

# BRO

The Berkshire Record Office  
The Archives of the Royal County

## The Berkshire Echo Issue 39

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### From the Editor

Welcome to the spring edition of The Berkshire Echo, although with this year's non-existent winter it feels as though spring has been in the air for sometime! In this issue: read about the recent purchase of a long lost historical document; find out what really went on at the workhouse; read the sad story of a baby's death; celebrate the abolition of the Slave Trade; find out who gets ducked in water; and catch up on recent additions to the BRO archive.

We now have the first results from the new national assessment of local archives. The assessment provides a rating of anything between zero stars (not good) to three stars (fabulous). We are very pleased to have been rated as a two star service, a considerable achievement for us.

We will not rest on our laurels though, and the results of our last Visitor Survey have given us food for thought. I am pleased to report that you all remain very satisfied with the service you get from BRO as visitors – 95% rated our overall service either very good or good.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the BRO staff for all their hard work and dedication to making you happy.

However there are no noticeable changes to satisfaction since the previous survey in 2004. So although we are not doing any worse, equally we have not done any better. The survey produces a 'wish list' from visitors, and we will be looking again at how we ensure our public research rooms remain welcoming and comfortable for all.

Enjoy the Echo, and remember to recommend a friend and spread the word about Berkshire's history!

Please read on, and enjoy!  
*Mark Stevens (Senior Archivist)*



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Find out more about your family or local history with a visit to the BRO. Why not put your name down for one of the free BRO introductory visits. Remaining dates for 2007 are: 9th July and 8th October. Just call us on 0118 901 5132 or ask at Reception for details.

#### SEE YOU IN FARINGDON!

Come along and investigate your family, house and/or local history at the Faringdon History Day. It takes place on 1st May between 10.30 and 19.00 at Faringdon Town Hall (formerly Corn Exchange) and at Faringdon Library. Oxfordshire Record Office is leading the event, but the BRO will also be there. Why not come along and find out more. For further details, please contact Oxfordshire Record Office on 01865 398200.

#### VISIT OUR NEIGHBOUR

The Buckinghamshire Family History Society is having an Open Day at The Grange High School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury on Saturday 28th July from 10am to 4pm. This will be an opportunity to find out more about family history in the Buckinghamshire area. Please see the website for more details: [www.bucksfhs.com](http://www.bucksfhs.com)





## Celebrate the abolition of the Slave Trade!

2007 marks the bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade. Many archives across Britain are celebrating the event through the 'Freedom and Liberty' Archives Awareness Campaign and we too would like to highlight to our readers some fascinating records relating to this gruesome part of history.

The BRO holds details on a particular family by the name of Blagrove, resident in Jamaica in 1774 (document ref; D/EX1271/1). A large volume contains information on their estates and

includes a list of slaves as well as an inventory of the goods of John Blagrove, including slaves, 1767.

For more information on the history of slavery please visit The National Archives online exhibition at; [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/rights/abolition.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/rights/abolition.htm).

Also take a look at the Freedom and Liberty campaign at: [www.archiveawareness.com](http://www.archiveawareness.com)



List of slaves, ref: D/EX1271/1

## Missing historical document found at last

A once assumed lost document has recently been purchased by the BRO with the financial help of the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Family History societies. The document is a vestry minute book for the parish of St Leonard, Wallingford, 1819-1853.

The book provides an insight into the town and its people in the early nineteenth century. It details support for the poor of the parish and includes fascinating items such as the purchase approval for a 'change of linen and a new pair of shoes each for Mrs Watkin's son and daughter'.

The general health of the parish poor was provided for by an agreement between the parish officers and a certain Robert Clark and Son, for the Clarks to attend the sick poor in the parish, 'in all professional cases whatsoever ... excepting cases of small pox, cow pox, or the vagrant poor' for which they were to be paid £9 a year.

The complete book will soon be fully catalogued and made available for research purposes.

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## Workhouse Master misuses rations

We recently unfolded an interesting saga among the minutes of Wokingham Union Board of Guardians (document reference G/WO 1/11; September 1871).

Following an anonymous complaint that there had been “a party of three persons for several years visiting the Union Workhouse and making it quite an Hotel”, Mr Norry, the master of the workhouse, admitted that “he had friends once a year for several years staying with him for a fortnight but that the scale allowed for the Officers rations had not been exceeded.”

The Guardians of the workhouse were clearly displeased by the goings on. In January 1872 they resolved that the Master of the workhouse had “no right to have friends staying in the House without permission from the Board of Guardians” or “to dispose of any rations which were allowed him but which were unconsumed by him”. All of this was reported to the Local Government Board so clearly they did not want it to occur again in Wokingham or anywhere else in the country for that matter!

## Local woman gets ducked!

Grace Stampe, a local Abingdon woman in the 1600s was subjected to punishment by ‘ducking stool’. A recent visitor to the BRO made this discovery while delving through the Abingdon quarter sessions records (c. 17th century; document reference A/JQP 2).

Mrs Stampe was accused of being “a common Schold, a brawler, scholder & disturber of her neighbours” and her punishment was to “be washed with water”!

The ducking stool was essentially a wooden chair hung from a wooden beam and lever and hung over a river. Ducking was a common punishment for troublesome and gossiping women and it is thought that it was used even in the nineteenth century. More shocking perhaps is the fact that it remained an optional form of punishment until 1967!



## Cold death for baby boy

In January 1879, James Rhodes died. He was just 3 months old. His parents, classed as ‘strollers’, were refused lodgings and walked the streets through the night, resulting in the death of their baby, James. This rather sad story was taken from the Wallingford St Peter burial register (document reference D/P139/1/7, page 64).

The term ‘strollers’ probably refers to travellers or gypsies who would not have had a permanent place to stay. If you have traveller ancestry the Romany and Traveller Family History Society may be able to help. For more information visit the website at: <http://website.lineone.net/~rtfhs/links.html>.

## New to the Archives

### Plumbers in Reading?

If your ancestor was a plumber in the Reading area in the period 1894-1913, his name and address may appear in the contributions book of the United Operative Plumbers’ Association Reading & District Lodge (catalogue reference D/EX1977).

### New registers

Newly deposited records of Sunningdale Baptist Church include the burial register, 1843-1978, and membership records (D/N23).

The latest parish registers now available are:

- Great Coxwell -marriages 1992-2006 (D/P44)
- Eastbury -baptisms, 1867-2006, banns, 1901-2006 and burials, 1867-2005 (D/P79B)
- Lambourn -baptisms, 1948-1979, marriages 1974-2002, and banns, 1979-1995 (D/P79)
- Woodlands St Mary (also known as Lambourn Woodlands) - burials, 1842-2005 (D/P79C)
- Purley -marriages, 1994-2005 (D/P93)





Air raid precautions map, ref: D/EX1949

## New to the Archives

### Legal letters

We have acquired a collection of letters originating from the offices of Hungerford solicitors Ryley & Matthews (later Matthews & Hulbert), covering the period 1797-1841 (D/EX1949). Some relate to clients in the Midlands, many relate to the bankruptcy of William Pinnell of Lambourn.

### Air Raids and Bomb Shelters

We were excited to receive a printed map of Slough showing Air Raid Precautions and bomb shelters in 1940 (D/EX1949). The BRO has also purchased a royal writ relating to a meadow called Ferrers Mede in Cookham, 1536 (D/EZ154/1). Records of the Community Association, 1949-1965 (D/EX1982), and of the Horticultural Society, Sutton Courtenay, 1950-1984 (D/EX1995), are now available.

### Greenham Parish Council

Records of Greenham Parish Council, 1893-2003 (CPC130B), are particularly interesting for the impact of the women's peace camp at Greenham Common in the 1980s. We also have a beautiful set of plans for properties in Speen, Greenham, Hampstead Norreys, Newtown (Hampshire) and Newbury, belonging to the Newbury Church and Almshouse Charity (D/QX37/1). In addition we have catalogued the records of the Speen Relief In Need Charity (formerly Speen United Charities), 1859-2005 (D/QX36).

### Property History

Property history records include a small collection of deeds for a house in Bath Road, Speenhamland, 1775-1894; West Hanney, 1315 (D/EZ154/2-3); Aldermaston, Beenham and Padworth, 1724-1857 (D/EX1966); Bray and Sunninghill, 1896-1920 (D/EX1992); Ashbury, Buckland, Faringdon, Grove, Lambourn, Longcot and Shrivenham, 1656-1958 (D/EX1977), in Reading (D/EX1990, D/EX1986, D/EX1865) and leases for Irene Goodwin's "ladies' outfitter" at 100 Peascod Street, Windsor, 1939-1960 (D/EX1960).

### Business Goodwill

Reading's businesses are represented by the 1905 assignment of goodwill of the Royal Berks Sanitary Laundry in Reading (D/EX1987), and a catalogue of products of local window manufacturer Ideal Casements (Reading) Ltd, 1964 (D/EX1994). Plans of alterations to 106 Friar Street, Reading, show the building's conversion into a clothes shop called Rose's of Reading in the 1950s (D/EX1957). Also available are a set of photographs and programmes of shows by the Royal County Amateur Operatic Society in the 1940s and 50s (D/EX1991).

### Opening Hours

Tuesday 9-5, Weds 9-5, Thurs 9-9pm, Fri 9-4.30  
Closed Mondays, Weekends and Bank Holidays.  
Please call us for further details.

### Contact Information:

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The Berkshire Record Office,  
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### Funding Partners

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Slough Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council
- The Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead
- Wokingham District Council

**BERKSHIRE**  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Are you interested in tracing your  
Ancestors from near or afar?

Contact the  
**Berkshire Family History Society**  
Yeomanry House  
131 Castle Hill  
Reading Berks RG1 7TJ  
**Telephone 0118 950 9553**

For more details about our Society  
and dates of Branch meetings in  
Bracknell, Newbury, Reading, Vale of White horse,  
Windsor and the Computer Branch in Woodley  
see the website [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk)  
Our **Research Centre** is open  
at the address above  
Tuesday 10.00-1600, 19.30-21.30  
Wednesday & Thursday 10.00-1600  
2nd & 4th Sunday each month 11.00-1600

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