

# BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

## 42<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019

Dear Member,

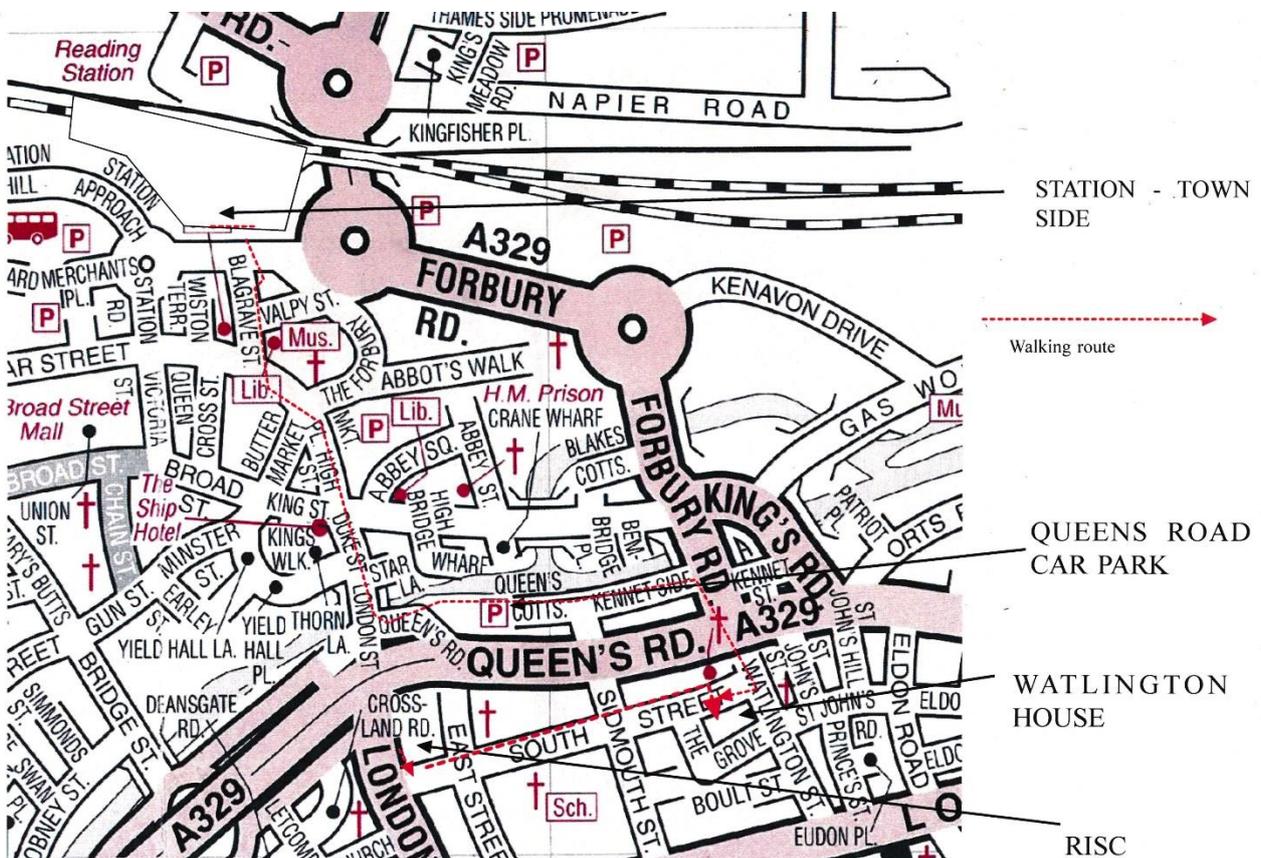
Thank you for booking attendance to the meeting.

Please find below instructions for getting to Watlington House, the agenda for the meeting, the minutes of the 2018 A.G.M., and the reports of members of the Executive Committee. They will be taken as read at the meeting.

Carol Dixon-Smith,  
Hon. Secretary, BLHA.

## GETTING TO WATLINGTON HOUSE

Watlington House front is on Watlington Street, but where we are meeting is to the rear with access from South Street. The garden gate comes just after The Grove, when coming along South Street, where someone will be available to guide you, from 10 a.m.



## **On foot, from Reading Station**

Leave the station on the town side, and turn left towards Forbury Road, crossing the end of the road to the station car park, and then cross the road by Caffè Nero to turn right along Blagrove Street.

You'll see the Town Hall clock tower ahead. Pass the Museum, Town Hall at St. Laurence's Church, cross the end of the Forbury, and continue along the left-hand pavement of the Market Place.

When you arrive at King's Road, cross it using the refuge in the middle of the road, and go along Duke Street, which continues the line of the street you were on. Go over the river on the High Bridge, and immediately afterwards, turn left and follow the riverside path.

Pass the Queen's Road Car Park, and the road continues as Kennet Side. The next road bridge is Watlington Street, so you turn slightly right to go up to the street, and keep on the right-hand pavement. You cross the dual carriageway on the pedestrian crossing, and pass Wesley Methodist Church.

Once past the church, Watlington House will come into view. Turn right into South Street just before it, and after a few yards, you'll see the garden gate. The distance is about half a mile, and the walk should take no more than 15 minutes.

## **By bus, from Reading Station**

Buses go from stop SC in Station Road, which is more or less ahead when you leave the station on the town side, by the tall office building called Thames Tower and opposite the Malmaison Hotel. You can use buses 5, 6, or 7, and they go every 8 minutes. Alternatively you can catch bus 21 from stop EK, which is to the left, by the Railair coach stop, which goes every 15 minutes. Whichever bus, the stop you want is London Street Foot, which is by the Reading International Support Centre (RISC), and the journey time is about 5 minutes. If you need to pay, the fare is £2 single, £4 return. You need the right coins if you're using cash, but you can pay with a "contactless" card. When you alight, keep on the same pavement and go along in the same direction as the bus for a few yards, and you come to South Street on your left. Continue along it, taking care when crossing Sidmouth Street, and you'll see a church spire ahead and the garden gate on your right,

## **By car**

Do not put the postcode of Watlington House into your sat-nav as there is no access to the car park from Watlington Street which is closed to traffic at Queen's Road, South Street and Grove Road. Instead, put 'Sidmouth St, Reading.'

The car park is accessed from the garden gate on South Street and the only access is via Sidmouth Street.

You can access South Street directly from London Street, or via Sidmouth Street, which is reached from London Road or Queen's Road.

There are 25 spaces in the Watlington House gardens: in the unlikely event of our running out of space, the nearest car park is the Queen's Road Car Park, where you will have to pay. To get there, return to Sidmouth Street, turn right, and then turn left onto Queen's Road. The car park is on the other side of the road, with traffic light access. Follow the River Kennet from the north side of the car park, turning right as you leave. This is part of the walking route from the station.

If you do not have sat-nav and do not know Reading, you can approach it from several directions. From the east, follow the signs for the A329 towards the town centre. Just after you pass the Royal Berkshire Hospital, keep in the right-hand lane and Sidmouth Street is on your right with access controlled by traffic lights. Go down about 100 yards and turn right into South Street.

From the west or south via M4 follow A33 towards the town centre and turn right as you come to the Inner Distribution Road. Follow this past Queen's Road Car Park and then keep in the right-hand lane and circle the office block ahead of you and return along the IDR to the traffic lights at Sidmouth Street. Turn left, and mid-way up the street turn left again into South Street.

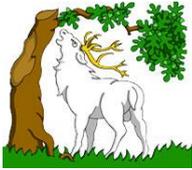
From the north, cross Caversham Bridge and turn left at the second big roundabout. Carry on to the next roundabout, avoiding the bus lane to your right. Then drive under the railway bridge, turning left at a smaller roundabout, keeping to the right-hand lane turn right at the next roundabout by the prison and follow the road, keeping to your left to join the IDR until you come to the Sidmouth Street lights, where you turn left.

# AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held on March 10<sup>th</sup> 2018
3. Matters arising not already on the agenda
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Journal Editor's Report
6. Newsletter Editor's Report
7. Membership Secretary's Report
8. Website Designer's Report
9. Chairman's Report
10. Election of President
11. Election of Vice-President
12. Election of Officers
13. Election of Members of the Executive Committee
14. Election of Honorary Examiner of Accounts
15. Any Other Business

---

The meeting will be followed by a short talk on The Mills Archive, from Ron Cookson. After this, there will be the chance to visit the archive, which is based in Watlington House, in small groups, and the chance to look round the display tables of the member societies, and to enjoy lunch. After lunch, there will be a walk along streets in the neighbourhood of Watlington House, looking at the houses built for the wealthy, and for ordinary working people. We will visit two churches, and at the second of them, refreshments will be laid on, before we break up and make our way home.



## BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity 1097355.

President: Brian Boulter

Email: [secretary@blha.org.uk](mailto:secretary@blha.org.uk)

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

### The 41st Annual General Meeting of the Berkshire Local History Association

Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 at 11:00am

Maidenhead Community Centre, 42 York Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1SH

Welcome from Brian Boulter on behalf of The Maidenhead and District Archaeological and Local History Society.

The meeting was chaired by David Cliffe, Chairman of the BLHA

1. Apologies for absence:

John Chapman, David Osborne, Josie and Mike Wall, Maureen Over. About 40 members including the committee attended.

2. The 2017 AGM minutes were circulated to members in advance and taken as read.

3. There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from the Treasurer, Journal Editor and Membership Secretary were circulated in advance. The Newsletter Editor, who was not present, had sent a report which was read out. In it, he said that he would like to receive more book reviews for the newsletter. Windsor Local History Group and The Friends of the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum reported continuing problems with their details in the newsletter and website. The Membership secretary will make the necessary amendments.

5. Chairman's report

This was circulated in advance and taken as read. David Cliffe said that booking for the Hendred House visit was now open. He thanked David Axford, Brian Boulter, Margaret Yates and Sue Burnay who are leaving the committee.

6. Election of the President

Brian Boulter is leaving Berkshire and moving to Wales. He has been in the Berkshire Local History Association since the beginning. He has been active in Maidenhead and in the Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group. David Cliffe thanked him and presented him with a card and cheque. Joan Dils was unanimously elected as the new President (proposed by David Cliffe and seconded by Elias Kupfermann).

## 7. Vice Presidents:

Ted Collins was elected as Vice President (proposed by David Cliffe and seconded by Margaret Simons).

## 8. Election of Chairman and Treasurer:

David Cliffe was elected as Chairman (proposed by form previously received from John Chapman, seconded Elias Kupfermann) and David Lewis as Treasurer (proposed by John Chapman, seconded Margaret Simons).

## 9. Election of Executive Committee Members:

Jonathan Brown, John Chapman, Elias Kupfermann, David Osborne, Margaret Simons and Ann Smith were elected to the committee (proposed by David Cliffe, seconded by Vicki Chesterman). The post of secretary needs to be filled.

## 10. Clive Burgess has agreed to act as Honorary Examiner of Accounts (proposed by David Cliffe and seconded by Ted Collins).

## 11. Proposed Change to the Constitution

David Cliffe explained that this change was required by The Charity Commission, and all committee members would be trustees of the BLHA. The change was agreed by the meeting (proposed David Cliffe, seconded David Lewis).

## 12. Any Other Business

Brian Boulter talked about the General Data Protection Regulations which will come into force in May 2018. There will be an article in the next newsletter. Every society will have to tell members that we will keep their names and contact details. Membership forms will need a consent box for people to tick and websites will need new wording.

Members of The Friends of the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum reported that Brigitte Mitchell won an award from The British Association for Local History for her article "Windsor and the Contagious Diseases Act", published in Berkshire Old and New in 2016. The meeting congratulated her.

After formal business, Joan Dils introduced the School Buildings in Berkshire 1870-1918 Project. It will be run by the Berkshire Record Office and volunteers will be asked to research schools built after the 1870 Education Act. They will meet 3 times a year and the next meeting is April 25<sup>th</sup>. The results will be published by the Berkshire Record Society.

Then followed a presentation by Margaret Simons and David Cliffe about Suffragettes in Berkshire.

After lunch, Brian Boulter gave a short and humorous talk on "The Origins of Maidenhead." David Cliffe then thanked our hosts, the Maidenhead and District Archaeological and Local History Society, after which we left the hall. Some visited the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, and others went for a short local history walk with Brian Boulter, along the stream to the Chapel Arches, and then to the site of the chapel in the High Street.

## Chairman's Report, 2018-2019

This has been a mildly frustrating year, in which one of the bright spots was our finding someone to take over as Secretary, Carol Dixon-Smith. Once formally elected, she can take on the job in earnest!

One of the mild frustrations was the new General Data Protection Regulations. I currently serve on four committees of organisations which maintain lists of people's names and contact details, and they all went about complying with the regulations in slightly different ways. Much time was spent on reading advice and on discussion in meetings. I should like to thank all those members who responded to our request to give their consent to the Association holding their names and contact details, though I must say it all seemed a bit "over the top" to me. Our Privacy Policy can be seen from the home page of the BLHA website, and if you don't use the Internet, I'll be happy to send you a copy by post.

A second frustration was caused by our lack of a secretary for a while, and our failure to make our annual return to the Charity Commission. No-one seemed to have the password to get into the database and update it, but the password has been reset, and I've begun the updating. Once Carol has been formally elected secretary, I will let her have the password, and she can add herself to the register of trustees!

Then there's the length of time it takes to get anything done. However, a date has now been set for the workshop for local societies and individuals who have archival collections. This will be held at The Barn, Purley-on-Thames, the scene of our 2011 A.G.M., on Saturday October 26. On the day, we hope to hear from the people who are managing collections, and from experts who will give advice on best practice.

The film show, mentioned in my 2017-18 Annual Report, is gradually taking shape. I've already managed to get hold of a number of old clips of movie film on DVD showing how life was lived in Berkshire over the last hundred years. I hope to get a few more, and get them edited to make an interesting programme, and to arrange a day for viewing – if not several days in different parts of the county. This slow progress is largely due to my going on holidays, and getting involved in other projects.

Then it was rather vexing to see that Reading Museum had organised a conference, "Royal Death and Burial at Reading Abbey in Context," at Reading Town Hall on the same day as our A.G.M. On top of that, the Berkshire Archaeological Society is holding its day school, "Archaeology in Berkshire 2019" at the same time. I suppose such clashes cannot be helped. So I must thank anyone who chose to come to our meeting instead of one of the others!

On the positive side, we published three well-filled newsletters, and an edition of "Berkshire Old and New" containing articles on the history of local history in Berkshire, the Berkshire Record Society, the Berkshire Musical Festivals and the Abingdon Workhouse. The website looks good, but I sometimes wonder if we should have an "extra" committee member to gather information, generate additional content, and work with the web designer to keep things up-to-date.

The Association has had a hand in the production of the latest volume from the Berkshire Record Society, "Berkshire Schools in the Eighteenth Century." Joan Dils and I have sat on the management board, offered advice, and worked on the text and the illustrations, and the Association has offered financial help. It is a parish-by-parish gazetteer of schools of all kinds, with an extensive introduction and an index. This book is particularly unusual inasmuch as the research was carried out by a team of volunteers, and it was published in February.

The volunteers have now started work on a further project, looking at school buildings in Berkshire, built between Forster's 1870 Education Act and the outbreak of the First World War. The Association's committee, and Joan and I, have already agreed to help where we can. Dare we hope for a third volume to bridge the gap? - despite the title, the published survey ends in 1833 when the government began making grants to schools, so the 1833-1870 gap will need to be filled.

The Association made a grant of £500 to the Oxfordshire VCH Trust, which is financing the research and publication of the final volume of the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire. This volume will contain the history of Caversham, which was on the Oxfordshire bank of the Thames until much of it was annexed by Reading Borough in 1911. It was omitted from the Berkshire volumes of the VCH, which were published 1906-1924. I hope that when the large and expensive red volume has been published, it will be possible to produce a smaller and inexpensive Caversham volume, reproducing the text but with additional illustrations. [I have to admit I have a vested interest here, since I have lived in Caversham longer than I have lived anywhere else.] What are the chances, I wonder, of a new series of Berkshire volumes being issued? The originals are still useful, but a century has gone by, and the subjects people expect to be able to explore in local histories have changed.

Our two visits over the summer were enjoyed by those who came along. In June there was the rare chance to see the medieval great hall and chapel of Hendred House, near Wantage, the paintings, the relics, and the gardens outside. We also visited the Anglican and Catholic Churches. This was a joint event, and I'm grateful to Tony Hadland, my counterpart in the Oxfordshire Local History Association, for making the arrangements. Then in July, our Membership Secretary, Ann Smith, organised a walk through the Oxfordshire countryside, just north of Reading, along the "Wilfred Owen Trail." In glorious sunshine we looked inside Dunsden Church, and then walked along nearby lanes to see other buildings which would have been known by the poet. Another local history walk is promised for this year.

The Berkshire History Prize, funded jointly by the Berkshire Record Office and the Association, was awarded in 2018 to Amie Bailey for her dissertation on "Sex and Madness: Exploring Male and Female Experiences in Broadmoor and Bethlem Hospitals, 1800-1900." A summary appeared in our September newsletter, and the whole dissertation can be seen at the Record Office. The prize is awarded to undergraduates of Reading University who produce an outstanding piece of work which involves research into Berkshire history. I sometimes wonder if we ought to have a prize for a good piece of published local history research that is not written by a student at Reading University. Setting up the parameters for the award might be tricky - but it would be a way of encouraging new authors, and showing that local history is for everyone.

As always, I must thank all of our committee members for their sterling work, giving their expertise, time and energy to promote local history. Our constitution says that we must have a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, with up to seven "ordinary" committee members. [Yes - I know that there is no such thing as an "ordinary" committee member.] At present we have six, and there is room for one more. If you would like to help in running the Association, please consider joining the committee, and talk to me or any other committee member, and we can tell you what's involved.

And finally, I must thank the members of the Association, individual, institutional, and the members of affiliated local societies, for their continued support. Our aim is "to promote the advancement of public education through the study of local history," and we cannot do this without members!

David Cliffe

Chairman, BLHA

## **Financial Report for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018**

The income of the Association is little changed from 2017 at £1,713.

The Association's expenses are also broadly in line with previous years, with the exception of two major donations made during the year of £500 each. One to the Schools project run in conjunction with the Berkshire Record Office and another to the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, in support of their research into the history of Caversham.

As in previous years, the Association continues to award £50 towards a £100 prize for the best undergraduate history dissertation at the University of Reading.

A gift of £50, supplemented by members' donations, was given to Brian Boulter in recognition of his work over many years with the Association and on his retirement.

After accounting for the above donations, the Association had a deficit of outgoings over income for the year of £908.

The Association's accumulated funds at the end of the year stand at £4,462 and are considered sufficient to support continuing operations.

No claims were made during the year on the Association's restricted funds, for small research grants.

Dr. D. G. Lewis, F.C.A., F.S.A.,

Hon. Treasurer, BLHA

## **Journal Editor's Report**

"Berkshire Old and New" was published on schedule last September with four articles. There are two articles submitted so far for the 2019 journal. We would welcome offers of articles for future publication.

Dr. Jonathan Brown,

Hon. Editor, "Berkshire Old and New"