

BRO

The Berkshire Record Office
The Archives of the Royal County

The Berkshire Echo Issue 48

- ❖ [School dinners, 1950s style](#)
- ❖ [Special orders at Broadmoor Hospital](#)
- ❖ [Sour milk and honey: household hints from the 1920s](#)
- ❖ [New to the Archives](#)

From the Editor

This Echo is dedicated to one of my favourite things – food. As food plays an important role in our daily lives, this is reflected in our archives, and so much so that we shall have a food part two in the next edition.

A significant number of our collections come from public institutions, and institutional food is always a matter of interest and debate. Those of you who have followed the topic of school dinners may be interested to see what children were given during the 1950s, when the concept of five a day was obviously some way off the educational radar. We can also all mourn the passing of household hints for what to do with our leftovers, both in terms of the greater waste we generate today as well as the demise of such entertaining advice.

For many of our ancestors food was a source of worry and concern, and we have been able to substitute their worries of getting something to eat with our own of getting the right things to eat. The information that BRO holds lets us watch this type of social evolution at work. This is a reminder of how archives give us a sense of our own place in history, putting the past into a context we can understand and learn from.

Away from food, don't forget that BRO will be open for the annual Heritage Open Days, when you can come and see behind the scenes. We have also announced the dates for next year's introductory visits, if you are interested in having a taster for what research is like. We hope to see you here soon!



Mark Stevens
Senior Archivist

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BROADMOOR REVEALED

Senior Archivist Mark Stevens will give a talk on Victorian Broadmoor as part of the Festival of Crime Writing, taking place at venues across Reading on 11-13 September. Berkshire Record Office will host the talk at 1pm on Friday, 11 September 2009. Free tickets are available from Reading Arts Box Office by calling (0118) 960 6060.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY

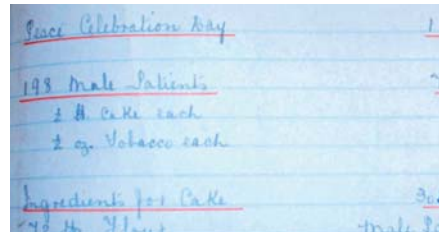
Come along for a behind-the-scenes tour to see the strongrooms and conservation facility at the Berkshire Record Office from 11am-1pm on Saturday 12 September 2009.

If you would like to book a place on a tour, please ask at Reception in the Record Office or call 0118 901 5132 to put your name down on the list.

EXPLORE YOUR HISTORY

Discover your family history or look into the history of where you live with a visit to the BRO. Why not put your name down for one of the free introductory visits? The next dates are: 5 October 2009, 8 February and 19 April 2010. Please see staff at Reception or call (0118) 901 5132 to add your name to the list.





SPECIAL ORDERS AT BROADMOOR HOSPITAL

Recently the Project Conservator of the Broadmoor Hospital archives re-bound a seemingly unremarkable volume called the Special Order Book (D/H14 B1/2/1/8). On closer inspection, this contains a fascinating insight into the life of Broadmoor Hospital through a record of the ingredients and portion sizes of special meals and events at the hospital from 1912 through to 1960.

Listing events such as Christmas Day 1912, the Patients Dance in the Female wing in January 1921, and recipes for Good Friday Buns on April 18th 1924 and the New Years Eve cake in 1959, this volume records the total quantity of ingredients used and the portions allocated to patients and attendants, male and female.

It is interesting to note the decrease in portion sizes over the years and the introduction of a bought Christmas cake from 1948 – Lyon’s Ideal Fruit. The Special Order Book also reveals the Christmas issue of tobacco, cigarettes and oranges to the patients, with cigarettes first being given to the female patients in 1950. Amusingly enough, the 72 ‘fancies’ and ‘jam tarts’ issued for the female patients in Block 2 remains constant throughout the years.

This volume has been re-bound into the standard ‘Broadmoor Red’ that has now become typical of the collection. Although its appearance may be anonymous amongst the other Broadmoor volumes, it allows us a taste of life in one of Britain’s most notorious institutions.

School dinners, 1950s style

TV chef Jamie Oliver has made sure school dinners have been in the news in the last few years. A recent arrival at Berkshire Record Office lists the menus served at South Grange (formerly Burleigh Wood) Nursery School, Sunninghill, in the mid 1950s. No choice was offered – a single hot main course and pudding were produced each day, with no provision for special dietary needs.

Typical meals included:

- Roast lamb, roast potatoes and greens, followed by chocolate mould
- Cheese pie and baked beans; semolina whip
- Stewed beef, mixed root vegetables and potatoes; steamed currant pudding and custard
- Stewed mutton, carrots, lentils, dumplings and boiled potatoes; chocolate blancmange
- Cold mutton, baked jacket potatoes and beetroot; date slices and custard
- Mutton stew and mixed vegetables; rice pudding
- Mince, chipped potatoes and mashed swede; jam tart and custard
- Casseroled rabbit with carrots, swedes and onions; steamed chocolate sponge and vanilla sauce
- Shepherd’s pie and cabbage; treacle tart with cornflakes
- Scrambled eggs, baked jacket potatoes and butter beans; batter pudding with black treacle
- Stuffed ox heart, roast potatoes and cabbage; steamed sultana pudding and custard

Snacks were issued with 2/3 pint of milk at morning playtime, and included sandwiches (fillings included cheese, Marmite, chocolate spread, Bovril, black treacle, and syrup); rusks, with butter, jam, margarine, dripping, or Bovril; jam tarts; scones (with butter or margarine); sponge cake; raw carrot; oatmeal or shortbread biscuits; apple. Again only one kind of snack was offered each day, e.g. one sort of sandwich.

What would today’s children make of such a diet? And would Jamie approve?



SOUR MILK AND HONEY: HOUSEHOLD HINTS FROM THE 1920s

Members of BRO staff have been entertained recently by the handy household hints contained in the Home Words insert to Earley St Peter's parish magazines, for which we have just acquired a bound volume covering the years 1921-1937 (D/EX2105/1).

For instance, cookery expert Estelle Lestienne advocates the French way of dealing with sour milk in January 1921: "the French cook, she lets it get quite solid, strains it through muslin, and takes the thick part to make a sour-cream whip. The solid part is beaten up with enough sweet milk to make it of the consistency of whipped cream; then it has plenty of white sugar stirred into it, and, perhaps, a drop of vanilla. Then it is served in a glass dish, as the accompaniment of stewed fruit. The watery part of the sour milk is mixed with a little sugar, and given to the children to drink in the morning. It is supposed to be extremely good for the general health, and particularly for the complexion. It is not at all nasty." Perhaps some of our readers would like to experiment? In July 1923 she suggests another method: "The milk has turned! Never mind! Make it into cream cheese."

Rather nicer sounding (although untested by Record Office staff) is this recipe for honey loaf:

- 1 lb flour
- 5 oz honey
- 1 dessert spoonful carbonate of soda
- ½ pint boiling water

Stir honey and soda into hot water. Add them to the flour, a little at a time, beating well with a wooden spoon. Keep beating steadily for 10 minutes, until full of bubbles. Put into well-greased loaf tin and bake in moderate oven. Test with skewer when done. Will be golden brown and slightly sticky, like gingerbread. Improves with keeping – wait 3 days until cutting it.



Need somewhere to hold a meeting?

Why not ask about our Wroughton Room for hire. Reasonable rates, great accommodation. Call on **0118 901 5137** for more information.



St Marks Hospital, Maidenhead staff social club meal, 1954 (BRO ref: D/H3/1/2/3)

Help local & family history at BRO

We are looking for volunteers to help us check the index of wills for Berkshire 1711-1857. If this sounds like something you would enjoy, please contact us by emailing: arch@reading.gov.uk, telephoning (0118) 901 5132 or put your name down at Reception.

Feedback

The editor of Ancestors magazine contacted The Berkshire Echo to give more information about one of the articles featured in Issue 47. In the 'New to the Archives' section, we mentioned that the records of Yattendon Civil Parish Council (CPC159) feature Elizabeth Waterhouse, a female chairman from 1906-1913. We thought this was notable, especially as women did not have the right to vote at that time. In fact, Ancestors tells us, "women ratepayers could vote and stand for local office as indeed they had been doing in increasing numbers since the 1860s. The whole subject is discussed in Patricia Hollis' excellent *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987)."

Perhaps another reader will do some research on Berkshire women in political life in this time period and report back to the Echo for a future issue...





New to the Archives

Deeds & Estate records

Berkshire Record Office has purchased a 1773 conveyance of a mansion in Clewer, then known as Gloucester Lodge, and subsequently called St Leonard's Hill (D/EZ164). The house was the home of the Duke of Gloucester, younger brother of King George III, and Maria, the Dowager Countess Waldegrave, following their secret marriage in 1766. Maria was the illegitimate child of Edward Walpole and Dorothy Clements. Despite being the granddaughter of Robert Walpole, considered the first prime minister of the UK, her social status precluded her from marrying into royalty. Their secret marriage led to the passing of the Royal Marriages Act 1772 by an enraged George III. Though their marriage was considered legal by Parliament, Maria was never received at court.

We have also acquired deeds for The Beeches, Wokingham, 1851-1879 (D/EX2054), and property in Binfield, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Lambourn, Thatcham, Windsor and Wokingham, 1711-1794 (D/EZ163); Reading, 1871-1966 (D/EX2101); and Waltham St Lawrence, 1832 (D/EX2100).

We have purchased a small but fascinating set of bills from James Fidel of Faringdon to Lord Barrington of Shrivensham, who employed him to carry out various jobs on the estate, mostly building work, between 1815 and 1818 (D/EZ155). A small miscellaneous 19th century collection relates to the Harenc family, one of whom was vicar of Longcot, and Robert Blunt and the Clegg family of Windsor (D/EX1922).

Photographs & Drawings

A charming photograph album of children treated at the Finchampstead and Barkham Infant Welfare Clinic c.1925-1958, originally presented to Nurse Watkins when she retired, is the highlight of the collection of the Finchampstead Society (D/EX665). An index to the children in the album appears in the catalogue. Other new additions to our photographic holdings include Berkshire scenes taken by commercial photographer Thomas Wilkie between roughly the 1950s and 1980s (D/EX1934); and 1970s scenes in Cookham, East Hagbourne, Sonning, Wantage, Windsor and Wokingham (D/EX2063).

We have also acquired a small collection of photographs of Marlston House and estate in Bucklebury, home of the biscuit-making Palmer family, c.1896-1910s (D/EX2057). Single images include a view of London Road, Reading, c.1910 (D/EX2080) and the Christmas party at St Peter's Church, Earley, 1923 (D/EX2090). Some interesting early 20th century photographs and illustrated Sunday School material have been added to the records of Wesley Methodist Church, Reading (D/MS60). We have also acquired a late 20th century collection of drawings of Berkshire pubs made by a specialist stationery company (D/EX2103). Also new is an album relating to the 'Windsor Through The Ages' Pageant held by the inhabitants of Windsor and Slough to celebrate the coronation of George VI in 1937 (D/EX2072).

Schools & Women's Groups

We hold little relating to private schools, so we were delighted to receive the records of Lambrook School, a private preparatory boarding school for boys in Winkfield, 1870-1997 (D/EX1832). This collection includes administrative and pupil records, school publications and photographs. Women's activities are represented by a very large collection of records from closed branches of the Women's Institute, 1916-2006 (D/EX1925). We have also listed the records of Wokingham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild, 1962-2008 (D/EX2098).

Wills & Family papers

Also new are the probate of Lucy Coxhead, widow of the minister of Newbury Baptist Church, 1865 (D/EX2025), papers relating to the will of Sir George Henry Long of Windsor, 1900-1954 (D/EX2071), and papers relating to the Tuck family of Maidenhead and White Waltham, 1867-1933, and to property in Warfield, 1824-1952 (D/EX2077).

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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