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# *BERKSHIRE* *Old and New*



Berkshire Local History Association

No 1 1983





## Berkshire Local History Association

THE BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION was formed in 1976. Membership is open to individuals, societies and corporate bodies such as libraries, schools, colleges, etc. The Association covers the whole area of Berkshire, pre- and post-1974.

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*Berkshire Old and New* is published annually.

The journal can also be bought through local bookshops and at Association and member society meetings.

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## BERKSHIRE OLD AND NEW

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We would like to acknowledge with grateful thanks the typing by Mrs Miriam Cox.



Robertson's Map of the Road to Bath, 1793

## Newsletter

It gives me great pleasure to be able to provide the editorial for the first issue of *Berkshire Old and New* - the Royal County's own local history journal.



With the phenomenal increase in the number of people taking an active or passive interest in the various facets of local history, there is little doubt that the time is ripe for the launch of a publication of this nature. In this journal we aim to publish what we like to think of as 'good local history', that is history which is accurate and well researched yet interesting and enjoyable to read. Jean Debney's article - among others - is an

excellent example.

Local historians also need more help on where to find records, sources of information, etc., and they also need to know what is happening throughout the county. This we have tried to give you while at the same time providing a vehicle for pieces of research which might not find publication elsewhere, whether they be from local or family historians, research students, professionals or amateurs.

I am content that we have achieved these objects and at the same time maintained a reasonable balance between the popular and academic approach in the contributions which appear in this first issue. As you will see as you read the journal, articles have been received from all parts of the county - from Shrivenham in the west to Windsor in the east - and they range in type from the humerous to the factual survey.

*Berkshire Old and New* is published by the Berkshire Local History Association, but articles for consideration for future issues are welcome from both members and non-members. Please contact a member of the BLHA committee or the editorial committee for further information.

Ken Goodley  
Honorary Editor



# A Shocking Incident at Theale

'A few days ago a young woman, about 20 years of age, fell from the shafts of a loaded broad wheeled wagon, and one of the wheels having passed over her thigh crushed it in a most frightful manner. She was taken to Mr Sabine's, the resident surgeon, at about one o'clock in the morning, when, with the assistance of the Overseers, whose prompt attendance at that early hour deserves the greatest praise, she was conveyed to an apartment at the Crown, where she now lies in great agony. Notwithstanding her serious condition, the Surgeon entertains hopes of being able to preserve the limb.'

*The Reading Mercury*  
Monday, 2 November 1835

\*\*\*\*\*

Late one cold October evening, Robert Bird was driving his loaded wagon along the London Road towards Reading. He was a wagoner to Job Hawkins of Marlborough, a common carrier from that place to London. In order to comply with the law concerning traffic on the turnpike road, the wagon had broad wheels with a minimum width of 9"; these were thought less likely to cause deep ruts, but in fact they tended to grind the roads to powder. Bird was travelling by night, probably to shorten his journey time: it seems likely that his average speed would be about 2 - 3 miles per hour, in which case he would cover the 36 miles to Marlborough in something less than 18 hours.



Stage Wagon

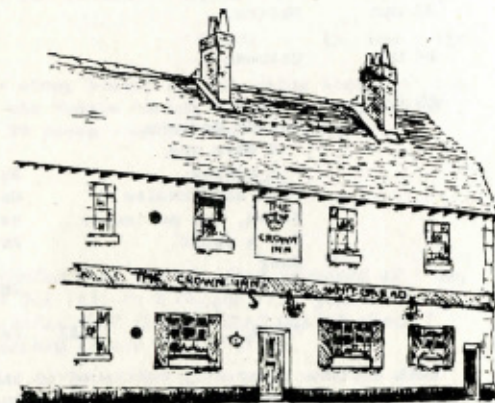
When the wagon neared the Marquis of Granby, Robert Bird met up with four Irish travellers, two men and two women, one of whom was called Mary Briant. The two men rode in the wagon, but for some reason the women chose to walk alongside.

There were many Irish immigrants in England at this time, as conditions were very bad in Ireland; when the potato harvest failed, as it

did in 1822, many died of starvation. Those who could come to England in search of work and there was plenty for those who would accept low wages. Gangs of Irish labourers helped to harvest the corn in southern England and in the autumn they struggled to return home. Newcomers to English parishes were not entitled to Poor Relief, but it was often cheaper, and more practical, for authorities to wink at the law when an Irish labourer became destitute: and so it was for Mary Briant.

Walking along the Bath Road in the early hours of Thursday morning, Mary presumably became tired because three times she climbed on to the shaft of the wagon and three times she was removed by the wagoner, who naturally considered it unsafe for her to ride there. But, unknown to him, she climbed on to the shaft again and as the wagon was passing through Theale, and about 300 yards from the Crown Inn, there was a sudden cry! Mary was found with her leg trapped under the fore wheel of the wagon and the horses had to be backed off to free her. She was badly injured.

The wagon continued on its journey to Marlborough and two Overseers, Mr Draper and Mr Laurence, ordered Mary's two male companions to carry her to the doctor's house. Thomas Sabine, the resident surgeon in Theale, had earlier that year applied for the post of Medical Officer to the newly formed Bradfield Union; but he was a "disappointed candidate", the position having been offered to and accepted by another surgeon, Edward May.



Crown Inn, Theale

From Mr Sabine's house, the party was directed to the Crown Inn where a room was engaged for Mary. Mr Sabine immediately wrote a letter to Samuel Lucas, the Relieving Officer in Tilehurst informing him of the accident. It says something for the conditions in those days, that the accident happened at 2 am and Mr Lucas arrived in Theale just one hour later. (1) By that time, Mr Sabine had reduced the nasty compound fracture in Mary's right thigh and done all he could to make her comfortable. A nurse was found to look after her and in the morning the Board of Guardians met and approved the payment of all expenses for this casual pauper. But they could not countenance Mr Sabine continuing to look after the case when they had their own doctor, Mr May, whom they ordered to take over.

Then followed some acrimonious wrangling. Mr Sabine received a letter from the Guardians informing him of the 'order for the immediate attendance of Mr May the Medical Officer of the District' and that his (Mr Sabine's) attendance, should 'be discontinued after this notice, Thursday morning, 22nd October 1835'. Mr May was evidently discreet and tried to avoid a row: he 'thought it best to leave the case in Mr Sabine's hands' as his attendance was apparently ordered by a Magistrate. The Guardians refused this gesture and stated that they would only accept reports from Mr May and any further attendance by Mr Sabine would be gratuitous. Thereupon, the hardpressed Mr Sabine threatened to take 'steps to obtain his legal fees' and refused to give up the case.

While all this arguing continued, Mary Briant lay in her room at



the Crown attended by a nurse. Elizabeth Strange, the landlady of the Crown, sent in her bills to the Guardians, who paid up promptly and uncomplainingly:

22 Oct	Oatmeal	4d
	Mutton	8d
	Flannel	10d
	Bran	6d
23 Oct	Mutton	8½d
24 Oct	Oatmeal	4d
25 Oct	Mutton	7d
	Use of Bedroom	
	5 days and	
	5 nights	5s 0d
	Fire and Candles	6s 0d
	Bread, tea and sugar	4s 0d
	For a shift	2s 0d
	Beer	6d
	For washing	2s 0d
	TOTAL	£1 3s 5½d

Both doctors apparently continued to take an interest in the case and for the first fourteen days Mary continued to make good progress. Mr Sabine visited every day and Mr May issued a 'medical order' that she be supplied with wine and ale; she also received some gin. But to no avail. The nurse engaged to sit with her (she received 5s for sitting up 10 nights with the patient) was not very competent. When Mary's breathing became laboured she failed to report the change to Mr Sabine as she did not consider the 'symptoms at all of a serious nature'. Two days later, during the night of Saturday, 7th November, Mary unfortunately died of a 'violent inflammation of the lungs', said to have been 'brought on by drafts (sic) and exposure to the cold'.

A Post Mortem examination was ordered which was carried out by Mr May in the presence of Mr Sabine. The fracture in the right leg was found to be quite healthy, but the lungs were 'in a very diseased state'. Before Mary could be buried, Mr J May, the Coroner, was sent for from Reading and an inquest was held in a room at the Crown five days later. The driver of the wagon, Robert Bird, was there to give evidence, as were the two doctors, Mr Sabine and Mr May. The Reading Mercury faithfully reported that 'the jury were unanimously of the opinion that the woman died from inflammation of the lungs and returned a verdict accordingly'. There was no sign of Mary's travelling companions.

At a time when paupers were expected to pay for their own funerals, however destitute they might be, £1 2s 6d was allowed for Mary's funeral expenses. The Guardians also paid the following bill to the landlady of the Crown:

½ lb candles	2½d	3 pts beer		6d
½ lb sugar	3½d	Wine	3s	4d
½ lb butter	3½d	Bran for coffin	1s	0d
1 oz tea	3½d	Washing, blankets, etc.	2s	0d
1 qtr bread	2½d	Gin		6d
For use of Bed and Room for 10 days and nights . . . . .				10s
For Fires . . . . .				10s
For a Room and Fire for the Coroner's Inquest . . . . .				5s
TOTAL				£1 13s 7½d

The final detail in the story behind the 'Shocking Accident' can be found in this entry from the Theale Parish Register: 'Buried 12 Nov 1835 - Mary BRIANT aged 20 years - on her way to Ireland'.

Jean Debney

# Reference

- (1) The Reading Mercury reported that the accident happened at 1 am; but the letter dated 28 Oct 1835 to R Gulson, Esq from Thos. Stevens (see G/B.5/1) states that the accident was at about 2 o'clock and Mr Lucas reached Theale at 3 o'clock.

# Sources of Information

Bradfield Union - Administration:

Minutes of Board of Guardians, Vol. 1 [1835] Ref: BR0. G/B.1/1  
Letter Book Vol. 1 (1835) Ref: BR0. G/B.5/1

Theale Parish Register - Burials

Ref: BR0. D/P 132B/1

Reading Mercury - 2 November 1835 }  
- 16 November 1835 }

Reading Ref. Library

For information re Irish immigrants in England, see:

The People's England by Alan Ereira (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981)  
pp. 180 - 189.



# The Country Banks of Berkshire



Messrs Simonds & Co Banking House

At the time of the Industrial Revolution, the country banker was a major source of finance. It is probable that in the first decade of the 19th century, this source provided about half of the country's total currency requirements and therefore most of the investment capital outside London.

Country bankers generally, tended to be members of families already prominent in industry and commerce and Berkshire's bankers were no

exception. As in many other predominantly rural rather than urban areas, the brewing families were well to the fore. For generations the more important brewers had been in the habit of advancing money on mortgage - particularly to publicans - and also providing their products on credit. This gave them a source of income from interest paid by successful landlords and the option of foreclosing on mortgages or bankrupting those who failed. Such action frequently enabled the brewer to acquire an additional tied outlet for his beer - an important consideration at any time, but particularly so prior to the Beer House Act of 1830 when additional licenses were hard to obtain.

The brewer had another advantage. He had some six months in which to pay his malt tax and thus often had government money in hand. It was therefore the logical step for a brewer to start a bank and issue his own banknotes, as this created still more credit to be lent on interest terms and further increase his money supply.

Having said this, it must be pointed out that not all the Berkshire bankers were brewers, nor did all the breweries operate banks, but more than half of the banks which existed in the county during the period 1780 - 1913 did have connections with the trade with one or more partners being members of brewing families. Sometimes brewers in a town would become partners in a banking venture occasionally joining forces with one or two other traders. This gave the bank a wider acceptance in its area and greater apparent creditworthiness.

The first bank in Newbury was the NEWBURY OLD BANK, founded about 1780 by Messrs Vincent, Bailey and Vincent. By 1788, the partners were Vincent and Withers and by 1815, Vincent, Tanner, Barnes and Hancock. On 9th December of that year a robbery took place at the bank's premises, the gang escaping with a considerable sum of money. It was a well organised raid. The 9th was a Saturday and by Monday, 11th, the robbers had changed £850 in Newbury Old bank notes at Abingdon. They left there

by post chaise at 1 pm and were dropped at Oxford. Wasting no time, they changed conveyance and headed north. On Tuesday they were in Birmingham where they changed more notes. The haul included Bank of England notes and payment on these was stopped. None of the money seems to have been recovered despite a £500 reward and the creditors of the Old Bank met on the following Friday. The firm struggled on for another year, but was finally declared bankrupt on 15th December 1816.

The second bank - THE NEWBURY BANK - was founded in 1791 by Toomer (an ironmonger), Bunney (a surgeon), Slocock (a brewer) and a Mr King. This bank continued in business for 104 years with various changes of partnership until 1895, when as Slocock, Matthews, Southby and Slocock it was taken over by Capital and Counties Bank Ltd. This bank in turn was absorbed by Lloyds in 1918. The Slocock family were for many generations Newbury's principal brewers having owned West Mills Brewery since it was built in 1698 and having operated in the town for 38 years before that.

The third Newbury bank, a short lived affair, was the NEWBURY NEW BANK. Founded by Thomas Fuller and William Graham in 1813, it ceased business (though still solvent) in 1821.

Some confusion has arisen over the years due to the use of the word 'OLD' by both the first and second of these banks. In 1791, when the Newbury Bank was formed, Vincent and Withers decided to call their business the Newbury Old Bank to emphasise their earlier establishment. Once they failed, following the robbery, the Newbury Bank added the word 'old' to their title to distinguish themselves from the New Bank, which, as we have seen, was in existence by this time. Confusion, however, continued down the years and as the past came blurred, so the confusion became worse. In its issue of 17th March 1932, the Newbury Weekly News mentioned that the Old Bank was founded in 1791. As we have seen this was the second bank. In the next issue it was reported that 'an old Newbury resident has brought in notes to show that the Newbury Bank existed before 1791. Each is dated 1788 ... and the partners' names are given as Vincent and Withers'. Clearly these were notes from the original Old Bank and some of the misunderstanding seems to have occurred because of the failure to appreciate that until the second bank was founded there was no reason for the first one to include 'old' in its title. The same newspaper mentioned that a 'Mr G J Watts of Donnington had sent to the Newbury Weekly News the original copper plates from which the notes were printed, the partners' names being Fuller and Graham'. These, of course, belonged to the short lived New Bank.

If Mr Watts or his successors knows the present whereabouts of the plates or if any readers are in possession of any Newbury bank notes, I should be very interested to hear from them with a view to obtaining photographs for future reproduction.

The earliest of the Reading banks was founded in 1788 at premises in Friar Street by Messrs Marsh, Deane, Westbrook and Deane; the Deane family then being owners of the Castle Brewery. The former brewers' house still exists (now occupied by a firm of solicitors) almost opposite the Sun Inn, Castle Street. The bank fell on hard times in common with many others around the middle of the second decade of the 19th century, partly due to problems arising from the war with France. Although it was well thought of locally, the bank, then trading as Marsh, Deane and Co, Reading Bank and with a branch at Wallingford, failed to open on





Marsh Deane and Co £1 Note - Issued 1814

6th January 1815 and announced that it was unable to meet its liabilities. The creditors received a dividend of 3s 4d in the £ in July of that year and other small dividends later. The failure of this old established banking house caused a general panic in the town leading to adverse comment in a poster which appeared on walls in Reading shortly after the bank closed its doors. Prompted by the comparatively high cost and low quality of their staple beverage at that time and the failure of this local institution the populace of Reading summarised their frustration in the following terms:

'Wanted immediately by the British Public, some honest brewers who will serve them with wholesome beverage for a fair profit. Such men may depend upon receiving encouragement from a people that are always more ready to reward than punish, but who will no longer submit to the extortion of their servants who have long called for condign punishment.

No Country Bankers need apply having forfeited all claim to confidence.

NB Fine Barley 25s per quarter.  
Bad Beer 6d per pot.'

The second Reading bank was founded soon after Marsh, Deane and Co, though the actual year varies from source to source. *Berkshire Past and Present* puts the date at 1789, whilst *The History of Barclays Bank* claims that the foundation was in October 1791. Personally I am prepared to accept the date shown on later bank notes which read, 'Established 1790' and this is also the date given in Guilding's *Notable Events in the Municipal History of Reading*.

All sources agree, however, that the founders were Robert Micklem (a draper), John Stephens (brewer at Mill Lane Brewery), William Blackall Simonds (brewer at Bridge Street Brewery) and Robert Harris (a mealman). The capital was £4,000 and the bank had its premises at 1 - 2 Market Place. At sometime in the first quarter of the century, Micklem dropped out of the partnership and the bank's name changed to Stephens, Simonds and Harris.

On the 30th July 1814, this partnership was dissolved. John Stephens was elderly and not in good health, while Simonds desired to leave it to start his own bank. In fact he was on the verge of giving up the brewery entirely in favour of banking and it was only the insistence of his elder son that they could make the brewery pay which changed his mind. How different the brewery history of the Reading area might have been if Simonds had given up brewing at that time.

W B Simonds did, in fact, start his own bank on the day after the dissolution of the partnership. He took into the business his younger son, Henry, two cousins, John and Charles Simonds, and a Mr Nicholson. The firm traded as Simonds, Nicholson, J and C Simonds and Co, with premises just round the corner in King Street. Thus was born the third Reading bank.

In 1816 a further change took place when W B Simonds and Mr Nicholson left the partnership, the firm continuing under John, Charles and Henry Simonds until 1839 when the latter retired. Again the name was changed and now the firm became known as John Simonds, Charles Simonds and Co, Reading Bank, retaining this name until it was taken over by Barclays and Co in 1913. The brass plate bearing this title is displayed outside the recently rebuilt Barclays Bank premises, built over the site where the original Simonds' Bank was founded.

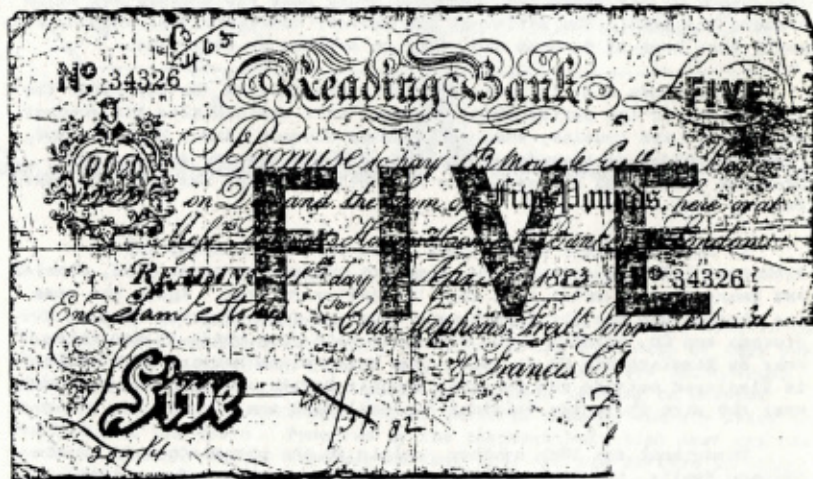
Throughout the 19th century, solely in the proprietorship of the Simonds family, the bank steadily grew in importance and prestige. The first branch was opened in Wokingham in 1816 and the second at Henley in 1821, following the bankruptcy of George Hewett, formerly a banker in that town. By the time it became part of Barclays, the bank had 21 branches.

The merger did not, however, herald the extinction of the family as bankers. In 1923, John Hayes Simonds was appointed director of Barclays Bank Ltd, and in 1926 local directors included John Simonds (the third) who, since 1870 had also been Reading's Borough Treasurer, and for many years he was also Honorary Treasurer and President of the Garth Hunt Club. Others were William Simonds, John Hayes Simonds and son, Maurice Hayes Simonds. Although the bank was always totally independent of Simonds Brewery, several of the various principals were also partners (and later, directors) of the brewery.



Meanwhile, after the dissolution of the 1814 partnership, Harris took William Stephens into his business. William was John's son and until 1814 he had been learning the banking business, operating a malt house and assisting his father in the brewing trade. John's death in the October left William with quite a little empire - a half share of the bank, two malthouses, the reputable Mill Lane Brewery in Reading (described some eight years earlier as 'by far the largest Reading brewery with an annual output of 25,000 barrels') and the Aldermaston Brewery some ten miles away.

In 1815 Robert Harris retired and William Stephens took his brother into the partnership together with Harris' son, adopting the style, Stephens, Harris and Stephens, Reading Bank. They were, therefore, the first to adopt the 'Reading Bank' tag, which the recently defunct Marsh, Deane and Co had used. By 1841 Harris junior had retired and the Stephens brothers looked around for another partner. They found one in William Blandy to whom, with John Willats, William Stephens had sold the Mill Lane Brewery estate in 1831. This bank had a somewhat larger note issue than Simonds' Bank, the 1844 figures being £43,271 and £37,519 respectively.



Stephens, Blandy and Co £5 Note - Issued 1883

Blandy, of course, came of a family which was - and still is today - prominent in the legal field. Various members of the Blandy and Stephens families controlled the business - now trading as Stephens, Blandy and Co - until it was taken over by Lloyds Bank in 1889. Lloyds also still operate from rebuilt premises on the original site. Branches were opened in 1824 at Maidenhead, Marlow in 1869 and Bracknell in 1872.

It is, perhaps, of interest to note that as well as being prominent in the fields of law, banking and brewing, the Blandy family tried their hands at newspaper publishing. The Berkshire Chronicle was founded on

29th January 1825 by solicitor, John Jackson Blandy, brewer, Thomas Garrard (of the Friar Street Brewery) and others. Blandy disposed of his interest in the Chronicle in 1830 and from then until his death at the age of 72, was Reading's Town Clerk.

Finally, if any readers have any Simonds bank notes or cheques I would appreciate the opportunity to obtain photographs or photocopies.

Kenneth Goodley

## Project Co-ordination

In recent years there has been a great upsurge of interest in both local and family history leading to many projects being undertaken. This in itself is splendid news, and the results of some of these studies are causing a review of national history. Moreover, whereas in the past interest in local history was mainly confined to local residents, today many more people are interested in the history of localities in which they do not live. This is particularly true of family historians, who, having dug up their roots, often turn to the history of the patch of earth in which they grew.

The Berkshire Family History Society is engaged at present in two countywide projects of value to both local and family historians - the surveying of all local graveyards and cemeteries, and indexing and transcribing the 1851 census. However, it is very easy for duplication of effort to take place and at least one family history group has surveyed a churchyard which had already been recorded by a local history group. It is, therefore, vitally important to have a co-ordinating body keeping a full and up-to-date list of all projects, in progress and completed to prevent waste of effort. The Berkshire Family History Society and the Berkshire Local History Association have joined forces to compile and maintain such lists. The first of these is the list of churchyard surveys given opposite. We should be glad to hear of any surveys not included.

A full churchyard survey includes a plan showing the location of all graves and other memorials, including those within the church, a careful copy of the monumental inscription (MI), or as much as is legible, and the details of the type, material and condition of each memorial, accompanied where possible by photographs. The MI's are of particular importance and, if time is limited, recording the inscriptions only will help preserve the information they contain. This is being rapidly lost through decay, vandalism and churchyard clearance. Such information is of interest to both family and local historians. Not only does it supplement the church burial register,



# LIST OF PARISHES WHICH HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY OR FULLY SURVEYED

Unless otherwise stated the records are those for the monumental inscription of the parish church and its churchyard.

## 1. Old Berkshire (including the northern area now in Oxfordshire)

Abingdon St Helen	P	Hatford	R, P
Appleton	R	Hendred, East	R
Arborfield	R	Hinksey, North	P
Ardington	R	Hinksey, South	P
Ashbury	R	Hungerford	P
Aston Tirrold	R	Hurst	R
Aston Upthorpe	R	Ilseley, West	R
Avington	R, P	Inkpen	R
Barkham	R	Kingston Lisle	P
Baulking	R	Letcombe Bassett	R
Besselsleigh	R	Littlewick	R
Binfield	R	Lockinge, East	R
Bisham	R	Longcot	R
Blewbury	R	Longworth	P
Bracknell	R	Lyford	R, P
Bray, Touchen End	B	Maidenhead	R
Brightwell	R	Moreton, North	R
Buscot	R	Moreton, North, Primitive Methodist	R
Catmore	R	Moreton, South	R
Caversham	R	Moulsford	R
Chaddleworth	R	Newbury, Newtown Road	P
Challow, East	R	Cemetary	P
Challow, West	R	New Windsor, St John the Baptist	R
Charney Bassett	R, P	New Windsor, Bachelors Acre	W
Chieveley	R	Graveyard	P
Childrey	R	Old Windsor	P
Chilton	R	Padworth	R
Cholsey	R	Purley	R, P
Clewer	R	Pusey	P
Combe	R	Radley	P
Compton Beauchamp	R, P	Reading St Gile	R
Cookham	R	St Lawrence	B, R
Coxwell, Great	R	St Mary	R
Coxwell, Little	R	Remenham	R
Cumnor	R, P	Ruscombe	R, P
Denchworth	R, P	Shefford, East	R
Didcot	R	Shefford, Great	R
Eastbury	R	Shellingford	R, P
Easthampstead	P	Shinfield	R
Eaton Hastings	P	Shottesbrook	R
Eddington	B	Sotwell	R
Enborne	R	Sparsholt	R
Faringdon, Great	R	Speenhamland	W
Goosey	R, P	Stanford Dingley	R
Grazeley	R	Stanford-in-the-Vale	P, R
Grove	R	Stratfield Mortimer	R
Hagbourne, East	R	Sulham	R
Hampstead Norris	R	Sunningwell	R
Hampstead Marshall	R		
Hannay, West	R, P		

Swallowfield	R	Wallingford Baptist	R
Thatcham	R	Independent	R
Tidmarsh	R	Particular	
Tilehurst	P	Baptist	R
Tubney	R	Wesleyan	R
Twyford	R, P	Wantage	R
Uffington	R	Wantage Municipal Cemetary	P
Ufton Nervet	R	Warfield	R
Upton	R	White Waltham	R
Upton Methodist	R	Wittenham, Little	R
Wallingford		Wittenham, Long	R
All Hallows	R	Wokingham	R, P
St Leonard	R	Woodhay, West	R
St Mary	R	Woolstone	R
St Peter	R	Yattendon	R

## 2. New Berkshire (part of Buckinghamshire until 1974)

Datchet	W, P	Key
Eton, St John the Evangelist	W	B Deposited in the Berkshire Record Office.
Eton Wick	P	P In progress, further detail from me.
Horton	W	R Deposited in the Reading Reference Library. NB Many of these transcripts are not complete.
Langley Marsh	W	W Research complete, further details from me.
Slough, St Mary	W	
St Laurence	W	
United Reform Church	W	

Copies of these records may also be deposited at the Society of Genealogists and elsewhere.

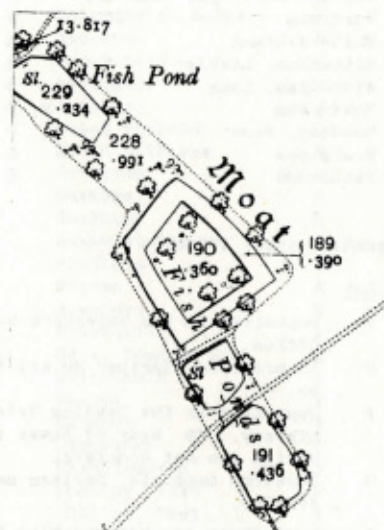
but often points to the social standing of the family. Sometimes the information given could not be found elsewhere, as for example, 'For 53 years faithful servant of ...'. The memorials themselves may reflect something of the history of the area, eg the iron crosses in the churchyards of Bucklebury and neighbouring parishes are the products of the local iron foundry.

If you are working on MI recording, or census transcription, or indexing either as an individual or local society, please do contact me - I shall look forward to many replies!

Polly Lawrence  
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OX12 8LX. Tel: 02357 4798



# Sites and Monument Record



Moat at Upton Nerve

The Berkshire Archaeological Unit was set up, with funds from the Department of the Environment, in 1974. One of the first tasks of the Unit was to bring together all the available information concerning the archaeology of the county into one comprehensive system, which would provide an easily accessible index for both research and planning purposes. The system adopted is based on that devised and used by the Oxford City and County Museum.

The basis of the record is the primary record card system which relates to maps at 1 : 10000 scale for the whole county. 1 : 2500 scale maps are available for some of the urban areas. Each site, monument or find spot is given a unique number which is marked on the relevant map and the card records the basic information relating to each site while providing an index of sources for

further information. The cards are standard printed index cards which allow the recording of period, form and location of the archaeological information together with a brief description and reference to the authority for the statement. The maps also contain sketch plots of archaeological sites known from aerial photographs.

The basic record has now been completed and there are about 4000 cards in the system. All the information recorded by the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey has been transcribed and most of the published sources and local indices, such as museum accession register, have been included.

Aerial photographs for select areas of the county have been examined and the sites have been sketch-plotted on the 1 : 10000 maps. Air photographs of the river gravels, taken up to 1974, have been examined and the results plotted and published in 1975 [T. Gates, *The Middle Thames Valley - an archaeological survey of the river gravels*].

Similarly, as part of the survey of the archaeology of the Berkshire Downs, aerial photographs were examined and the archaeological features transcribed onto 1 : 10000 maps. Some of these results have been published in 1979 in *The Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs* by Julian Richards. A small library of aerial photographs has been purchased and

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

RECORD CARD

No. 1014

PERIOD MEDIEVAL	FORM SITE OF	ITEM MANOR HOUSE	MATERIAL (if object)
OS 6° SU 66 NW	25° 50°	PARISH UFTON NERVE DISTRICT NEWBURY	MAP REFERENCE SU 66 NW 12 SHARP (1892) pp. 30, 73-4
REMARKS 1) The probable site of the manor house of Upton Robert - mentioned in 1333 as belonging to William de Uffington. Excavated in 19th century when bridge piles, gateway and other foundations were found. Remains of moat visible (see card 015) and three associated fish ponds (1916-1918).			AUTHORITIES 1) SU 66 NW 12 SHARP (1892) pp. 30, 73-4
PRESENT LOCATION (if object)			A.R. Nos.
OWNER/TENANT ADDRESS			

## Sites and Monuments Record Card

The reverse has details of photographs, records, plans etc.

is housed with the record.

A further survey was commissioned to examine the archaeological potential of the historic towns in Berkshire and this was published in 1978 (G. G. Astill, *Historic towns in Berkshire: an archaeological appraisal*).

A basic manual retrieval system accompanies the record and consists of a set of optical coincidence cards. This has yet to be developed fully but, at present, allows retrieval of information by period, site form and parish, or by any combination of these.

Most of the basic information has now been indexed but there is still much work to be done to develop and enhance the record; for instance a systematic survey of the aerial photographs of the whole county is much needed and information from sources not yet tapped, such as documentary evidence, should be examined and included.

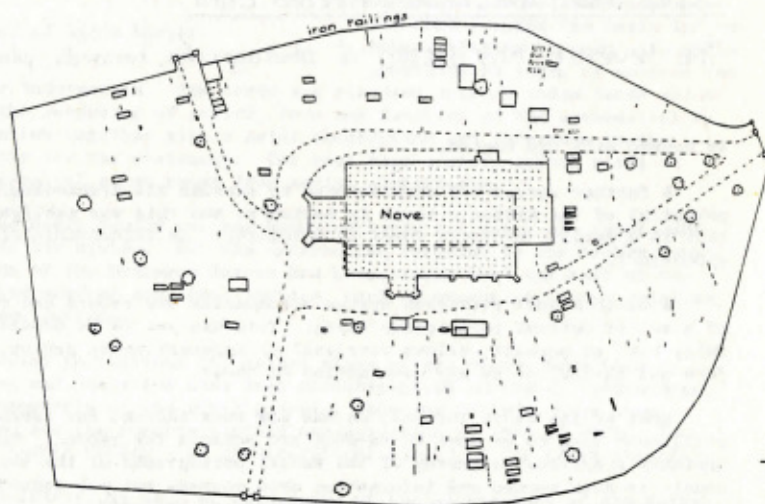
Since 1976 the Sites and Monuments Record has been maintained and up-dated by adding recent finds and information from recent publications.



Berkshire County Council have recently appointed an archaeologist who will take up the appointment in March 1983, and responsibility for the SMR will be taken on by him. The record will be housed in Shire Hall in Reading. However a microfiche copy of the whole record has been lodged in Reading Museum and a copy of the record relating to Newbury District in Newbury District Museum. Both copies can be consulted at each museum by prior arrangement.

Susan Lobb  
The Wessex Archaeological Committee

### Thatcham Churchyard



Plan of St. Mary's Churchyard 1980: On the master plan all graves are numbered

## St. Mary's Church, Thatcham: The Churchyard Surveyed



Little is known of the early history of the churchyard, but early records do show that it was cheaper to be buried in the churchyard rather than inside the church itself. At one time, the enclosure of the churchyard was undertaken at the expense of local property owners or tenants - considering that there was a total of 86 such persons involved, it is easy to understand why difficulty was often encountered in ensuring that the job was done properly! How this system worked in another parish is illustrated in *Purley - the churchyard rails*, (BFHS vol 7, no 1, Autumn 1981, p 14 - 15).

At the time of the restoration of the church, a local benefactor named Samuel Barfield supplied iron railings for the northern boundary of the churchyard and a quantity of gravel to make footpaths. Some two years later the remainder of the churchyard was enclosed by a six foot high wall: there were big iron carriage gates at the eastern entrance, a small pedestrian gate on the southern side and double iron gates opening onto Church Lane to the north.

The churchyard wall was lowered to its present height (an average of 2' 6") in the mid-nineteen-thirties to allow the safe passage of motor vehicles along the adjacent Lower Way.

The churchyard itself was closed for burials from April, 1887, because there was no more space for new graves to be dug. Six months later a new cemetery, situated on the north side of the London Road at the eastern end of Thatcham, was opened for burials and is still in use.

### The Churchyard Survey

The recording of the memorials in the churchyard was undertaken by members of the Thatcham Historical Society during 1980. To begin with, an accurate survey was made to produce a detailed plan of St. Mary's churchyard. The position and size of each gravestone with the churchyard was recorded and plotted on the plan, which was drawn at a convenient scale so that each grave on the plan could be identified, annotated with an appropriate index number and the details recorded on a suitable pro forma.



To record the information relating to individual memorials, a standard form was designed to accommodate a grave index number, the recorder's name, the type and shape of memorial, and any special comments (such as stonemason's marks or initials, etc); the reverse of the form was used to record the complete inscription on the memorial concerned.

The churchyard was divided into areas, each of which was allocated to one or more volunteer recorders. Armed with bundles of recording forms, a group of Society members spent many a pleasant summer evening patiently trying to decipher the varied inscriptions on the memorials in the churchyard. Inscriptions which were very faint or highly ornate sometimes necessitated special visits - early in the morning or at dusk - when the light was just right to allow fading chiselled lines to be translated into letters or figures.

Other useful aids to the recorders were brushes (including tooth brushes), torches, paper and wax crayons and, of course, cameras - some of the more interesting memorials have also been recorded on film.

For all this effort, some memorials were too worn to permit a recording of an inscription being made.

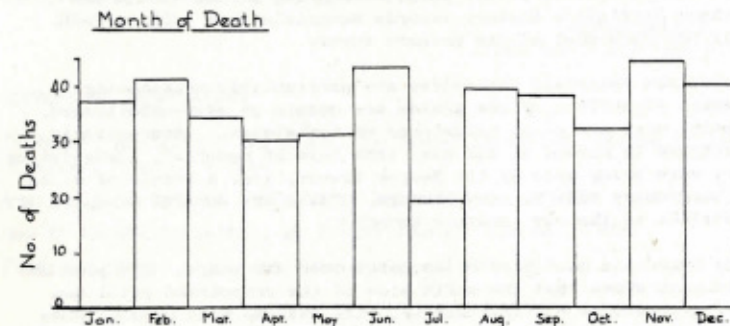
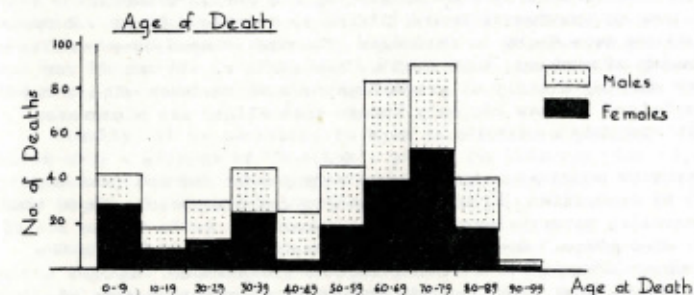
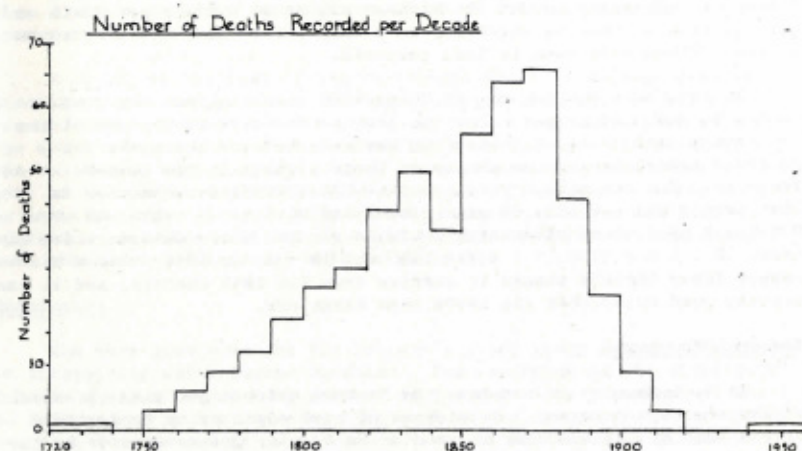
When all the memorials had been recorded on the forms the next task was to bring them into some sort of order. For this purpose, an index card was designed to include the surname and grave number at the top of the card, followed by the christian name(s), relationship of individual burials to others (whether in the case of multiple burials in the same grave or to other graves), the date of death, the age at death and (by means of a simple calculation) the approximate date of birth. A space at the bottom of the index card was left to record anything of special note.

#### The Statistics

As of 1980, the total number of gravestones surviving in St Mary's churchyard was 260. Of these 29 were illegible, thus 231 memorials were actually recorded. From these, a total of 431 names were indexed - these comprised 220 female and 211 male burials.

The distribution of gravestones over time was recorded graphically. Diagrams were drawn up to show a growth in interments by decades - there was a predictable increase from the date of the earliest remaining stone of 1729 to a peak in the decade of 1870 to 1879. The only exception was the decade 1840 - 49 when there was quite an appreciable fall in the number of recorded burials, in spite of the fact that there was a "cholera epidemic" in Thatcham during the summer of 1849. For the decade 1880 - 89 it must be remembered that burials in the churchyard ceased in 1887 except for those in family vaults.

The most common age at death was within the age band of 60 to 80 years, so Thatcham people seemed to live for their 'three score years and ten' on average in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was so in roughly equal proportions for both sexes, but in the age band 30 - 39 female deaths outnumbered those of males - perhaps these were women worn out by childbirth. At the level of infant mortality, girls outnumbered boys by 29 to 13 recorded burials.





As might be expected, the winter months of November, December, January and February showed the highest number of burials per month on average (but it came as something of a surprise to find that the month of June ranked with them in this respect).

An important problem was to attempt to establish the ratio of marked to unmarked graves. For the last seven years of the use of the churchyard, 1880 - 87, a comparison was made between the number of recorded memorials and the number of burials shown in the parish register. The comparison revealed that 235 interments were made in that period and yet only 34 gravestones now survive, a ratio of about 7 : 1. A spot check of adult burials in earlier years showed ratios of about 12 : 1 for 1780, 7 : 1 for 1830 and 12 : 1 for 1840. One would expect fewer legible stones to survive from the 18th century, and it has already been noted that the 1840s seem anomalous.

#### Research Problems

It is necessary to consider the factors which might bias the results of the churchyard survey. An element of bias might arise from either errors made by the recorder in reading particular gravestones or by the stonemason in engraving the details supplied to him by relatives of the deceased.

Some random cross-checks were made on details transcribed from memorials by Society recorders by consulting the parish's burial registers, (now in the County Record Office at Shinfield Park). A few recording errors were found in this way: the most common ones were the transposing of numbers, such as 3's, 5's and 8's. In one or two cases, dates showing clearly on gravestones are at variance with those given in registers and one can only assume that either the stonemason or the vicar has made a mistake.

More serious problems arise because many graves are not (and were not) marked by memorials. Authorities on graveyard memorials argue that existing memorials nevertheless provide a reasonable guide to the social composition of a place. However, in Thatcham it may be that only the middle and upper classes could afford durable gravestones. Local knowledge suggests that those burials marked by gravestones were of more prosperous families - quite a high proportion of the names on the memorials are of tradesmen and churchwardens, for instance. The most important and prosperous people were, of course, buried within the church where Barfield's history records memorials from 1433 to 1868. These did not form part of the present survey.

Few of the memorials themselves are particularly outstanding. Only a small proportion of the graves are ornate or over-embellished; in the main, most are plain headstones or tombstones. Interestingly, the churchyard is devoid of the cast iron type of memorial. Considering that they were being made by the Hedges foundry just a couple of miles away at Bucklebury this is very strange. There are several examples of such memorials in the new cemetery though.

Many memorials must have disappeared over the years. The plan of the churchyard shows that the south side of the churchyard still has plenty of gravestones - traditionally, this was the most popular side of any church for burial. In Thatcham, the north side of the churchyard

also contains numerous memorials and some of the most prominent parishioners are buried here.

However, to the west of the churchyard there is a large area of missing or unmarked graves. This is the lowest and the wettest part of the churchyard and until a few years ago a pond was sited just outside the south-west corner. Perhaps the five memorials now placed against the south-west corner of the church tower originally came from this part of the churchyard? Others may have been removed altogether: it is sometimes the custom to tidy fallen gravestones and place them against a perimeter wall and it might be that when the wall was lowered some stones were taken away with brick rubble.

#### Conclusion

The work undertaken by the Society's study group during 1980 was an interesting and valuable exercise. The recording of the churchyard memorials was a fascinating project in its own right - perhaps it could be followed up by similar recording work in the cemetery? Memorials do not last forever and it is important that the historical information they contain is recorded in another form.

Once recorded, the information lends itself to all sorts of analyses: that presented here is not particularly sophisticated and more could be done. More than this, to the bare details afforded by the memorials can be added a wealth of historical information. Thus it is possible to follow the fortunes and failures of some of the local people who now lie buried in "Thatcham's acre" (the size of the churchyard is one acre, one rood and sixteen poles).

Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that the project gives only a glimpse of Thatcham's past. Considering that the earliest gravestone recorded dates only from 1729 our knowledge of interments made in the churchyard is, to say the least, incomplete.

Burials have been made in the churchyard for centuries: the unmarked plots and open spaces presumably represent a proportion of the 'missing burials' referred to only in parish records. One such reference, dated 1562, concerns the burial of a Thomas Johns of Ham Mill who "dyed suddenly with nedell and thred in his hand being at his worke" - such was the pressure of life in days gone by!

George Sibley  
Thatcham Historical Society

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Thatcham, Berks. and its manors* by Samuel Barfield; edited by James Parker. 1901. 2 vols.

*A popular history of Thatcham* by Peter Allen. 1980.

*How to record graveyards* by Jeremy Jones. 2nd ed., 1979.

*Thatcham parish registers* (Berks RO: DP 130)



## Early Photographs of Berkshire

During my work on the early photographs and negatives at the Reading Museum and, in particular, my recent research for our new publication, *Berkshire in Camera*, I have become increasingly aware of the need to record the whereabouts of these throughout the county. At the moment it would not be practical to suggest one single depot for original photographs and copy prints for a number of reasons, not least the financial aspect of copying large collections of photographs. However, I should like to make an initial start by offering the Museum to act as an information centre and index for known photographs associated with the county. Here we hope to gather details of both original and copy prints and in whose hands they are at present. This would embrace all types of sources, including single photographs or family albums held by private individuals, or a larger developing collection held by a local society.

I feel that this is the way in which the likelihood of the survival of photographs will be increased, and at the same time these will be more accessible to be appreciated by present generations. Perhaps the future could see this index expanding into a complete collection of copy prints and negatives.

I hope that readers will feel this to be a worthwhile idea. I have spoken with various bodies in the county, including the County Record Office and the main reference libraries, and they have enthusiastically offered their support.

Below I have listed a code of information which, ideally, I would like for each photograph. However, where this is not practical, due to the size of the collection, I would be grateful for a short overall description and the approximate number of photographs.

### A The type of photograph

- 1 Original photograph/or negative
- 2 Copy print (is the original still known to exist?)

### B Basic details of each photograph

- 1 Place
- 2 Subject matter - brief description
- 3 Date - if known
- 4 Photographer - if known

### C The name and address of the owner, who can be contacted for further details, etc.

For a collection of copy prints, the name and address of the Society or individual collector would be most suitable. The owner of the originals would, therefore, be contacted only if this was necessary.

Please contact me with an enquiries.

Susan Read, Reading Museum  
and Art Gallery, Blagrove  
Street, Reading, RG1 1QH.



- Above: A Original photograph.  
 B [1] Wallingford [?]. [2] Thames river outing from Shinfield.  
 [3] c 1912. [4] Unknown.  
 C Mr J S Spink, Cathays, Shinfield Gardens, Reading.  
 Below: A Original photograph.  
 B [1] Newbury. [2] The Broadway and Clock Tower.  
 [3] c 1980 [4] Henry Tawnt of Oxford.  
 C Berks Archaeological Society Collection held by Reading Museum.





## Autumn Meeting at the BRO

On Saturday, 3rd October 1981 some 60 members of the Association and its affiliated societies enjoyed a day at the new County Record Office at Reading. The cramped conditions in the old Victorian Shire Hall were always limiting and sometimes depressing - even though the staff made wonderful efforts to cope with the conditions and to provide the services for which the Office existed. Now, in the new Shire Hall at Shinfield Park, they have modern premises and facilities.

Four members of the Staff, Amanda Arrowsmith (the County Archivist), Jennifer Thorp, Peter Durrant and Nigel Clubb, were responsible for the organisation and the leadership and no praise can be too high for the expertise and the thoroughness which they brought to it. In the morning the members divided into four groups which were successively given sessions on the work of the Office. Amanda dealt with the procedures by which records are received, including cleaning, classifying, cataloguing, editing, labelling. Jennifer introduced us to the hows and whys of the Search Room and showed us the use of indexes, catalogues, hand-lists and calendars. Nigel illustrated the problems of 20th century and current records, of which there is an increasing volume. We were given the exercise of making our own decisions about what should be done with a specimen collection of documents (retain permanently, destroy after due consultation, review after five years, etc.) and we then discussed our findings. Finally, Peter showed us the strong room where the records are kept in controlled conditions of temperature and humidity. From the strong room we went into the work-room or laboratory where documents in need of repair are dealt with carefully and expertly. The Record Office is indeed fortunate in having a craftsman of the calibre of Leslie Franklin to do this work.

In the afternoon members were invited to take part in group projects which involved looking at original records. These projects included:

- A. Reading and translating MSS, 13th - 18th centuries
- B. Source analysis: 'Berkshire in 1881'
- C. Source analysis: 'Nonconformity in Berkshire'
- D. Source analysis for beginners: occupations and trades in census returns/directories/parish registers
- E. Describing and indexing documents: wills and inventories

A wide range of records was made available and everyone had fascinating opportunities of doing some original research and, because the time was so limited, having their appetites whetted for a return to the Record Office on another occasion.

In short, the day provided a perfect introduction to the work which is being done and the services which are available at the Record Office.

From its formation the Berkshire Local History Association has had a close and co-operative relationship with the County Record Office. We have appreciated this very much and share the pride which our friends at the Record Office have in their new home.

Raymond South  
Windsor Local History Publication Group

This was the first of BLHA meeting of this kind; in 1982 we spent the day behind the scenes at the Museum of English Rural Life, Whiteknights, Reading.

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## An Arborfield Tale

Have you ever heard of 'rough music', or the simile 'like a tom-tit on a round of beef', or heard of a man getting a turd in his tea? I learnt of all three when joining the group studying old documents at the Berkshire Local History Association's day conference one Saturday in October 1981.

My particular document (BRO reference D/EW1 L3) concerned the case of certain labourers from the Arborfield area accused of inciting a riot outside the small farm of Mr Goble, who had been found striking his wife with a stick. Her offence was the evenings and nights spent at a neighbour's by the name of Mr Chandle, so Mr Goble did appear to have a degree of grievance. It is possible, however, that the labourers were encouraged to riot by the local landlord, stirring up trouble against Goble's landlord.

The labourers pleaded that they were only following a custom of the neighbourhood called 'rough music', which took place when a man resorted to violence against his wife. The men rang sheep bells, blew horns and banged pieces of iron outside the house to support the wife against the husband's lack of gallantry.

When the 'rough music' continued for seven nights, however, the neighbours intervened and abuse and argument followed. Certain people were examined by lawyers for the landowners as witnesses, and amongst them was Richard Clark from Bearwood, who received a letter from an anonymous woman so full of lively abuse that I quote it in full.

The envelope has written on it, 'Richard Clark at Mr Walters Garden House, Bear Wood. With Speed', and the letter reads:

'Richard Clark you must not be surprised of a few lines to you from one who is not such a fool as yourself and all the rest of you. I suppose you thought you was going to frighten the Arborfield young men but you was devilish mistaken. I wish they had given you a good ducking thats what licktrenchers ouht to have I have not been to interfere with the Bear Wood fools not yet but I shall be there on Monday to meet all the Cowards at the wood I will see that five fools shall not fall upon one Arborfield man to tread his toes and scratch his face. as for that bit of a butler he looks like a tom tit on a round a Beef and there is George Hill another such a fool and Radband the same. I wonder that you are not afraid the timber falling upon you as you are Cutting it but I suppose the other men are oblige to instruct you as they see you are such a fool some delights in having a fool. as there is always one fool at play so I reckon you as such. Son no more at present a friend to truth and a looker on I wrote it the postman brought it you paid for it law who would a thought it

Peep fool peep at your brother why shant one fool peep at

another. I hope you will get served out for it O you Cowards you bear Wood Cowards I hope you will get a good ducking for it you bear wood fools O you Cowards If I was your wife you should not have a bit Sugar in your tea I would put a turd in it to see if that would sweeten it that would make a Beautiful Flavour.

from a friend of good understanding and not from a fool'

*from a friend of good  
understanding and not  
from a fool*

I'm sure Ms Unknown felt much better after writing this! As for me, I decided that TV soap opera has nothing on the old documents in the BRO for entertainment value.

Edith Jeacock  
Shrivenham Local History Society





## Petty Crime in Berkshire

I was lucky when the Berkshire Local History Association visited the County Records Office. I was one of the group looking at the records of 1881 and found the proceedings of the Berkshire Quarter Sessions on the table in front of me (BRO reference Q/SR 589-591). Two things quickly struck me: crime seemed very similar a hundred years ago, and there appeared to be great discrepancies in the sentences. The documents I saw were, with one exception, the formal records of verdicts and the absence of testimony was tantalising. There were two Pangbourne men found not guilty of stealing three bottles of wine from the Great Western Railway. What sort of wine and where had it been stolen from? On a train or from a store?

A Maidenhead man seems to have got off very lightly. He pleaded guilty to stealing 'certain money', namely £1, a silver watch, a silver chain, a pair of stockings and a metal chain. Quite a haul for 1881, yet he was given only three months hard labour. Mary Ann Johnson of Tilehurst got a much heavier sentence for a lesser offence. Her term of hard labour was nine months for stealing two pairs of stockings, two napkins, one shirt and two dusters. It could be that she was a well known 'wrong-un', for the nine months was to be served concurrently with a sentence for another offence. Again, tantalisingly, the records of the session roll gave no detail of this offence.

The most savage sentence I came across was on Eliza Cooper, who got fourteen days hard labour for stealing sheeting worth only one shilling from Old Windsor workhouse. The evidence against her, set out in sworn depositions, gave rather different versions of events. The Master of the workhouse said that Eliza had gone there to visit her mother. One of the old ladies had passed a bundle through the railings to the prisoner. He ordered the porter to stop her. 'She gave me the sheeting produced', the Master concluded. The workhouse porter on the other hand said, 'It was part of my duty to examine baskets coming in' - a revealing insight into strict workhouse control - 'and the linen was not in the basket when she came in. The Master took the linen out of the basket. I don't know what the Master said to you. I was there and saw what was taken out of the basket.'

It wasn't all petty theft. There were matrimonial cases very like those of today. An East Hanney labourer was bound over in the sum of £10 for three months to be of good behaviour, 'particularly towards his wife'. A case of wife-beating?

There were two cases of deserted wives. The Court's concern appeared not so much with the plight of the abandoned families as with the resultant cost to the rates. An Abingdon man 'unlawfully did run away and leave' his wife and three children under sixteen years 'where-upon they then and there came chargeable to the Common Fund of the Abingdon Union'. He was released on bail of £5 from himself and £5 from his brother. Unfortunately there was no time to search for the end of this story.

A Shinfield man was charged with the same offence. I had been puzzled as to why it was unlawful for a man to leave his wife, and the verdict in this case appeared to provide an additional reason: he was sentenced to forty days in Reading Gaol 'for being a thief and a vagabond'. I later learnt that it was indeed an offence to leave one's wife and family chargeable to the local authorities.

These gleanings are the outcome of a mere half-hour's perusal of the archives. They are further proof of the wealth of material in the Record Office and of its inestimable value to the local historian.

Anthony Cross





## Is This a Roman Road

Mortimer Common lies just two miles north east of Silchester and the Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum. Before the common was enclosed in 1904 - 6 a web of roads and tracks converged on the old Horse and Groom, where the horse fair was held twice a year. A short while ago I was trying to reconstruct the 18th century landscape here, and one alignment just would not fit into the pattern, but ran disdainfully south west to north east across my sketch maps as if horse fairs had not been invented.

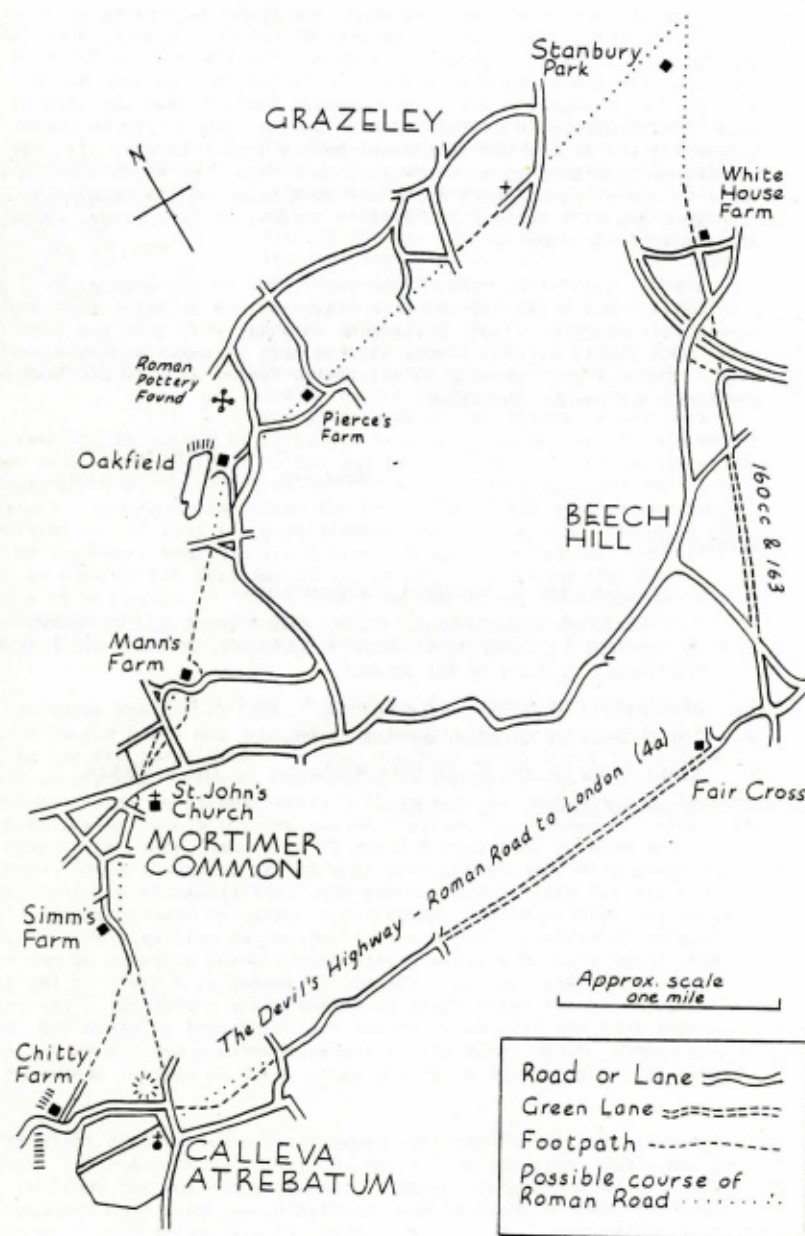
This alignment can easily be followed with the aid of a 2½ in (1 : 25000) Ordnance Survey map. (1) At Grid Reference 654646 lies St John's Church, Mortimer Common, with the fairground, now used for recreation immediately to the north of it. From almost opposite the church door a footpath crosses it diagonally to the far corner. Here the alignment is interrupted by what appears to be a diversion of the original right of way around an old estate now known as Hazely House, previously Knotmead, and under the name of Goodwyns dating back at least as far as the 15th century. There is now a modern house on the site. The diverted footpath goes through a copse and across two fields to Manns Farm where the alignment is picked up again and runs north east to Wokefield. Here the right of way ends, but Oakfield House appears to be on the line. This is an old house on an older site, and in the grounds is a large dam holding back a lake known as Millbarn Pond; while to the north of the house Roman pottery was found in 1902. (2)

The route south west from Mortimer to Silchester is a little more difficult, but starts off clearly enough. A little way along West End Road there is a garage and some shops. From the garage forecourt a footpath runs behind the shops and becomes a narrow gravel road through 19th century housing to Summerlug Common. Here, at the junction with Drury Lane, an ancient enclosure lies across the direct line and there is also a change of alignment here, on the last high ground before Silchester. The way lies south through Simms Farm and across the Foudry Brook into a narrow meadow.

Here there is a choice. The same alignment continues uphill through Nine Acre Copse and down again to join a lane called Hollow Hill, a little way from the Roman amphitheatre and the East Gate of Calleva. There used to be a footpath which followed hedge boundaries, but the right of way now runs unmarked to a stile in the land.

Alternatively, by crossing the meadow on a low causeway another right of way runs along the north west edge of the copse and through Chitty Farm to Wall Lane. The last half mile of this route is along the modern farm road, joining the land west of the North Gate. From Oakfield to Silchester by either route is by public footpaths all the way.

What evidence is there of Roman origin? At the southern end there





is the abandoned North East Gate of Calleva, (3) and the Roman pottery at Oakfield has already been mentioned.

Does the road continue? To the north there is nothing to suggest it does so, but to the east of Oakfield House the driveway, once the public road, lines up, via Pearce's Farm, with the road in front of Grazeley Church and the Wheatsheaf. In isolation this line means nothing, but extended a little to Spencers Wood it cuts the line of two other Roman roads near Stanbury Park. Road No 160cc from Dorchester to Silchester via Henley has been described by Ivan D Margary, (4) and southwards from here it shares with road No 163 from St Albans (5) a route by way of White House Farm, and Wood Lane and The Broad Way through Beech Hill to join the Devil's Highway at Fair Cross, three miles east of Silchester. (6)

I know very little about Roman roads, but it seems to me a possibility that a shorter way from Stanbury Park to Silchester could have gone through Mortimer, perhaps an earlier route when the town walls were built. If the Romans knew it not, it makes a very pleasant walk. There is good parking at Silchester Common and draught beer at the Horse and Groom, Mortimer!

Colin Woodward  
Mortimer Local History Group

#### REFERENCES

- 1 OS Sheet SU 66/76, Mortimer and Aborfield.
- 2 Just north of Rookery Wood. This, like a good deal of other information of interest to local historians, is omitted from the Pathfinder edition of the OS map.
- 3 Silchester the Roman Town of Calleva, by G C Boon.
- 4 Roman Roads in Britain, by Ivan D Margary
- 5 Roman Roads in the South East Midlands, by The Viatores.
- 6 Roman Silchester, by G C Boon.

## Inns, Taverns and Alehouses of Berkshire, 1577



'For as much as intolerable Hurts and Troubles to the Commonwealth of this Realm doth daily grow and increase through such Abuses and Disorders as are had and used in common Alehouses and other Houses called Tipling Houses: It is therefore enacted by the King our Sovereign Lord, with the Assent of the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That the Justices of the Peace, within every Shire, City, Borough, Town Corporate, Franchise or Liberty within this Realm, or two of them at the least, (whereof one of them be of the Quorum) shall have full Power and Authority by Virtue of this Act, ... to remove, discharge and put away common selling of Ale and Beer in the said common Alehouses and Tiplinghouses, in such Towns and Places, where they think meet and convenient: And that none after the first Day of May next coming shall be admitted ... to keep a common Alehouse or Tiplinghouse, but such as shall be thereunto admitted and allowed in the open Sessions of the Peace, or else by two Justices of the Peace ... and that the said Justices of the Peace ... shall take Bond and Surety from Time to Time by Recognisances ... to keep any common Alehouse ... against using of unlawful Games, as also for the using and Maintenance of good Order and Rule ...'

So begins the Act of 1552. Half a century earlier in 1495 Justices of the Peace had been given authority to suppress alehouses, but this was the first time that they had been given power to license as well as suppress. Persons keeping an unlicensed house were to be committed to jail and fined twenty shillings at the next Quarter Sessions. In the following year a law was passed limiting the number of taverns in each town to two only, except in 22 named towns, none of them in Berkshire. Both alehouses and taverns were looked upon with disfavour by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, but in 1566 Sir William Cecil still had reason to speak in Parliament of the multiplication of taverns and to cite them as 'evident cause of the disorder of vulgar people who by haunting thereto waste their small substance which they weekly get by their hard labour and commit all evils that accompany drunkenness'. In 1570 a small number of towns were allowed an extra tavern, but again no Berkshire town was included. In the same year a man called Horsey was granted a patent by the king, which allowed him half the fines imposed on those found guilty of operating an unlicensed tavern.

In great contrast most contemporary descriptions of inns are full of praise. A Description of England by William Harrison, published in 1577, includes the following account: 'Those towns which we call thoroughfares have great and sumptuous inns builded in them, for the receiving of such travellers and strangers as passe to and fro. ...









Norden's Map of 1607 showing four inn signs

name of one of the manors in Hurst Parish which included the embryo town of Twyford, then on the Bath Road where it crosses the River Loddon. Across the border into Buckinghamshire, Colnbrook (a small town divided between four parishes) had eight inns and, although the tiny hamlet of Slough had none yet, it was thought worthwhile to separate it from the remainder of the parish of Upton cum Chalvey.

How accurate was the census? The returns give the impression of being carefully compiled and county officials were quite used to collecting such information. However licensing was not yet effective and undoubtedly there were at least a few unlicensed alehouses whose presence were not recorded. Even so 253 alehouses, 17 taverns and 63 inns were listed and presumably licensed in Berkshire in 1577. Three years later the licensees paid their 2s 6d levy towards the repair of Dover Harbour.

Judith Hunter  
Chairman of BLHA

# General Certificate of the Number of Taverns, Inns and Alehouses within the County of Berkshire, 1577

The statistics below are taken from the returns held at the Public Record Office: the original order of parishes and hundreds has been maintained.

	Alehouses Inns Taverns			A. I. T.
Bray Hundred				
Bray	3	2		
Maidenhead in Bray	1	1		
Cookham Hundred				
Cookham	3			
Maidenhead in Cookham	5	2	1	
Binfield	2			
Sunninghill	1			
Ripplesmere Hundred				
Town of Windsor	8	8	5	
Clewer	1			
Winkfield	1			
Old Windsor	1			
Easthampstead	1			
Charlton Hundred				
Finchampstead	1			
Swallowfield	1			
Shinfield	2			
Whistley in Hurst	2	2		
Beynhurst Hundred				
White Waltham	1			
Hurley	1			
Bisham	1			
Remenham	none			
Wargrave Hundred				
Warfield	2			
Waltham St Lawrence	1			
Wargrave	2			
Sonning Hundred				
Sonning	4			
Aborfield	1			
Winnersh in Hurst	2			
Town of Wokingham	18	2		
Homer Hundred				
Borough of Abingdon	26	9	2	
Cumnor	1			
Botley	2			
Wytham	1			
Ock Hundred				
Fifield	2			
Long Wittenham				1
Morton Hundred				
North Morton				1
South Morton				1
Brightwell				1
Ashampstead				1
Borough of				
Wallingford				41 10 3
Wantage Hundred				
Wantage Town				10 4 2
Childrey				1
West Hanney				1
Faringdon Hundred				
Great Faringdon				4 4
Ganfield Hundred				
Buckland				1
Longworth				1
Shrivenham Hundred				
Uffington				1
Longcote				1
Shrivenham				1
Ashbury				1
Lambourne Town				3 2
Faircross Hundred				
Town of Newbury				21 4 2
Speenhamland				8 4 1*
Shaw				1
Donnington				1
Yattendon				1
Yattendon				1
Woodspene in				
Shawebridge				2 1
Wellford				1
Chieveley				2
Brimpton				1
Wasing				1
Stanford Dingley				1
Kintbury Hundred				
Town of Kintbury				3
Hungerford				7 1 1
West Woodhay				1

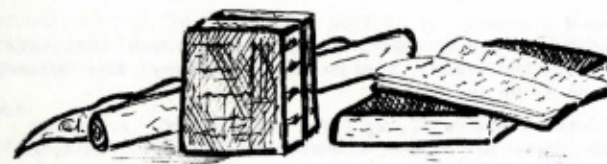


	Alehouses	Inns	Taverns	
Hampstead Marshall	1			Stoke Hundred (Buckinghamshire
Enbourne	1			parishes now within
West Shefford	1			Berkshire) A. I. T.
Compton Hundred				Datchet 2
East Ilsley	1	1		Eton 3 2 1
Reading Hundred				Horton 2
Town of Reading	44	7	3*	Langley Marish 2
Cholsey	1			Slough 3
Pangbourne	2			Upton cum Chalvey 2
Blewbury	1			
Theale Hundred				* taverns which are also inns
Thatcham	5	2		
Sulhamstead Bannister	3			
Bucklebury	3			
Tilehurst	1	2		
Bradfield	1			
Woolhampton	2	1		
Sulham Tildmarsh	2			
Mortimer	2			
Burghfield	2			
Aldermaston		1		
Englefield	1			

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- 7 Rental of the Royal Borough of New Windsor, 1561: Berks Record Office W1/FR1
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## Berkshire Bibliography 1980-82



Each month sees the publication of an increasing number of new local history books and journals. It is not easy to keep track of these publications, especially as many are published privately by authors and societies with limited facilities for display and promotion.

We aim to produce periodic lists of new publications about Berkshire as a whole, or individual places in the county, and we would welcome information about books, journals, guides, facsimiles of maps or other material. Libraries, also, are keen to build up local history collections for the benefit of students, and the County Local Studies Librarian at the Central Library, Blagrove Street, Reading, would be very grateful for information about new publications, so that copies can be purchased for stock.

We would be pleased to display copies for sale at meetings and conferences, and authors are invited to contact one of us or Mrs. Judith Hunter who holds the Association Book Box.

Many of the books on the following list may be obtained at bookshops serving the appropriate locality. Addresses of suppliers are given for items which may not be available through booksellers.

Angela Perkins  
BLHA Information Officer  
Manor Garden, Sonning, Berks.

Daphne Phillips  
County Local Studies Librarian

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