

Berkshire Local History Association



Newsletter No. 108

January 2014

**Berkshire Local History Association
Registered Charity 1097355**

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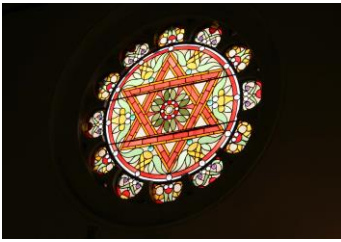
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THE DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS 1 April 2014.

Front Cover: By courtesy of Reading Museum.

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Chairman's Corner



The Heritage Open Days in September usually give me the entrée to somewhere new, and this year I had the chance to see the inside of the Reading Synagogue, a building I had previously admired and photographed from the outside. The richness of the exterior is matched by the inside, and since the rabbi had no objection to the visitors taking photographs, I

took advantage. I think that the members of the congregation who showed us round were surprised at the number of people waiting to get in at the door, and I hope that they got some decent donations towards the upkeep of their building, and will repeat the tours in future years.

The next month, in connection with the Berkshire Schools' Project, which is funded partly by our Association, the volunteers and members of the Management Board visited the British Schools' Museum in Hitchin. Until then, to me Hitchin was just somewhere you whizzed through on the way north from King's Cross Station. Now I realised it was a rather handsome old town. I think I'd previously realised the distinction between the British Schools and National Schools, but was to learn a lot more. Two things particularly impressed me. One was that the old school building, a copy of the first of its kind, opened by Joseph Lancaster in Southwark in 1798, was a remarkable survival, and the other was the enthusiasm of everyone we met there, who had saved the building from destruction and wanted to see it visited, enjoyed and used by the local community. No bought-in sandwiches for lunch here: everything was fresh and home-made!

It was in the same week that I collected the Association's old minutes and newsletters. Such things usually end up with the secretary, but in our case, for some reason Amanda Harvey, our membership secretary, had ended up with them, and wasn't sure why. This must be a common kind of problem for organisations without buildings of their own, and very often, the documents get forgotten, lost and destroyed. I thought that the least I could do was to ensure that the B.L.H.A. looked after its own history, and my first job was to sort the papers out, and to see exactly what we had and what was missing.

The minutes begin with the papers of the Berkshire Archaeological Society's Local History Committee in 1972, when the formation of a separate county local history association was being considered. I knew many of the people involved when I first came to Reading – Anthony Cross, Canon Basil Clark, C. B. Willcocks, Maitland Underhill, Godwin Arnold, and so on. I never thought that I would be stepping into their shoes one day!

The minutes proper run from 1976 to 2004, but the years 1979-1989 inclusive are missing. If anyone could supply copies of the same, or lend them for photocopying, I'd be grateful. The newsletters run from 1976 to 1991, with numbers 9, 37 and 38 missing – and it might be good to have copies from number 40 up to the end of 2004, so that they cover the same period as the minutes. Our friends at the Record Office have agreed that the material may be deposited with them, so that it will

be kept in optimal condition, won't get lost, damaged or destroyed, and will be available for consultation by anyone who may be interested in future. It seems a good idea to make the files as complete as we can before I take them over there.

One or two noteworthy publications have come my way recently. I had long regretted that a report on the archaeological investigations carried out before The Oracle shopping centre was built in the middle of Reading seemed unlikely to be published. Now, to my surprise and delight, it has appeared, lavishly produced and illustrated, and entitled "Under the Oracle." It is just the report on the archaeological investigations, though, and not a full history of the site. I can't help thinking that there's room for another volume on what was on the whole of the Oracle site in more recent times – the brewery, the fireproof furniture depository, the telephone exchange, the bus depot, the Yield Hall Car Park, and the infamous Thing-a-me-Jig Club.

Then I was very pleased to see the Berkshire Record Society's volumes covering the churchwardens' accounts of St. Laurence's Church in Reading. These are particularly interesting because they begin before the Reformation, so you can read about the customs celebrated on Palm Sunday, Eastertide. Hocktide, Whitsun, etc., with church ales, drama and morris dancing. And, of course, you can note their disappearance in later years.

In fact, the first mention of morris dancing in the county is in these accounts in 1513, and the Kennet Morris Men celebrated the 500th anniversary in August. They had researched the costumes, music and styles of dancing which would have been current in 1513, and gave us a re-enactment, outside St. Laurence's Church. I was pleased to have been there – it was great fun.



My other noteworthy publication is "The Reading Book of Days," remarkable because it was produced by a team of 18 researchers from The History of Reading Society. Other volumes in the series have a single author, but this volume reflects the many different interests of its compilers. It gives at least one event for every day of the year, including February 29. Unfortunately there's no index, but then such is the nature of these standardised series, with set numbers of pages. Perhaps I should have bought the electronic version!

Sadly, since I last wrote, Michael Bayley, a committee member of long standing, has passed away. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the area of east Berkshire where he grew up, and wrote many interesting papers. His insistence that a version of the Celtic language survived in the area into the early twentieth century was sometimes controversial, but his company was always delightful. By profession he was an architect, and he was also a talented artist. I well remember my first committee meeting in the chair – not having been a member of the committee before and not knowing everyone. Michael sat opposite. He kept glancing at me, but he never said a word – he just smiled. I afterwards discovered that he was drawing my portrait!

Looking to the future, I've booked my place on the visit to the Chilton Open Air Museum in Buckinghamshire on 10 May. The Museum has at least two exhibits of Berkshire interest – a medieval barn from Arborfield, and the Edwardian public conveniences, built of cast iron panels by Caversham Bridge in Reading. I believe that this was known, in homosexual circles in the 1970s, as "The Iron Maiden"!

David Cliffe, Chairman, BLHA

Words from the Editor

A Happy, if not wet, New Year to all our members. I do hope that the inclement weather is not curtailing your early 2014 programmes. Nearly a year on from the announcement at our last AGM of my intention to step down as editor and I am still here. Although not an onerous task other matters have been pressing at production times this year and this has allowed me less time than usual to devote to the Newsletter. I am ever hopeful that someone will come forward!

Speaking of the AGM I would like to draw your attention to the important information about this event that can be found in the Notice Board section. Our secretary Ann works very hard to ensure this event is a success and this year in particular. It would be nice to see as many as possible of our members on the day and to be able to have a chat over lunch in the college dining room. Do make note of the necessary deadlines to ensure that you do not miss out.

Cliveden, the former home of Lord Astor gets a mention in Twyford and Ruscombe's contribution this time and a brief reference is made to the Profumo Affair, the scandal that broke in 1962 involving John Profumo, Christine Keeler and Dr Stephen Ward. The affair is now the subject of the latest musical by Andrew Lloyd Weber and playing at The Aldwych.

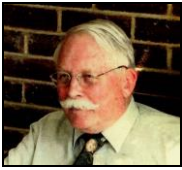
Those of you that are abreast of county news will have no doubt heard about the final closure of Jacksons of Reading. I attended the auction for part of the day and took the opportunity to wander around with my camera when the store was open for viewing; both were as much an experience as shopping in the store.

Our Dates for Diary is very full this time, there are a few AGMs taking place, but there are also some interesting speakers lined up. Enjoy your spring programmes.

Margaret Simons

In Memoriam

MICHAEL H. H. BAYLEY, ARIBA



Michael was known to many members as a unique sort of local historian, interested in folk-lore, legends, place names and topography. In his booklet “Celtic Place Names”, he explained how this came about. He grew up in an extended South Bucks family of yeoman farmers. He recalled that the older members often referred to an “old-fashioned way of speaking”. This was a form of Celtic dialect, still used by the Welsh drovers who came through the area before the railways. Using a Welsh dictionary, he “translated” local place names and found that this often resulted in an accurate description of the place. In this he challenged many of the accepted Anglo-Saxon derivations.

His respect for the old ways extended to his architectural practice. He recalled how a leaking sewer resulted from the Council using a pressure washer to clear it. They had not realised that the joints had been sealed with clay, not cement, to allow for slight movement in the gravel subsoil.

Michael was a great raconteur. He claimed that when Diana Dors wanted to make changes to her riverside home, she arranged a party for the Town Clerk, Borough Engineer and their staff and received immediate planning permission.

Michael was a valued member of our committee for many years, and we shall miss the sketches he produced during our meetings.

Perhaps the most appropriate tribute came in the form of letters to the Maidenhead Advertiser, the correspondents saying how much they would miss his letters to the Editor. In these, as in other aspects of Michael's writings, he was often controversial, but stated ideas that needed to be considered.

Brian Boulter

My thanks go to Brian for writing this short appreciation of Michael, who passed away in October and to David Cliffe for forwarding the photograph of Michael. Members may remember the self portrait of Michael drinking sloe gin that appeared in an earlier edition of the Newsletter. I will miss Michael's letters to me on various subjects for inclusion in the Newsletter and his responses to requests for information.

Margaret Simons

Requests for Information

John Dearing is currently researching and writing a study of Reading's involvement in the Christian missionary enterprises of the period 1790 to 1945 and would welcome any information from members. The book is 30,000 words already but could do with strengthening in some areas. Please contact JD on gpwild@btconnect.com or at 27

Sherman Rd, Reading RG1 2PJ, tel 0118 0580377, if you can assist.

Historic UK have recently been working on a project to map out key historic sites up and down the country, and now this is live we thought you may be interested in our coverage of Historic Berkshire at <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryMagazine/DestinationsUK/HistoricSitesinBerkshire/>

Due to the large scale nature of the project, we are anxious to learn if we have missed any sites, which is where we hope that you can help. With your detailed knowledge of the county, we are hoping that you could please let us know if we have indeed missed any historic sites in your area?

In particular, we would appreciate your comments concerning our current coverage of Castles, Battlefields, Anglo-Saxon and Roman sites. You will find a form on each page to let us know of any we have missed.

We aim to develop this into the most comprehensive collection of historic destinations on the internet by extending our interactive maps over the coming months to include further historic attractions including abbeys, palaces, stately homes and ancient and prehistoric sites.

Our next task however, is to collate and map museums. So again, if you have any particular favourites please do not hesitate to let us know.

As a website, Historic UK receives up to half a million page views a month and we are hoping that our new Destination UK section will allow visitors to better appreciate the rich history available to them in Berkshire.

Trevor Johnson

Notice Board

AGM 2014 IMPORTANT NOTICE

Could all those attending the AGM on 15 March at Wellington College please **RSVP by Friday, 7th March**? In the past we have been able to be a little flexible about numbers up until the day itself. However, this year, as we have the honour of eating lunch in the College dining room, we need to provide numbers a week in advance. This is particularly important because, although the College is offering us a special rate, the Association is subsidising the lunch so that the cost to delegates remains at £5 per head. We have been promised a hot meal with vegetarian option, as well as pudding and therefore, we hope you will appreciate that we cannot order extra meals 'just in case' extra people show up, as this might incur unnecessary extra cost. Likewise, we do not want to under-order and risk disappointing some.

I will be out of the country for approximately a week before the AGM (dates to be confirmed). Therefore, it would be most helpful if delegates could book their

attendance via email. I can then respond promptly via email with further details and directions. For those who prefer Royal Mail, please send your booking form to me via post as early as possible and provide a telephone number so I can contact you quickly on my return, should this be necessary. My contact details are as follows: secretary@blha.org.uk; Home phone: 01344 291 575; Mobile 07775 775.

Finally, I would like to encourage as many as possible to attend the AGM. We will be in a lovely historical environment, but will enjoy state-of-the-art facilities. It promises to be an interesting day and we look forward to seeing you all.

Ann McCormack Hon Secretary

Archive Visits

The Berkshire Local History Association is pleased to announce its next organised visit to the Chiltern Open Air Museum on Saturday 10th May 2014.

The Chiltern Open Air Museum was founded in 1976 with the aim of rescuing threatened buildings. As an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on London's doorstep, the pressures of redevelopment in the Chilterns are particularly great. The Museum thus preserves a heritage that would otherwise have been lost. More than thirty historic buildings have now been saved and rebuilt at the site near Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire. The collection includes some Berkshire buildings, such as the medieval barn from Arborfield, dated around 1500, and the public convenience from Caversham, first erected in 1906.

Numbers are limited so places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. We will send details of when and where to meet once the tickets are allocated, but unfortunately we cannot provide a refund if you are unable to attend or cancel on the day. The cost of the visit will include admission to the Museum plus a guided tour of the buildings, lasting approximately 1½ hours. After the tour has finished, you will be free to look around the Museum as you wish. The Museum is close to a number of main routes and can be reached from the M25 at Junction 17, and is also signposted from the A413 at Chalfont St Peter and Chalfont St Giles.

Jameson Wooders

The cost of the visit is £10 per person and application forms are available to download from **www.blha.org**. For anyone not able to access the internet please send an SAE to the editor, address on the back of the Newsletter.

BLHA Website Upgrade

Over the next few months the BLHA website will be upgraded to comply with EU regulations, also to update the features and layout to ensure the site remains easy to use and navigate.

We will be looking to update the Speaker List page, the Diary Dates information and to provide some pictures of Berkshire places and people.

If you have any ideas or suggestions on what you would like on the website then we welcome your input for discussion.

Dave Osborne

Newsletters and Bulletins

You may be aware that we now send out the Newsletter in electronic format which should make it a lot easier for society secretaries to circulate to their membership. In between the newsletters we often send out bulletins which contain information on various activities. Sometimes the information on activities doesn't get to us in time to be included in the Newsletter so the use of bulletins is a simple way to keep you all informed.

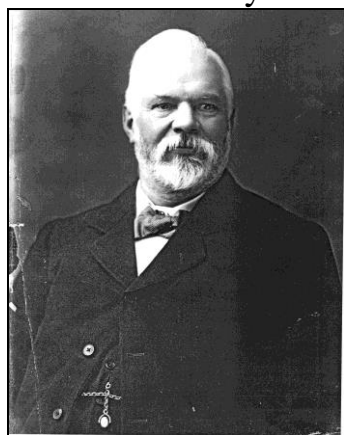
It is vital that you keep us up to date with your secretary's email address so that we can ensure our distribution list is maintained. If you wish to update us with a new email address then please contact the BLHA secretary.

Dave Osborne

Special Feature

Jacksons of Reading 1875-2013

A chapter in Reading's retail history came to an end at Christmas when Jacksons of Reading ceased trading after nearly 140 years of business in the town. However, it was not finally to close its doors to customers until after the auction of its remaining stock and fixtures and fittings, by Stroud Auction Rooms, on Saturday 4th January. The store and lots were open to viewing on Thursday and Friday 2nd and 3rd of January and it was an opportunity for many to pay their last respects to an old friend by wandering around the now empty departments for the last time. It was an occasion that reflected the high level of interest in the company and the regard that many from the town and beyond had for this traditional independent family business.



The founder Edward Jackson

The decision to close the store, which finally shut up shop on 24th December, was made by MD Brian Carter, a fourth generation great grandson of the founder Edward Jackson. The store which began life as a small gentleman's outfitters at 6, High St, Reading in September 1875 had been run by Mr Carter for the last 51 years and he headed a 60 strong sales force at the time of closure. Once part of the thriving town centre the store in later years had been marginalised as the centre of retail trade in the town had moved westwards causing falling sales and this combined with high building maintenance costs were given as the main reasons for the decision to close.

It could be said that Jacksons was as synonymous with Reading as the infamous 3Bs: a little later off the starting block perhaps, but it stayed the course and was every bit as much a part of the town's built environment as its other Victorian counter parts. Whilst tailoring remained at the heart of the business Edward Jackson expanded to create a truly comprehensive family clothing and hardware business. Moreover, with shops in Camberley, Bracknell, Henley, Goring, Caversham and with more than the corner shop in Reading, plus a fleet of delivery vehicles, its reputation and service was county wide.



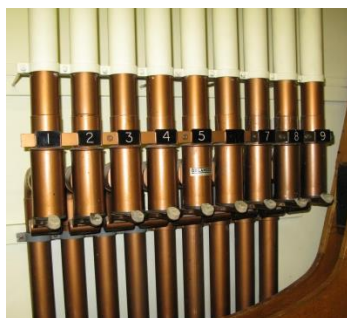
Jacksons became something of an institution; renowned for putting the customer first it was the place to go for those items that couldn't be had elsewhere. To go into Jacksons was an experience, it was like a time capsule, with little in the way of state of the art shelving or lighting, departments were separated by a change in

floor level, steps and staircases – something new round every corner. It prided itself on its one to one salesmanship and with longevity of service, a hallmark of the company, staff knew their stock. Retirement was not a word in the vocabulary of some of the company's employees who, in their 70s and 80s, were still enjoying their work and making a valuable contribution to the company.

To many a visit to Jacksons meant only one thing – school uniform and this service now continues in Market Place in premises not that far from the firm's original starting point at number 6, High St. However, the one thing above all else which marked Jacksons out from the rest was the Lamson pneumatic tube system. It was a feature of the store that fascinated old and young alike and was part of the experience of shopping at Jacksons. Without cash registers the payment system relied on what became known as the 'cash railway', whereby aluminium torpedo like canisters containing the customer's bill and payment were fed into the tubes which were then sucked up to the cash office by the vacuum created. Once there the transaction was completed, receipt and change returned to the canister put back into the tube and sent back to the department from whence it came. When this system was installed in the early 1960s there were a number of such systems in use, but before closure Jacksons was the only remaining shop with a fully working Lamson system still being used for its original purpose.



A Lamson Canister



The cash office station



Shop floor unit

The demise of the store is keenly felt by many and it was no surprise to see so many people squashed into Jacksons for the auction, some hoping to obtain a piece of Reading's retail history others just to be there. The auctioneers should not have been surprised at the amount of people who turned up on the day; the vast numbers who queued to register for bidding delayed the start of the auction by half an hour and when bidding finally got underway it was the start of a marathon which was to last for over 7 hours. There was international interest in the auction as live broadcast allowed bidders from as far away as France and Australia.

Customer sat on lots, leant on lots and even the chairs and table used by the auctioneers were lots. It was evident from the outset that lots would realise far more than the estimates with the final total for over 580 lots (the sales catalogue contained only 497, the online catalogue 577, I was sat on lot 582) reaching in the region of £75,000. From polystyrene heads to hat stretchers and hat boxes, from metal display stands to hand crafted display cases, the diversity of the lots was considerable. An E Jackson and Sons Ltd, Reading tailors and outfitters coat hanger sold for £80 and a small hat brush for £160 both estimated at £10-20. The Lamson system, to be removed sympathetically by the purchaser, including several of the metal canisters reached a figure of £900, whilst the 8 canisters sold as separate lots, estimated at between £20-40 each, fetched between £100-140. Amongst the most noteworthy, in terms of price



reached, was the £700 paid for a child mannequin known affectionately as 'Cruella' and the most expensive lot was a rather substantial tailor's bench used for making Jacksons' suits which went for £1,700. A total of 24 lots represented not only Jacksons' history but also that of Samuel Elliott and Sons, a substantial twentieth century joinery business established in Caversham. All of these lots were display units and counters, labelled with the makers badge and were substantial pieces of shop furniture. The highest price paid for a piece of this craftsmanship was £700 for an oak display case and counter, but in total these lots realised over £12,000.

It only remains to ask ourselves what next for the building? The building is not listed and has been bought by a private investor with the intention of turning the site into a mix of shops, with plans of between 6-12,000 feet of retail space, on the ground floor and flats above. There are no plans to remove the façade, but no decision has been made as yet on the lettering. Whatever the development and for some time to come it will always be Jacksons Corner.

For anyone interested in the history of this family run business Reading Museum currently have a small display on the ground floor running until April. A slim volume by Thomas Macey is also available. First published in 2009 this is probably now only available from libraries, but a new and updated version is in the process of being written and should be available shortly. Thomas has become the self-appointed archivist of the company and is a mine of information. Since joining the company 10 years ago he has amassed many of the company's records which are now

in his possession. If any society would like Thomas to give a talk about Jacksons please contact me and I will gladly forward details. Anyone interested in what Thomas has to say might like to read the History of Reading Society's report in this times Newsletter; Thomas gave a talk there in October.

The first three photographs that illustrate this write up come from the private collection of Thomas Macey the rest were taken on my visit to the store before the auction. Further images are included in the Picture Gallery.

Margaret Simons

New Books and Reviews

The History of Reading Society are pleased to announce that 'The Reading Book of Days', compiled by a group of 17 members of the Society, has now been published and is available in certain good Reading bookshops. It is a relatively inexpensive case-bound 365-page 'one-event-to-a-page' book, which, we hope, will be of much interest to all local people. Look for the purple cover! The book retails at £9.99.

***Berkshire Place Names* by Anthony Poulton-Smith**

Berkshire Place Names is currently available exclusively in Kindle eBook format, price £2.85. It can be downloaded to any Kindle device. It can also be read without a Kindle as Amazon provide free Kindle Reading Apps for PC, Mac, smartphones and tablets (*search for Kindle reading apps*).

Within these pages the author examines why our towns and villages are named as they are? Who named them and why? Why would a river name mean 'to turn aside'? Were cooks really living at Cookham? Was Wargrave known as the burial place for soldiers? And why would a river name mean 'hills'? He considers the origins of the place names with which we are otherwise so familiar. Towns, villages, districts, hills, streams, woods, farms, fields, streets and even pubs are examined and explained. Some of the definitions give a glimpse of life in the earlier days of the settlement, and for the author there is nothing more satisfying than finding a name which gives such a snapshot. The definitions are supported by anecdotal evidence, bring to life the individuals and events which have influenced the places and the way these names have developed.

This is not simply a dictionary but a history and will prove invaluable not only for those who live and work in the county but also visitors and tourists, historians and former inhabitants, indeed anyone with an interest in Berkshire.

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Society News

Goring and Streatley Local History Society

2013 has been a good year for the Society. We have had a full programme of talks, starting in January with David Oliver who told us about Cold War sites in Berkshire and followed in February by Corry Starling's enthusiastic presentation on Mapledurham watermill, which inspired several members to attend the joint Oxfordshire and Berkshire Local History Associations' study day at Mapledurham later in the year. Our members' session in March saw two talks on Victorian and Edwardian houses in Goring, a period of much development in the village when the population doubled between 1871 and 1911. In April Valerie Alasia described the history of Henley Workhouse and in May we welcomed Liz Woolley once again for a talk on the coming of the railway to Oxford. After the summer break Rachel Sanderson, who is manager of the Chilterns Commons project, explained what this entails. In Goring we have no commons, although there were many at Goring Heath in the past. The only local relics are ponds! The upper Thames Valley harboured many Roman Catholics in the past, even during the years of persecution described by Tony Hadland in October. In November we took to the water, with a talk by local boatbuilder and restorer Colin Henwood on traditional Thames boats. The December meeting featured well-known local author Stuart Hylton with a presentation on Reading in World War II.

Our main outing this year was to the Black Country Living Museum in June. It was a great success, the highlight being a trip into the subterranean canal network at Dudley which amazed everyone by its complexity. In August we had a new venture, a joint event with the Goring branch of the WEA: a day school on Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill conducted by Glenis Kerr Elliott followed a couple of days later by an outing to see the house at Twickenham. Also in August we ran two guided walks of Goring which were well supported and culminated at the Lock where the WI were fortuitously serving tea and delicious cakes.

The AGM in July went well, with a full committee elected for the first time in ages. Our membership has reached 180 but it is still difficult to get people involved in running the Society. After the formal business a goodly turnout enjoyed a buffet, bought second hand books and perused some of the exhibition panels prepared for the Diamond Jubilee Exhibition in 2012.

The Transport History Group goes from strength to strength. It runs an outing most months, often by public transport but sometimes by minibus and shared cars, and Mike Hurst the convener produces a regular and colourful newsletter which is greatly enjoyed by all its readers.

We also have an on-going oral history project, with 20 interviews of local inhabitants now recorded electronically. These should hopefully result in a book in due course.

The big event in September was the unveiling of a plaque at Goring to the well-known local boat builder Samuel E Saunders. Born at the Swan at Streatley, he had several boatworks in Goring before moving to the Isle of Wight where he was patronised by royalty, became an early pioneer of aviation and eventually formed a partnership with A.V. Roe to form Saunders Roe, a company that still survives today as GKN Aerospace. The plaque was the culmination of a project by Mike and Janet Hurst to commemorate this remarkable man. 'Saunders Day' was an event for the whole Goring Gap community, including an exhibition in the Village Hall, a reception at the Swan and trips in restored Saunders' boats upriver to the Withymead Nature Reserve to see the remains of the Springfield boat sheds and slipway on the site. The Society promoted membership and its activities in the exhibition and the event gave us excellent PR, being well-publicised in the local and boating press.



Apart from our usual programme of talks and outings, the next big project in 2014 is to mark the anniversary of World War 1. We hope to explore the impact of the conflict on local life, as well as to pay our respects to the fallen and the many people who served in the war.

Secretary (01491 871022; gslhs@w-mark.demon.co.uk)

Janet Hurst

The History of Reading Society

The speaker on 18th September, at the first meeting after our summer recess, was Dr. Margaret Simons, who has been researching Reading's council housing history and development. Her talk, based on the start of a much larger project she is undertaking, was limited just to the pre-war development of housing estates in Whitley. Design, by the borough architects' department, of the very first council housing off Shinfield Road in the early 1920s and based originally on 'garden city' ideas, was progressively modified during the late 1920s and 1930s. This involved building both two and three bedroom dwellings and making them more compact as time progressed. However, an ingenious scheme evolved where a pair of houses could be adapted as necessary for more bedrooms if a large family had to be accommodated. A small number of experimental metal-framed houses, some of which still survive in Basingstoke Road, were also built. Of interest is that originally the pre-war housing had gas but no electricity. They did have inside toilets but not necessarily a bath!

The original idea was to accommodate families moving in from the country but this soon became one of re-housing people made homeless by private landlords or because of increasing numbers of town centre dwellings deemed uninhabitable or the subject of slum-clearance. The council house waiting list never got shorter! While tenants in the new council houses gained a far better standard of living, there were

drawbacks, including, initially, a lack of shops, entertainment facilities and schools, although basic bus services were developed and Whitley library and the Community Centre were soon built.

With the imminent demise, after 138 years, of Jacksons of Reading, the town's oldest family-owned department store, we were superbly entertained at our meeting on 16th October by Tom Macey, a Jacksons' employee who has become entrusted with the custody and preservation of the firm's archives. Tom, who is, in any case, keen on studying life in the Victorian era, was able to trace the history of the business from its founding in 1875 using a presentation from a wonderful collection of catalogues, advertisements, photographs and other ephemera that he has amassed.

The business itself seems to have been a resounding success right from the beginning, specialising originally as a gentlemen's outfitters, later including boys, and grew to employ large numbers of tailors in rooms above the shop at the location we hope will continue to be known as 'Jacksons Corner'. A boots and shoes shop (where the Oxfam Bookshop is currently located in High Street), off-the peg men's clothes and contract work for farm overalls followed but it was not until after the Great War that a ladies' department was started.

Most folk in more recent years will have fond memories of the vacuum tube system used to convey cash for purchases in the various departments up to a cashier and for the change being returned. It was one of the last such installations to be used in a retail business and, thankfully, part of the system is intended to be re-installed in Reading Museum as a permanent memory of how things were once done!

Our meeting on 20th November was a presentation by John Chapman, entitled 'Ephemera Can Be Fun'. He brought with him a wide variety of items that come under the ephemera heading, which he kindly allowed us to examine – and which, he told us, was only a sample of his full collection. Essentially, ephemera comprises all manner of printed matter originally produced to have a fairly short life, so that generally speaking an item's survival is rather a matter of pure chance. Inevitably, nostalgia can play a large part in ephemera interest – one has only to think of the Robert Opie collection of packaging, and individuals collecting picture postcards, cigarette and other trade cards, old 'bell punch' bus tickets, theatre programmes, and the like - John Chapman's subject matter seemed virtually inexhaustible! Apparently, there is even an Ephemera Society, with its own journal.

Such surviving material does also, of course, have an important part to play in studying social history, in particular the way in which items were designed and printed, the compilation of the wording, and, indeed, the prime reason why they were produced. We ought to remember, incidentally, that the University of Reading has a museum at Whiteknights, which particularly features these aspects.

The talk rather left us wondering whether our own collections, whatever they are, are not as extreme as we might have thought they were!

We invite membership to all who are interested in the history of Reading. Yellow leaflets inviting membership and detailing our meetings through to the end of 2014 will be found in certain bookshops, all libraries and other selected outlets

throughout the Reading area. Meetings are on Wednesday evenings mid-month at Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square starting at 7.30pm prompt and ending around 9.00pm. Entry is free to members; All are welcome - Non-members £2.00. Secure free car parking is available for members nearby – if you prefer using your car. Ring 0118 947 2470 or eMail Edward.W.Hooper@btinternet.com for further details of the Society.

John Whitehead

Hungerford Historical Association

Ashdown House – The Palace on the Berkshire Downs

More than 70 members of the Hungerford Historical Association enjoyed a talk by the eminent local historian and author of regency novels, Nicola Cornick. The title of her talk was “the Cravens of Ashdown House”. She explained how the first Earl of Craven, William, fought for Frederick V of Bohemia and fell in love with his wife, Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia, who was the sister of King Charles 1. William Craven dedicated and built Ashdown House for Elizabeth, but she died before it was completed.

The Craven family rose from penury in Yorkshire to becoming one of the most wealthy and famous families in Berkshire and England. William also earned the respect and gratitude of the people of London, during the Great Plague when unlike many noblemen who fled to the country he remained in London helping to maintain order.

Ashdown House was donated to the National Trust in 1956.

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer and its implications for Hungerford Churches

On Wednesday, 23rd October the Reverend David Bunney gave a most scholarly presentation to the Hungerford Historical Association on the impact of the Anglian Prayer Book on Hungerford churches. He traced the origins of the current United Reform Church in Hungerford back to 1662 when the Minister of St Lawrence, along with numerous other ministers nationwide, was expelled from his living by King Charles 11 and his Bishops.

Sir Max Hastings at his best on 1914

Sir Max Hastings gave a wonderful talk to over 120 guests and members of the Hungerford Historical Association on Thursday 28th November. On the eve of the centenary of the First World War, Sir Max explained both how the conflict came about and what befell millions of men and women during the first months of WW1. He argued against the “Poet’s view” that the war was not worth winning as he felt it was vital for Europe’s freedom and Britain’s survival that Kaiser Bills Germany was defeated. His book on which the talk was based “Catastrophe- Europe goes to War 1914” would be a great Christmas present to give and receive!

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 22nd January 2014 at 7.30pm in the Corn Exchange when Dr Hugh Pihlens will talk on "The Town and Manor, Hocktide and all that!"

Shelagh Parry

Sandhurst Historical Society

Val Pretlove's talk in August on 'City of London Hidden Gardens' proved most interesting. It took us on a circular tour beginning and ending at St. Paul's cathedral. On the east side of the cathedral there is a rose garden and a festival garden to the south complete with fountains and statues. There is a children's garden at St. Bartholomew's hospital and a Meryll Lynch garden has part of the original Roman wall in it. There are many hidden gardens in the city all of which can be visited by the public though one may have to make an appointment to see some of them. Most are quite small but very well-tended.

In September we visited the Royal Garrison Church of all Saints in Aldershot. This church is also known by some as the Red Church having been built in 1863 in red brick as opposed to the nearby barracks where yellow bricks from Farnham were used. The church has numerous plaques on its walls dedicated to soldiers, most of whom were killed in various wars. There are beautiful stained glass windows too. Being nearby, we then walked over to have a closer inspection of the Wellington statue. Paul Vickers kindly gave us the history of the church and the statue. Leslie Grout gave us a talk in October on 'The History of Windsor Castle'. Accompanied by slides he took us through numerous rooms, halls and chapels in the castle. Around 100 rooms were damaged when the fire started in the King's private chapel. After the restoration which, incidentally, was carried out on time and under budget, some of the rooms were an improvement on the originals! The Round Tower not only contains the bell which was captured at Sebastopol but also many archives including Queen Victoria's letters. The musket ball which killed Nelson can also be found in the castle. Ten monarchs are buried in St. George's chapel including Henry VIII and Charles I.

November's talk by Sally Botwright. On 'London oddities' centred around unusual and interesting sights that may be unfamiliar. Carriages and horses were kept at Bathurst Mews where the grooms-men also lodged. It is still the home of the Hyde Park riding stables. Nearby is Nottingham House, now called Kensington Palace which was built for William III by Christopher Wren. The Albert Memorial depicts subjects in which Albert showed great interest such as art, agriculture and geography. Incidentally the Albert Hall was built on land bought with the proceeds of the great Exhibition. Parishioners were asked to contribute towards the cost of building St. George the Martyr church in Southwark which has a clock on each side. All were willing except the people of Bermondsey so their clock is black and unlit! The Bishop of Winchester's palace was by the Thames near the Globe Theatre. Part of the great hall is all that is still standing. The palace also had a prison called The Clink, hence the

expression 'being in clink'! Close by is the last of the coaching inns, the George Inn. Another is Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese frequented by Charles Dickens and Samuel Johnson. The narrowest pub in London is the Cock Tavern in Fleet Street and the smallest house is in Marble Arch. All the timber used in the construction of Liberty's department store came from HMS Hindustan and HMS Impregnable. There are many more 'London Oddities' but space here is at a premium!

Kathy Sergeant

Shinfield and District Local History Society

Our November meeting included a presentation by Dr Jameson Wooders on "Life in the Shinfield area c.1600 to 1750; the evidence of Probate Inventories". The talk was based on Dr Wooders' PhD studies of a large number of Berkshire probate inventories with some additional examples specific to Shinfield and surrounding parishes.

Dr Wooders explained the process by which an inventory was compiled by two qualified and independent persons. These would generally be from the same trade or profession as the deceased and therefore would know the value of any items associated with the deceased's occupation. He explained how, by analysing the contents of these documents, it is possible to determine not only the wealth of the individual but also their occupation. He demonstrated this with examples showing the sort of items found in inventories associated with various occupations. In some instances these would indicate a secondary occupation not apparent in that named in the document. It is also possible to obtain an indication of the size and layout of the deceased's house although rooms containing no items of value might not be included in the inventory.

This was another thoroughly enjoyable and interesting presentation, appreciated all the more for the additional work Dr Wooders had done on the local area especially for our meeting.

George Taylor

Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society

After the summer break, our first meeting was in September when Mr. Trevor Ottlewski talked to us about 'Purpose-built Villages'. With excellent slides we were given a conducted tour of four such villages, with Mr Ottlewski pointing out detailed individual and interesting features of design, architecture, building materials and so on.

Before we set off on our tour, Mr. Ottlewski reminded us of the appalling living conditions which prevailed in the 18th and 19th centuries for many industrial workers. However, even in those far-off days there were people who realized that decent living conditions should not be a privilege: and who were prepared to do something about this. Samuel Greg built houses at Styal Estate and Quarry Bank Mill in Cheshire. Prices Patent Candle Company built a village in Bromborough – also in Cheshire.

Coming south, the third example was Holly Village in Highgate, built by Angela Burdett Coutts – for estate workers rather than industrial ones, but worthy of inclusion for its striking design and for the same good intentions.

The final village on our tour was Port Sunlight in the Wirral Peninsula, built by William Hesketh Lever for his employees, and probably the best-known of the four.

Other factory owners have similarly provided houses for their employees – Cadburys at Bournville being one example. A very enjoyable and informative talk.

Also in September we enjoyed a trip to Denbies Wine Estate, and to the National Trust's Polesden Lacey.

In October Mr. Alan Copeland gave us Part 2 of 'The Changing Face of Reading'. This was based on the work of local photographer Doug Noyes – who had photographed the changes resulting from the construction of the Inner Distribution Road. It is good to have such a record as it is all too easy to forget what stood there previously.

In November Mr. Keith Parry talked to us about 'Victorian Millionaires and their Riverside Mansions'.

Starting with Temple House – built by Thomas Williams, an immensely rich industrialist who made his fortune through owning a copper mine in Wales – we reach Edwardian times, when his descendant – Edith Williams – was the centre of a scandal involving some of the highest names in the land; including the King himself. (Unfortunately the house was burnt down in 1922).

Moving downstream, Pascoe Grenfell – M.P. for Marlow – lived at Taplow House, and his son later at Taplow Court: and his son became Lord Desborough.

Cliveden was once owned by the Duke of Buckingham; and in later years by the Asquiths. It has had its own colourful history and share of scandal.

This was a very interesting talk, illustrated throughout by slides.

Denise Wilkin

Wargrave Local History Society

In September, Mildred Cookson, who was the Mapledurham miller for about 30 years and is a leading member of the Mills Archive Trust, recalled the *Life and Times of a Miller at Mapledurham*. The Mapledurham mill was valued at 12/- in the Domesday survey of 1086 - a valuable property. The earliest surviving part of the original mill has been dated to 1626, and there were several additions in the mid 18th century. The mill had two waterwheels, each of which ran two mill stones on the first floor, although only the larger one remains. Mildred's talk included illustrations showing the mill at varying times in its history, and she also brought along some of the miller's tools and examples of cog teeth made from various types of wood.

Village resident Norman Rees gave an insight in October to his *Experiences as an ITN Reporter*, working in many of the world's troublespots. "News", he said, "is history in the making". He had reported many major world events, such as the Watergate hearings, and the shootings of John Lennon and President Reagan. When Princess Diana visited a leprosy unit in Indonesia, Norman's report "*She touched the untouchable*" showed Diana going out of her way to dispel the myths about leprosy in the 20th century. Troublespots that Norman reported from included the miners' strike of 1984, the Northern Ireland troubles, and wars in the Falklands and Lebanon.

Particularly difficult for Norman had been to report the Dunblane shootings - an event that clearly still affects him.

Dr Elise Fraser spoke enthusiastically in November about the Silchester excavations. Before the Roman era, Silchester had been an iron-age town for the Atrebates people, and an important trading place. After the Roman left, Silchester was virtually abandoned - so preserving the earlier town. The first archaeology on the site was done by the Victorians, whilst in more recent times; a geophysical survey of the entire site has been completed, as well as detailed excavations. Elise's task as Finds Manager is to ensure that everything found is cleaned, recorded, identified and dated. This year alone there were 24,408 pottery sherds of pottery (0.3 tons) found, whilst other finds include complete pots - placed as offerings in the bottom of wells, and intricately carved intaglios - indicating the skill to make the tools to carve such miniature objects, as well as that of the carver who had no magnifying aids.

At December's Christmas Party, members heard extracts from the diary of George Beck, (recording life locally from the 1880s - 1930s) recently acquired by the Society, and saw photographs of changes within the village over time, as well as enjoying traditional fare provided by Wendy Smith.

For more information about the Society, visit www.wargravehistory.org.uk

Peter Delaney

Heritage, Family History, Museums and Libraries

Berkshire Record Office

The Story of Bisham

I mentioned in the last Newsletter that we had up a small display relating to the Vansittart Neale family and Bisham Abbey. Now I can report that the collection on which that display was based is available for research.

Although many of the early Bisham Abbey records were lost in the eighteenth century, what has survived is still a substantial body of material that relates not just to many properties in the village but also to places in Cookham and Maidenhead. In addition to these is a sizable quantity of personal papers across the Vansittart and Neale generations. Though mostly local in nature, they include some papers about trade in both India and St Lucia at the turn of the nineteenth century as well as much detail about the family's domestic life. It is these domestic records that formed the bulk of our own display.

It is rare these days for an archive such as this to come to light. Most papers of the Berkshire gentry are well-known and have been available for many years. Please do browse the catalogue online or at the Record Office, for the Vansittart Neale collection is well worth a look.

Closing Reading Gaol

Readers are probably aware that Berkshire's county gaol discharged its last prisoner in November 2013. Although the gaol has been closed before, it has always remained part of the Government estate and that will not now be the case; the building is instead likely to be sold off for commercial use. Thus will end a period of over 200 years that the Forbury site has been used as a place of detention.

There is a local feeling in favour of saving the 1844 building designed by George Gilbert Scott. And the prison archives have been saved too: most were already at the BRO but they have now been joined by material that had remained on site. The result is that we have a lot of information to illustrate the history of the present gaol, and we would like to do something with it. In the short-term, we hope to hold an event next year that will be similar to our 'Enemies of the State' seminar in spring 2013. Please keep an eye out for activities in the autumn of 2014.

Mark Stevens, Senior Archivist

Museum of English Rural Life

In November 2012 the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) received a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to take forward plans for 'Our Country Lives', a project aimed at redisplaying the galleries, improving visitor facilities and creating a series of new activities for our visitors to enjoy. Work began in earnest in early 2013. Museum designers, GuM (part of the Pringle Richards Sharratt architectural practice) were appointed to work with us to develop a new interpretation strategy. Together we have been preparing some new layouts for the galleries that will create more space for visitors and provide more opportunities for interactivity. We have been looking at themes that explore our views and perceptions of the countryside, how rural life has changed over the last 200 years and how much it has stayed the same. We want to show more of our objects that relate to domestic life and display some of our spectacular textiles which have never been on show in the galleries before. We are also looking at how our garden could work as a "gallery" in its own right and how we might provide better access to our mezzanine which can currently only be seen as part of a guided tour.

Alongside the interpretation plans we have also been working on an activity plan with consultants, The Cultural Consulting Network. We are aiming to attract more people from the local urban communities of Reading. We are also planning to work in partnership with different groups to create displays that reflect their views and experiences of the countryside.

Our Round 2 application will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in February 2014 with a start date for capital works to extend the galleries in autumn 2014.

To keep up to date on the progress of this project and find out how you can get involved, read Our Country Lives - the new MERL blog at <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/merl/>

Telling the Stories of the University of Reading's World War One War Heroes

To mark the Centenary of the First World War, the stories of some of the brave men and women who fell during the conflict are being revealed. The research is being carried out as part of the University of Reading's Arts Council England funded project, Reading Connections, in partnership with Reading Museum. The University's archive houses a Memorial Book which lists those who died in the Great War who were connected to the University, then Reading University College. Unusually, the book also includes photographs of some of those individuals and as part of the project, these have now been digitised. With the help of local volunteers, University researchers have explored their service history, personal details and connections with the University. The research team is keen to enlist the public's help in building a wider picture of those who lost their lives as well as providing vital information on those they know little about. The stories behind the faces in the Reading University College WW1 memorial book can be explored on the Reading Connections project Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/97802785@N08/sets>). Anyone with more information about any of the individuals listed is invited to contribute via Flickr or by contacting p.heath2@reading.ac.uk.

Throughout 2014 there will be a range of events taking place which complement the project including an:

Exhibition: Reading University College: WW1 and Beyond

1 April – 31 August, Staircase Hall, Free.

Funded by Arts Council England and inspired by the University of Reading Memorial Book and Clock Tower Memorial, this exhibition reveals the stories of the men and women with connections to the then Reading University College, who fell during the First World War. This exhibition also looks at the theme of War in a broader sense with interesting items from MERL and the Special Collections relating to other conflicts.

Seminar Series: The Great War and the Countryside

From 29 April on various dates. Free. MERL.

This special series of MERL seminars has been convened in collaboration with The Friends of the University of Reading as part of a wider programme of events to mark a century since the outbreak of the First World War. The talks will reveal a range of narratives, including some connected with Berkshire and Reading. Others will chart the varied ways in which this terrible conflict came to impact upon the British countryside and beyond.

For full details of each seminar, visit www.reading.ac.uk/merl/WW1seminars.

Heritage Event: Reading and the Great War

27 April, 1 – 5 pm, London Road Campus.

To mark the centenary of the start of the Great War, the Friends of the University are hosting special heritage event to highlight the impact of the First World War on Reading and the University.

Alison Clare Hilton

Reading Local Studies Library

Reading Libraries are continuing with our Heritage Lottery Fund project on Berkshire in World War One, and volunteers have found some marvellous stories about Belgian refugees and similar topics. The Project Manager John Arcus and volunteers are putting together a roadshow to visit schools and societies to encourage people to bring their WW1 memories and memorabilia. His contact details are john.arcus@reading.gov.uk or 0118 901 2521.

Future local history talks at libraries that may be of interest to members are:

General Brock and the Maiwand Lion by Mike Cooper at Battle Library at 7pm on Thursday 23rd January.

Reading in the 1950s by Stuart Hylton at Battle library at 2.30pm on Saturday 8th February.

Newspaper History by Phil Creighton at Palmer Park library at 10am on Thursday 20th February

And last chance to hear my talk on *100 Years of Shops in Reading* at Reading Central Library at 7.30pm on Thursday 6th March and at The History of Reading Society at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19th March.

For more details, e-mail libraryevents@reading.gov.uk or phone 0118 901 5950.

I have been to Jacksons before they closed down, to take photos for the library's collection. It's sad to see the end of a Reading institution and I hope that some of their historic records and fittings have been saved for the Berkshire Record Office and Reading Museum.

Anne Smith

Reading Museum

Exhibitions

Making Faces:



Making Faces: Tudor to Modern

Until Sunday 16 March 2014

What makes a great portrait? Experience an impressive sweep of over thirty oil paintings from Reading Museum's art collection. Works range from Tudor and Stuart panel paintings, including Reading's extraordinary portrait of Elizabeth I, to secret self-

portraits from the 1990s. In between there are Georgian dandies and Victorian characters by Thomas Gainsborough and Benjamin Haydon and more informal twentieth century images of the friends and portraits from the 1990s. In between there are Georgian dandies and Victorian characters by Thomas Gainsborough and Benjamin Haydon and more informal twentieth century images of the friends and acquaintances of John Minton, John Bratby and Stanley Spencer. Many of the portraits have local connections and all are stunning paintings. They are supported by real objects from each period and an opportunity for visitors to make their own portraits with their phones. Altogether the exhibition gives an impression of how

portrait painting has developed over four centuries. Look out for associated activities in the New Year.

Jacksons Closing Down display

Until April 2014

It will be with sadness that Reading says goodbye to Jacksons when it closes its doors for the final time at the end of 2013. Founded by Edward Jackson in 1875, the shop will be affectionately remembered by generations of Reading people. This small display on the Museum's ground floor takes a nostalgic look at the history of one of Reading's best loved names.

Coming Soon:

Reading at War

Saturday 5 April – Sunday 14 September 2014

Marking the centenary of the First World War's outbreak, Reading at War will be a focal point for our town to explore how war throughout history has shaped Reading's character.

WALKS, TALKS AND WORKSHOPS

These are just some of the events that may be of interest to BLHA members. For details of all our forthcoming events and exhibition details please go to www.readingmuseum.org.uk

Lecture: Reading's Portrait of Elizabeth I

Saturday 25 January

One of Reading's greatest treasures has returned to the town and the Friends of Reading Museum are fundraising for Tudor education workshops to help local schools access this precious painting. Join the Friends to hear guest speaker Dr Elizabeth Goldring discuss the significance of this painting both to modern eyes and those of the Elizabethan court. The event will include refreshments.

Dr Elizabeth Goldring is Fellow at the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick.

Adults and older children, 2pm – 3pm. £12, for further information and to book email linda.fothergill@reading.gov.uk or phone 07751 965334



Workshop: A Community Self Portrait

Saturday 1 February

Experience a working photographic studio within the Making Faces: Tudor to Modern exhibition and be part of a growing archive of local portraits of local people. Join professional photographer Anna Mitchell and sculptor Jon Lockhart to have your

photograph taken and be transported digitally to a variety of exotic and familiar locations using editing software. All ages, 1pm – 3.30pm. Free, drop in

Art: Small Works Sale

Saturday 8 February

Reading Guild of Artists members will be in the Sir John Madejski Art Gallery with small art works at affordable prices. Everyone is welcome to browse a range of paintings, prints and sculpture which will be for sale ... you might find the perfect piece to brighten the February blues!

All ages, 10.30am – 3.30pm. Free, drop in

Study Day: Making Faces, Great Portraits

Saturday 1 March

Join curator Elaine Blake and researchers Sandy Gardner and Audrey Gregory for a day considering historic portraiture. The day includes an introduction to British portraiture, an in-depth look at the portraits in our Making Faces: Tudor to Modern exhibition and the chance to view some surprising portraits from the Museum's works on paper collection. Adults and older children, 11am – 3pm. £20, booking essential (0118 937 3400)

Talk: Life in Tudor and Stuart Berkshire



Saturday 8 March

Early portraits like those in Making Faces: Tudor to Modern suggest what people looked like but how did they live, what did they think and who did they know? Joan Dils, well-known local historian and research fellow in the University of Reading's Department of History, will illuminate their times. Adults and older children, 2pm – 3pm. £8, pay on the day, drop in

Matthew Williams, Museum Manager

Courses

The spring schedule will already be underway by the time you read this, but there may still be time to book on a day school, so why not have a look to see what is available to occupy yourselves in the coming months. For more information visit www.conted.ox.ac.uk and www.southern.wea.org.uk to out find out what there is on offer near you.

Other local Further Education colleges often run courses for adults; there are five in Berkshire, so keep a look out as there may be something of interest. Look out for these logos.	 
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Picture Gallery



The

Reading Synagogue – David Cliffe



Making Faces - Reading Museum



Jacksons shop window – Thomas Macey



Jacksons' Advertising – Thomas Macey



The Saleroom, Jacksons – Margaret Simons

History Societies

Arborfield Local History Society: Secretary Tina Kemp, Kenneys Farm, Maggs Green, Arborfield RG2 9JZ [tina@geoffkemp.force).co.uk]

Berkshire Archaeology Society: Andrew Hutt, 19, Challenor Close, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 4UJ [info@berksarch.co.uk]

Berkshire Family History Society: Research Centre, Yeomanry House, Castle Hill, Reading, RG1 7TJ [www.berksfhs.org.uk]

Berkshire Industrial Archaeological Group: Secretary, Peter Trout, 7 West Chiltern, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 OSG or Mr. Weber, [bentwebershops@waitrose.com]

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: Geoffrey Moss, 31 Huntsman's Meadow, Ascot, SL5 7PF [MossSandalwood@aol.com]

Burnham Historians: Mary Bentley, 38 Conway Road, Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 0LD tel 01628 665932 [burnhamhistorians@btinternet.com]

Cox Green Local History Group: Pat Barlow, 29 Bissley Drive, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 3UX. tel 01628 823890 weekends only. [alan.barlow2@btinternet.com]

East Garston Local History Society: Jonathan Haw, Goldhill House, Front Street, East Garston, Hungerford, RG17 7EU [jonathanhaw@btopenworld.com]

East Ilsley Local History Society: Sue Burnay, White Hollow, High St, E.Ilsley, Berks RG20 7LE tel 01635 281308 [info@eastilsleyhistory.com] [www.eastilsleyhistory.com]

Eton Wick Local History Group: Teresa Stanton, 35 Eton Wick Road, Eton Wick, Windsor, SL4 6LU tel 01753 860591 [teresa.stanton@talktalk.net] [www.etonwickhistory.co.uk]

Finchampstead Society: Mohan Banerji, 3 Tanglewood, Finchampstead, Berks, RG40 3PR tel 0118 9730479.

Goring & Streatley Local History Society: Janet Hurst, 6 Nun's Acre, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 9BE tel 01491 871022 | Mob: 07799 583524 [gslhs@w-mark.demon.co.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: Edward Hooper, 6 Tower Close, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8UU tel 0118 9472470 [edward.w.hooper@btinternet.com]

Hungerford Historical Association: Secretary: Mrs Shelagh Parry, 9 Cottrell Close, Hungerford. RG17 0HF. Tel: 01488 681492. [shelaghpparry@btinternet.com] [www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk]

Longworth & District History Society: Pam Woodward, 22 Cherrytree Close, Southmoor, Abingdon, OX13 5BE. tel 01865 820500 [prwoodward@btinternet.com] [http://www.longworth-district-history-society.org.uk/]

Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society: Brian Boulter, 43 Bannard Road, Maidenhead SL6 4NP [bboulter@tesco.net]

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: Ray Hopgood, 23 Lipscombe Close, Newbury, RG14 5JW [secretary@ndfc.org.uk]

Oxfordshire Family History Society: Tony Hadland, 4 Barcote Cottages, Buckland, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 8PP

Pangbourne Heritage Group: Rosie Newrick, 1 Thames Avenue, Pangbourne, RG8 7BU tel 0118 9842565

Project Purley: Catherine Sampson, 32 Waterside Drive, Purley on Thames, Berks, RG8 8AQ tel 0118 9422 255 [clspurley@aol.com]

Sandhurst Historical Society: Janice Burlton, 16 Scotland Hill, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 8JR tel 01252 872504 [janiceburlton@hotmail.co.uk] [www.sandhurst-historical-society.org]

Shinfield & District Local History Society: Ann Young, 'Roselyn', School Green, Shinfield, Reading, Berks RG2 9EH. tel 0118 9882120

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: Philip Morris, 71 Van Diemens, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 8HW tel 01367 710285

Swallowfield Local History Society: Ken Hussey, 'Kimberley', Swallowfield, Reading, RG7 1QX. tel 0118 9883650 [slhsoc@yahoo.co.uk] [www.slhsoc.org.uk]

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

Thatcham Historical Society: Alf Wheeler, 22 Park Lane, Thatcham, RG18 3PJ tel 01635 863536 [enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk] [www.thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk]

Theale Local History Society: A.D. Spurling, The Fifteenth, Broadlands Close, Calcot Park, Reading RG31 7RP [thealehistory@aol.com]

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

Wargrave Local History Society: Peter Delaney, 6 East View Close, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8BJ tel 0118 9403121 [peter.delaney2@btinternet.com]

Windsor Local History Group: Sue Ashley, 49 York Avenue, Windsor, SL4 3PA [nutritionssashley@hotmail.com] [www.windlesora.org.uk]

Friends of Windsor and Royal Borough Museum Jinny Melville, 15 Gloucester Place, Windsor, SL4 2AJ [www.windsormuseumappeal.org.uk]

Winnersh & District Historical Society: Brian Eighteen, 50 Watmore Lane, Winnersh, Berks, RG41 5JT [b.eighteen@btinternet.com]

Wokingham History Group: Trevor Ottlewski, Uani, Holly Bush Ride,
Wokingham, Berks tel 01344 775920.

Wraysbury History Group: Gillian Hopkins, 45 Staines Road, Wraysbury, Staines,
TW19 5BY tel 01784 482947 [gillian_hopkins@tiscali.co.uk]

Archives, Libraries & Museums

Abingdon Library: The Charter, Abingdon, OX14 3LY. tel 01235 520374
[abingdon_library@yahoo.co.uk]

Allen County Public Library: Genealogy, PO Box 2270, Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA
tel 001 468 012270 [www.genealogycenter.org]

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

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

Centre for Oxfordshire Studies: Helen Drury, Central Library, Westgate, Oxford,
OX1 1DJ tel 01865 815741 [enquiries@oxst.demon.uk]

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

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

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

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

Maidenhead & Windsor Local Studies Library: Chris Atkins, St Ives Road,
Maidenhead, SL6 1QU tel 01628 796981 [chris.atkins@rbwm.gov.uk]

Newbury Reference Library: Fiona Davies, Newbury Central Library, The Wharf,
Newbury, RG14 5AU tel 01635 519900

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: Val Davis, Library Assistant, PO Box 223,
Whiteknights, RG6 6AE. tel 0118 378 8785 [v.j.davis@reading.ac.uk]

Museum of English Rural Life: The University of Reading, Redlands Road,
Reading, RG1 5EX. tel 0118 378 8660 fax: 0118 378 5632 [merl@reading.ac.uk]
[www.merl.org.uk]

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

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

Slough Museum: 278-286 High Street, Slough, SL1 1NB tel 01753 526422 [info@sloughmuseum.co.uk]

West Berkshire Museum: Museum Collection Store, Unit 3, Bone Lane, Newbury, RG14 5SH [museum@westberks.gov.uk]

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

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The next Newsletter will be published in May 2014 (Copy by 1 April 2014). A word limit of 400/450 words is in place to allow for as many of you to contribute as possible, please note that when space is limited contributions over this amount will be subject to the editorial pencil! Email: newsletter@blha.org.uk or post to Dr. M. Simons 80, Reeds Avenue, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 5SR.

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