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# Berkshire old & new

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Above, **The Old Vicarage Bray**. One of the Francis Frith photographs recently acquired by The County Local Studies Library, Reading. Francis Frith set up his photographic business at Reigate in 1860. By 1970 a third of a million photographs had been taken by company photographers. The library has purchased 4,000 prints of Berkshire both pre-1974 and post-1974 county boundaries. Copies of some of photographs can be obtained from the Sales Manager, Department of Libraries, Archives and Tourism, Shire Hall, Shinfield Park, Reading RG2 9XD.

Front Cover, **Purley Village.** A photograph taken about 1950 from the Collier Collection held by the Museum of English Rural Life.

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## the story of Danish/Norwegian prisoners of war in Reading, 1807-1814

# The Gentlemen Danes

## by John Nixon

One day in the spring of 1988, whilst passing through St Mary's Churchyard Reading, I stopped out of curiosity to read the inscription on a weathered stone memorial tablet on the church's south facing wall.

To
The memory of
Laurenthes Braag,
a Danish Merchant
born
in the island of St Croix
in the West Indies 21st July 1783
and died
as a prisoner of war on Parole in Reading
the 3rd September 1808
in the 26th year of his age,
He lived
esteemed and beloved by his
Friends and Countrymen
by whom this stone
is raised.

Having grown up in the Reading area, and then lived in Denmark for six years, my interest was immediately aroused. Who was Laurenthes Braag and why was he held in Reading at the beginning of the nineteenth century?

By 1808 Britain had been at war against France almost continuously for 14 long years. With the real threat of invasion early on in the war, Reading, like many other towns and villages, had responded by forming its own companies of volunteers for home defence.

Other tangible reminders that the country was at war came when regular troops marched through the town, and on three occasions, twice in 1800 and once in 1806, townsfolk were able to catch a rare glimpse of 'the enemy' when bands of French prisoners of war passed through.[1] However, before 1807 the people of Reading had yet to experience having prisoners of war living amongst them. The winter of 1807 was to change all that.

At the beginning of the year, Britain found herself in a desperate situation, standing virtually alone against a formidable continental foe dominating most of Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte had control of the ports of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Holland, whilst Britain since the Battle of Trafalgar was master of the seas. Napoleon's plan, known as the 'Continental System', was to forbid all commerce with Britain, "in order to cut off supplies to the stomach" of his enemy.[2] Britain responded in January 1807 with a counter-blockade declared on the ports of France and her vassal states; neutral countries were also forbidden to trade with Napoleon and his allies. In this way the remaining neutral countries in Europe were put in an impossible situation, becoming embroiled in the fight between Britain and France.

Britain was now effectively in a state of war with Denmark (which then included Norway) and, as part of her strategy, orders were issued "to detain and bring into port all Danish vessels".[3] Britain also responded by besieging Copenhagen until the Danes capitulated and surrendered the entire Danish Fleet in harbour. In December 1807 one of Denmark's overseas possessions, the Danish Virgin Islands (now United States territory), was also seized.[4]

## Danish/Norwegian Prisoners of War in England

During the Napoleonic wars many thousands of prisoners were taken and brought to Britain. Most were French, but there were many Dutch and a sizeable number of Danes and Norwegians. They were kept in cramped and often deplorable conditions on board prison hulks, and in prisons on land. It is estimated that over 7,000 Danish sailors were taken prisoner between 1807 and 1814, the number peaking in 1809 with 3,547 in captivity.[5] The majority of ordinary seamen had to endure up to six years of continuous suffering on board the prison ships. The lucky few, however, those of officer rank and gentlemen (plus boys), were offered the more genteel and relatively easy option of serving their time as prisoners on land, on parole at selected towns. Those brought to the ports of south-east England were sent to Reading, which became home to the largest group of Danish/Norwegian prisoners in Britain.

## Danish prisoners' arrival in Reading

The first prisoners to arrive came from London in November 1807. According to the General Entry Book (which lists all the prisoners), they numbered 35 in all and consisted of masters, mates, two boys and one passenger.[6] The *Reading Mercury* reported, "32 captains and mates of detained Danish vessels arrived in this town on their parole. Upwards of 100 are expected to follow".[7] By the end of the month 173 had actually arrived, coming in large groups at regular intervals from London, Portsmouth, Chatham and Dover, where they had spent several months in detention. By New Year's Eve 1807, there were 206 prisoners in the town whilst over the whole period of the General Entry Book 1807-1811, 542 prisoners (including 58 boys) were paroled in Reading. Although not all of these were in the town at the same time, by far the majority, 493, came and went in the two year period between November 1807 and October 1809. Prisoners coming later, between December 1809 and June 1811, numbered only 49 and included a young lieutenant, later to become Admiral Dahlerup, who had spent time in Reading in 1808, only to be recaptured in 1810 and again in 1813. The General Entry Book listing prisoners on parole between 1813-14 has yet to be located. It is, therefore, impossible to estimate their number although we know they included not only Danes/Norwegians, but also Dutch and French prisoners.

Lieutenant Dahlerup arrived for his first stay in Reading in June 1808. The journey from Chatham seemed wonderful to the impressionable 18 year old as he travelled through the English countryside in the height of summer. Everything "seemed to be more beautiful and better than home; wealth, activity, freedom and culture were

everywhere to be seen". Furthermore he noted "the Inns are splendid, they shine of tidiness and silver service; the food is wonderful".[8] When he arrived in Reading he had nothing but the clothes he stood in. However, he did have some money in his pocket, so the first thing he did was head straight to the tailor.

Peter Motzfeldt, later to become a Norwegian statesman, arrived nine days later in June 1808. At that time he was a 31 year old Captain of Artillery captured in the Danish West Indies at Christmas, 1807. "We were in all over 300 and never I heard that any of us met anything other than obligingness. As proof of the way the people felt about us I would add; our Parole Passes contained the condition that we were to be in our quarters by sunset, but there was never anyone that felt like seeing this rule observed, and we stayed out as long as we wanted. Once when a new major (of the guard) came, he tried to make himself look important and repeatedly gave out public notices appealing to the towns-

**No. 22 The Forbury**, which once stood on the south side of the Forbury, and was demolished in 1962 to make way for the new Prudential building.

**A drawing by 12 years old Math. P. Clausen**, of the building which may have housed some of the Danish prisoners. *Fanøs Historie* (1934)

*Prisonen i Reading, hvor flere Fanøboere tilbragte deres Fangenskab*
*Blyantstegning af Drengen Math. P. Clausen, Nordby, 1808.*



people to turn us in at night. Yes, he even promised a guinea for every prisoner to be brought in, but he was never able to get anyone to do it and we went out as before".[9]

According to another condition in their Parole Pass, all prisoners were bound to keep within a one mile radius of the town under the threat of punishment that could send them back to the prison ship. In reality the prisoners were allowed unlimited long walks in the countryside, which Dahlerup in his old age called "the most beautiful he had seen in his long life".[10] None of the countryfolk thought of earning the guinea that was offered as a reward for an arrest, on the contrary he was met only with kindness. Dahlerup on his long walks got to know all the country houses, at least from the outside, and despite the insurmountable class differences he observed, he became full of admiration for everything English.[11] These feelings of mutual respect were not always repeated elsewhere. There were reports of French parole prisoners being attacked in other towns.[12]

Fund raising and subscriptions for the POWs were commonplace and there is ample evidence of generous support from the citizens of Reading.[13] The money raised was distributed to the prisoners by Mr. H. Lewis, a senior bank clerk in the town, who was appointed by the Transport Board (responsible for administering prisoners' affairs) as the prisoners' agent. According to Danish sources he was a kind man and well liked. Not all prisoners needed help from the relief fund, some prisoners, most likely the naval and army officers, were comparatively wealthy. Dahlerup, when his funds ran out, needed to sell his watch and other personal effects in order to make ends meet, and eventually had to rely on subscription fund relief.

## Where the prisoners stayed

All the prisoners stayed in private lodgings in the town. Dahlerup and his navy and army officer friends rented a whole house where they did the cooking themselves. From the illustration in Carl Roos' book - drawn by a prisoner, Math. P. Clausen in 1808 - and an advertisement in the *Reading Mercury* it is almost certain that this house was No 22 'The Forbury', a large building next to Forbury Gardens, pulled down in 1962 to make way for the present-day Prudential Building.[14]

## Affairs of the Heart

It appears that some prisoners were welcomed into well off middle class circles. Indeed they became known affectionately as 'the Gentlemen Danes'. Dahlerup remembered with pleasure how he was invited to dances and other parties. One episode with a young lady, however, gave him a fright. He explains it by saying that "the English ladies have excited passions and the same unbending will which is particular to the national character".[15] Through a friend he learned that a young lady had declared her love for him, and threatened to take her own life if he did not reciprocate. The young and inexperienced lieutenant pulled himself hastily away.

He also got to know a group of young girls from working class families whom he learned to respect. He described these girls as, "fine, quiet, shy and virtuous".[16] One of them, a washerwoman's daughter, became engaged to a Danish ship's officer and later became his wife.

## Those who died

In the period covered by the General Entry Book, from November 1807 to June 1811, five prisoners are listed as having died on parole. The first to die was Laurenthes

**Admiral Hans Birch Dahlerup (1790-1872)** who spent three terms of imprisonment in Reading between 1808 and 1813. National History Museum, Frederiksborg

Braag, remembered on the stone tablet at St. Mary's Church. He was a 26 year old merchant from the island of St. Croix in the Danish West Indies and was travelling in the merchant ship 'Harriet' in July 1807 when she was captured and brought into Dover. He arrived in Reading in November 1807, spending eight months in the town before he died. There is no surviving explanation as to the cause of his untimely death, although we do know that he is buried in St. Mary's churchyard. No records survive on the deaths of the other prisoners although Markus Brant's effects were given to his nephew, a boy by the name of J.C. Kock who was a crew member on the same ship, the 'Triton', and who was allowed to travel home accompanied by another ship's master, Christian Stalling.

## Those that got away

Throughout the period covered by the General Entry Book there was a small but constant stream of prisoners who were discharged or exchanged and allowed to travel home. Most of the boys, for instance, were allowed to go home accompanied by an adult prisoner, and very few actually stayed until a General Amnesty in October 1809. There was a sizeable number who decided to take their chances and escape. Given the relaxed attitude towards parole it would not have been difficult for them to leave the town. Only nine decided to escape or 'run', as it is described in the Entry Book in 1808. Throughout the spring and summer of 1809 there was again a steady flow, but by late summer and early autumn of that year there was an exodus of escaping prisoners. It is possible that the escapes were organised by smugglers who took the prisoners to the Continent. With prisoners leaving in droves (51 in three months) it comes as little surprise that the remaining prisoners were given their freedom in a General Amnesty on the occasion of the 50th Jubilee of King George III on Wednesday 25th October 1809. Perhaps the escape rate was not the reason for the remaining prisoners being released, but it was certainly convenient.



## King George's Jubilee and Freedom

Their liberation coincided with the release of debtors from gaols and the great celebrations in every town and village throughout the country. Celebrations started in the Market Place in Reading at six in the morning, with soldiers from the local militia firing volleys. This was accompanied by the ringing of bells from the flag bedecked church towers and the acclamation of the townspeople. Then, at nine o'clock, according to the correspondent in the *Reading Mercury*:

> "All the Danish prisoners, nearly 200 in number, were assembled in the Market Place where the happy news of their being set at liberty in consequence of this joyful event was announced to them by Mr Lewis."[17]

There then followed a presentation by the Danes:

> "As a tribute of gratitude for the hospitality manifested towards them by the inhabitants, they have presented the mayor and the corporation with a complete model of a Ship of War constructed by one of them named Sivert Riiberg."

In the same edition of the paper the Danish prisoners formally thanked the people of Reading, and Mr. Lewis in particular, for their treatment. They wrote:

> "The Danish Prisoners of War beg leave to return their gratitude for the kind treatment they have ever received during their long residence in the Borough. They more especially wish to acknowledge the attention they have always received from Mr. Lewis, the Agent, the Corporation and those Inhabitants who so liberally entertained them at the Woolpack, Royal Oak and Wheatsheaf Inns on Wednesday".

## Later Prisoners

However, not even two months elapsed before more prisoners began to arrive. In December 1809, nine prisoners came from Chatham, and for a period of a year and a half until June 1811, 49 prisoners arrived with the largest group - 15 prisoners from Chatham in March 1810. Lieutenant Dahlerup arrived for his second spell as a prisoner on parole in September 1810 and thanks to him we are able to shed some light on this otherwise less well documented period. He had been captured from the Danish gun boat, 'Thor' off the Coast of Norway in July 1810 by the Royal Navy frigate 'Belvedere'.

In this second period he began to study and buried himself in English literature and improved his English to such an extent that he was taken as a native. Through his growing understanding of England and the English people he came to conclude that "Danish mentality resembled the English more than it resembled Norwegian or Swedish". However his general love of all things English did not extend to all areas of English life. Some experiences he found "loathsome". The first was the spectacle of a public execution, the other was the punishment of delinquents in the town's pillory. He found it shocking that after the delinquent had been ridiculed, spat at and covered in muck, the youth in a brief pause wiped his filthy face and greeted the yelling crowd with a "raw grin".[18]

Dahlerup's third and final visit to Reading began at the end of 1813. He was taken prisoner in October of that year, and once again ended up at Chatham on the prison ship 'Bahama' before being issued with his Parole Pass. In Reading at this time there were only a few Danish prisoners; nearly all of them of the lower class, skippers and mates; as well as French and Dutch officers who were taken from the Island of Java.[19] Among the Danish officers was Lieutenant Hans Carl Bodenhoff who married an English

architect's daughter, who moved with him back to Denmark.

Although we now know a great deal more about this fascinating story, there are still a number of unanswered questions. Perhaps the most important are what became of the General Entry Book for the prisoners on parole in Reading between 1813-1814 and what happened to the model warship given to the Mayor and Corporation on the occasion of the Danish prisoners' liberation in October 1809? Perhaps after more research the book and the model ship may be discovered.

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9 Roos, *The Prison*, p193
10 Roos, *The Prison*, p192
11 Roos, *The Prison*, p194
12 Roos, *The Prison*, p193. The French painter L.A. Garneray in his memoirs speaks of being the victim of a bloody attack by peasants near his parole town of Bishop Waltham, Hampshire.
13 *Reading Mercury*, Monday September 12 1808
14 This reference in the *Reading Mercury* refers to an advertisement: "Reading Fair. Ganters Universal Museum, comprising the greatest variety of curiosities of Nature and Art ever seen, will be exhibited during the Fair, in the Forbury, from eleven in the morning until nine in the evening, in a commodious room, in the house at present occupied by the Danish prisoners." *Reading Mercury*, Monday September 18 1809. Compare the photograph in Daphne Phillips' book *Reading Old and New* (1986) p28 with the picture in Carl Roos' book p193 of the house shared by Danish parole prisoners in Reading.
15 Roos, *The Prison*, p194
16 Roos, *The Prison*, p194
17 *Reading Mercury*, Monday October 30 1809 p3 col.2
18 Roos, *The Prison*, p196
19 Roos, *The Prison*, p199



**John Nixon** is a designer and maker of contemporary fine furniture living in Aldermaston, Berkshire. He was born in Wokingham, trained as a teacher and then spent six years in Denmark. A fluent Danish speaker, John became interested in Danish furniture design. When he returned to England he trained with the ecclesiastical sculptor, David John, at his studio in Woodley. Since then he has supplied work to Liberty's, Oxford University and featured in numerous publications including *House and Garden*.






# The Great Western Railway comes to Purley

## by John Chapman

The Great Western Railway was conceived in 1824 to link Bristol with London. The idea was promoted by Bristolians who saw a line to London as a way of enhancing the port of Bristol and as part of the link between London and New York, rather than just a link between London and Bristol. It was not until 1833, however, that the project finally got under way and the name Great Western Railway was adopted. It took two years to get the required Bill through Parliament and it received its Royal Assent in August 1835.[1]

Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the engineer responsible for the construction of the railway, was a man of rare vision. It was his intention to build a railway with minimal gradients and with sufficient width of land to accommodate the 7 foot gauge he decided to adopt. He spent many months riding up and down the proposed route estimating the best alignment and calculating the quantities of soil that would have to be removed or brought in to maintain a level line.[2]

His first thought for Purley was a mile long tunnel and he envisaged a second tunnel at Sonning to run under Holme Park.[3] The Purley tunnel was to be 87 chains long (1914 yards) and in 1835 Brunel calculated that it would cost around £34 per yard to construct, a total cost of £65,076. Brunel's standard tunnels for the broad gauge were 25 feet high and 30 feet wide. They were dug by hand and lined with brick. The problems encountered in digging through the wet chalk would have made tunnelling in the area impractical. There were enough problems with springs washing away the trackbed as it was without compounding the problem in a tunnel. In the event Brunel came to an accommodation with local landowners to substitute two very deep cuttings. By coincidence the owner of Holme Park at the time was the MP for Berkshire, Robert Palmer, the father of Richard Palmer who was to become Rector of Purley in 1844.

## Land acquisition

Negotiations with local landowners were often bitter and protracted, for not only had the land to be purchased or acquired compulsorily under the terms of the founding Act, but arrangements had to be made for the transfer and commutation of tithes and the diversion of roads and footpaths which crossed the route. The largest landowner in the parish was Anthony Morris Storer of Purley Park. He controlled the stretch from the Roebuck to New Hill plus some odd parcels of land to the west. It was this stretch which was later to prove most difficult to construct. The agreements were equally difficult and involved tracing back all the land transactions since 1694 to ensure that all the transfers were legal.[4]

The final sum agreed was £10,000. George Gibbs recorded in his diary on 13 October 1838 that, "all points of issue about Storer's land at Purley have been disposed of and we have possession of the land". The final deed is dated 20 December 1838 so there must have been a few more points of detail to conclude.[5] The most complex transaction, however, involved the Rector, Philip Powys of Hardwick and the railway company. This concerned the land between New Hill and Purley Lane which was partly owned by the Powys's and leased to the Rector, Charles Manesty, and partly Glebe land which was administered but not owned by the Rector. The land was known as Nutmore and had been strip farmed. Some of the strips had been Glebe and some had been acquired by the Powys-Lybbe's as part of the manor of Purley Parva. Under the deal the GWR purchased land from both parties with an agreement to sell back to the Rector personally (not as part of his glebe) any surplus land which was not eventually required by the railway. A memorandum of agreement was signed on 11 August, 1838, when the railway company paid £580 to Henry Philip Powys. Part of this land was occupied by Philip Powys, part was formerly leased to William Viner and latterly to Edward Sherwood and his undertenant, the Reverend Charles Manesty. The deed also covered lands in Goring, Whitchurch and Tilehurst.[6] Some Glebe lands were also involved. These were transferred under a separate deed dated 10 August, 1838. The railway used only part of the Powys' land and the balance together with the unused glebe lands was sold back to Charles Manesty in 1844.[7]

Much of the line in the western part of the parish was on land owned by the Wilders. This involved most of the land from Westbury Lane to the Pangbourne border. The Wilder conveyance was summarised in a Memorandum of Understanding dated 6 February 1838. The GWR paid £450 for the land and £350 for compensation. This was later reduced to £430 in 1843 when the railway's needs were reduced.

**Pangbourne Station**

## Construction

Work started at London and Bristol as soon as the first Act was passed. The line was divided up into sections and individual contracts were let for each section. Brunel was directed by the company on March 1 1838 to 'make arrangements for letting the line from Reading to Purley'.[9] At Purley the first step was to dig a deep trench down to the level that Brunel had decreed as being the track alignment. This level was carefully checked along the whole route and then a plateway was laid down so that horse drawn trucks could remove the spoil as the trench was widened to form the cutting. Initially of course the spoil had to be removed by pack horses and then carted along slippery tracks as the cutting was made through loose chalk. All the digging was done by hand, mainly by Irishmen who traditionally had come to England to help build the canals and hence had become known as 'Navvies', an abbreviated form of Navigation cutters.[10] The first trains were running to Reading on the 14 March 1840 and the line from Reading to Steventon was eventually opened to the public on 1 June, 1840, two years from the start of construction.[11]

Initially the line was laid with standard broad gauge iron rails. These were nailed to longitudinal timbers over thin wedges of hardwood so that the rails were canted slightly to the centre of the track. They also allowed a certain amount of give in the track. The longitudinal timbers were spaced by similar timbers or cross bars of iron which spanned the two tracks. These cross bars were then spiked deep into the ground to secure the whole structure and then the track was ballasted. The timbers were soaked in biochloride of mercury before they were laid, a process known as Kyanizing. This was replaced by creosote in 1840 which remained the method of preserving sleepers until they began to be replaced by concrete in the 1960s and 1970s.

## The effect of the railway on Purley

With the substitution of the cutting for the originally proposed tunnel, Purley was suddenly faced with being split into two and with the village cut off from the main road. The railway for its part had to begin a new series of negotiations with local landowners to obtain the required parcels of land. The route took no account of ancient field boundaries. It started tight against the river on the easternmost boundary of the parish and swung in a gentle curve through the side of the escarpment until it reached the plain between Purley and Pangbourne. The line bisected Purley Park, which had only recently been completed, and the agreement called for a tunnel beneath the line so that the occupiers of Purley Park House could reach the church and the lower part of the estate by the river. West of New Hill the line cut through the rectory Glebe lands and part of the property belonging to Purley Lodge. Then it cut across the Great Common fields of both Purley and Pangbourne.[12]

The ancient road which had run down from the Roebuck to the village, along the Village Street, around Purley Lodge and had joined Westbury Lane just before the junction with the turnpike, was cut in two places. At the east end of the parish the road was simply abandoned, but at the west side the bridge near what is now Winston Way was constructed and the road dog-legged across what is now Glebe Road. There is also a suspicion, as yet unproven, that in the process Purley lost its one and only pub, the Red Lyon, which stood on the line of the route and had to be demolished. Four bridges over the railway were constructed. These were for New Hill, Purley Lane, the extension of the Village Street and Westbury Lane. Also three bridges were constructed to carry the railway over the pathway at Purley Park, a farm track joining the fields between Purley and Pangbourne and over the Sul Brook.[13]

When the line was opened the parish discovered the line had a rateable value. The one and a half miles of lines was rated at £1950 and as soon as this was announced the Surveyor of the Roads for Purley, Edward Sherwood, promptly ordered a supplementary rate of 4d. in the pound which raised an additional £30. [14] He clearly got in quickly because when Pangbourne and Tilehurst tried to get their section rated they found that the GWR were not prepared to give in so easily. They had gone to court to appeal against the assessments and received an assessment of £600 a mile against Purley's £1,300 a mile.[15]

## Services in the 1840s

When the GWR line was first opened in 1840 the main station for Purley was at Pangbourne. The original layout was designed by Brunel and had a trailing crossover from down to up lines at each end of the station with a small siding to the east on the south side. This was fitted with a small wagon turntable.[16] The timetable for August 1840 shows passenger trains from Paddington to Pangbourne leaving at 8am, 10am, 12 noon, 4pm and 7pm with a goods train leaving at 4am. In addition there were four trains which did not stop at Pangbourne, they ran on to Faringdon Road, later Challow. In the reverse direction there were five passenger and one goods train each day except Sunday when there were only three trains in each direction.[17] The journey time from Paddington to Pangbourne varied between an hour and 25 minutes to an hour and 34 minutes, but compared with the coach journey by road it was considerably faster and more comfortable.[18]

The railway, from the outset, had realised the futility of trying to keep local times and insisted on using London times at all their stations. This added a slight hazard to the passenger as Reading was some four minutes later than London so a train advertised to depart from Pangbourne for London at 9.54am, actually left at 9.50am local time. It was not until 1884 that Greenwich Mean Time was finally adopted as the standard for the whole of Britain.

As well as conveying passengers, coaches and horses could be accommodated providing they arrived at the station at least ten minutes before departure. It cost 24 shillings to take a four wheel carriage or 18s for a two wheeler. Horses were 20s. for one and 32s. for a pair. Passenger fares were 9s 6d first class, 6s.6d. second class and 3s.6d. to ride on a goods train from Pangbourne to Paddington. To Reading it was 1s.6d., 1s. and 9d. and to Faringdon Road 5s., 4s. and 2s.6d. respectively.

## Postscript

The railway drove a scar across the landscape and the division it imposed on the village remains today. People grew to live with the railway and it remains a never-ending source of interest. Anthony Morris Storer was a young man when he sold land from Purley Park to the railway. He died in 1902 and when his funeral cortege was crossing the New Hill bridge, the horses were startled by a train passing beneath. They were not brought under control until the hearse reached the church. As one old timer remarked, "that was a faster run than the old bugger ever managed in his lifetime".[19] Perhaps that was the key - the railway changed the pace of life, forever.

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# "Local knight wins a King's ransom"

## by John Titterton

The *Reading Mercury* might well have used this as a headline if it had been publishing in 1356. The local knight was Sir John Kentwood from Tilehurst, and the ransom was 2,000 marks (£1,333.33) granted to him for the capture of Prince Philip of France at the Battle of Poitiers. The Hundred Years' War between England and France was a violent time, but also a time of opportunity. Sir John's career took him from the fields and woods of Tilehurst to the service of the Black Prince and eventually to the Court of King Richard II. How did he manage to achieve this rapid rise in power and influence?



Sir John (de) Kentwood took his surname from that area of Tilehurst which is represented today by Kentwood Hill. It is likely that his family were comparatively wealthy free tenants of the Manor which was held by Reading Abbey. His own rise began through his family's association with the Malyns family, lords of the Manor of Purley Parva in the adjacent parish of Purley.

The Malyns came to England from Malyns in Brabant in the late thirteenth century, and lived in Gracechurch Street, London. They acquired several manors in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Essex. Their main residence out of London was the moated manor house of Henton, near Chinnor, Oxfordshire.[1] Purley was merely a source of income visited by the family occasionally, and the Kentwood family seem to have been there at the same time, perhaps when business needed to be conducted.[2]

John Kentwood must have been born about 1310 to 1315 and was about the same age as Reginald Malyns, the heir to the Malyns' estate. Reginald's grandfather and father were both merchants, but his mother was the daughter of Sir Reginald Hampden, of Great Hampden. Reginald Malyns embarked on a military career with Sir Gerard Braybrooke (II) of Bedfordshire, who was married to another Hampden daughter.[3] John Kentwood joined his young friend, and both Reginald Malyns and John Kentwood were at the Braybrooke manor of Horsenden (Bucks) in 1330. They were both knights by this date.[4]

The course of a military career at this time is difficult to determine. The activities of the main commanders can be found in published records for the period, but details of the lesser ranks are hard to discover and often only a shadowy picture can be built up. Sir Reginald Malyns was at the Battle of Crecy in 1346 and the Siege of Calais the following year.[5] The first recorded military event that Sir John Kentwood took part in was the Battle of Poitiers, although it is likely that he participated in earlier battles.[6]

The taking of valuables and prisoners for ransom was the one sure way of making money out of war, but few made such spectacular gains as Sir John. The taking of prisoners could be a matter of great dispute. In the close confines of battle the capture of one prisoner might be claimed by several knights. This arose with the seizure of King John of France, where several knights started brawling and fighting amongst themselves over his capture. Prince Philip was only 14 and with his father the king. He was reputed to have constantly told his father to 'look to your left, look to your right'. So Sir John Kentwood must have been very close to capturing the King himself. As it was he had to share the capture of the Prince with another, Sir Edmund Vauncy.

The payment of ransom money to free prisoners might be resolved quickly if the prisoner had only modest wealth. At Poitiers, "the captured knights and squires found the English and Gascons very accommodating and many bought their liberty then and there". "All (the English and the Gascons), who took part in that glorious battle under the Prince became rich in honour and possessions, not only because of the ransoms, but also thanks to the gold and silver which they captured. They found plate and gold and silver belts and precious jewels in chests crammed full of them, as well as excellent cloaks, so that they took no notice of armour, arms or equipment."[7]

Large ransoms took time to organise and would not be paid over immediately. The ransom for the French King was set at £500,000, but this was not agreed until 1360. He was released shortly afterwards, but only after part was paid and others surrendered themselves as hostages in his place. Sir John Kentwood, being in the service of Edward, the Black Prince, handed over his Royal Prisoner to his Lord. The Black Prince granted him 2,000 marks for his part in the capture, but did not hand over a lump sum. Sir John was granted various sums from time to time, from £5 to £66 13s 4d

A rubbing of the brass memorial to Sir Reginald Malyns at Chinnor Church, Oxon.

until £280 had been paid off by November 1362.[8] It was then agreed that the outstanding balance was to be paid off at £100 a year. In 1364 this figure was increased to £133 13s 4d on condition that he continued to serve the Black Prince in Aquitaine.

Both John Kentwood and Reginald Malyns were to serve the Black Prince for many years in various capacities. King Edward III transferred the Duchy of Aquitaine over to his son in 1362. The Black Prince established a glittering court. "There abode all nobleness, all joy and jollity, largesse, gentleness and honour and all his subjects and his men loved him dearly."[9] Sir Reginald was his steward and Sir John served there also.

Sir Reginald returned to England to manage the family estates after his father's death in 1367, but he was recalled to the Prince's service in 1368 as the military situation on the continent deteriorated. He and Sir John were with him when an army sailed for Aquitaine in 1369. John Kentwood took with him two esquires, Reginald had four esquires and six archers, while Sir Gerard Braybrooke (III), Reginald's cousin, had five esquires and six archers.[10] This gives an indication of their relative status and wealth.

It was accepted that travelling and fighting abroad had an element of danger and a knight would make suitable provisions for his family. No record exists of arrangements made by Sir John Kentwood, but those made in November, 1368, by Sir Reginald Malyns are known. He made over his estates to four trustees who were either to look after his estates until his return. or to hand them over to his heir when the latter reached his majority. The four trustees he appointed were close family members. They were: John Hampden, his uncle, Sir John Kentwood, who was probably by now his brother-in-law, his son-in-law, Thomas Barentyn and John Englefield, of Englefield, who was related to the Braybrooke family even if he was not directly related to Reginald Malyns. The appointment of Sir John Kentwood as trustee, who was also going abroad, shows that death must have been considered only as a possibility rather than a probability.[11] Both eventually returned to England and Reginald was restored to his estates by his trustees.[12] Sir John was to be appointed trustee for Reginald's son, Edmund, in 1372.[13]

The death of the Black Prince in 1376, followed by that of Edward III in 1377 must have changed the lives of both John and Reginald. Reginald seems to have come home for good and he became involved in the civil administration of Oxfordshire, where he had his principal landholdings. He was Member of Parliament for Oxfordshire in 1372, 1377 and 1380. Sir John Kentwood initially took up a similar role in Berkshire as one of its MPs in 1376, 1377 and 1378. There seems to have been a change in the early eighties when he served his former master's son, Richard II, in the Duchy of Cornwall. He was Richard's Steward of the Duchy in 1382 and 1383 and held various civil commissions there in 1380 and 1382. He was again to serve as MP for Berkshire in 1390 and 1393. He died before 1396 and must have been over eighty. His elder son, Nicholas, was never styled 'Knight'. There were some possessions in Berkshire, but the family died out in the male line with John, his great-grandson, in 1487 with the co-heiresses marrying members of the Fettiplace and Swafield families.[14]

Sir John Kentwood's younger son, Reginald, embarked on a career in the church where he enjoyed success which was perhaps comparable with that of his father. Reginald Kentwood held a number of ecclesiastical appointments, ultimately becoming Dean of St. Pauls from 1421 until 1441. His connection with the cathedral church of the Bishop of London stemmed from the tenure of Robert Braybrooke, his kinsman, as Bishop of London between 1381 and 1404. Reginald administered the affairs of Reginald Malyns, Sir Reginald's grandson, both before and after his death. He was also the administrator of Sir Gerard Braybrooke(IV)'s will on his death in 1429.[15]

While it was possible to make personal advancement at this time, it was difficult to establish a 'dynasty'. It was necessary to produce heirs that had both ability, longevity, heirs of their own, and no widow to deprive the son of one third of the estate. Sir Reginald's family died out with his grandson in 1431. The latter had suffered because most of the family estates were in the hands of his mother and step-grandmother, for much of his own life. The Braybrooke family almost made the peerage. Sir Gerard Braybrooke (IV) had married the heiress to the barony of St. Amand, but he left only heiresses so his family died out. The young Prince, whose ransom enhanced Sir John's position was created Duke of Burgundy in 1363 and founded a Ducal House which rose in power and prestige in Europe. Philip's last male descendant, Duke Charles, died in 1477 just 10 years before the Kentwood family was extinguished.

It is not possible to determine whether or not Sir John Kentwood eventually received the payment of the ransom in full. Certainly he does not seem to have enjoyed great wealth and estates. Perhaps he used his wealth to maintain an expensive lifestyle at the Court of the Black Prince. The rise of Sir John Kentwood as an important figure in the service of the Black Prince and subsequently serving King Richard II, shows how families could begin the climb up the social ladder. He owed much to his friendship with Reginald Malyns, whose own military career was advanced by his relationship to the Braybrooke family. The capture of Prince Philip then gave him some financial backing. He (and Sir Reginald Malyns) would have prospered even more if the Black Prince, whom they had served for around 30 years, had become King of England.

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**Ascot by** H.W. Nicholls, taken just before the First World War.




# A moment in time - the Berkshire camera of Horace Nicholls

## by Pamela Marson

Berkshire played an important part in the early history of photography for it was in Reading that the first book to be illustrated with photographs was printed. In 1844 William Henry Fox Talbot, who developed the first negative/positive process, took premises in Baker Street to set up a factory to make the prints that were pasted into his book, *The Pencil of Nature*. The fact that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert showed a keen interest in photography may have been one of the reasons for its early success. Prince Albert was a photographer and a darkroom was set up for him in Windsor Castle by Roger Fenton in February 1854. This was not the first darkroom in Windsor though because W.F. Taylor started his photographic business at 13 High Street in 1852. Later, it was at this address that one of Berkshire's finest photographers worked, a man whose pictures became social documents in their own right - Horace Walter Nicholls.

Born in Cambridgeshire in 1867, he was the son of Arthur Nicholls, a successful portrait painter who became fascinated by the new photographic process. When Horace was eleven years old, his father's brother lost the family fortune, so Arthur took his young wife and children to Sandown in the Isle of Wight, where he opened his own photographic business. Although Horace's photographic training began at an early age, when he left school he became apprenticed to a chemist in Huddersfield, but the obvious lure of photography encouraged him to apply for a job as an assistant to a photographer in Chile, where he stayed from 1884-1886. It was on his return to England that he first came to Berkshire, and took a job as an assistant to George Cartland at 13 High Street, Windsor, where he worked from 1886 to 1889.

Cartland had been running a stationery and bookselling business at Eton, but had taken over the Windsor premises from W.F. Taylor. Taylor was a bookseller and stationer, but he had added photography to a long list of services in 1852. The Windsor studios were on a prestigious site, opposite the entrance to the parish church, and the first building churchgoers saw as they left St. John's. Like many Victorian studios it had huge first floor windows to provide as much natural light as possible. As there was no electricity to provide artificial light the only source was the sun and this had to be harnessed using large areas of glass and many reflectors. Drawings of such

windows can often be seen on the reverse of many Victorian photographs, and were used as a means of advertising the photographic premises. Many of these large windows were later removed when artificial light became more widely available. Typical of this type of business all over the country, Taylor employed photographers and artists to run the studio. He never claimed to be a photographer and always gave his occupation as bookseller. Cartland also employed photographers, but did take pictures himself. Cartland held a Royal Warrant as a photographer, but it was probably Horace Nicholls who went to Windsor Castle when Queen Victoria's guests needed some instruction in the burgeoning art of amateur photography.

Cartland was related to the Holderness family who were long-established Royal Warrant-holding bakers at nearby 65 Peascod Street, and he introduced Horace Nicholls to his cousin Florence. Eventually they married, but not before Horace had spent a year at the studio of James F. Goch of Johannesburg in South Africa. Horace returned to marry Florence at All Saints Church, Windsor, on October 11, 1893. Seventeen days later the couple sailed to South Africa, where Horace opened his own studio under Goch's patronage.

Horace had been an unremarkable, though competent photographer, but now he started to take photographs of the conditions of the local miners at the Kimberley diamond mines. Particularly remarkable is his set of a miner having a body search. He also took on the role of news photographer. When the Boer War broke out in 1899 he became the first South African war photographer.

In December 1899 the Nicholls' family returned to England and, under the patronage of Princess Alice, Horace embarked on a nationwide tour to show and speak about his pictures. Most of his engagements were in large cities, but in March he spoke at the Royal Albert Institute, Windsor and later in the month at Eton. The next two years were very active as Horace went backwards and forwards to South Africa, and between times his family stayed with his in-laws in Windsor. He finally returned to England in August 1902.

It was during the 1880s and 1890s that it became possible to print photographs in newspapers. Until then an engraver would have to take the photograph and manually carve the picture on to wood. With the introduction of the half-tone block it became possible to reproduce photographs mechanically. It took three or four days to make a block at first, so there was no market for hot news, and Horace Nicholls fitted into this market admirably. He would take pictures of buildings or places (possibly from his files) and then pictures of the people who were going to visit them. He would then stick the picture of the person onto the picture of the place and submit it to a newspaper. This may feel unethical to us, but many early photographs were treated in this way. Those photographers who thought of themselves as artists would work in the same way as an artist and photograph one model at a time. Then they would cut and stick the pictures together, or print them all on to the same piece of paper. Paint was then applied to cover the joins. Many pictures that could easily have been taken as one shot were done in this way.

Nicholls never made any secret of this technique and would include copies of his original pictures with the montage in the hope that he might sell two pictures the same day. Horace's father, Arthur Nicholls, certainly worked this way and he made a name for himself in Reading for his 'binographic' and 'triptographic' photographs, in which the same person appeared twice or three times, reacting to himself in some way. He had a studio at 40 Friar Street in Reading, and his name appears in the 1900 Kelly's Directory for Reading. He also appears in the 1899 Directory for Berkshire, but his name is given as Arth. Nicholas.

In the main Horace's reputation stems from his series of photographs of English Edwardian society at play, including the Eton Wall Game, in 1908, Henley Regatta (1904-1914), and Royal Ascot. Many of these pictures are undated, but he was known to have been at Royal Ascot in 1906, 1907, 1909 and in 1910, which was known as 'Black Ascot', as the court was in mourning for King Edward VII, and all the ladies wore black. One explanation for the lack of a date on these pictures is that they may have been combined images from different years. It was these Ascot photographs which were used by Cecil Beaton when he was asked to design the costumes for the film 'My Fair Lady'.

The outbreak of war in 1914 severely limited Horace's income so he enlisted in the Artists Rifles, hoping to be sent abroad, but he was appointed 'official photographer for Great Britain'. A lesser man may have shown his resentment, but Horace, who always had a nose for a good story, set about producing a series of action portraits of women doing men's work, or war-related jobs. One of these appears in almost every text-book about the First World War, and shows women working in a munitions factory manufacturing shells. He also undertook a number of other projects, including photographing wounded soldiers returning from abroad, shipbuilding and, eventually the Victory celebrations.

For the last 15 years of his working life Horace worked at the Imperial War Museum where he printed and preserved the 100,000 photographs taken during the 'Great War', including over 2,000 of his own. This did not prevent his freelance activities, from his home at Ealing. He retired in 1934 and moved to Worthing where he died of diabetes on 28 July 1941.

**13 The High Street Windsor** photographed in 1993, showing the nineteenth century windows still intact.

**Further reading**


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# Milestones on old roads in the Upper Thames Valley

## by Alan Rosevear

## Turnpike Roads

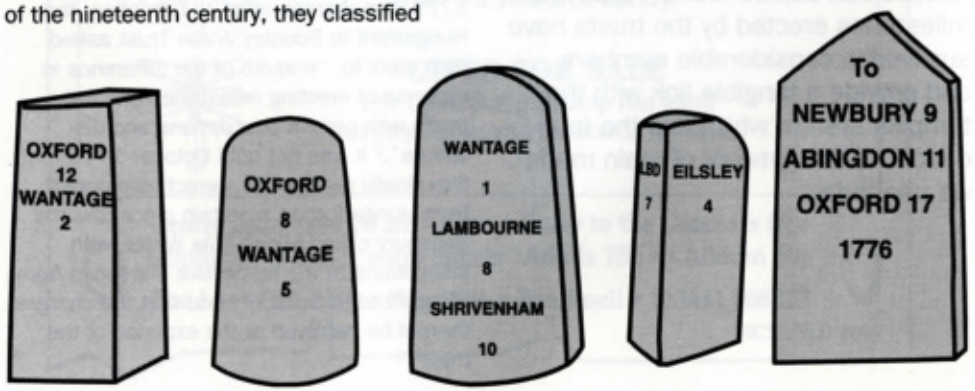
Turnpike trusts administered the main roads in England during much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The trusts were established under individual Acts of Parliament and borrowed money to finance the improvement and maintenance of major highways which ran through several parishes. Tolls were levied on travellers who used the road and the trusts employed this money to pay interest on the loans and to purchase materials for repairing the carriageway. The Acts allowed them to erect gates across the road and build toll-houses for the collection of charges. All traces of the toll-gates have disappeared and only a few toll-houses can still be found. However, milestones erected by the trusts have survived in considerable numbers and provide a tangible link with the turnpike system which laid the foundation for the network of main roads we use today.

A Parliamentary Act of 1744 made milestones compulsory on all main roads and the General Turnpike Act of 1766 extended this requirement to all roads.[1] Individual Turnpike Acts made specific provision for erecting milestones; the "Act for repairing the Roads from Wallingford to Wantage and thence to Faringdon", passed in 1751, was typical. It placed an obligation on the trustees to, "direct the said road to be measured, and cause stones or posts to be set up in or near the sides of the said roads, at the distance of one mile from one another denoting the distance of every such stone or post from any other place [as they] shall seem meet". These milestones were protected under law and if anyone did, "wilfully break, obliterate, deface or pull up, any of the said stones or posts [they must] pay the sum of forty shillings for each stone". The legal penalties, as well as the weight and durability of the individual stones, helped preserve these waymarkers well after the demise of the trusts. Although the waymarkers which survive are generally of stone or iron, other materials were considered. For instance, in September 1775, two months after its formation, the Hungerford to Sousley Water Trust asked their clerk to, "enquire of the difference in expense of erecting milestones and oak posts with certain descriptions and distances".[2] It was not until October 1776 that they finally resolved to, "erect milestones from Hungerford to a certain place towards Salisbury called Minns Mile Water, with inscriptions of the respective distances from Hungerford to Salisbury and that the charges thereof be defrayed at the expense of the trust".[3]

# Surviving Milestones

Milestones and way-markers had been used before the turnpikes were created. The Romans marked their roads with stones at regular intervals and although some of these have survived elsewhere (examples can be found from Watling Street and near Hadrian's Wall) there are no fully substantiated examples locally. It was not until the seventeenth century that stones were used in significant numbers to assist travellers and define boundaries of responsibility. Stones erected by private individuals survive at Wroxton in Oxfordshire (dated 1686) and at Teddington 'Cross Hands' (dated 1676).[4] During road improvements in 1969, a boundary stone was discovered beside the Wheatley to Islip road, next to Stow Wood. It was inscribed "Here begins STOWOOD High Way which ye County is to repair 1680".[5] This road through Islip was one of the earliest ones in the area to be turnpiked (1719), perhaps reflecting its historic importance as a through-route which had already been taken out of parish responsibility. Another important set of marker stones are those defining the ends of the Oxford Mileways; good examples still survive on Cheney Lane and Headington Hill, dated 1667. However, the sets of regularly spaced milestones are the work of the turnpike trusts. When local Highways Boards took over responsibility for roads in the latter part of the nineteenth century, they classified main roads irrespective of their previous status.

The pre-1974 county of Berkshire is particularly fortunate in the number and variety of milestones which have survived. The Bath Road (A4) from Beenham, west of Reading, has an almost unbroken series of magnificent stones, with recessed faces cut to two basic patterns. In addition many of the cross-country routes are similarly marked. For example, the five roads radiating from Wantage have almost complete sets of stones cut to four different patterns. In contrast, the adjoining county of Oxfordshire has very few stones left on the trunk route from London (A40) and on the cross routes in the south of the County, the few surviving stones are defaced or damaged. Much of this loss probably occurred during the War when the fear of invasion legitimatized the destruction or removal of these aids to travellers. Berkshire County Council re-erected many of the stones so that by 1967 Hart found much of the network intact.[6] Surviving stones have been listed as ancient monuments to protect them from official, as well as unofficial, vandalism. Resiting of stones did not always go without a hitch as is illustrated by the story of the "Jude Milestone" from Red House Hill above Wantage. This was reinstated in the wrong place when it was recovered from the UDC Depot in 1969. There is no provision to "move" ancient monuments, so until mid-



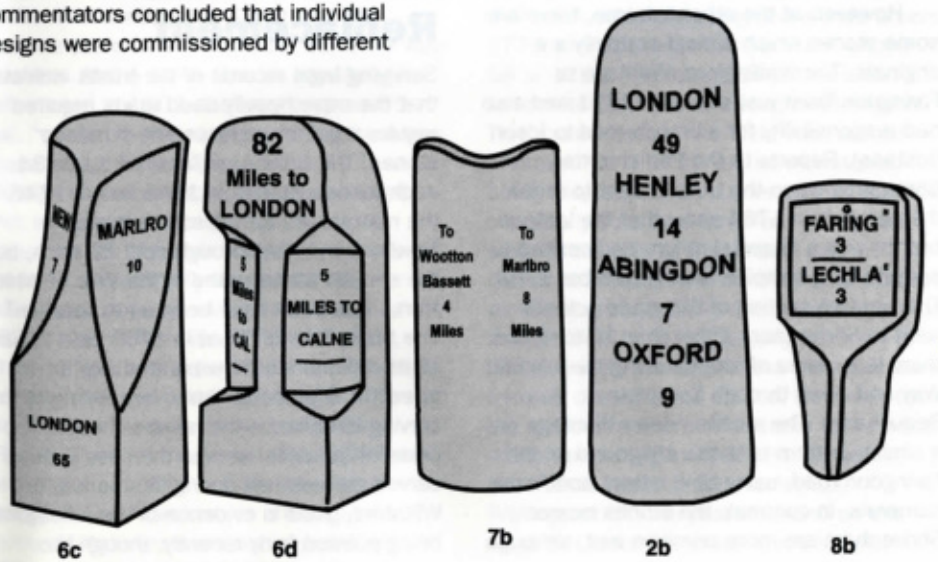

1a 2a 3a 4a 5a



1992 when it was finally resited, this stone had to remain a few hundred yards away from the position described in Thomas Hardy's novel.

To discover how many stones still remained, during 1992 I re-surveyed the milestones in the Upper Thames. Surprisingly, some stones have re-appeared over the 25 years since Hart's survey in west Berkshire, though a few others have been lost during road changes or the result of "souvenir hunting". The survey shows that, except for Swindon, Wiltshire is almost as fortunate as Berkshire in the number of stones still in place. During recent years pollution has wrought more damage than vandalism. The mileposts north of Venn Mill on the Besselsleigh road are almost completely defaced as a result of salts washed up by passing vehicles, while the remaining stones on the Oxford to Henley road and those west of Blewbury have been badly eroded by acidic rain. Fortunately, elsewhere, particularly in the Vale of White Horse, some stones still stand erect with clearly cut lettering, thanks to a good choice of stone and fortuitous protection.

There is considerable local variation in the shape of the stones and their lettering. Earlier commentators concluded that individual designs were commissioned by different trusts and the pattern of the stones on the Bath Road fits this suggestion. Nevertheless the distribution pattern over much of the region is not consistent with this hypothesis. In some instances the same design is used by several adjacent trusts; for example almost all the roads around Swindon use a common semi-circular stone. In other areas the same trusts used different designs, some of which are shared with adjoining trusts. The stones around Wantage are a clear example of this. The same very square design can be found on the Besselsleigh Turnpike to the north of Wantage and on the Wallingford Turnpike east of Wantage. A second sloping, curved top design is used on the Faringdon section of this road; the Idstone section uses a slightly different type while a fourth, more upright, design remains on the southern section of the Besselsleigh Turnpike. A further example of this cross-trust use is around Rowstock corner where stones with triangular cross-section are found on the Wantage to Wallingford Trust roads east of Rowstock and on the Abingdon to Chilton Pond Turnpike north and south of the Rowstock cross roads.




6c 6d 7b 2b 8b

## Original Milestones

Roads were turnpiked at different times so it is implausible to suggest that the trusts went to a single stonemason, taking what he was able to cut. In some instances the stones we see at present were erected after the local Highways Boards began to take an increasing role in managing the roads and the same surveyor covered a particular area, irrespective of the trust. This process of change was formally encouraged after the General Highways Act of 1835 and eventually led to the responsibilities of the trusts passing to local government control in the late 1870s. This view is reinforced by the discovery of a cast iron marker bearing the name "Austin - Brightwalton", during road widening near Frilford. This was probably made by John Austin who moved to Wantage from Brightwalton in 1826 and established what became Wantage Engineering; so the marker must date from the early nineteenth century. A milestone bearing the same distances as the iron marker is one of the existing set beside the road from Venn Mill to Besselsleigh. Thus, at least some of the stones on the Besselsleigh Turnpike may not be original markers.

However, at the other extreme, there are some stones which almost certainly are originals. The Wallingford, Wantage to Faringdon Trust was set up in 1751 and also had responsibility for a branch road to Idson (Idstone). Reports to the Parliamentary Committee when the trust sought to renew their powers in 1764 show that the Idstone branch was a financial failure and ceased to operate as a turnpike after November 1753. The western section of this route actually went to Shrivenham rather than Idstone and there is a series of stones along the Icknield Way and down through Compton Beauchamp. The stones nearer Wantage are a similar pattern to those still found on the Faringdon road, using bold letters and Arabic numerals. In contrast, the stones nearer Shrivenham are more primitive and, although badly worn, are engraved with distances to Wantage in Roman numerals. The use of Roman numerals indicates an early stone. The practice, though elegant, was criticised by travellers for being too difficult to read. Evidence of re-letterring with Arabic numbers can be seen on the second milestone west of Streatley and on the milestone close to the Dorchester Toll-house. The stones on the road from Henley to Dorchester and on the branches to Oxford and to Fyfield through Abingdon, have weathered badly. The stones on the eastern sector of this road, including that at Dorchester, were completely recut; the older version with the milage to London discernible under the more recent carving. There are still stones at Watchfield and towards Highworth with the distance to London clearly cut in the older Roman numerals but this route from Faringdon to Gloucester fell out of favour in preference to the Coleshill post road in the late 18th century. These older stones also tend to express distances in the form "x miles from London" rather than the more modern "London x".

## Repair and Replacement

Surviving legal records of the trusts indicate that the more heavily used roads required regular repair or replacement of marker stones. The Colnbrook Trust paid £2s.8d. each for new stones in 1741 and in 1746 the new stones for the road between Newbury and Marlborough cost £1 each, but the simpler stones used in the Vale of White Horse would not have been as expensive.[7] The Stokenchurch Trust in 1769 paid to have all its milestones "new painted and lettered". It is probable that overpainting of the carving to enhance the numbers was common practice, as was the case with carved gravestones during this period. In Wiltshire, there is evidence of the milestones being painted fairly recently, though the original carving is sometimes ignored to allow modern road numbers to be shown. On the Bath Road, west of Maidenhead, some stones have metal lettering (probably copper) inserted into the stone carving to enhance their appearance.

The accounts of the St John's Bridge and Fyfield Trust show that they paid for repairs and replacement of stones on several occasions.[8] In 1789 the trust carried out a survey of their milestones, presumably since it was thought they were inadequate. In 1809 the trust resolved that new plates of cast iron were to be provided on milestones. The plates were to be inscribed, "denoting distances from London, Abingdon, Faringdon, and Cirencester and also denoting the name of the parish in which the milestone sits". The milestone at Southmoor, in Longworth parish, is obviously a direct result of this action and the stone post was purpose made. In contrast, the stone just west of the Appleton turn has the original carving behind a plate, though the iron plate has since disappeared. The stones near Buscot have most of the features demanded by this proposal of 1809, but a triangular cast iron marker west of Faringdon looks relatively modern. This suggests that towards the end of the nineteenth century cast iron had become preferable to hand cut stone for way-markers. At the same time as modifying its milestones in 1809, the trust proposed to put, "posts on side roads denoting the same leads to e.g. Newbridge or Witney". These old sign-posts have long ago disappeared. This section of road also has the most complete set of parish boundary markers in the area. Superficially these look like milestones but were set up as a result of the 1822 General Turnpike Act (3/4 Geo IV), which obliged trusts to place markers where the road crossed parish boundaries. The more westerly markers had iron plates (Figure 2), whilst the one at Gozzard's Farm between the parishes of St. Helen's Abingdon and Marcham, is a triangular stone. Milestones were also repaired in 1823 and re-lettered in 1853.

## Dating of the Stones

Local stonemasons would have supplied the milestones so it is not surprising that the style and lettering are reminiscent of grave stones which these craftsmen also made. Although comparison with the style of local churchyard memorials does provide a rough estimate to the age of the milestones, this alone is insufficient to date stones satisfactorily. There are three sets of stones in the area which actually bear a date. The gable ended milestones on the Chilton Pond to Newbury road around Ilsley are dated 1776, well after the Act establishing the Trust in 1765. The lettering is semi-formal; for example, "to Newbury x". The large milestones on the Wycombe to Stokenchurch section of the A40, turnpiked in 1719, carry the date 1744 and are marked in both Roman and Arabic numbers. The stones on the Bath Road between Maidenhead and Reading are dated 1824, when it seems that parish boundary details were added. The new cut numerals are Arabic but what may be older Roman numbers, inset in metal, are on the back of at least one stone. These pieces of evidence, taken with the style of the carving on the Idstone road, point to the use of Roman numerals being abandoned around 1770, probably after the General Turnpike Act of 1766. The exception to this is the London to Oxford road through Headington. This route replaced the older road across Shotover Hill in 1789 yet the milestones boldly display Roman numerals; perhaps the classically educated travellers into Oxford were better able to read these ancient numerals. Inscriptions on the present stones generally correspond to the legends given on the 1878 OS map, suggesting that very few changes were made after the turnpikes were formally closed in the 1870s. However, there are some alterations. The stone to the east of the now long gone Dudcote Toll-house once read, "London 52, Henley 10, Wallingford 6". The present stone on the verge of Didcot Broadway reads simply,

"Wallingford 6, Wantage 8" and is a neat round topped stone unlike others on this section of road. The milestone at the top of Blewbury Hill is reminiscent of a simple mid-Victorian gravestone and differs from the larger stones elsewhere on that road. These are clearly stones that were replaced by the Highways Board in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the greater part of the surviving stones are probably of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century origin.

# Conclusion

The upper Thames valley is fortunate in the number and variety of milestones which still stand beside our roads. All of them are at least 100 years old and some date from the eighteenth century, or even before. They have been vulnerable to damage by vehicles and the weather since they were first erected, but have been legally protected, initially by the Turnpike Acts, and more recently as ancient monuments. This has helped to preserve these memorials from the early improvements of our road network but the loss of the few remaining "portable" items such as cast iron plates and the damage from mechanical tools could still threaten these unique local landmarks.

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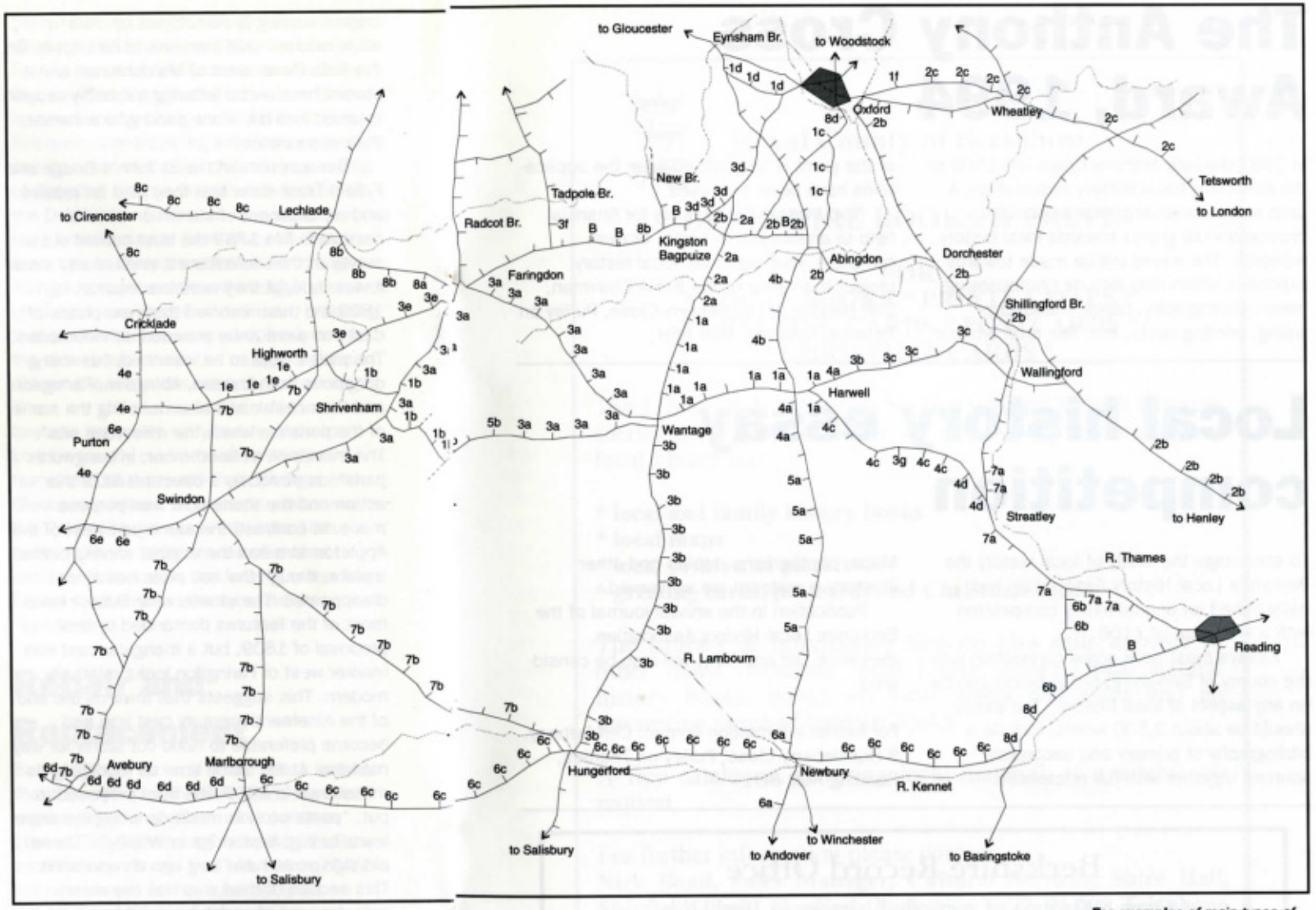


**Alan Rosevear** is a biochemist by training. His interest in the eighteenth and nineteenth century industries of the Wantage area has led to a particular concern with the road network and the way in which it has evolved in response to economic and social change. His research is chiefly with documentary records, but this study of surviving milestones is a welcome excuse to travel around the lanes and by-ways of Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

**For examples** of main types of milestones see pages 26-7

# The Anthony Cross Award, 1994

In 1987 the late Anthony Cross left £500 to the Berkshire Local History Association. A fund was subsequently established to provide annual grants towards local history research. The award will be made towards expenses which may include photocopying, travel, photography, tapes, manuscript typing, printing costs, etc. The total amount of the grant is determined after the applications have been assessed.

If you would like to apply for financial help to enable you to begin, or even complete, your particular local history project then write to the BLHA Chairman, Cliff Debney, 8 Huckleberry Close, Purley on Thames, Reading, RG8 8EH

# Local history essay competition

To encourage the study of local history the Berkshire Local History Association has established an annual essay competition with a first prize of £100.

Essays must have some connection with the county of Berkshire, but subjects can be on any aspect of local history. The essay should be about 2,500 words, include a bibliography of primary and secondary sources together with full references. Maps, photographs, tables and other illustrative material are welcomed.

Publication in the annual journal of the Berkshire Local History Association, *Berkshire Old and New*, will also be considered.

For further information contact Cliff Debney, 8 Huckleberry Close, Purley on Thames, Reading RG8 8EH

# Berkshire Record Society

## by Professor Donald Matthew

Most English counties have long since established societies for publishing their historical records, making available in print manuscript sources, that are often difficult to read, in out of the way places or unknown except to specialists. Such societies were founded by local historians already committed to research into their county's history and eager to share their enthusiasm for written records from the past with a wider public. They published documents, memoirs, letters and other material they had discovered, along with sufficient commentary to make them both enlightening and a pleasure to read. Cumulatively these published records from all over England have helped to transform not only local perceptions of the county but the character of national historical writing, serving to rectify the imbalance formerly induced by excessive reliance on the evidence available for London and central government at the expense of the rest of the country.



For reasons that are not clear but worth reflecting on, Berkshire is now almost alone among English counties in not having any society dedicated to making its county records better known by putting them into print. A number of historians in the county have concluded that it is shameful to do nothing about this, as though Berkshire did not have much to be proud of, and did not have records worthy of attention. It is a matter of regret that worthies of earlier ages have not in this respect been county benefactors. The opportunity to rectify earlier neglect should be seized, so that the present generation can affirm its determination not to allow historic Berkshire to be underestimated any longer. We see it as our privilege to accept responsibility for publishing county records making them better known throughout the county, both by other historians and by all those who take an interest in the history of the county we live in.

Everyone in Britain knows that the royal family is in Berkshire by domicile, but Berkshire is an "historic" county in many other respects. It is distinctive in the context of southern history. It is the only county of the former kingdom of Wessex to take its name from a natural feature (the wooded downs) rather than from its leading town. Originally a border zone defending Wessex from its hostile neighbours across the Thames in Mercia, Berkshire became instead an area where people from all over the country could meet, where the roads north from Southampton Water crossed routes west from London along the Thames valley. In early times it had several centres of comparable importance, Wallingford, Abingdon, Newbury, Reading and Windsor. Berkshire was a county without any one really major town. Already in 1086, moreover, it had many royal tenants-in-chief with small properties. The nature of its county society was different. No aristocratic group could dominate it. The royal family was a powerful force, but it could not take up the cudgels to defend local issues. Berkshire, though close to the capital and the crown, did not become merely suburban, like Surrey or Middlesex. Berkshire had its own character from the first and if this has not been adequately appreciated in the past, it is because Berkshire historians have not blown their own trumpets as loud and clear as they should.

## Launch of the Society

A group of historians, including some from Reading University, and the County Archivist (Dr. Peter Durrant) have given many hours to collective discussion of how a Berkshire Record Society could be established. As a result of these negotiations, the Society was launched in October 1993. The informal group has decided which records should be prepared for publications in the first few years, what kind of organisation is required to sustain this programme and how the Society can recruit enough subscribing members to meet the cost of publication. It should be understood that the organisers and editors of the volumes proposed give their services free for love of history, but to meet printing and distribution costs a regular income will certainly be needed. Money is not, however, the only consideration. Equally important is to sustain the morale of the enterprise by securing a large and active membership of the Society, to prove that the idea commands widespread support, and to encourage organizers to make available in print those records of greatest interest, repute and value throughout the county. It is launched to show all Berkshire what treasures have been lying neglected in archives and depositories and how we may all benefit from knowing more about our past.

## Publication programme

The Berkshire Record Society proposes to begin publication with letters relating to a problem still of contemporary importance, the fostering of children, but as it was managed in the eighteenth century. A wonderful collection of letters relating to the placement of children in Berkshire has been discovered in the archives of the Foundling Hospital and provide an intimate view of several layers of local society in a way that will impress and amaze modern readers. This work will dispel many modern illusions about how this problem was tackled over hundred years ago. The second volume we propose to publish will contain detailed descriptions from the seventeenth century of the properties belonging to the churches of Berkshire. Again, this work provides information of interest to many parishes all over the county. Other volumes are in process of being prepared for publication, so that once the first volume is published this year, the Society can maintain a steady stream, one book each year to subscribers. The founding members believe that they can, and should, publish records relating to all the historical periods, including the middle ages, and of as many different kinds, with the clear intention of showing local historians the great range of materials available. In time, we expect that our subscribers will themselves want to keep the Society informed about texts they would like to see in print.

The most urgent task facing the founding group now is to make fruitful contact with its future membership so that the pioneering work done by the few for the county will be carried forward by the enthusiasm of all the many Berkshire historians. Their needs have not been properly provided for in the past. Now that steps have been taken to remedy this state of affairs, my hope is that they will come forward en masse to make the Society a successful venture and serve their legitimate needs. For an individual subscription of only £14.50 a year, each member will receive yearly a valuable record of Berkshire's past.





# The Berkshire gardens of Gertrude Jekyll

## by Richard Bisgrove

Gertrude Jekyll is probably the greatest single influence on the design of the twentieth century English garden. Her training as a painter, her knowledge and acute observation of plants and her belief that hand, heart and eye must combine to shape a work of art led her to create gardens ideally suited to the English temperament.

Lutyens's drawing of himself with a T-Square, Gertrude Jekyll with a cat, 29 September 1896.
© British Architectural Library, RIBA.

For 74 of her 89 years she lived in west Surrey, moving to the country from London at the age of five, so it is not surprising that half of her 200-plus commissions were in Surrey. The other ten years, though, from her mid-twenties to mid-thirties, were spent in Berkshire, when the tenant in the Jekylls' family home at Wargrave died. Miss Jekyll did not like Berkshire - mainly, she admitted, because Berkshire was not Surrey and the chalk was not sand - but she also became irritated when every visitor to Wargrave Hill insisted on pointing out to her the chimneys of the Huntley and Palmer factory at Reading. Nevertheless, Berkshire features fourth in the league of counties with Jekyll gardens, topped only by Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex. Surviving plans indicate her involvement with nine gardens in the county, ten if one includes the miniature garden of Queen Mary's dolls' house, now at Windsor. Two of those gardens are of national, even international, significance.

The Deanery at Sonning, begun in 1901, has an important place in the history of gardens for two reasons. It was an auspicious start to the new century for the young but already renowned architect, Edwin Lutyens. Lutyens' design was, as it still is, widely acclaimed as a masterpiece, with house and garden woven into a single unified composition. It was not the work of an architect alone, however. Christopher Hussey, in his biography of Lutyens, took pains to emphasise Gertrude Jekyll's role at The Deanery. "Miss Jekyll's naturalistic planting wedded Lutyens' geometry in a balanced union of both principles", putting to an end an acrimonious dispute which involved Sir Reginald Blomfield and William

Robinson, the protagonists between formal and naturalistic garden design. The Blomfield/Robinson dispute confirmed a belief in many people's minds that gardens could either be designed or could be full of beautiful plants. Lutyens and Miss Jekyll demonstrated that a garden could be both beautifully designed and beautiful, and although that message has still not permeated to every corner of the gardening world, the Deanery would rank as outstanding for this lesson alone.

What makes The Deanery doubly important, though, is that Lutyens' client, introduced to him by Miss Jekyll, was Edward Hudson, proprietor of a new weekly journal called *Country Life*. Hudson and Lutyens developed an instant and lasting friendship; Lutyens designed two more houses (or more precisely, a house and a castle) for Hudson; illustrated descriptions of many of Lutyens' houses were published in the pages of *Country Life*, bringing his work to the attention of a wide and discriminating audience, probably boosting the already meteoric rise of his career. Although both Lutyens and Miss Jekyll were undoubtedly destined to make significant contributions to their respective arts, the happy collaboration of architect, gardener and patron/publicist at The Deanery promoted a marriage of house and garden which became the envy of the world. It is, therefore, not entirely surprising (although highly questionable) that when the International Commission on Sites and Monuments produced is first list of European gardens of historical importance, Berkshire's Deanery was the only English garden to be given the four-star top rating.

Folly Farm, on the western edge of Reading at Sulhamstead, and less than ten miles from The Deanery, is also the result of collaboration between Lutyens and Miss Jekyll. It is actually two Lutyens' houses. In 1906 he enlarged an ancient timber-framed farmhouse for Mr. Cochrane. This was one of his early experiments in the new classicism which he (wittily) dubbed "Wrennaissance" in homage to the source of his inspiration, Sir Christopher Wren. Ten years later he was asked by the new owner of Folly Farm, Zacchary Merton, to enlarge the house again. The problem of adding to his earlier, strictly symmetrical facade on a sloping site was solved by setting the extension back and encasing it beneath an enormous sweeping roof. At first glance the new extension looks like an old barn, converted into a house some time before the addition of a charming "seventeenth century" wing - the 1906 house. On closer inspection, though, the dramatic roofline, massive supporting pillars, reflecting pool and angular projecting balconies are surprisingly modern in appearance, reminiscent of much of Frank Lloyd Wright's work in America.

The garden plan of Folly Farm, a tightly interlocking series of formal compartments, is Lutyens at his most inventive but Miss Jekyll steadied his occasional excesses and mellowed the whole scheme with her subtle planting. Wisterias festooned the balustrade above the lily pool, billowing borders framed the large square garden and massed lavender and roses filled the elaborate circular garden. Originally, borders of arching roses, white columbines and gypsophila lined the forecourt, with skimmia and guelder rose in the darker corners. An orchard of quinces and medlars filled the awkward corners between games lawns (for tennis, bowls and croquet) and the boundary, while white broom, tree lupins and pale Michaelmas daisies were woven between the rhododendrons along the roadside border to lighten their otherwise heavy foliage.

This generous use of herbaceous plants, together with herbs, annuals and short-lived shrubs among slower-growing but eventually large evergreens, which is characteristic of all Miss Jekyll's gardens, means that they did not age well. No Jekyll garden has remained intact and in good condition, but at Folly Farm the once tired garden has been gently nudged back to health over the past twenty years or so by its sensitive owners. It is a great delight to return each year and see it looking better than the year before.

The earliest Jekyll garden in Berkshire was at Bear Place, near Twyford, designed in 1896 but no plans of her work there have survived. Only the surveyor's notes on which Miss Jekyll based her design remain in the Jekyll archive at the University of California. Bear Place, The Deanery and the first phase of Folly Farm were followed, in 1907, by a garden in Sunningdale and, in 1908, by Hollington House, Newbury, the home of Fergus Kelly, publisher of Kelly's Directories.

Hollington was a large and elaborate garden. Terraced walks around the house, lined with flower borders and supported on flower-decked dry walls, descended to three large formal gardens (one of them a double-square rose garden with 32 beds), then ascended again by long flights of steps between enclosing banks of shrubs to the Green Garden. One of the most delightful of all Miss Jekyll's innumerable wild gardens, the Green Garden extended from the formal gardens as a long straight ride flanked by broad masses of dark, glossy holly interspersed with the white stems of birch. This long, holly-lined vista opened at its farther end into a clearing through which elegantly meandering paths crossed and re-crossed the central ride between banks of azaleas and *Viburnum opulus*. Thus in spring the Green Garden was a sea of cool white viburnum and fragrant yellow and orange azaleas in a setting of young birch foliage. In summer it was a green oasis in contrast to the colourful gardens near the house. In autumn, golden birch leaves hovered over the richer yellows and crimson of azalea and viburnum foliage and the rich red clusters of viburnum berries, and in winter the garden presented a delightful picture of dark hollies and the slender, white shafts of the birch.

After Hollington House nearly ten years passed before Miss Jekyll turned her attentions again to Berkshire. The Great War prevented many people from attending to domestic matters, although Miss Jekyll herself continued to be busy: more than eighty commissions, including her planting schemes for the cemeteries laid out by the Imperial War Graves Commission in France, separate the Hollington plans of 1908/9 from those for Basildon and Borlases (Waltham St. Lawrence), both begun in 1918.

At Basildon, working again with Lutyens, she created a luxuriant cottage garden setting for his picturesque cluster of almshouses and new rectory. South facing borders were filled with yuccas and China roses, iris, fuchsias and peonies, with edgings of catmint, pinks and occasional clumps of bergenia. The cool contrast of the few areas with a northern aspect was emphasised with pyracanthas on the walls and ferns, *Iris foetidissima* and the bright, translucent flowers of Welsh poppies below. For larger borders there were many other cottage garden flowers and familiar shrubs providing colour throughout the year.

At Borlases, she was asked to extend an existing garden of an old house. There was no architectural collaborator. The project is an amusing example of Miss Jekyll's attempts to design from a distance, using extensive notes, plans and pages of questions to compensate for her inability to travel. The first site plan, sent to Miss Jekyll by Captain Davidson from his military base in Derby, showed a "square" field which he hoped to bring into the existing garden around his home. Miss Jekyll sent, in reply, suggestions for small improvements to the existing garden and a plan of the extension - a straightforward shrub-garden with paths radiating from an octagonal yew-hedged enclosure against the wall. After a long delay caused by "medical boards and other business of war", Captain Davidson wrote gratefully, and with abject apologies, to say that the plan would not *quite* work because the boundaries of the field, which he had assumed to be at right angles, were in fact far from square. A correct plan, the work of a professional

surveyor, was dispatched. The second plan from Miss Jekyll showed an altogether bolder scheme with the octagon moved to the centre of the garden, wide cross paths radiating from four of its eight sides and narrower paths winding in gentle counterpoint to the formal scheme connecting the new garden to an existing informal pond. All the compartments between the paths were filled with evergreen and white flowered shrubs intermingled with ferns, bamboos, white willowherb and other light graceful plants. Sadly, there is no indication that the plans were ever implemented.

In 1919 she produced two plans for the garden at Woodend, Ascot, including proposals for a border of annuals and, from 1920, she became involved in Lutyens's plan to provide a dolls' house for Queen Mary. The house was to be a focus for artistic activity, a fillip to combat post-war uncertainties and a symbol of the affection felt for the king and queen because of their war-time activities. Over the three years of its creation, the dolls' house involved some five hundred donors and more than a thousand artists and craftsmen contributing to the furnishing and decoration of the diminutive palace. A small formal garden formed an important part of the scheme and Miss Jekyll wrote to Lutyens to discuss the mouldings of garden pots which she had had made. She was not satisfied with the quality of the rims on the inch-high pots.

Her last Berkshire garden, designed in 1923 for Mrs. Van der Bergh, was Fox Steep, Crazies Hill, scarcely a mile from the Wargrave home in which she had pined for her beloved Surrey. Here the architect was Oliver Hill, a great admirer of Miss Jekyll's work. The most remarkable feature of the garden was the wide, dry-built double wall along the lane in front of the house, continuing the line of the old thorn hedge to the side of the garden. To furnish the wall Miss Jekyll used aubrieta, helianthemums, teucrium and cerastium, with lavender along the top, making a near-instant and colourful "hedge". The lower part of the wall was planted with ivy and the lavender border was interrupted from time to time by groups of holly for the longer term. The thorn hedge then enclosed a flower border on one side of the main lawn, a predominantly herbaceous border enriched with antirrhinums and African marigolds in high summer, and with white everlasting peas strategically placed behind a large clump of delphiniums, to be trained over them when these had finished flowering. The house, too, supported a wide range of climbers: winter jasmine for its cheerful yellow flowers at the dullest time of year, honeysuckle, vines and white jasmine for fragrance later in the summer and the sweetly scented *Clematis flammula* to round off the season.

Berkshire is fortunate in its diverse portfolio of Jekyll garden plans, ranging from the architectural bravura of Folly Farm and The Deanery through the balanced interplay of formal and wild at Hollington House to the cottage garden charms of the Basildon almshouses and Fox Steep. It is even more fortunate that one or two, at least, of the gardens have survived and two have been restored to a condition approaching that originally intended.

Now there is a new "Jekyll" garden in the county, tucked away in a corner of the University of Reading's campus at Whiteknights. The origins of this need some explanation. Miss Jekyll based her plans for other people's gardens on ideas she had developed and experimented with over many years in her mother's garden at Munstead house and, from 1881, in her own 15 acre garden across the lane at Munstead Wood. The most renowned feature of her Munstead Wood garden was the "main hardy flower border", 200 feet long and 14 feet deep. The most influential of all her books, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, published in 1908, is largely concerned with a description of the flower border, its colour schemes and the techniques of planning and cultivation needed to keep it in full glory from July until October.



When three Departments at Reading University combined forces in 1988 to form a School of Plant Sciences, the existing Botanic Garden was enlarged and redevelopment began to meet the wider requirements of the School, and in particular to introduce features needed by the Department of Horticulture in its new home for the teaching of horticulture and landscape management. There are many Jekyll influences in the new garden (now called "The Harris Garden" to commemorate a former Professor of Botany, Tom Harris), but the lessons to be learned from that famous hardy flower border were thought to be so useful that a decision was taken to recreate the scheme from the plan in *Colour Schemes*. Planting began in the winter of 1992/3. Although the garden lacks the handsome stone wall which backed the real border, and although there have been many disappointments in nurseries failing to supply promised plants, the broad effects of colour grading and distribution of good foliage were already apparent in the summer of 1993. Given a year or two for gaps to be filled and for permanent plants to fill their allotted space, the results should be wonderful.

Miss Jekyll was born on 29 November 1843. The first year of the new border, 1993, marked the 150th anniversary of her birth and, not surprisingly, the year has seen a flurry of Jekyll-centred activities, among them an exhibition of her life and work at the Museum of Garden History in Lambeth from April to August (the core of which remains in a new Jekyll room at the museum), a symposium on her continuing inspiration at the University of Surrey culminating in over a hundred participants walking up the hill to commemorative evensong in Guildford Cathedral on 27 November, and a birthday party in her honour at the Museum of Garden History.

The year 1993 may have been the year of the Jekyll, but we have not yet heard the last of that remarkable lady, whose tombstone describes her succinctly as "Artist, Gardener, Craftswoman".

Lutyens's drawing of Gertrude Jekyll digging a sunflower, 6 August 1897. © British Architectural Library, RIBA.

**Notes**

The Harris Garden, with its Jekyll border, will be open to the public on May 15, July 10 and September 18 1994 - but don't expect too much of the border yet.

Folly Farm is open to the public in aid of the National Gardens Scheme and the West Berkshire Marriage Guidance Trust on Sunday April 17, Monday May 30 and Sunday June 26, 1994, from 2pm until 6pm.

A new edition of *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* was published by Windward Press in 1989. It contains many coloured photographs and drawings illustrating Miss Jekyll's original text, and her plans have been coloured to make them more informative.

**Richard Bisgrove** is senior lecturer in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape at Reading University. For many years a member of the Council of the Garden History Society, he is now on the Gardens Panel of the National Trust and a consultant on the restoration and management of historic gardens. His *Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll*, published by Frances Lincoln in 1992, contains a detailed analysis of Miss Jekyll's approach to garden design and plant association with nearly fifty of her plans coloured and with modern plant names.

# Piety and charity in a Berkshire village 1520–1710[1]


## by Joan Dils and Deidre Schwartz


The strength of popular piety in late medieval England is currently a topic of considerable interest to historians who have questioned the contention that there was such scant enthusiasm for traditional religious practices that the protestant reformers had little difficulty in spreading the new ideas.[2] Some have based their assertions on detailed local studies where it is possible to find evidence for the activities of the ordinary parishioner in parish records, especially churchwardens' accounts. These are comparatively rare for this early period; in Berkshire there are only five dating from before 1547, two of which are from the borough of Reading.[3] Most parishes have another source, namely wills, which may shed considerable light on the faith of a community, even if, as many would now assert, it is unwise to assume they accurately reflect the beliefs of individuals.

This is true of Shrivenham, a large rural parish in the Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire. Before 1974 it was in Berkshire, near to the county boundary with Wiltshire, and in the sixteenth century it was in the diocese of Salisbury. In addition to the parish church there were two chapels, one in each of the hamlets of Longcot and Watchfield; none of these has early churchwardens' accounts. However there is a substantial collection of early wills, most of which were proved in the court of the Archdeacon of Berkshire.[4]

The wills are not equally spaced over the period, the number increasing substantially after 1540. It is likely that in the mid-sixteenth century this was due more to the effect of epidemic disease than to local conformity to the Statute of Wills (1540). In each of three decades, 1521-30, 1541-50 and 1551-60, one year contributed the overwhelming number of wills proved. This is particularly true of the period 1557-59 when in successive years seven, six and ten wills (twenty three in all), made up 67% of the decadal total, and 24% of all the wills for the half century. Clearly Shrivenham shared in the nationwide epidemics of influenza and other diseases which gave these years the highest death rate in the early modern period.[5] It would also seem to have been affected by a summer epidemic in 1529, a year when the county generally showed increased mortality.[6] Since the parish register does not begin until 1575, the wills provide rough but very useful guides to this aspect of Shrivenham's history.

Their content is also very revealing of the pattern of piety and philanthropy in the community during the period. The thirty-four wills made before the reign of Edward VI suggest that Shrivenham people had a strong attachment to traditional religion. Many left small sums to the lights which burned before the images of the saints, on the rood screen or before the parish hearse at funerals. In 1529 Edward Povey left 20d to the "five principal lights" of the parish church; John Hicks, William Heward and Thomas Blagrave in 1544 all gave a bushel of barley to the rood light of Longcot Chapel, the rood lights being the most popular of the shrines. Only the hearse light attracted more bequests: Thomas Shepherd (1521), Roger Barnes (1529) and Thomas Day (1533) left money or corn to the one at Shrivenham Church and in 1544 five testators each left a bushel of barley or malt to that in Longcot.. Others remembered the shrine of a favourite saint: that of St. Andrew, to whom Shrivenham Church was dedicated, was given a bushel of barley by Roger Barnes; St. Christopher, St. Michael and St. George at Longcot all received 2d from John Franklin in 1528, though others preferred Our Lady of Pity; John Bond (1529) asked to be buried before her statue.

As important to these pre-reformation will makers was the provision made for prayers to assist the soul to salvation. Many, like John a Powell, began with the traditional formula, leaving their souls to "allmyghty god, to our lady Saynt marye virgin and to all the wholy companye in hevyn". John was one of only three, the others being Margaret Hynton (1528)[8] and John Bryte (1529), who specifically mentioned the 'month's mind', the mass said for the deceased a month after death. The latter left 8d to each of four men who would carry torches at the ceremony and black cloth to make them hoods. Margaret left 8d each for fifteen priests to be present at her funeral, her month's mind and her year's mind. In addition she left eight marks to Sir John Codron to sing mass for two years for the health of her soul. William Hellyer, who died the same year, left a cow to pay for a yearly obit, or anniversary mass, to be celebrated by two priests. It is very unlikely that John a Powell had his month's mind, for though he had made his will in

**Table 1:** Number and distribution of Shrivenham wills 1521-1570

| Date | Wills | Highest annual total | Year of probate |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1521-30 | 14 | 9 | 1529 |
| 1531-40 | 3 | | |
| 1541-50 | 20 | 8 | 1544 |
| 1551-60 | 35 | 10 | 1599 |
| 1561-70 | 24 | | |
| Total | 96 | | |

**Table 2:** Type of bequests per decade

| Date | (a) Sarum wills | | (b) Church/Chapel[7] | | (c) Poor | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1521-30 | 13 | 100% | 13 | 100% | 1 | 8% | 13 |
| 1531-40 | 3 | 100% | 3 | 100% | 0 | 0% | 3 |
| 1541-50 | 16 | 80% | 16 | 80% | 2 | 10% | 20 |
| 1551-60 | 28 | 80% | 19 | 54% | 6 | 17% | 35 |
| 1561-70 | 17 | 68% | 9 | 37% | 8 | 32% | 25 |
| 1571-80 | 10 | 71% | 1 | 7% | 10 | 71% | 14 |
| 1581-90 | 14 | 70% | 5 | 25% | 10 | 50% | 20 |
| 1591-1600 | 7 | 30% | 7 | 30% | 11 | 48% | 23 |
| 1601-10 | 14 | 47% | 15 | 50% | 14 | 47% | 30 |
| 1611-20 | 8 | 26% | 13 | 42% | 12 | 39% | 31 |
| 1621-30 | 11 | 30% | 13 | 35% | 14 | 38% | 37 |
| 1631-40 | 15 | 39% | 18 | 47% | 18 | 47% | 38 |
| Total | 156 | 55% | 132 | 46% | 106 | 37% | 289 |

1546, it was not proved until 1549, when the church was living under the new protestant dispensation. The others may have relied on the prayers of their relations and friends: both John Bond (1529) and Thomas Day (1533) wished that should their children die before inheriting, their inheritance should be used to hire a priest to 'sing' for the will makers' souls. Others, like John Green and John Cusse in 1544 and 1545 were more circumspect in the troubled years at the end of Henry VIII's reign, asking only that their legatees should dispose of some of their goods for the health of their souls.

In 1547 national legislation swept away all the shrines and chantries and with them prayers for the dead. The following year, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, ruling for the new young king Edward VI, ordered all images to be removed from churches. In 1552 the government imposed the Second Book of Common Prayer with a reformed service in English and ordered the replacement of altars by tables to be placed centrally in the chancel bringing about a complete change in the appearance of churches and popular religion. No records survive to explain how quickly the Shrivenham churchwardens complied with the new order, but the few wills proved between 1548 and 1553 are markedly different from those of Henry's reign. Only one man, John Fewtrill (1549) left money to the high altar. None of the other four wills left anything to the church or to Sarum

When Catholic worship was restored by Queen Mary in 1553, the testators of the parish no longer included all the former devotions in their wills. The high altar continued to attract bequests as did the church and the chapels generally. Yet only one of the nineteen wills made between 1553 and 1558 mentioned the lights: Margery Harris left 2d and a bushel of barley at the year's end to the light of Shrivenham church. None mentioned the statues or the shrines. Only three, William Cuse, John Harris and William Lewis early in 1558 requested a month's mind; William Lewis wanted "to have at my buryinge & at my monethes & at my xij monethes as manie prestes as my father hadde and my dirige every weeke for the monethe and my gospell for the xij monthes." More persistent was the adherence to the old form of the 'soul bequest'. Ten wills began with the commendation to the Virgin and the saints, a practice which continued into the 1560s: George Green and Robert Auger used this as late as 1562, and even in 1565, when the Elizabethan Church had been established for six years, Robert Jackson asked his executor to "do for my soul etc.", which could be interpreted as requesting prayers for his salvation.[9] The same priest, Sir John Corbett, was vicar from the 1522 to April 1564, which may help to explain the conservatism of some of his parishioners: he witnessed at least four wills between 1558 and 1562, two of which were framed in traditional language. Much later, in 1585, John Blagrave, then living in London but asking to be buried in Shrivenham, his birthplace, hoped for salvation through the death and passion of Christ only, but gave his soul to the Blessed Virgin and all the holy company of heaven.[10]

However the balance was swinging towards the new ideas. Will formulae were increasingly used where the 'soul bequest' omitted reference to Mary and the saints. Jone Lewse's will made in February 1559 bequeathed her soul "to almightie god the maker and redemer thereof"; Edith Hall in October 1560 was even more brief, "my sowle to Almightie God". Neither formula contains sentiments unacceptable to traditional teaching; some pre-reformation wills are just as brief. However, in July 1559 Edward Fabian, gentleman, made very specific arrangements for his funeral which left little doubt that he had embraced the reformed faith. Trusting in "Jesu, my whole sufficient Mediator and Redeemer", he elected to be buried in the parish in which he died. He wished "no such solemnitie to be vsed as to have my boddie kept longe above the grounde to the entente to congregate together a nomber of people to one place moch more to the solace of the quick then to the Comforte of the Deade." Instead he was to be interred as soon as he was cold by whatever priests were available; he hoped for four or five. They would receive 8d each and the clerks 4d, as well as a dinner. There was to be a sermon and the burial service would be conducted using the Book of Common Prayer. On the following Friday, the clergy of Shrivenham, Compton, Ashbury and Uffington were to say the appointed service in each of their churches, to be attended by "all and everie such poore howseholder with their Wholl Howsholde as have neither plowe no handiecrafte to lyve on".... "there to occupie themselves in godlie contemplation and prayer" for which each householder would receive 4d and each member of the household 2d.[11] Though he was very careful to exclude any possible interpretation of his wishes as implying a request for prayers for his soul, he intended his funeral to be as impressive as any under the old dispensation.

Later, perhaps as the prayer book services came to be accepted and even treasured, the churches and chapels again began to attract bequests. From a low point in the period from 1560 to 1590, the number of donors rose to an average of one in three of all will makers in the early seventeenth century, rising to nearly one in two in the decade before the Civil War. Thereafter it fell off almost completely to an occasional bequest, ending in 1690 with a final gift of five shillings from William Fairethorne to repair the church.

Post-reformation gifts to the churches and chapels were also differently phrased from earlier ones, being small sums "to the church" rather than for a particular part. The last of the old style gifts was never implemented; there was no high altar in Shrivenham church to receive the bequest in William Perry's will made in January 1559, but not proved till 1565. His was one of

**Death Bed.** A seventeenth centuy wood cut showing a death bed. Most wills were made when near to death.

**Burial.** This seventeenth century woodcut shows a burial in the churchyard. The pall over the coffin usually belonged to the parish.

**Court.** Wills were proved in the church court where scribes made copies in the court register.

twelve bequests to the altars of the churches and chapels before 1559. Thereafter only one post-reformation will, that of Arthur Green (1583), mentioned the communion table; he left buckram cloth to make a covering for that of Longcot chapel. Perhaps he was one of those for whom the new rite had some attraction born of custom and use.

Bells were an expensive necessity whatever the religious regime, rung for feasts and tolled for funerals. Yet they ceased to be supported by will makers in Shrivenham after 1598. They had not attracted much charity even in the pre-formation period compared with bequests to lights; the most being six out of the twenty wills in the 1540s, all in the reign of Henry VIII. The pattern in the chapels of Watchfield and Longcot was similar, though the last bequest there was later than in Shrivenham being in 1634 when twenty shillings was given by Christian Richards, spinster, for a new bell.

Despite all the religious changes, a small donation of 2d to the 'mother church' at Sarum (rarely referred to as Salisbury) was almost universal before 1560. Only three times was this sum exceeded: 4d was given by two testators in 1557 and 1558 and a magnificent 6s 8d by John Bryte in 1521. Throughout the sixteenth century Sarum was remembered by a consistently high, though declining number of testators. After this the cathedral church no longer attracted so many gifts. Between 1591 and 1640, when the bequests ceased, the proportion of testators in any decade leaving money to Sarum never exceeded 47%. In addition bequests generally remained at 2d despite inflation, which reduced their 1520 value to about a half-penny by 1600.[12]

This was in complete contrast to the pattern of giving to the poor. Up to 1560 the number of wills with bequests for the relief of the poor never exceeded 17% in any decade, and was only 32% in the ten years after this. Thereafter the proportion increased rapidly, remaining above 45% until 1610, declining but still nearly 40% or more until the Civil War. After 1660 the number of gifts to the poor fell, reaching the low level of those of the first half of the sixteenth century.

It is difficult to explain the motivation behind this changing pattern of charitable giving. The obligation to care for the poor was just as much emphasised by Catholic moralists as by the reformers yet will makers before the Reformation responded far less frequently. Only four Catholic will makers made provision for the poor before 1550, one of whom determined that it should be paid in meat, bread, and drink at the funeral and the other at the month's mind as well. It must be supposed that at these services the recipients of the charity would pray for the benefactors' souls. Though only one of five will makers in Mary's reign (1553-8) linked a bequest to the poor to their attendance at a church service, the connection between the good deed and the personal salvation of the testator was still present; William Peache (1557), with no immediate family to pray for him, made the connection explicit when he left the residue of his goods to the poor of Shrivenham "that it may be for the salvation of my soul".

The greater frequency of charitable giving was perhaps a response to the growing numbers of the poor and to the legislation on poor relief. The Injunctions of 1536 urged charity to the poor in wills as more meritorious than gifts to adorn images; the law requiring a 'common box' for donations to the poor to be set up in every parish was passed in the same year. The bad harvests and the consequent high food prices of the 1550s created widespread hardship and in 1563 it became compulsory to contribute to the upkeep of the parish poor; those who refused could be reported to the bishop. The first reference to a gift to the poor men's box in Shrivenham was by Richard Lewis in 1562, with six further bequests, all before 1600.[13]

Rather more common were the gifts to every poor household in one or more of the villages in the parish. These were the settled poor, worthy of help for reasons perhaps known to the benefactor. Edward Fabian left 4d to "everie such poore howseholder with their Wholl Howsholde as have neither plow no handiecrafte to lyve on" living in the parishes of Shrivenham, Ashbury and Uffington, and 2d to every poor person in their households, provided they attended his funeral "in godlie contemplation and prayer". Richard Lewis (1562) and Thomas Blagrave (1581) also made bequests to households without a plough or part of one, though without imposing conditions; Edward Prestwood (1628) and his widow, Joan (1638), left 6d to all the poor widows of Longcot. Richard Povey (1577) and Marian Thatcher (1581) each chose six unnamed poor folk in Watchfield and Shrivenham respectively as the objects of their benevolence; a century later John Blagrave (1662) and Thomas Clarke (1700) left five shillings and one shilling respectively to forty poor. The former named them all, working perhaps from an overseer's list or possibly from personal knowledge.

By far the most common bequest was a lump sum to the poor of a named community. In the 1570s and 1580s, this was more likely to be in kind rather than in cash; a quarter of barley from William Gunter in 1571; one and a half bushels of grist corn from Joanna Povey in 1589. (Bequests to lights and shrines in pre-reformation wills were also usually in kind). This method of giving occurred until the Civil War, though it became very infrequent, falling to one or two every decade. Increasingly popular were money gifts. These varied in amounts from a few pence to several pounds, though it is difficult to calculate exactly how much would be involved where the bequest was to every poor household. Nevertheless it is clear that some Shrivenham will makers were aware of inflation: between 1550 and 1580 sums given to individuals or households were either 2d or 4d with only one of 6d; between 1600 and the Civil War the amount was normally 6d with only one example of 4d. There were only two bequests after 1660 to individuals. They were of an entirely different order of magnitude from previous examples: John Blagrave's ten pounds to forty poor would have given each of them five shillings (60d); Thomas Clarke left 12d to each of his forty poor. Since in general prices rose between two- and three-fold over this period, it is clear that Shrivenham charitable giving easily kept pace.[14]

When the form of the bequest was a lump sum to be divided among the undifferentiated poor of the parish, comparisons of its value are easier to make. The overall picture is similar to that of the bequests to individuals, with the amount rising in the course of the period. In the late sixteenth century the most common was half a mark (6s.8d.) or a quarter of a mark (3s.4d.). In the forty years after 1600 the most common was twenty shillings, with only a handful falling below five. Again allowing for inflation, the bequests were about the same in value over the period.

In the forty years after the Restoration ie 1661-1700, the number of wills with bequests to the poor dropped sharply, 23% compared with 43% in the same period before the Civil War. Yet the value of the gifts was very much greater. The most common amount was twenty shillings, with some donors leaving four, five or more times that amount. There was nothing below 2s.6d, which was quoted on only three occasions. Yet this was not a period of inflation, nor of severe poverty. When the study of the village economy is complete it may be possible to see what factors, other than philanthropy, can be found to explain this phenomenon.

Already it is clear that the social status of will makers of Shrivenham changed during the seventeenth century, a period of social polarisation in England.[15] Between 1551 and 1640 there were twice as many husbandmen (the small farmers) as yeomen (the wealthy freeholders); in the fifty years after 1660 yeomen outnumbered husbandmen eight to one. The proportion of gentry wills increased

five-fold. These wealthier men would be paying a major share of the poor rate in the parish; many may have felt that they need not make further voluntary contributions to a system of poor relief; others may have seen continuing need in the community and had greater means to help than their predecessors.[16]

As to the general attitude to the poor among those with sufficient wealth to give some to the needy, there is very little evidence. However, one striking bequest in 1635, that of John Pleydall, gentleman, gives some indication. He left £12.10s to remain as a stock "unto the world's end" and the interest to be paid to the poor by the churchwardens on Good Friday and the feast of St. Thomas, but nothing was to be given to those known to be breakers of hedges, stealers of corn from the fields "or otherwise vehemently suspected to be a Burglar or privy stealer of Corn out of barnes." The juxtaposition of what may be opponents of enclosure and small scale thieves possibly driven by poverty raises interesting (if unanswerable) questions, about the social problems of the village in the difficult years before the Civil War.

By 1700 the parishioners of Shrivenham were living in a very different world from that of their forebears in the early Tudor period. The parish had come through the changes of the Reformation and the Civil War, the growth in population and the rise in prices. The evidence of the charitable impulses of the will makers reflect some of those changes. When they could no longer leave some of their wealth for the good of their souls or the adornment of their favourite saints, some of them gave it instead to their poor neighbours, fewer to the parish church, denuded of its images, colour, and lights. Only John Pleydall in 1635 diverted some money to the repair of the roads. There had been a 'revolution' in giving, as well as ones in church and state.

**References**


1 This is part of a larger study of the society and economy of Shrivenham between c1520 and c1720
2 Haigh, C., *English Reformations* (1993) is the most recent of such studies
3 Parishes of St. Giles and St. Laurence (BRO DP/96 and P/97 respectively). Those of St. Giles from 1518 to 1546 are in print as W.L. Nash ed. *The Churchwardens' Account Book for the Parish of St. Giles, Reading* (1881); Rev. C. Kerry used those of St. Laurence extensively in his *History of the Municipal Church of S. Laurence, Reading* (1883)
4 Unless otherwise stated these are in the Berkshire Record Office under the general catalogue reference D/A2/... Where a date is given in brackets it refers to the year of probate
5 Wrigley, E. A. and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (1981) p333. The value of wills in studying epidemics was shown by F.J. Fisher 'Influenza and inflation in Tudor England', in *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd ser. xviii No. 1 (1965)
6 Slack, P., 'Mortality crises and epidemic disease in England 1485-1610' in C. Webster ed. *Health, Medicine and Mortality* (1979)
7 These totals include all gifts to lights, altars, shrines, bells etc. in the church as well as general bequests left 'to the church' or 'to the chapel'
8 Will of Margaret Hynton (PRO 27 Porch)
9 The scribe registering the will probably abbreviated this phrase. Where it occurs in full in other Berkshire wills of the period, it reads 'my executor to do for my soul as God shall put in his mind' (will of William Spenser of Reading, 1550)
10 Will of John Blagrave (PRO 38 Brudenell)
11 Will of Edward Fabian (PRO 16 Crymes)
12 After the bishoprics were restored in 1660, there were just two bequests to Sarum by Shrivenham testators, both in 1662. For details on inflation see note 14
13 Will of Richard Lewis, yeoman (PRO 30 Streat)
14 Figures for the price rise can be found in several calculations including the Phelps-Brown index in J. Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living* (1969) p60-1
15 Wrightson, K., *English Society 1580-1680* (1984)
16 We owe this suggestion to Dr. Ralph Houlbrooke



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# Closed until.....

## By Dr. Peter Durrant

What potential such a title possesses. In the hands of a master it could herald a tale of suspense and intrigue, misunderstandings and missed opportunities, perhaps even real ale and a red Jaguar, leading at last to a classic piece of detection. Alas, not on this occasion. More prosaically, but probably more appropriately for *Berkshire Old and New*, it introduces a discussion about access to records and restrictions to access.

All record offices, not least Berkshire's, hold records to which the label 'closed until.....' is attached. Why is this, and what is the rationale behind it? Who makes the decisions and on what grounds? Is there rhyme and reason, or are the restrictions merely capricious? These are reasonable questions, and often remain unanswered. The aim here is to set out the background to the restrictions and, in summary at least, to give a guide to what they are.

In September 1993 Berkshire County Council's Community Services Committee - which governs the Record Office - adopted a set of proposals relating to access which made a number of significant changes to the periods for which documents are closed in the Berkshire Record Office (in some cases reducing them by as much as a half), and which led, in January 1994, to many records, previously closed to public inspection, becoming freely available for study and research.

But why close records at all? There are three reasons:

- because of statutory or other official restrictions
- to protect individuals against the premature disclosure of personal information obtained under guarantee or reasonable expectation of confidentiality
- (in the case of deposited records) because the depositor has imposed restrictions as a condition of deposit.

Occasionally these restrictions are imposed for business reasons - matters relating to tenders and contracts, for example. More commonly they are there to protect individuals.

In a recent article in *The Oxfordshire Family Historian*, Jeremy Gibson, in his usual robust way, appeared to criticise some archivists for imposing unreasonable restrictions on access to records, to the disadvantage and obstruction of the historian. He commented:

> "Archivists often somewhat arbitrarily close sensitive records for up to a hundred years, even specifically denying their use for genealogical research. Our predecessors were not so mealy-mouthed and published what might seem intimate details of those in their care for all to read."[1]

It is not my intention to defend either over-long or arbitrary closure periods (or, come to that, selective restrictions); indeed, this article has been prompted by a decision to make substantial reductions in closure periods. However, I do defend the principle of restrictions on access. As to changes since the nineteenth century, it may simply be noted that considerably more effort is made nowadays to respect people's individuality and personal dignity. The old, infirm and physically or mentally disadvantaged are no longer herded into workhouses or lunatic asylums with all decisions made for them and no personal freedom at all. Protection from disclosure of personal details is part of this greater respect for individuals.

It is important, however, that freedom from disclosure should not lead to undue secrecy. There must come a time, too, when the interests of free historical inquiry outweigh the need to protect individuals. The time may not come at the same time in the life of all records. Some records will be available for study immediately, others not for a hundred years. The purpose of Berkshire's new guidelines is to set out clearly for creators, custodians and users alike, what those periods are.

In framing the recommendations I and my colleagues had regard to two sources of authority and advice: the rules and conventions, statutory or otherwise, adopted by government for its own records, and the recommendations put forward by the Association of County Archivists in 1988.[2]

These led to the adoption of the principle that access should be preferred to closure, and to the following general guidelines:

- records should be open if the item has already been made public
- records should be closed for 30 years where open access is inappropriate (eg. routine administrative files; papers containing names but not sensitive details)
- records should be closed for 50 years which contain personally sensitive information about persons aged 21 or over
- records should be closed for 75 years which contain personally sensitive information about persons aged under 21
- records should be closed for 100 years which contain exceptionally sensitive material, or information which if disclosed would breach a guarantee of confidentiality (eg. medical case records and census records).

In judging into which category a record falls, consideration is given to the general nature of the record rather than to an exceptional individual entry, so it is possible that, very occasionally, the general principle of protection for individuals may be breached. However, it is generally agreed that this is acceptable in the interests of openness and the availability of evidence for historical research.

The general guidelines apply in all cases where no specific rule or agreement exists to the contrary. Not surprisingly, there are one or two such cases. For example, all coroners' inquest papers are closed for 75 years, regardless of the age of the deceased, as are records relating to persons admitted to workhouses or public assistance institutions, or receiving relief. Records of the Methodist Church and the Society of Friends, other than those already made public, are closed for 50 years. In a further few cases, notably relating to 'Part Two' minutes of the County Council (ie. minutes of those parts of meetings from which the public is excluded) and certain records of pre-1974 district councils, shorter periods apply.

What does this mean in practice? First, the closure period on many records containing personal information about named adults has been reduced from 60, 75 or 100 years to 50 years. This includes such records as police examination books, most charity records and school managers' minutes. Second, the closure period on certain workhouse and public assistance institution records has been reduced from 100 years to 75 years. This relates to the admission, discharge and relief records mentioned above. Third, the closure period on school log books has been reduced from 60 years to 30 years, which means that many of the war-time log books previously inaccessible are now available for research.

One final point needs to be made. The date from which the period of closure is calculated is always the last date in a book or document. This necessarily means that some material well outside the general closure periods remains inaccessible. It should be a warning to record creators that closing files at frequent intervals is more friendly to historians than using them for as long as possible. However, on the whole the new guidelines should be clearer and more consistent that the old, and they undoubtedly mean that more material will be accessible sooner for purposes of historical research.[3]

**References**


1 Gibson, Jeremy, 'City of Oxford Poor Law Records', *The Oxfordshire Family Historian*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (1993), p37. The context was a discussion of the published accounts of the Oxford Poor Law Union, 1808-1930, held in the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.

2 Association of County Archivists, *Document Closure Periods: Guide and Recommendations* (1988)

3 Full details are to be found in the paper *Access to Records*, approved by Committee on 15 September 1993. A copy is available for inspection in the Record Office search room.



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# Berkshire Bibliography 1994

This year, I have included International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs), where a book has an ISBN (not all local history publications have them). The ISBN is an important bibliographical detail to quote when ordering a book, and helps a bookseller considerably. It consists of a ten digit number.

In case of difficulty obtaining any of the items listed, most are available for consultation at the County Local Studies Library, though some are held at other major Berkshire libraries. Contact me on 0753 509243/5 for further information. In addition a few titles are on sale through libraries.


Margaret Smith
Senior Librarian: Local Studies,
County Local Studies Library, Reading.


**Berkshire Books**


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