

# BRO

The Berkshire Record Office  
The Archives of the Royal County

## The Berkshire Echo Issue 41

- ❖ [Ancient building burned by suffragettes](#)
- ❖ [Human rights, freedom and liberty at the BRO](#)
- ❖ [It's fascinating!](#)
- ❖ [New to the Archives](#)

### From the Editor



This year's Archive Awareness Campaign launched in September with hundreds of archives across the country planning activities and

publications to celebrate the history of human rights in the UK. The theme of the 2007 campaign is 'Freedom and Liberty', looking at the struggle for rights in history, including the Chartists, the Suffragettes and the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. This edition of the Echo has taken Freedom and Liberty as its theme and we have articles on how Wargrave's church burnt down in the name of freedom, and how to seek out riots from the past.

One of the great things about archives is how much can be hidden in seemingly routine documents. Back in spring we had ITV filming an account book we have for John Estridge's estates in St Kitts during the early 19th century. While largely a list of financial incomings and outgoings part way through there is suddenly a list of people (his slaves) included as commodities. When you come across it in the midst of routine payments it seems a shocking addition to the balance sheet.

The Archive Awareness Campaigns are all about recognising these types of submerged stories. Jonathan Pepler, Chairman of the National Council on Archives, said at the launch of this year's campaign: "The Archive Awareness Campaign offers something for everyone and gives people a unique chance to play detective and reinterpret the past themselves. This year archives will explore the more hidden history of the UK and are highlighting documents which haven't been as visible in the past. Almost every region has a connection to the slave trade, for example, and your local record office is the place to find it."

The BRO will have attended a couple of events by the time this Echo is published, but please check the Dates for your Diary if you want to meet us and find out more about BRO. If you're not local and want to see what your local record office is doing, please visit the campaign website at [www.archiveawareness.com](http://www.archiveawareness.com).

Mark Stevens  
Senior Archivist



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### INVESTIGATE YOUR HISTORY

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. Dates for 2008 are: 4th February, 14th April, 7th July and 6th October. Just call us on 0118 901 5132 or ask at Reception to put your name down on the list.

#### FAMILY HISTORY FOR ALL

The BRO will be joining the Bracknell and Wokingham Branch of the Berkshire Family History Society (BFHS) at a family history workshop. The event will be held between 10.00 and 14.00 on Saturday 13th October 2007 at Wokingham Library. It will be an opportunity to gain advice on how to research family history so why not join us on the day. Please see the BFHS website for more details [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk).

#### ADVANCE NOTICE OF CLOSURE

The BRO will be closed for its two-week annual stocktaking from 5th November to 16th November 2007 (inclusive). We will reopen at 9.00am on Tuesday 20th November 2007.





Reference: D/P145/28/14

## Ancient building burned by suffragettes

In June 1914, suffragettes burned down St Mary’s church in Wargrave. Only the outer walls and the west brick tower remained after the fire. The theory was that a woman smashed a window to get in, set the place alight and escaped through a door.

The Reading Standard stated “Discoveries at the church itself leave no shred of doubt that the fire was an act of incendiarism on the part of militant suffragists. There were three postcards charging the authorities with torturing women”.

We have a reprint of this article amongst the Wargrave parish records, as well as photographs of the resulting damage (document references D/P145/28/15 and 14 respectively). The church was restored and consecrated in 1916 and it still stands today.

Suffrage meant the right to vote and in 1897 Millicent Fawcett founded the National Union of Women’s Suffrage in peaceful protest against Parliament. However, it was the Women’s Social and Political Union set up by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903 whose members gained the nickname Suffragettes. They were prepared to use violence to get the vote and they burned down many churches as the Church of England was against the idea of women’s suffrage. The violence stopped in August 1914 due to the First World War. The fact that women were so important to the war effort finally gained them the right to vote in 1918, but they still had to be over 30. It was not until 1928 that women and men could vote at the age of 21 on an equal basis.

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please contact us on  
**0118 901 5132**



# SUFFRAGETTES AT READING.



## Human rights, freedom and liberty at the BRO

Photo by]

MEETING NEAR CAVERSHAM BRIDGE, ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11th, 1908. [H. A. Barrs, Reading.

There are many references to aspects of human rights, freedom and liberty at the BRO amongst our indexes to the catalogues. The previous article has highlighted the suffragettes, and the spring edition of the Berkshire Echo (issue 39) referred to items relating to slavery and detailed the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery in March 2007.

The Swing riots of the 1830s are also referred to in our indexes. These related to people who worked the land rising up against the use of machinery that affected their standard of living, which they wanted restored.

The Chartism movement of 1838-1848 whereby chartists aimed to gain political rights and influence for the working classes is also covered by our indexes. Other rebellions and riots are also mentioned. Why not visit us to find out more?

The National Archives currently has an online exhibition on Human Rights, which provides more detail on all aspects referred to here and others. Please see their website for more details: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/humanrights](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/humanrights).

## It's fascinating!

There is a great deal of information available at the BRO on any number of subjects – it's fascinating stuff! Why not explore them in detail by making an enquiry to discover what we hold and then visit in person to consult the documents. Please see our website for details on how to make an enquiry and how to visit: [www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk](http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk).

### SUPPORT CLASSICAL MUSIC AND THE BRO

#### Nash Ensemble at the Concert Hall in Reading

Sunday 28 Oct 2007 - 7.30pm

Ian Brown, piano; Marianne Thorsen, violin;  
Malin Broman, violin;  
Lawrence Power, viola; Paul Watkins, cello

Regulars to the exquisite surroundings of The Concert Hall, the Nash Ensemble return with a programme celebrating the composers Korngold and Elgar.

Tickets: £20, £18, £16, £12

Concessions £2 off a ticket.

Pre booked children and students in full-time education £8.50 a ticket.

Student standby tickets £5 one hour before performance.

Pre concert talk: Peter Avis 6.15pm-7pm  
The Town Hall (free).

To book: visit [www.readingarts.com](http://www.readingarts.com)  
or call 0118 960 6060.

The Concert Hall is located within the Town Hall,  
Blagrove Street, Reading.

**Sponsored by the BRO.**



*My heart with Love is beating*

## New to the Archives



'Songbook' of Stephen Mundy - reference D/EX2020/124

### New registers

The latest parish registers now available are:  
Tilehurst St Michael - 20th century baptism, marriage and burial registers (D/P132)  
Wargrave - marriages, 2002-2006 (D/P145).

Other parish records include an almost complete set of parish magazines from 1935 for Ascot Heath (D/P185), as well as other records for Mouldsford (D/P88).

### Property history

Records now available include deeds and papers relating to Kennington Manor and Farm, 1681-1999 (D/EX2020). These contain the papers of Stephen Mundy, tenant of the farm from 1823 to 1860 who kept detailed farm accounts, and also copied all his favourite songs and dance tunes into a manuscript 'song book'. Other deeds include deeds of Maiden Erlegh, Sonning, 1631-1896 (D/EZ136); Caversham, 1906-1923 (D/EX2022), Hampstead Norreys and Chieveley, 1784-1854 (D/EX2016); Reading, 1716-1989 (D/EX1902); and Twyford, 1886-1960 (D/EX2024).

### Health and welfare

Health care for the poor in the first half of the 20th century was often provided by District Nurses who were funded by District Nursing Associations. Records now available on these associations include: the Bagley Wood Nursing Association (for Kennington, Radley, Sunningwell and Wootton), 1923-1948, (D/QNA/BW); and the Wantage District Nursing Association (for Grove and Wantage, and from 1940 Letcombe Bassett and Letcombe Regis), 1928-1942, (D/QNA/WT). Also available are the minutes of Sonning Deanery Moral Welfare Association, 1934-1938 (D/RDS). This association helped unmarried mothers, fallen women and deserted wives by providing financial assistance, places in homes, referrals to the police, and assistance with prosecutions for maintenance, although the names of its clients are omitted.

### Local aspects

Official records include the rate books and valuation lists of Abingdon Borough, 1896-1956 (A/FR); minutes of Chaddleworth Parish Council, 1894-1991 (CPC32) and Finchampstead Parish Council, 1960-2002 (CPC56); and clothing and provisions accounts for Wallingford Cottage Homes, 1937-1948 (D/EX1881).

Leisure activities are reflected in a number of collections, including the minutes of Aldermaston Cricket Club, 1894-1931 (D/EX2000); records of Hurst Horticultural and Cottage Garden Society, 1906-2006 (D/EX2002); and records of the Berkshire Shakespeare Players, 1965-2003 (D/EX1998).

### Opening Hours

Tues 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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### Funding Partners

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