Taylor*

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

*Spencer's life in Cookham - An interesting talk by Sheila Heath, a volunteer from the Spencer Gallery on October 8th.*

We were invited to learn about Stanley Spencer's life by looking at some of his paintings and reading some of his quotations. It was evident that his work fell into three main categories, Visionary and religious : Portraits: and Landscapes.

The village of Cookham featured strongly in many of his paintings. It was his "heaven on earth" From an early age he showed great potential in depicting portraits. He professed to be less interested in landscapes which he called his "pot boilers" but these were of flowers and local farming scenes particularly featuring the river Thames.

He lived in Fernlea in the High St in close proximity to many of his family and was educated by Anne his elder sister. There were 9 children with no formal education but an emphasis on music, literature and art. At the age of sixteen he went to Maidenhead Technical college but it was not until he gained a scholarship to the Slade School of Art that he came into contact with other artists in 1907.

There he was introduced to Giotto's work, which influenced him in his later work. In 1914 a self portrait was bought by Sir Edward Marsh, secretary to Winston Churchill.

He served as a private during the First World War and saw active service in Macedonia. His painting of wounded soldiers may be seen in The War Museum. He was employed as a war artist in the second World War and became famous for works such as Shipbuilding on the Clyde. Undoubtedly his wartime experiences influenced his work as can be seen at the Sandham Memorial chapel at Burghclere where the murals are in the style of Giotto.

In reconnecting with his home he placed many of his religious paintings in Cookham such as Christ entering Jerusalem, the Last Supper and the Resurrection which was in the Tate exhibition of 1927. Some of these venues can still be spotted today even though Cookham has changed over the years

After the divorce of his first wife Hilda, he married Patricia from the Bloomsbury set, amid much emotional turmoil and produced some of his most controversial works. He withdrew his membership from the Royal Academy when two of his canvasses were rejected but returned when he was granted a CBE in 1950

He died at The Canadian Red Cross Hospital at Cliveden at the age of 68 having painted a very fine self portrait in 1959.

One of our most famous 20th century artists lived on our doorstep and tried to show miraculous and every day events taking place in his own “Heaven on Earth”, Cookham.

*Jean Poulter*

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

Joy and Joe Haynes gave an enjoyable illustrated presentation on the history of the Wargrave Theatre Workshop in September. Wargrave's theatrical tradition goes back to at least 1788, when Lord Barrymore's built a theatre. Amateur shows are known from the 1930s, through to the post-war era. The Wargrave Theatre Workshop was formed in 1974, with their first production - 'Oliver' - at the 1975 Village Festival. That was followed by 'Babes in the Wood', the first of 43 annual pantomimes. For the 1987 Village Festival the Workshop presented their first open-air Shakespeare – A Midsummer Night's Dream, on Mill Green. Many 'back-stage' activities, such as costumes, set making, etc, were also illustrated, whilst the audience enjoyed identifying many of the Workshop members in the pictures.

Local historian and author Paul Lacey recalled the history of Smith's Coaches of Reading in October. Like many such firms, its origins were with ex WW1 military vehicles obtained from the “Slough Dump”. Alf Smith bought a Thornycroft in 1921, intending to sell it as a lorry, but finding no buyer,

substituted a charabanc body, named it The Bluebird, and began to run pleasure trips locally, and then to the coast at Southsea. A more modern Lancia was acquired in 1923, enabling longer trips to places like Cheddar. Alf Smith began express services with his distinctive blue and orange liveried coaches to south coast resorts in the late 1920s. Most coach work stopped during WW2, but afterwards, contracts for workers' services to Aldermaston and Harwell, as well as the excursions and express work kept the firm busy, it becoming the largest private coach operator in the south of England. Information on Paul's books can be found at <http://www.paullaceytransportbooks.co.uk/>

Dr David Lewis revealed some of Old Windsor's history in a fascinating presentation to the November meeting of the Wargrave Local History Society. He considered why it was of interest, and what was known of its history – and, equally, what of its 'popular history' was fiction. The original community had faded by the 13th century, so that virtually nothing existed apart from the church surrounded by fields. Little direct documentary evidence exists, and unravelling the history depended on 'piecing together fragments of information from other sources', such as the Synod of the English church, held there in 1070, or the 'Crown Wearings' of various kings in the period before 1107. Whatever the 'reason' why a settlement had developed there, though, remains a mystery.

The year ended with the traditional Christmas Party, members enjoying seasonal fare provided by member Wendy Smith, and participating in a quiz based on extracts from the Wargrave News village newspaper – now 40 years old.

For more information about the society, visit the website [www.wargravehistory.org.uk/](http://www.wargravehistory.org.uk/)

*Peter Delaney*

## ***Museums and Libraries***

### ***Berkshire Record Office***

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

Recently catalogued material which may be of interest include the surviving coroners' inquests up to 1942 for Reading Borough (COR/R) and District (COR/RB); school records for Reading School, 1746-2001 (SCH3); Hemdean House School, Caversham, 1835-2014 (SCH40); and Caversham Nursery School, 1946-2011 (SCH43), as well as papers from a former pupil relating to Newbury County Girls' School, 1934-1944 (D/EX2644). We also have the records of the Newbury and Community Primary Care Trust, 1884-2010 (P/HA7); the Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes (D/EX2007); Basildon

WI (D/EX2447); Bradfield WI (D/EX2390); Theale WI (D/EX2550); Winnersh WI (D/EX2567); the Berkshire Federation of Townswomen's Guilds, 1991-2016 (D/EX 2634) and the Tilehurst TG (D/EX2632).

Records of Berkshire families can be found in the records of the Castle family of Home Farm, Charlton, 1704-2008 (D/EX2547); and the Blandy, Hooper and Watlington families of Reading, 1692-1933 (R/D142). If you are interested in political history, we have the records of the Windsor Labour Party, 1936-2001 (D/EX832), as well as the Hurst Conservative and Unionist Association, 1906-1955 (D/EX2606). We have also completed cataloguing the records of Phoebe Cusden (1887-1981) and her husband Albert (1891-1953) [D/EX1485].

Our newly updated website has lots of information about local and family history in general as well as our opening hours and online catalogue; you can even read our latest newsletter and see what events we have on – why not take a look: <https://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk> . If you're interested in seeing something, please do visit, but if you're not able to come in person we can still assist you remotely; just use our online contact form on the website and get in touch.

Have you read our World War One blog? Each post relates to that day or month 100 years ago as the 1914-1918 war unfolded before Berkshire's eyes. Why not take a look and see what you can discover? <https://berkshirevoiceswwi.wordpress.com/about-berkshire-at-war/>.

Don't forget to find us on Facebook : The Berkshire Record Office

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/berkshirerecordoffice/> and follow us on Twitter : @berksarchives <https://twitter.com/berksarchives/>

*Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist*

## **Opportunities**

### ***- For Lectures, Visits and Exhibitions***

*We do not publish meetings of individual societies only public events. The events marked \*\* will be held at The Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BQ Book online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or pay at the door (subject to availability)*

#### ***The Early Years of Reading's Railways: a talk by Paul Joyce \*\****

***Thursday 10th January 2.00-4.00 pm***

Reading was linked to London by railway in 1840, and to Bristol the following year, bringing important economic growth to the town. This talk focuses on the early years of the railway. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4) — includes tea and cake. .

## ***Reading Abbey and the Abbey Quarter***

***Talk at Reading Museum 22nd January***

A presentation and talk on the Abbey Quarter by the authors of the new guide. £5 booking essential

### ***Understanding Old Handwriting Course: with Joan Dils \*\****

***Three-part course on Saturday 19th January, 2nd and 16th February  
11.00am-1.30pm***

This course will look at the structure of documents from the 17-19th centuries, which are of most use to family historians, and teach attendees how to read the various handwriting styles used. Tickets £30 (Members £24). Pre-booking required – online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or during opening hours at The Centre for Heritage and Family History.

### ***Getting Around in the 1960s: a talk by Mike Hurst \*\****

***Thursday 24th January 2.00-4.00 pm***

An entertaining illustrated talk about how we were on the move in the ‘Swinging’? Sixties. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4) — includes tea and cake. Book online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or pay at the door (subject to availability).

### ***Merchant Navy Records: with Tony Wright \*\****

***A Workshop on Saturday 26th January 11.00am-1.00pm***

Find out what records are available and how and where to find them. The workshop will also look at the Seaman’s Certificate of Continuous Discharge, Crew Lists, Ship’s Logs, Lloyds Register of Shipping, Ship’s Movement cards, and some online resources for finding more information. Tickets £10 (BFHS Members £9). Pre-booking required

### ***Heroes of Woodley Airfield: a talk by Joy Pibworth \*\****

***Thursday 7th February 2.00-4.00 pm***

A whole host of important individuals in the history of aviation have associations with Woodley Airfield – many household names, others less well-known. Joy’s talk will bring to life the stories behind the names. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4) — includes tea and cake. Book online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or pay at the door (subject to availability).

### ***Census Records – England and Wales: with Tony Roberts \*\****

***A workshop on Saturday 9th February 11.00am-1.00pm***

Find out how to get the most from Census records for your family history research. Attendees will explore the development in the modern census from 1841 to date, including also the 1939 Register, and have the opportunity to examine examples of different census. Tickets £10 (Members £9). Pre-booking required – online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or during opening hours at The Centre for Heritage and Family History.

### ***Offences against the person?***

***Discovering hidden LGB histories in Berkshire court archives***

***11th February 2019, time 16:30 to 18:00***

As part of LGBT History Month, join us at the Berkshire Record Office to hear University of Reading students discuss the findings of their summer 2018 UROP research. Learn about previously forgotten lives, see some of the documents they used for research and enjoy tea and cake. It’s FREE and there are 30 places available; booking is essential. Please email [arch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:arch@reading.gov.uk) or call

0118 937 5132.

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

No lunchtime talk in January but talks resume 13th February at 12:45. (£2 at the door)

### ***The Victorian Schoolroom***

***An experience at the Reading Abbey Gateway on Tuesday 19th February***

### ***The Wilts and Berks Canal: a talk by Paul Joyce \*\****

***Thursday 21st February 2.00-4.00pm***

The Wilts & Berks Canal opened in 1810, was abandoned in 1914, but in recent decades sections have been restored and re-watered. Paul's talk will highlight the importance of this waterway and its mixed fortunes over the years. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4) — includes tea and cake. Book online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or pay at the door (subject to availability)

### ***Smith's Coaches of Reading: a talk by Paul Lacey \*\****

***Saturday 9th March 12.00 noon-2.00pm***

This is the story of how Smith's Coaches of Reading developed from a single charabanc to become the largest privately-owned coaching firm in Southern England. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4) — includes tea and cake. Book online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or pay at the door (subject to availability).

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

***11th March 2019, time 10:15 to 14:45***

Always wanted to know how to read old handwriting, but don't know how? Then come along to our workshop! It will be held at the Berkshire Record Office where we will look at samples from 16th to 18th century documents held here. 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.

### ***Guided Walk of Reading: with Terry Dixon \*\****

***Tuesday 12th March 10.00am-12.30pm***

This is a 2 mile walk around Reading which will look at 'Reading's strategic position, the importance of the coming of the railways and Reading's rapid growth'. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4). Pre-booking required

### ***Where there's a will there's a relative: with Chad Hanna and Gillian Stevens \*\****

***A workshop on Saturday 16th March 11.00am-2.00pm***

This workshop will look at wills, pre and post 1858, plus other probate documents such as inventories, administrations and death duties. Find out their benefits for family historians and where to locate them. Tickets £10 (BFHS Members £9). Pre-booking required – online at [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk) or during opening hours at The Centre for Heritage and Family History.

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

***18th March 2019, time 10:30 to 11:30***

Ever wanted to know what goes on behind the scenes at the BRO? Then come along and find out! You will be shown some historical documents, where we store them and given an insight into how

our conservator repairs them. It's FREE and there are 12 spaces available. Booking is essential. Please email arch@reading.gov.uk or call 0118 937 5132.

### ***Royal Death and Burial***

***Saturday 6th April***

A one day conference at Reading Museum to put Reading Abbey in context with internationally renowned experts (£10 booking essential)

## ***And Finally***

### ***The BLHA Annual General Meeting***

***Saturday 6th April 2019***

***Watlington House, 44 Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RJ***

The venue for this year's Annual General Meeting was suggested by members of the committee, and will give us the chance to see something of one of Reading's oldest surviving houses, and to take a short walk around one its earliest and most interesting inner suburbs. The programme will follow the usual format: arrival and refreshments in the hall in the garden behind the house itself from 11 a.m. with the AGM starting at 11.30. Before lunch, we will have a talk about the Mills Archive, which is based in the old house, followed by a visit. During our walk after lunch, we shall be visiting the two churches with spires that dominate Watlington Street – Wesley Methodist Church and the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart (formerly St. John's Anglican Church). Full details will be posted on the website, circulated in an eBulletin, and sent to all those who have booked to attend.

**AGM BUSINESS:** We will endeavour to keep the business part of the day as short as possible to make more time available for social and cultural activities.

**TRANSPORT:** Watlington House is fifteen minutes' walk from the railway station. Parking is at the end of the garden of the house, reached from South Street.

**MOBILITY CONCERNS:** The hall is accessible on the level, but the doors do not allow wheelchair access. Visiting the Mills Archive will involve climbing stairs.

**DISPLAYS:** For societies wishing to set up displays, the hall and adjacent car park will be open from 10 a.m.

**LUNCH:** Please bring a packed lunch, or you could visit one of several nearby pubs or cafes. Tea and coffee will be provided. There will be no charge for attending this meeting.

Please respond by Friday, 22nd March, 2019. Send a completed hard copy of the form with s.a.e, to Carol Dixon-Smith, 90 Gallys Road, Windsor, SL4 5QN.

# History Societies

- Arborfield Local History Society**, Secretary Rosemary King [roking@henforyd.plus.com see [www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk](http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk)]
- Berkshire Archaeological Society**, Anne Harrison, [secretary@berksarch.co.uk] [[www.berksarch.co.uk](http://www.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 Bent 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**, Chairman:Malcolm Austen. Secretary: Angie Trueman c/o Oxfordshire History Centre, St Luke's Church, Temple Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2HT, [email: secretary@ofhs.org.uk or 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, [nutritionsas-hley@hotmail.com], [www.windsorhistory.org.uk]

**Friends of Windsor and Royal Borough Museum**, Courtney Rudge c/o Windsor Library, Bachelor's Acre, Windsor SL4 1ER , [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**, Town Square, Bracknell, RG12 1BH, tel 01344 423149  
[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**, Newbury 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 685686,  
[museum.collections@rbwm.gov.uk], [www.windsor.gov.uk]
- Slough Library Local Studies**, Slough Library, The Curve, William St, Slough, SL1 1XY, tel  
01753 875533, [library@slough.gov.uk] [www.slough.gov.uk/libraries]
- Slough Museum**, The Curve, William St, Slough, SL1 1XY, tel 01753 875533,  
[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: Joan Dils**

**Vice-President Prof E J T Collins**

## **Officers**

**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

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## **Committee Members**

**Dr Jonathan Brown** (Journal Editor)

**John Chapman** (Newsletter Editor)

**Dave Osborne** (Web Designer)

**Dr Margaret Simons** (Newsletter Distributor)

**Elias Kupfermann**

**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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## Next Newsletter

The next Newsletter is due to be published in May 2019.

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, could you please address e-mails to [newsletter@blha.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@blha.org.uk) and copy it to [john.chapman458@gmail.com](mailto:john.chapman458@gmail.com)

## The Annual General Meeting

*Saturday 6th April 2019*

*at Watlington House, Reading*

*Please send the booking form as soon as possible*

*See Page 24*

*See you all there*

