

Berkshire Local History Association



**Newsletter No 122
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Berkshire Local History Association

Newsletter

Editor: John Chapman

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

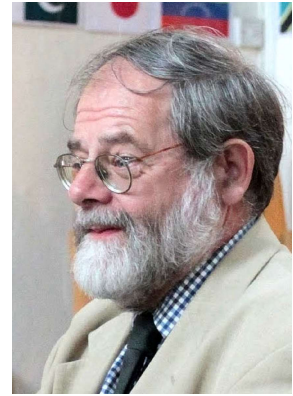
Contributions should be e-mailed to:- newsletter@blha.org.uk and arrive not later than the 15th of the month preceding publication (January, May and September) Word, Text or pdf copy is acceptable, but keep it simple and please do not use spaces or tabs to lay out presentations. Photographs and images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

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

Cover picture - **Champs Chapel, East Hendred - see page 5**

Chairman's Corner

I am pleased to be able to announce that we now have a new BLHA Secretary, Carol Dixon-Smith. She attended our last committee meeting, and was not put off! Carol is a member of the Windsor Local History Group. She edits the journal, "Windlesora," and has edited the books of several members of the group. Carol is also a keen photographer, and has contributed to books, not only on Windsor, but on other towns and cities – Maidenhead, Andover and Salisbury.



The hot summer brought a number of events, the first of which was the visit to East Hendred in early June. It was enjoyed by both BLHA and Oxfordshire Local History Association members. This was entirely appropriate, since the village was in Berkshire until the end of March 1974, and in Oxfordshire thereafter. (see page 5)

The following week came the visit to Dunsden Church, and the chance to walk the Wilfred Owen Trail. We were, of course, just inside Oxfordshire here, east of Caversham. Thanks are due to Ann Smith for arranging this. Though I enjoyed it, I was rather more interested in looking at the brown argus butterflies and humming-bird hawk moths around the flowers in the churchyard than in hearing about the poet's short and not particularly happy stay at the vicarage there. (see page 4)



Representatives from local history societies Sidney Gold (History of Reading Society), Joan Dils (President, BLHA), Peter Durrant, M.B.E. (former County Archivist), Mark Stevens (current County Archivist), and David Cliffe (Chairman, BLHA).

The seventieth anniversary party at the Berkshire Record Office came as the weather was cooling, on August 10th. Guests, and anyone who happened to be in the search room at the time, were invited into the Wroughton Room for tea and cake. Mark Stevens reminded us of the beginnings in the basement of old Assize Courts in Reading, and how access to the documents was nothing like as straightforward as it is now. Subsequently, the Record Office moved to the new Shire Hall at Shinfield Park, before arriving at its present location at the top of Castle Hill in Reading in 2000.

Over the summer I've been amusing myself reading through the nature diaries of Thomas W. Marshall, which are now in the Record Office and date from the 1930s. Mr. Marshall was President of the Reading Natural History Society – and I'm the current President. In the course of my reading, I discovered that he lived at No. 43 Alexandra Road in Reading. By curious coincidence, I, too, lived at this rather fine house some forty years later. But whereas Mr. Marshall occupied the whole house, I could only afford a bed-sitting room on the first floor! The diaries show some interesting changes over the eighty-odd years which have elapsed since he wrote. There are changes in the distribution of species, and changes in attitudes to fox-hunting, game-keeping, collecting dead specimens and the conservation of nature. He mentions gentlemen's parks with herds of deer, and coppices where nightingales sang and nightjars "churred" by night where there are now houses and golf-courses. Some of the locations he visited are now out-of-bounds, but many are still visited by the Society today. The diaries have kept me entertained for many hours: I shall use them in my residential address to the Society, and may eventually turn my notes into a journal article.

I've also been reading through the draft text of the section of the Victoria History of Oxfordshire which deals with Caversham, due to be published in a few years' time. When this was first suggested, I couldn't resist the opportunity, because I have lived there for over thirty years. I have written copious notes which I trust will be useful to the author, Dr. Stephen Miles. We have met, and I have been able to point out some recent developments which might have been missed. When it comes to earlier periods, the scholarship, to me, seems impeccable.

At the last BLHA committee meeting, we agreed to make a donation of £500 towards the publication of this volume, since Caversham was administered by Reading Borough and Berkshire County between 1911 and 1998. The finished "Big Red Book" will contain all the South Oxfordshire parishes, but I'm hoping that it may be possible to publish a Caversham volume, maybe with extra illustrations, at a reasonable price, in due course.

Back in the area where I was born and brought up, I'm hoping soon to fix a "launch" date for my latest book, on the street-names of Macclesfield. It's my first attempt at self-publishing. The success of my book on the history of cinemas in Reading, published last year, has led me to consider producing a book on the Macclesfield cinemas – I went to all five of them before I came to Reading. It's been a productive summer, but now I'm looking forward to a holiday and something very different in a few weeks' time.

David Cliffe

A Word from the Editor

As always, many thanks to all the contributors. Mostly old faithfuls so we would like to get a contribution from some of the many other societies in Berkshire.

The other day I came across a remarkable database in the form of a Gazetteer which lists every place name in the United Kingdom. It is produced by the Association of British Counties and lists each place's pre-1974 county as well as lat/long and OS grid reference. You can download all the A's for free but there is a charge of £15 for the whole gazetteer. Just google 'association british counties gazetteer'

You may have been aware that Britain is leaving the EU next Spring so they are voiding any internet suffixes for websites or emails of .eu for UK residents.. So if you are like me and have several such you will need to change your domain before it vanishes out of sight.

John Chapman

Miscellanea

The Berkshire History Prize

The Berkshire History Prize was won this year by Amie Bailey, for her dissertation on “Sex and Madness: exploring male and female experiences in Broadmoor and Bethlem Hospitals, 1800-1900.” In writing it, Amie had made extensive use of the Broadmoor archives, which are now in the Berkshire Record Office. A copy of the dissertation will be deposited at the Record Office. A summary follows on page 12.

This prize is awarded to history students at Reading University who produce an exceptional dissertation on a subject relating to Berkshire. It is not necessarily awarded every year. This year there was a winner, and Mark Stevens (County Archivist) and I went up to the University on a very hot early July day to present the prize, which is funded jointly by the Record Office and the Association.



Dr. Jeremy Burchardt, from the Department of History, Mark Stevens (County Archivist), Amie Bailey, and David Cliffe (Chairman, BLHA)]

A live Artillery Shell

Can anyone help find this newspaper cutting? - We received this from Richard Armistead who used to live in Easthampstead.

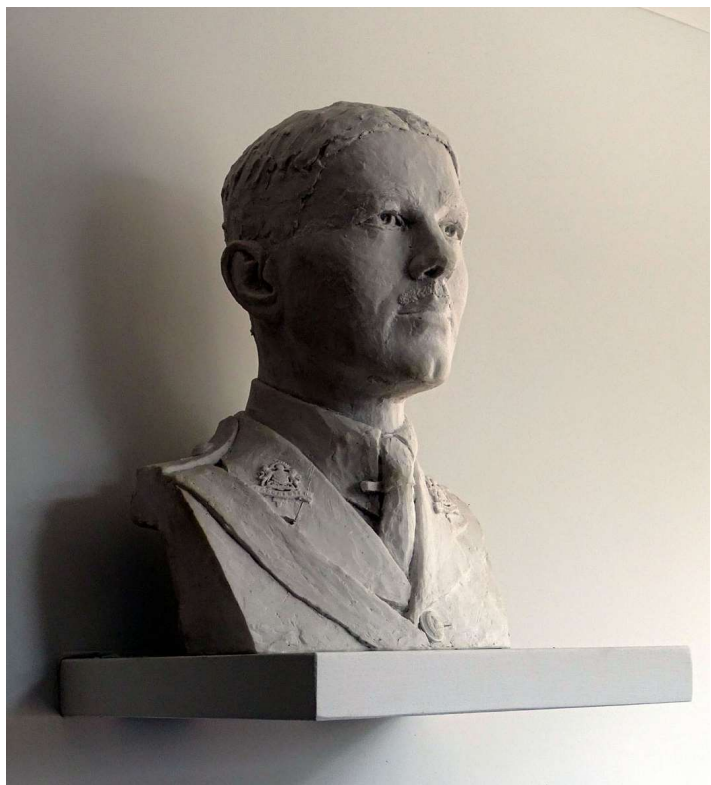
When I was young I lived on Harcourt Road, Easthampstead and went to Fox Hill school. My photograph ended up in the local and national papers because I found a ww2 artillery shell and took it home. It happened in the early sixties but I have no record it since my news paper cutting fell apart. Could you help, me in any way, to get a copy of the photo? I understand if this is not the sort of thing you do! Living in hope..

Reply to Newsletter@BLHA.org.uk and we will pass any information on.

The Wilfred Owen Trail

On one of the hottest days of the year, members of the Berkshire Local History Association gathered at Dunsden Church in South Oxfordshire. We were there to commemorate the life of Wilfred Owen, one of the greatest poets of the First World War, who died in 1918.

An enthusiastic member of the congregation showed us the church, gave us tea, and explained Wilfred Owen's connection to the parish in 1911-13. His parents and sister are buried in the churchyard.



We then followed the Wilfred Owen Trail, which was set up by the Dunsden Owen Association with money from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We saw the vicarage where he lived as a lay assistant to the vicar, the former school, now a village hall, and the outline of the demolished mission hall. It showed clearly on the village green owing to the drought. The heat brought another bonus: lots of butterflies were spotted.

We finished the walk with a welcome lunch at the Crown Inn, Playhatch.

The Dunsden Owen Association is doing a series of talks this autumn at the village hall. See www.owenindusden.org for details.

Ann Smith

Visit to East Hendred

As we stepped through the porch of Hendred House, we found ourselves in a medieval great hall – with a glitter-ball suspended from the roof, left over from a family birthday party. This is a lived-in house, and it was kind of Edward Eyston and his family to welcome us to their home.

From the hall, we proceeded to the private chapel, founded in 1256. The Eystons remained Catholic after the Reformation, and over the centuries there had been many acts of desecration and restoration. At one stage the chapel was used for storing fire-wood. When James II came to the throne, and it looked as though Catholic worship would be allowed again, the chapel was put back in order, only to be wrecked by soldiers in the invading Dutch army of William of Orange in 1688. Today, regular Catholic services are held.



The chapel from the garden

From the chapel, we walked through the garden, to the Victorian Catholic church which was commissioned by Charles Eyston. The parish priest, Monsignor Andrew Burnham (a former Anglican bishop) gave us a lively account of the history.

After time spent looking round there, we walked through the village to the Anglican church, where among other things we looked round the Eyston Aisle, and the family monuments.

The final call of the visit was to the Champs Chapel, now the museum for the village. It was built by the monks of Sheen Abbey as a pilgrimage chapel, but is now open to visitors on Sunday afternoons. The volunteers who look after it had kindly agreed to keep it open longer, to give everyone the chance to look round.

There was an incredible amount to see and to take in in this one small village. I cannot imagine anyone being disappointed. On several occasions in the past I had walked on field-paths around East Hendred, West Hendred and Ardington, all with medieval churches, and close to one another. I had wondered about the possibility of seeing the inside of Hendred House, and so I was very grateful to Tony Hadland, Chairman of OLHA for making the arrangements, leading the group, and providing us with seven pages of informative notes.

David Cliffe

Dr Brigitte Mitchell Honoured with Published Research Award

In June 2018, at the British Association for Local History annual awards ceremony in York, Dr Brigitte Mitchell was presented with a Local History Award for Research and Publication. The article was entitled Windsor and the Contagious Diseases Act and was published in our journal, Berkshire Old and New.

Dr Mitchell is Chairperson of the Windsor Local History Group, as well as a published research historian. She specialises in British military history as well as the history of Windsor. Indeed, her doctoral thesis was Problems of a Garrison Town; Windsor 1815 – 1855, part of which discussed prostitution in Windsor on which this article is based.

To the amusement of the audience, the part of the article that BALH Chairman Dr Tim Lomas chose to read aloud, was that of the ‘willy parade’. This is where soldiers were inspected for signs of venereal disease!

Carol
Dixon-Smith

New Books and Reviews

Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany

Published by the Berkshire Record Society ISBN 978-0-9573937-6-9 and edited by Brian Kemp

How fitting that in the Berkshire's Record Society's Jubilee year its latest volume should come from the pen of the one of the county's foremost historians, Brian Kemp, editor of the magisterial two-volume of Reading Abbey Cartulary (1986-87). This new 'miscellany' consists of an edition and translation of four key medieval works, namely, a third set of Annals of Reading Abbey, the Miracles of the Hand of St James (a relic with healing powers kept at the Abbey), a previously unknown account of the festivities to be observed annually by the monks on the Anniversary of the Death of Henry I, the Abbey's founder, and a Schedule of Feasts and Anniversaries observed in the Abbey and Pittances to the monks on these occasions. Apart from the Miracles (translated in the Berkshire Archaeological Journal in 1970) none of these has been published before.

The four works not only throw new light on the history of the Abbey but also on national events such as the barons' defiance of King John in Reading and the abbot's attendance at the Fourth Lateran Council. But there is also much here for the local historian including unique information on where Henry I and his second wife were buried in the Abbey, the annual festivities held by the monks

and amount of wine and ale permitted to them to consume on these occasions, as well as snippets of information on the plague in Reading and Bucklebury, the Kennet and Avon overflowing, lightning strikes on the Abbey church itself, and fascinating details of the miracles worked by the Hand of St James on at least eleven county folk from Reading, Bucklebury, Bradfield, Curridge, Earley and elsewhere. As for the festivities, perhaps December I, the anniversary date of Henry I's death, and the vigil the evening beforehand should be resurrected as days for the town and county to celebrate each year!

The publication of this very valuable and very readable volume is certainly cause for celebration, and thanks should go to the owners of the original manuscripts and Berkshire Archaeological Society for permission to publish, the editor Professor Kemp for his meticulous scholarship, the Berkshire Record Society, and last but not least, the Friends of Reading Abbey who financially supported this worthwhile enterprise.

Adrian Ailes

Land of The Atrebates

In and around Roman Berkshire ISSN 0309-3093`

Volume 83 of the Berkshire Archaeological Journal was published in May. It contained fifteen articles on a bewildering variety of topics related to Roman Berkshire and just beyond. It follows on from the volume on Iron Age Berkshire summarising the best of the archaeology which has taken place. It was back in 1931 that Howard Peake tried to bring together everything that was known about our county over the 500 years or so since Julius Caesar popped over in 55 BC. There have been many more excavations since then but, more importantly, archaeology has moved from being a rich man's hobby to being a branch of science. The resulting application of science to interpretation has revolutionised our view of the Roman period, making us realise that it is only in the last 100 years or so that technology has caught up.

We start off with a review of towns and villas by Trevor Coombs and roads by Hugh Davies giving us a feel for how things were. This is followed by a survey of the environment and agriculture by Trevor Coombs and Janet Sharpe. Then we move to technology to look at metal working, ceramics, glass and textiles by Trevor Coombs, Anni Byard, Anne Harrison and Janet Sharpe. Next comes matters to do with religion and death by Trevor Coombs although Christianity does not get a mention.

Trevor Coombs and Janet Sharpe then look at the reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire and the consequences of such matters as the drying up of coinage and loss of central government.

Taken all together this is a fascinating glimpse into a period of history with little written record at the grass roots level and although long delayed is a most welcome addition to our libraries. Copies can be obtained from Andrew Hutt by e-mailing BAS@berksarch.co.uk he will send you an invoice for £20 + £3 P&P.

John Chapman

Reading's Forgotten Children: the Start of Schooling in the Town

by R. S. Bray. Published by the author, 2003.

Although published as long ago as 2003, I came across this book only in July this year, in the shop in Reading Museum and Art Gallery.

The title is rather misleading: the book is really about board schools in Reading from 1871 until 1902 when school boards were abolished, and the Borough Council took over from them. And then I fail to see why the children who went to board schools were any more “forgotten” than the children who went to church schools and charity schools in the same period.

That said, the book tells its story rather well, and it's a story that hasn't been told before in an accessible form like this. The pages are large, and the illustrations are of good size, with good definition. I suppose it was inevitable that most of the pictures come from the post-board school era. The photographs of school buildings are modern, and those of school classes, with the children in rows, date from 1928-1936. But there is a picture of a Reading School Board certificate of merit, issued by the Swansea Road School in 1902.

The author was mistaken in saying that the Swansea Road School was in Lower Caversham. It's now known as the E. P. Collier School, and is off Caversham Road on the Reading side of the Thames. And I was a bit puzzled by the photograph of George Palmer School, which was built by the Borough Council in 1907.

Perhaps the price is a little “steep” - £5.99 for 32 pages – but it's well produced, and the text is well researched.

David Cliffe

Reading. Unique Images from the Archives of Historic England

by Marion Field. Amberley Publishing, 2018.

This is another publication where I feel the need to take issue with the title. The images are almost all from photographs. There is, or would have been, a unique negative of each image, but that image may have been printed and sold many times. Some of the images started out as picture postcards, which may have been sold in their hundreds. I have already seen many of the images in the book in other collections in Reading, so I wouldn't have used the word “unique” if I'd

had any choice in the matter.

Nevertheless, there were many images I hadn't seen before, and it is good to have them, well reproduced and reasonably large, in a handy book. Personal favourites include the premises of William Ridley & Son, timber merchants, on Abbey Wharf; Orwell House in Craven Road, the sumptuous residence of Owen Ridley; Cressingham Park, another sumptuous residence; some interiors of Caversham Park while the Crawshay family was still in residence; some of the departments in Wellsted's store in Broad Street in 1920; and the interior of the Odeon Cinema when it opened in 1937.

I spotted only one obvious error in the captions: the aerial photograph on p. 45 is supposed to have Castle Street running through the centre. I can make out London Road, Kendrick Road, Mount Pleasant, etc., but Castle Street is off to the left in the distance somewhere.

The price is £14.99 for 95 pages and just over 130 images.

David Cliffe

Articles

Projects, More Projects, and Branding

Perhaps there's something wrong with me. I can't get excited about "Reading Abbey Revealed" and the re-opening of the Abbey Ruins to the public. I felt vaguely amused some years back when a group was formed calling themselves The Friends of Reading Abbey. It seemed to me that they were a few hundred years too late. For me, the re-opening of the ruins only gets us back to where we were – though possibly with the danger of having loose flints fall on our heads removed. When I first saw the Abbey Ruins, fifty years ago, they were gloomy and sad. They gave little impression of the splendour of what had once been there, and they seemed hemmed in on one side by the prison wall.

A lot of money has gone into the "Reading Abbey Revealed" project – over £3 million. This includes making the Abbey Ruins safe for visitors and Inner Gateway of Reading Abbey useable again. There has been a lot of publicity, and there are some new interpretation boards, of course. But it only gets us back to where we were.

Then there is the "Reading Abbey Quarter." What is it? The map on the back of the "Reading Abbey Revealed" souvenir booklet suggests that it stretches from Forbury Road south to the old course of the River Kennet, and west to the Market Place. (Are there to be any more such "Quarters" in Reading, I wonder?) The twentieth century witnessed a number of acts of vandalism within

this area, resulting in the destruction of many old buildings which looked much more pleasant than the buildings that replaced them. I could write a list, perhaps starting with the 17th-century Pageant House, but perhaps now is not the time. The former Cooper's Wine Bar and the neighbouring timber-framed building in the Market Place are looking very sad at present. Hopefully someone will take them on and look after them one day. And let us not forget that there was a time in the 1970s when the Borough Council would have been prepared to see the Town Hall redeveloped, with the organ sold off and the present-day concert hall divided into two by a mezzanine floor and closed as a place of entertainment.

A sizeable portion of the "Abbey Quarter" is taken up by a closed Victorian prison. This opens up tremendous possibilities for the future of the town – both for the archaeology of the site, and for its future use. It could also make the "Abbey Quarter" something more than the Abbey Ruins, which are still a bit gloomy, and the Abbey Gateway, which is usually shut.

On July 12th, the "Reading Chronicle" announced "The Hidden Abbey Project," to "discover the hidden treasures beneath the town's oldest gem." Soon after Reading Gaol closed in 2013, archaeological investigations were carried out, using ground-penetrating radar. The Deputy Leader of the Council spoke of "tantalising initial results." The project is to involve English Heritage, and "targeted trench investigation."

Then on August 2nd, the "Chronicle" announced something called "Theatre Arts Reading" (TAR). The aim was to set up a trust which would press the Ministry of Justice to sell the gaol, so that a theatre and "hub for the arts" could be built within it. Where the necessary millions to buy it and to build the theatre were to come from was not stated. Presumably the trust would run it and take the financial risks. Will it be a small studio theatre, or a large theatre with a large stage and a fly tower to accommodate full-scale opera and ballet companies? Reading hasn't had a purpose-built theatre as such since 1960, when The Palace closed.

There would, of course, be a certain tourist potential in the old building, where the cell occupied by Oscar Wilde is still identifiable. The Oscar Wilde Society was pressing for the Grade II listed building to be kept – though I expect Oscar himself would have been glad to see it razed to the ground!

I was puzzled, in the same newspaper article, to read that the Deputy Leader of the Council said that he supported the TAR Project, but was determined that a theatre at Reading Prison "should not impact on the future of The Hexagon." Wouldn't they both be trying to attract the same audience? – and it was only a year or two back that the Borough Council announced that it was looking for a partner to help in building a replacement for The Hexagon. The original 1960s

plan was for a separate theatre and a concert hall, but instead, councillors were persuaded to opt for a multi-purpose hall. The Hexagon has always seemed a bit of a compromise.

Things move on. These are interesting times for Reading. Let's wish the projects every success. I look forward to reading the archaeological reports and to sitting in the new theatre and hub for the arts. I just hope that I live long enough.

Old Curmudgeon

A "Workshop" Day – Looking after your Collections and Archives

At the last committee meeting, we were contemplating holding a study day for local societies and private individuals who have their own local history collections. Some committee members thought it could be a valuable and well supported project, but others weren't so sure. Would there be any takers for such a day?

Some local societies have their own collections, with at least some of the material viewable on a website. Other local societies haven't got as far as making material accessible from a website. Some private individuals may, like me, have valuable collections.

I have in front of me a document called "Archives and Local History Societies," with lots of sound advice, which came from Project Purley. It says something about the value of keeping such collections, and rescuing material from neglect, damage and destruction. It lists the different kinds of material which may arrive on one's doorstep – property deeds, agreements, wills, letters, bills, photographs, and so forth, all of which may shed light on the history of an area.

The document goes on with recommendations for cataloguing, allocating unique reference numbers to items, having fields for description, provenance, date, etc., and allocating tags to designate subjects. This is to let enquirers know what's in the collection, what it's about, and the questions it might answer. Inevitably these days this will be a computer catalogue, and may just be a simple text document, or it may be a spreadsheet or a database.

Other considerations include relevance, accuracy, consistency, control and security. Who will decide whether items are worth keeping, or can be thrown away? Who will check the database entries for errors, and put them on the database. Will the pages on the database be protected from copying – and if you decide to protect, say, a photograph with a mark of ownership, will there be provision for anyone asking for a legitimate copy? And after all the effort of

setting up a database, what can be done to stop it from disappearing if a computer fails or gets stolen? Finally, as we know, technology keeps changing, so that anyone looking after such a database will have to look out for new software, so that it will remain viable.

Having created a database, there remains the question of the storage of the original material. Most local societies tend not to have buildings of their own, and the collection will need to be protected from sunlight, dust, damp, and extremes of temperature. What happens if it's kept in someone's house if they move away, or pass away? What happens if the local society is wound up?

One suspects that most local societies will be doing what seemed right to them when they started, but there may be simple standards when it comes to the technology and storage which it would be sensible for them to adopt. Maybe the British Association for Local History can help here. I shall enquire.

What our Association may well want to do is to arrange a day to look at the major concerns, and from this there may arise the desire for another, more specialised session.

We might start with an archivist, for guidance on which documents should really be kept in a record office, and who to ask for advice if a collection of old documents comes your way. A conservation expert could talk about cleaning dusty and mouldy documents, doing simple repairs, and storage containers, whether cardboard or plastic. There will have to be a "technical" person there, who isn't just bent on selling you something. Advice will be offered on software, scanning, optical character recognition, doing it yourself or paying someone to manage your database.

But perhaps the most valuable aspect of such a day will be people sharing their experiences.

If you would be interested in going to a "workshop" day of this sort, perhaps you could send me a message, which the committee will consider in due course. You could also say what you'd like the day to contain, and you may even be able to suggest an appropriate "expert."

David Cliffe

***Sex and Madness: Exploring Male and Female Experiences in
Broadmoor and Bethlem Hospitals, 1800-1900***

A summary of the prize winning essay for the History Prize

Though the word and the concept of an asylum has largely been consigned to history, in nineteenth century Britain they were undeniably present. Two of the

most infamous were – and remain to this day – Broadmoor and Bethlem.

Under the name of Priory of St Mary at Bethlehem, Bethlem Hospital was founded in 1247 when then Sheriff of London Simon FitzMary donated a piece of land in the Bishopsgate ward of the City of London to the Bishop of Bethlehem for the creation of a charitable hospital for the needy, especially those referred to at that time as ‘lunaticke’, making Bethlem the first institution in the UK to specialise in the care of the mentally ill. Broadmoor Hospital is a considerably younger institution, having been founded in 1863 following the Criminal Lunatics Act of 1860, although it remains oldest of the three high-security psychiatric hospitals currently operating in England. Although Broadmoor was only in existence for thirty-seven of the one hundred years covered in this paper, the Broadmoor archive and the documents therein are invaluable to its findings.

“Sex and Madness” looks at the two areas of mental health and gender in conjunction, assessing the influence of Victorian Britain’s inherent gender differences on asylum admissions and care. This paper brings together and closely investigates existing historiography and historians interpretations of Victorian asylum life, and, by studying archival material relating to both men and women in psychiatric hospitals in the nineteenth century, draws new conclusions regarding the existence – or indeed, lack of – gender bias existent in the mental health care system of the period. Consequently, this paper brings further clarity to images of both mental health and gender in the Victorian era, helping to ascertain the extent to which changes have been made in these societal areas up to the present day.

In its three chapters, this paper addresses, respectively, the nature of both mental health and gender in Victorian Britain, admission to and conditions in the Victorian asylum, and the treatment and doctors found therein. These latter two chapters both assess a range of material from the Broadmoor and Bethlem archives, held respectively at the Berkshire Record Office and Bethlem Museum of the Mind, with the continuing consideration of gender difference, or indeed a lack thereof. From the research conducted within this paper, it is concluded that there does not seem to have been a considerable gender bias in the administration and day-to-day running of Broadmoor and Bethlem hospitals during the nineteenth century. Bringing together considerations made in previous historiography, and addressing in tandem what others have only considered separately, is the focus that makes this paper unique in its scope. These deductions also shed light on the inaccuracies of many cultural depictions of psychiatric hospitals and others mental health institutions – whilst popular culture would lead us to believe that ‘the asylum’ was synonymous with poor living conditions, wrongful

incarceration and criminality, the conclusions that can be, and have been, drawn from archival evidence prove the inexactness of these interpretations.

Amie Bailey

Society News

Berkshire Archaeological Society

In April 2018, the Society undertook an excavation on a Roman site in Knowl Hill to investigate a field system and a large “S” shaped anomaly found in a geophysics survey. As you may remember April was very wet so we had trenches full of water and drilled a lot of bore holes which proved that the anomaly was probably a natural dump of material and that the field system had been in use until the late 19th century.

In May 2018, the Society published "Land of the Atrebates", a source book of Roman remains found in an around Berkshire. (see page 7)

In June and July, the Society organised visits to the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit and to this year's excavations at Silchester.

Members of the Society are looking forward to working on finds in Reading Museum store which are from excavations at Old Windsor led by the late Dr Brian Hope Taylor in the 1950s. This is a project sponsored by Reading Museum, Berkshire Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology.

Andrew Hutt

Berkshire Archaeology Research Group

During August 2017, in collaboration with the Boxford History Project, we took part in a further phase of the HLF-funded project at Boxford, supervised by Cotswold Archaeology. The Mud Hole Villa was originally discovered during drainage works in c. 1870, but not excavated until 2017. The site was investigated in 2014 by BARG, and our colleagues from Boxford, using gradiometer and resistivity surveys and surface finds mapping. These provided evidence for a main villa, a second large building, and other features. From the excavations in 2017 it appears that the layout of the villa consists of a single row of rooms with front and back corridors, with overall dimensions c. 26m x 13m. A trench in the north-west end found evidence that this area had been used as a bath suite, including a cold plunge pool lined with opus signinum. The trench at the south-east end revealed at first a small patch of in situ red tesserae. As the trench was extended this was found to be the border of a highly decorated and rare mosaic which is thought to date from the mid to late 4th century. The central panels of this mosaic depict the Greek hero Bellerophon riding the winged horse Pegasus, for which reason it has been called the Bellerophon Mosaic. A composite

photograph of this feature may be found at <https://sketchfab.com/giromondo>. Our own website <http://www.barg-online.org/> contains links to articles containing photographs and more information about this project.

During the summer, members of BARG enjoyed a highly informative tour of Abingdon, including the remaining buildings of the Abbey, conducted by Judy White of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society, and a visit to Dorchester on Thames to see the excavations at the Hempcroft allotments and to hear a comprehensive presentation by Paul Booth of Oxford Archaeology on the work at this site over recent years. Our meetings included a talk by John and Lindsay Mullaney on the Hidden Abbey Stones project (concerning stones from Reading Abbey dispersed at the time of the Reformation), a talk by Dr Steve Ford, Joint Director of Thames Valley Archaeological Services, on an excavation at St John's College, Oxford, which found a Neolithic henge, a medieval farm, and possibly victims of the St Brice's Day massacre.

Please contact Roger@PsrLtd.Demon.co.uk for further information about the activities of BARG.

Roger Sym

Eton Wick History Group

It is with much sadness that we report the death, in April, of Mr Frank Bond. In November 1992, Frank, with his friend the late John Denham, just wondered whether there might be any interest in a talk on the history of this village: they put a basic presentation together, tentatively booked the village hall, and waited to see if anyone would turn up (they were quite resigned to the possibility of there being no response); to their surprise and delight an audience of forty-seven people gathered. Following on from that November evening (almost twenty-six years ago), the Eton Wick History Group was formed and it continues to entertain and inform with its programme of eight events each year. Frank was approaching his 96th birthday when he died – three days prior to which he had attended a History Group committee meeting and, as ever, made a most valuable contribution to the discussions and planning; serendipitously, including providing a list of thirty-nine places of interest around the village: this information was to assist the local Council in providing a leaflet and noticeboards for the benefit of walkers and cyclists passing through the village when crossing from The Thames towpath to the Jubilee River (a flood alleviation channel) – the village sits between the two watercourses which are roughly to its north and south (and there are commons to the west and east). The provision of Frank's list also encouraged the committee to photograph the places to which he referred and to change the topic of its scheduled July event to 'The late Frank Bond's 'A Walk

Around Eton Wick” – a talk which was very well received by its audience.

Frank was born in Eton Wick in 1922; he was one of eight siblings. His father was the village greengrocer – whose ‘shop’ was a horse and cart. At age 15 Frank applied to join the RAF but was rejected – too young – so he went to train as a shoe repairer in Windsor. Three years later he went to work in a Slough aircraft factory and joined the Local Defence Volunteers (later known as the Home Guard) – he had already joined the ARP as a messenger boy. In 1941 he again volunteered for the RAF; this time he was accepted and he took a Flight Mechanic/Airframe course in South Wales; followed by time with an Operational Training Unit; and, after an Advanced Fitter’s course in 1944, and a short posting to a Lincolnshire Fighter Squadron, he was sent to Egypt, Aden and Masirah (an island in the Indian Ocean). In 1946 he was demobilised and returned to Eton Wick; he then had three jobs in industry: at Hawker Aircraft, Langley; then Rotascythes – the manufacturer of the first rotary lawnmowers; and lastly, Intertype – makers of compositing machines. In 1954 he joined his father and brother in the greengrocery business, which then operated from one of the parade of shops in the village; in time, they opened other shops in Langley, Holyport and Eton. Following the deaths first of his father and then, much later, his brother the business went into decline and in 1988 (with Frank then aged 66 and having suffered heart problems) the last of the shops was sold.

In Frank’s younger years he did much to serve the youth of the village as Youth Club Leader and then Chairman. In his later years i.e. 1972-2003 he was the Chairman of the Eton Wick Parish Churchyard Fund scheme; and, as you have heard above, in 1992 was an inaugurator of the Eton Wick History Group. Frank always supported local groups e.g. the ‘Over 60s’ club, lunch clubs etc. Frank never married “... never had the time.”!

Teresa Stanton

Project Purley

In April we welcomed Tony Strafford, suitably attired in Beefeater's uniform, to speak about ‘Unusual Prisoners of The Tower’. It was a highly entertaining talk which was extremely well received and the subject of much discussion afterwards over tea and coffee.

In May, the first of our summer trips took members and their guests to Salisbury, thankfully suitably distant to, and timed between the first and second poisoning incidents. There we enjoyed tours of the Cathedral, Mompesson House and Arundells, with lunch in between. June began with the latest visit by the Rain or Shine Theatre Company whose comedic performance of "Much Ado About Nothing" was set against a backdrop of 1918. This year’s proceeds were

donated to Launchpad, Reading, a charity which provides support for homeless people. A week later, the society's annual barbecue took place in the exquisite garden of our members Ben and Dorothy Viljoen. As usual it was well attended with good food and good company.

In July, our second summer trip was much closer to home – a walking tour of old Purley village. On what must have been the society's hottest ever visit, we didn't walk very far or very fast, but all of the group visited parts of the village that they hadn't seen before. The route included inside tours of four of the older cottages and houses in the old village, and took in a privately owned wildlife meadow and the site of the former railway track, now long gone, which carried gravel extractions in the 1920s. We finished with afternoon tea in two of the gardens. We are enormously grateful to all the house owners who generously shared their homes and properties with us, two of whom also provided the refreshments.

The autumn talks programme begins in September with Katie Amos talking about the history of Prospect Park Mansion, a property closely connected with the Liebenrood family of Purley. During October and early November, Purley is planning a series of events to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice. On 18 October, the society is delighted that Jane Burrell-Wood will be talking about "Poets of the Somme". Two weeks later, over the weekend of 3 and 4 November, Project Purley is putting on an exhibition as part of a larger commemoration event in the parish's 18th century Barn. The Barn, appropriately, was used as a remount depot during the First World War.

Catherine Sampson

History of Reading Society

The May talk was the History of Greyfriars Church in Reading. The speaker was Malcolm Summers a member of the congregation.

The Franciscan Order of Monks was founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209; they were commonly known as the 'Greyfriars' because of their grey robes or habit. The monks were required to live an austere life and go out into the streets to preach. The story of Greyfriars Church in Reading goes back more than 700 years to 1233 when King Henry III granted land to the Franciscan Order of Monks outside the town. In 1282 they rebuilt their monastic house at Friar Street where it stands today.

In 1536 with the closure of monastic houses ordered by King Henry VIII the monks were ejected from their church with little more than the clothes they wore. In 1540 the Crown sold the surrounding land and the building was rented to the town for use as its guildhall.

In the 17th century the building was converted to use as a 'poor house' which could accommodate 14 of the town's 'deserving poor'. During the siege of Reading in the English Civil Wars of the 1640s it was used as a barracks by both sides. By the close of the century the building had become the town's prison known as 'The Bridewell'.

By the 1840s a new prison had been built along Forbury Road and the Bridewell had become derelict. The vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Reading, the Reverend Richard Phelps, had the idea of restoring the old building for use as a parish church.

Work began on the restoration in 1862 and on 2nd December 1863 the Church of Greyfriars was re-consecrated by the Bishop of Oxford Samuel Wilberforce. Today Greyfriars is a lively Anglican church in the Diocese of Oxford.

In June Malcolm invited the Society's members to visit the church.

In July members of the Society visited the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) at Redlands Road, Reading. Our hosts for the evening were Kaye Gough and Caroline Piller both volunteers at the museum.

By the early 1950s the University of Reading's Department of Agriculture set out to establish at Reading a museum of the history of the countryside. It would house the national collection of all aspects of farming life. In 1952 the vice-chancellor of the University, J F Wolfenden, made a public appeal for funds and exhibits.

The museum's first home was at Whiteknights House on the Whiteknights Campus; John Higgs was the first keeper and the first exhibit was a cow bell donated by a student. Important early donations came from the writer H J Massingham; the 1951 Festival of Britain; and Lavinia Dugan Smith; she had used her collection to educate children.

In 1964 the museum moved to purpose-built accommodation on the campus and there it remained until 2004. That year the museum transferred to a former university hall of residence in Redlands Road known as St. Andrew's Hall; it opened to the public in 2005.

Today the collection comprises material that reflects the changing fortunes of the rural economy, items include: a steam powered threshing machine, horse-drawn wagons and modern diesel powered tractors. MERL has a large archive items include: agricultural produce catalogues, photographs and letters. The collection includes a number of artworks of particular interest is the Festival of Britain tapestry. At the end of the visit members were invited to view the library:

its collection of 75,000 books is the nation's foremost facility for the study of the history of agriculture.

The programme of talks starts again on 19th September the subject Amelia Dyer and the Baby Farm Murders. More information about future meetings and membership can be obtained from our website: www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk

Sean Duggan

Shinfield & District Local History Society

In May we welcomed back Colin Oakes, a London tour guide with a vast knowledge of many topics. This time Colin gave a talk on “VE Day”, very timely as our meeting coincided with VE (Victory in Europe) Day. He explained that, compared with the celebrations at the end of hostilities in World War 1, those to mark victory in Europe at the end of World War 2 were slightly muted, partly due to the continued fighting in the Far East. The surrender of Germany was accepted by Field Marshal Montgomery on 7th May 1945. Later that day the BBC announced that the war had ended and that the following day would be a public holiday. Winston Churchill made a radio broadcast at 3:00 pm on 8th May to announce formally that the war in Europe had ended.

For some weeks before the 8th May there had been a feeling that the war was coming to an end and people began stocking up with food, as far as rationing would allow, in readiness to celebrate. The Government relaxed rationing on red, white and blue bunting and street parties were hurriedly arranged throughout the country. The day began with a thunderstorm – coincidentally, there had been a thunderstorm on the first day of the war – but celebrations went ahead, tempered to an extent by thoughts of those lives lost.

Josef Stalin insisted on a separate ceremony to accept the German surrender on behalf of Russia. This did not take place until 8th May with the effect that Russians celebrate VE Day on 9th May.

As usual with Colin's talks this one was 45 minutes packed with information, delivered without any visual aids or notes.

Our June meeting was spent discussing Society business.

The speaker at our July meeting was Sheila Viner, former worker at The Mills Archive Trust, who gave an excellent illustrated presentation on “Watermills of the Berkshire Thames and Loddon”. At one time there were probably 180 watermills in Berkshire but most have long since vanished. Activities carried on at the various mills included grain milling, paper making, iron and copper

founding and cloth fulling. Sheila took us on a journey along the Thames and Loddon describing all the mills known to have existed on the way. She began at Old Windsor where excavations had revealed Norse and Saxon timbers and, below these, Roman remains of a mill. Our journey then continued upstream via the mills at Eton, Bray, Taplow, Ray Mill & Boulter's Lock, Cookham, Bisham Temple, Hurley, Marsh Mill (Henley), Sonning, Longbridge and Wargrave. We then turned in to the Loddon and proceeded via Twyford, Whistley, Sandford, Sindlesham, Arborfield and Sheepbridge Mill to Stanford End.

There is mystery surrounding a mill at Shinfield. One is mentioned in Domesday Book but no evidence of a mill has been found; could it be that the entry in Domesday Book refers to Arborfield Mill? Sheila would be pleased to hear of any suggestions that might help solve this mystery.

George Taylor

Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society

Our speaker in April was Philip Williams and his subject was OSS Station Victor. Little was known about what went on in Hurley in the way of wartime espionage activity, but thanks to Mr Williams' research this is now in the public domain; and what a fascinating story it is.

We had a very enjoyable visit to Mottisfont House and Garden on 21st April thanks to Audrey Curtis. Everything went like clockwork, and Doreen Scott would have been proud of Audrey's efforts.

On Sunday 13th May Graham Starkie arranged a Willow Walk, and Stephen Lloyd shared his extensive knowledge of our village's osier industry, local trees and the flora in Ruscombe Wood.

Our good friend from Wargrave, Peter Delaney, saved the day when our speaker in May had to cancel her visit for personal reasons. Peter gave us a very informative and well-researched insight into how the Piggott family had founded the Wargrave schools

Mr David Peacock came on June 11th and gave us a very interesting talk on the Tudor Cloth Trade and Jack Newbury's part in it.

The theme of osiers was kept going with a Stripping event at the Horticultural Store on 20th May. The original wrought iron brake stripped off the willow's bark to leave a glistening white rod. One of our members has used these rods to make a small willow basket.

Denise Wilkin

Wargrave Local History Society

In a late change to the published programme, the Wargrave Local History Society's May meeting was an illustrated presentation about Robert Piggott and

the Wargrave Schools, given by Society secretary, Peter Delaney. Robert Piggott a local farmer, was born in 1724, and died in August 1798, He had written his will in 1796, setting out how his schools, (probably founded by 1794) should be run. In 1862 a new building was opened, providing for 100 boys, and 100 girls. Over time numbers continued to rise, the infants moving to the former District School buildings in 1910, before the present infant school was built in the early 1960s, and the older pupils were moved to a new 'senior school', which opened in September 1940. Peter went on to review curriculum developments, and some of the extra-curricular activities that pupils – and staff – could participate in. All 3 schools still provide for the education of village – and beyond - children.

Ian Wheeler, the author of a recent book on Fairmile Hospital, at Cholsey, gave an illustrated talk on the history of this Victorian Asylum, in June. He reminded the audience that the meaning of asylum was a 'place of refuge', where those suffering from mental illness could be cared for. His family had worked at the hospital, and on discovering a photographic archive, he researched the history further, using documents at the Berkshire Record Office, and anecdotal evidence from former staff. He described the care and treatment provided for patients, as well as the development of the site - the historic buildings being adapted to desirable residences since the hospital closed in 2003. Ian also offers guided walks for those wishing to explore the site.

The Grade 1* listed Dorney Court was the location for a warm summer afternoon visit in July. The house has belonged to the same family – the Palmers – for almost 500 years, and is a wonderful example of a medieval Manor House – large parts of which date back to the Tudor period. The Great Hall was seemingly originally a large barn, later adapted as a living space, with wood panelling from Farnborough Abbey, in Kent, at the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. Upstairs, the bedrooms have Tudor barrel vaulted ceilings, with walls covered in 18th century hand-painted wallpaper. The house is well worth a visit if you have the opportunity. As is customary, the Society's visit ended with afternoon refreshments, served in the Dorney Court Kitchen Garden.

Our meetings take place at the Old Pavilion on the Recreation Ground, Wargrave, starting at 8pm, and more information can be found by visiting our website www.wargravehistory.org.uk/

Peter Delaney

Museums and Libraries

Berkshire Record Office

What new archives are now available at the BRO?

Recently catalogued items which may be of interest include the papers of the Fuller, Coleman and Pope families of Abingdon, 1681-1886 (D/ECM), and a trust fund established by Thomas Holdsworth, 1887-1896 (D/EX2618). Of interest for house history and architecture is a contract for Bear Place, Wargrave, 1784 (D/EX2544); an elevation drawing of the Albert Institute, Windsor, 1878 (D/EX2386) and slides for the redevelopment of Orts Road, Reading, 1977 (D/EX2494). The development of east Reading can be seen through the records of the Redlands Estate Company, 1836-1928 (R/D69) and we also have a series of rate books for Charlton, 1875-1922 (G/WT). Information on marriage portions, apprenticeships and education of the poor can be found in the Windsor Municipal Charities records (WI/Q). We have also catalogued records of the Archdeacon's Visitations of Berkshire (R/D80); Newbury Rural Deanery, 1970-1984 (D/RDN), the Vale of White Horse Rural Deanery, 1948-1969 (D/RDV) and the Ascot and Winkfield Manors, 1758-1921 (D/EX2650).

Ivone Turnbull Senior Archivist

Opportunities

- For Lectures, Visits and Exhibitions

We do not publish meetings of individual societies only public events

Heritage Open Days

This year our heritage is being celebrated across two weekends 6th-9th and 13th-16th September. Check with your local paper, museums and libraries for details of events in your area. See www.heritageopendays.org.uk

The Abingdon Water Turnpike Murder

Thursday, 6th September 2pm to 4pm

Part of series organised by the Centre for Heritage and Family History at Reading Central Library. Any queries or for more information contact the Booking Administrator.

Mark Davies recounts events of 1787, when an elderly man was robbed and killed after leaving Abingdon's Michaelmas Fair. Investigations uncovered a wide-ranging criminal network, involving marriage alliances and support by some of the town's leading citizens. Tea and cake provided too. Tickets £5 (BFHS Members £4) and booking advisable

Night in the Ruins

6.45 pm September 8th

Spend a night in the Reading Abbey Ruins and as the light fades see it illuminated with an atmospheric performance by designer Stuart Melrose. Live music to entertain you by Flamingo and special guests.

Tickets £15 from Reading Museum box office tel 0118 960 6060

Workshop on Parish Registers

Saturday, 29th September 11.00-1.00 pm - see 6th September

Catherine Sampson leads a journey into a key resource for research, especially before the arrival of civil registration and censuses. Understand what registers can provide, where to find them, how Church of England and nonconformist registers differ, and how to interpret them. Also the benefits and pitfalls of indexes and transcripts. Tickets £10 (Members £9) Places are limited, early booking recommended. Free parking for those attending.

Tracks to the Trenches

Thursday, 11th October from 2.00-4.00 Pm (see 6th September)

Mike Hurst gives an affecting account of railway activities in England and France during the Great War. Railways permitted the mass movements of munitions, equipment and men – and the harrowing resulting casualties, many of whom were taken through the Thames Valley. Tea and cake provided too. Tickets £5 (Members £4) and booking advisable.

River Thames Crime Walk

Saturday, 13th October from 2.00-3.00 pm (see 6th September)

A short crime walk with Angela Buckley, taking in key locations around the river and surrounding roads in Caversham. Tickets £5 (Members £4) Places limited

Smugglers, Scientists or Super-Heroes

Who will you find in your family tree? (A Children's Workshop)

Monday, 22nd October from 11.00-1.00 pm at Reading Central Library

Margaret Crook and Vicki Chesterman invite all super-sleuths aged 5-11 years old to take part during half term in a range of fun and stimulating activities designed to help them discover more about their families' histories. An adult must accompany children. £12 for a family ticket (1 adult and up to 2 children) (Members £10.60) additional child £3 (£2.70). Includes tea, coffee or juice. Places are limited and pre- booking is required.

Hidden History of Reading's War Graves

Thursday, 25th October from 2.00-4.00 pm (see 6th September)

The stories of Reading's war graves, and the men and women they honour, meticulously researched and brought to life by Liz Tait, founder of the Reading Remembrance Trust. Learn about Private William Lewington, tragically killed in a training accident at Maidenhead, and Agnes Maud Russell,

who served as a nurse in Malta treating soldiers evacuated from the Dardanelles campaign. Tea and cake provided too. Tickets £5 (Members £4) and booking advisable.

Celebrating the Armistice

3rd and 4th November at The Barn, Goosecroft Lane, Purley on Thames

Exhibition celebrating the Armistice and the effect of the First World War on Purley and around. Also talks and stands by various societies with a series of talks and workshops. Admission free

The end of the First World War and its aftermath

Thursday, 8th November from 2.00-4.00 pm (see 6th September)

Local historian, Mike Cooper explains how and why the war ended, the peace treaties, and what followed for Europe and countries as far afield as Samoa and Tanzania. Tea and cake provided too. Tickets £5 (Members £4) and booking advisable.

Medals and decorations of the First World War

Thursday, 22nd November from 2.00-4.00 pm (see 6th September)

Known to many as Reading Football Club's historian, David Downs is also passionate about medals and awards. He will give a fascinating insight into the background of medals and awards, featuring many from his collection, and will share the stories behind them. Those attending can bring medals to the talk for David's advice. Tea and cake provided too. Tickets £5 (Members £4) and booking advisable.

Putting Berkshire on the Map

Thursday, 6th December from 2.00-4.00 pm - (see 6th September)

If you enjoy maps – do not miss this talk! John Leighfield CBE looks at the history of mapping with particular emphasis on Berkshire, beginning with Matthew Paris' map of Britain c.1250 and ending with Google and modern mapping. There will be an opportunity to view a selection of maps afterwards. Tea and cake provided too. Tickets £5 (Members £4) and booking advisable.

And Finally

The Armistice

This year is the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War and is being celebrated both locally and nationally - some of the local events have been mentioned above but there is a national framework for Sunday 11th November 1918 which will be followed by many local communities:-

06:00 -10:00 - Bagpipes at dawn

10:00 -1300 - Remembrance Day parades and services

18:55 - Battles over - last post played

19:00 - Battles over - beacons lit

19:05 - Battles over - ringing out for peace - church bells pealing

History Societies

Arborfield Local History Society, Secretary Rosemary King [roking@henforyd.plus.com see www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk]

Berkshire Archaeological Society, Anne Harrison, [secretary@berksarch.co.uk] [www.berksarch.co.uk]

Berkshire Archaeology Research Group, Richard Firth, The Bailiff's Cottage, Barkham, Wokingham RG41 4TG, [tel 0118 978 7434]

Berkshire Family History Society, Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ, [tel 0118 950 9553] [www.berksfhs.org.uk]

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

Berkshire Record Society, Secretary Margaret Simons, 80 Reeds Ave, Earley, Reading RG6 5SR, [margaretsimons@hotmail.co.uk]

Blewbury Local History Group, Audrey Long, Spring Cottage, Church Road, Blewbury, Oxon, OX11 9PY, tel 01235 850427 [audrey.long@waitrose.com]

Bracknell & District Local Historical Society, Mrs Jane Moss, 31 Huntsman's Meadow, Ascot, SL5 7PF, [MossSandalwood@aol.com]

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

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

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

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

Eton Wick Local History Group, Teresa Stanton, 35 Eton Wick Road, Eton Wick, Windsor, SL4 6LU, tel 01753 860591 [teresams35@virginmedia.com] [www.etonwickhistory.co.uk]

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

Goring Gap Local History Society, Janet Hurst, 6 Nun's Acre, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 9BE, tel 01491 871022, [goringgaphistory@gmail.com] [www.goringgaphistory.org.uk]

The Hanneys Local History Society, Ann Fewins, 'Lilac Cottage', East Hanney, Wantage, OX12 0HX, tel 01235 868372, [annfewins@beeb.net]

The History of Reading Society, Vicki Chesterman, 7 Norman Road, Caversham RG4 5JN,, [vickichesterman@yahoo.co.uk] [www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk]

Hungerford Historical Association, Secretary Mark Martin, 23 Fairview Road, Hungerford RG17 0BP, Tel: 01488 682932, [mandm.martin21@btinternet.com], [www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk]

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

Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society, Brian Madge, 11 Boulters Court, Maidenhead, SL6 8TH, [bandgmadge@btinternet.com]

Mid Thames Archaeological & Historical Society, Jane Wall, 143 Vine Road, Stoke Poges, SL2 4DH, [sec.mtahs@yahoo.co.uk]

Mortimer Local History Group, Mrs Janet Munson, The Laurels, Ravensworth Road, Mortimer, RG7 3UD, [munsonsinmortimer@yahoo.co.uk]

Newbury District Field Club, Jane Burrell, Walnut Tree Cottage, Oxford Rd, Donnington, Newbury, RG14 3AG [tel 01635-46497] [secretary@ndfc.org.uk][www.ndfc.org.uk]

Oxfordshire Family History Society, Chairman:Malcolm Austen. Secretary: Angie Trueman c/o Oxfordshire History Centre, St Luke's Church, Temple Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2HT, [email: secretary@ofhs.org.uk or chairman@ofhs.org.uk]

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

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

Shinfield & District Local History Society, Eileen Taylor, Long Meadow, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Berks, RG7 1TB. tel 0118 9883580. Reporter George Taylor [george.taylor2-9@btinternet.com]

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

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

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

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

Thatcham Historical Society, Mr P Laverack, 2 Ashworth Drive, Thatcham, Berks, RG19 3YU, tel 01635 863536, [enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk], [www.thatchamhistorical-society.org.uk]

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

Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society, Jean Poulter, 17 Weir Pool Court, Silk Lane, Twyford RG10 9GY, [jeanpoulter@tiscali.co.uk], reporter Denise Wilkin

Wargrave Local History Society, Peter Delaney, 6 East View Close, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8BJ, tel 0118 940 3121, [secretary@wargravehistory.co.uk], [www.wargravehistory.org.uk]

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

Friends of Windsor and Royal Borough Museum, Courtney Rudge c/o Windsor Library, Bachelor's Acre, Windsor SL4 1ER , [www.friendsofwindsormuseum.org.uk]

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

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

Your website url (if you have one)

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

e-mail changes and corrections to membership@blha.org.uk

Archives, Libraries & Museums

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

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

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

Bracknell Library Local Studies, Town Square, Bracknell, RG12 1BH, tel 01344 423149
[bracknell.library@bracknell-forest.gov.uk]

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

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

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

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

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

Newbury Reference Library, Newbury Library, The Wharf, Newbury, RG14 5AU, tel 01635 519900

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

Reading Central Library, Local Studies Librarian, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ, tel 0118 9015965

Reading Museum Services, The Curator, Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading, RG1 1QH, tel 0118 9399800, [www.readingmuseum.org.uk]

Reading University Library, Kate Devaney, PO box 223, Whiteknights, RG6 6AE, tel 0118 378 8785, [k.r.devaney@reading.ac.uk]

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

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

Windsor & Royal Borough Museum, The Guildhall, Windsor, SL4 1LR, tel 01628 685686,
[museum.collections@rbwm.gov.uk], [www.windsor.gov.uk]

Slough Library Local Studies, Slough Library, The Curve, William St, Slough, SL1 1XY, tel 01753 875533, [library@slough.gov.uk] [www.slough.gov.uk/libraries]

Slough Museum, The Curve, William St, Slough, SL1 1XY, tel 01753 875533,
[info@sloughmuseum.co.uk]

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

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

Berkshire Local History Association

Registered Charity 1097355

President: Joan Dils

Vice-President Prof E J T Collins

Officers

Chairman David Cliffe

1 Priest Hill, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RZ

tel: 0118-948-3354,

e-mail chairman@blha.org.uk

Treasurer Dr David Lewis ACA

5 Gloucester Place, Windsor, Berks SL4 2AJ

tel 01753-864935,

e-mail treasurer @blha.org.uk

Secretary Carol Dixon-Smith

90 Gallys Road, Windsor SL4 5QN

Tel 01753 474836

e-mail secretary@blha.org.uk

Committee Members

Dr Jonathan Brown (Journal Editor)

John Chapman (Newsletter Editor)

Dave Osborne (Web Designer)

Dr Margaret Simons (Newsletter Distributor)

Elias Kupfermann

Ann Smith (Membership Secretary)

Membership

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

We have three classes of membership

Institutional - for institutions, including libraries, archives and museums

Society - for local history and similar societies

Individual - for individuals or couples living at the same address

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Membership fees

The rates for 2018 are:-

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

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

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

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Next Newsletter

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

The DEADLINE for copy is 15th December 2018 - preferably we would like to have it much earlier. To avoid some of the problems we have had, could you please address e-mails to newsletter@blha.org.uk and copy it to john.chapman458@gmail.com