

# BRO

The Berkshire Record Office  
The Archives of the Royal County

## The Berkshire Echo

October 2019

- Jacksons of Reading
- Early closing a living tomb
- Second hand – or stolen?
- New to the Archives

### WHAT'S ON

#### Always here for you

*25th September to 20th December 2019, during normal opening hours*

This exhibition celebrates 100 years of the Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes. It takes a look back at how the BFWI encouraged and inspired women to develop their skills and empowered them to make a difference in their communities.

Available during our opening hours (Tuesday and Wednesday 9am to 5pm, Thursday 9am to 9pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm). FREE admission. Why not come along and take a look?

#### Behind the Scenes at the BRO

*11th November 2019, time 10:30 to 11:30*

Ever wanted to know what goes on behind the scenes at the BRO? Then come along and find out! You will be shown some historical documents, where we store them and given an insight into how our conservator repairs them. It's FREE and there are 12 spaces available. Booking is essential. Please email [arch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:arch@reading.gov.uk) or call 0118 937 5132.

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### From the Editor


Welcome to the autumn edition of the Berkshire Echo which looks at local shopping 'giant' of its time – Jacksons, as well as the issues surrounding pawnbrokers. Large department stores were something to behold in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries with everything under one roof and helpful assistants to tend to their customers. Traditionally, shops tended to be fairly small and specialised in one or two products. Indeed, we discover in 'Jacksons of Reading' that the store began life as several small stores dotted around Reading. It must have been very exciting for the people of Reading to have everything in one place!

Pawnbrokers were people who would lend money on items brought in by their owners. Pawnbrokers were a life line to those who needed money quickly to make ends meet – more often than not, this meant the poor. If they could find the money to buy back the item within the time set by the pawnbroker, they could get them back. If not, the pawnbroker could sell them on instead. As we discover in 'Second hand – or stolen' however, the owner of items is not always the person pawning them. It is interesting to see how such revealing stories can be discovered from court records.


It would appear that the need for pawnbrokers is active today as it always has been, but as we move further into the digital age and online shopping, it would seem that the traditional local department store is perhaps at risk of being lost forever.

Do to take a look at the 'New to the Archives' section to see what is now available. Our 'What's On' section details what events are going on and you can always keep up to date, search the online catalogue, or use our services by visiting our website: [berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/](http://berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/)

You can also follow us on Twitter:

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Read on and discover more. Enjoy!

Ivone Turnbull  
Senior Archivist

Top: The infants' department at Jacksons, 1958 (D/EX2670/6/12/2)



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E. JACKSON, King's Road Corners, Reading.

Gent's "Ready to Wear" Clothing Department.



# Jacksons of Reading

The last independent department store in Reading was Jacksons. Its origins lie with the small shop of Henry Fox, clothier, woollen draper and tailor, hatter, hosier and general outfitter, at 6 High Street, Reading, established in 1848. Edward Jackson bought the shop in 1875, and expanded the business, which stayed in the hands of his family until its closure in 2013.

A little-known fact about Jacksons is that it was actually a (local) chain. From 1899 onwards several branches were opened in London Road and Oxford Road, Reading; as well as Caversham, Bracknell, Maidenhead, Goring, Henley and Oxford, and Camberley (Surrey). From 1899 to the 1920s hardware, china, glass, stationery and fancy goods, were sold at a separate store opposite the main shop, at the corner of Kings Road with Duke Street, which was known as Jackson's Household Stores or the Duke Street Stores. The boot and shoe department was at 8 High Street, 1885-c.1955.

Buildings adjoining the original shop were acquired piecemeal, and the main premises at the corner of Broad Street, Kings Road and Market Place were rebuilt as a single store in 1885. Clothing and drapery departments were housed here. There were major extensions in 1936, when showrooms, stockrooms and warehouses were erected at the rear of the premises, and in 1954 along King's Road to house drapery, linen, furniture, bedding, footwear

and ladies' clothes. The oldest parts of the building were devoted to men's clothing and tailoring and children's clothing, including school uniforms. In 1960 the firm purchased 3 Kings Road, a public house which infilled the space between the 1954 extension and the original building, and created a new main entrance in Kings Road.

In its heyday the shop was at the forefront of new developments in retail. The famous pneumatic tubes used to take orders and payments were installed in 1960. In later years the shop had a reputation for upholding traditional values in retail.

One of our favourite items in the archive is a set of rules drawn up in 1893 for staff, who were all male at the time, including how to provide good service to customers. There was a veiled threat to discontinue a profit-sharing scheme Edward Jackson had introduced a few years earlier, with the words, 'It is not my intention to offer a premium to carelessness, indolence, or indifference'. There were fines for unprofessional behaviour, including 'gossiping, standing in groups, lounging about in an unbusinesslike manner, or addressing fellow-assistants other than by their surnames'. Seemingly strict, but relatable to today's retail services, though perhaps first names are more acceptable now.

Source: Jacksons archives, D/EX2414, D/EX2670

Top left: Jacksons decorated to celebrate the coronation of the Queen, 1953 (D/EX2670/6/4)  
Top right: The latest fashions on sale at Jacksons, 1903 (D/EX2670/4/5)

WHAT'S ON

## How to Read Old Handwriting Workshop

18th November 2019, time 10:15 to 14:45

Always wanted to know how to read old handwriting, but don't know how? Then come along to our workshop! It will be held at the Berkshire Record Office where we will look at samples from 16th to 18th century documents held here. Cost is £20 per person. There are 10 places available and booking is essential. Please email [arch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:arch@reading.gov.uk) or call 0118 937 5132.

## Don't forget

The World War One blog is still going and each post relates to that day or month 100 years ago as Berkshire coped during the war and dealt with its aftermath. The blog will reach its culmination this autumn as we reach the centenary of the first official Remembrance (Armistice) Day. However, the blog will remain online thereafter. Why not see what you can discover?

<https://berkshirevoiceswwi.wordpress.com/about-berkshire-at-war/>





Top: A dress showroom in Reading, 1911 (D/EX165/1, p. 73)

## Early closing a living tomb

In 1882 Reading bookseller George Lovejoy railed against 'an extreme section among the shop assistants & their friends who are beginning to demand ... things in the moon, simply impossible things', such as restricting the working day to 10 hours. This would 'shut up the shops of London at six p.m & thus practically paralyse the activity of a metropolis containing four millions of souls. London after six in the afternoon would be literally a living tomb'. A curious, if perhaps an extreme, opinion.

Source: R/D131/8/17

## Second hand – or stolen?

Pawnbrokers had an important social role helping the poor to raise money at short notice in a cash-based society, and also provided cheap goods for purchase by the poor. However, as revealed in the records of Reading Borough Quarter Sessions, their shops were also a place where stolen goods were sold on.

On 17 October 1867 19 year old dressmaker Annie Jane Kirk appeared before the court, accused of stealing two pillows, one silver spoon and one blanket from her landlord William Barnes (at the Woolpack Inn, Broad Street, Reading). Barnes's wife Sophia became suspicious of Annie, and reported her to the police. Mrs Barnes testified in court:

"On the 11th July on missing the pillows I asked her if she hadn't a pair of pillows belonging to me. She said she never had any. I told her that she had had a pair, and referred her to the time when she had asked for a pair of pillow cases to put on them. She then confessed that she had had them but that they were not in the house, but if I would wait she would get them... I then accused her of the silver spoon – she said 'if you will forgive me I will tell you'. I asked her what she did with it. She told me she had sold it to a person named Adams in Castle Street for 3s, that she had asked 5s but he only offered her 3s for it. I then said the person that offered 3s must have known that it was stolen as he did offer half the value of it. I asked her if they questioned her where she got it

from, she said no, they asked her no questions. I ... told her I would have her locked up."

Sergeant Roby took up the tale: "On the 11th July instant in the evening I went to Mr Adams, a General Dealer in Castle Street, and asked him if he had bought a silver table spoon about two or three months back. He said he would think and then said he thought he had. I then gave him a small teaspoon to look at the initials on it – he said 'I believe it is sold'. I told him he would have to find out to whom he sold it as it was stolen property. He said he would look over his books if I would call in the evening. I called in the evening when Adams said it was not sold and he produced the spoon which is now in my possession. I then took the spoon to Mrs Barnes who identified it. Adams had told me that he gave either 3s or 3/6 for the spoon but he could not remember which. Before I went for the spoon I went to the Woolpack and searched the room occupied by the prisoner and in a small drawer in a box belonging to the prisoner I found 23 pawn tickets. After that I went with Mrs Barnes to Mr Rose, a pawnbroker where some property was produced which Mrs Barnes identified."

William Adams of 32 Castle Street, Reading, testified: "I am a General Dealer and Salesman and deal in gold and silver. About three or four months ago the prisoner came to my shop – my shopwoman [later identified as Jane Purdue] was in the shop. I believe I was at tea or dinner and I was called into the shop. The prisoner had offered the table spoon produced for sale. The prisoner asked me five shillings for the spoon. I said 'where did you get it, is it your own?' She said 'yes'. She gave a name and said that she lived in Friar Street and that her mother was very ill, that they had been well off but were very much reduced. My young woman said, 'It's all right Adams for she is a respectable woman, she has been here once or twice before'."

Annie Jane Kirk herself said, when charged at the police office, "I don't wish to say anything". However, exercising her right to silence did her no good, as she was found guilty and sentenced to six months hard labour.

Source: minutes of Reading Borough quarter sessions (R/JQ2/3) and sessions papers (R/JQ3/125).





## New to the Archives

### Shopping in Berkshire

We were delighted to receive records relating to historic Reading department store Jackson's, 1865-2014 (D/EX2414 and D/EX2670), which are highlighted in this issue. Records of A E Watson & Son of Minster Street, Reading, china and glass dealers, 1861-1890s (R/D127), are among the Reading Borough deposited collections, as are account books from Colebrook & Co, a butcher's shop (R/D129). A small collection of bills and vouchers of the Bradley family of Reading, 1929-1935, relate to a number of local shops and other businesses (D/EZ186). We have acquired accounts for E A Bullock of Wokingham, ironmonger, 1933-1936 (D/EX2585), and F W Heynes of Cox Green, Maidenhead, coal merchants, 1948-1971 (D/EX2529). We have also been given a photograph of the premises of Bradley and Bliss, Ltd, chemists, Kings Road, Reading, in the 1980s (D/EX2516).

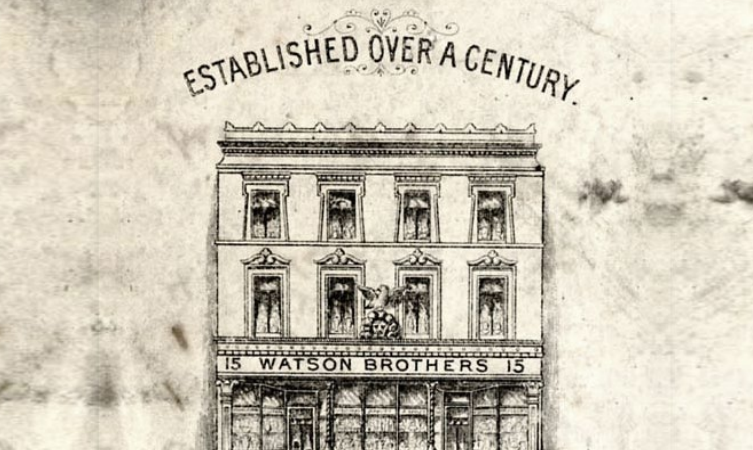
### Other local businesses

Dunlop & Son of Reading, and its subsidiary The Polienta Company, was a corn and coal merchant which also manufactured animal feed and medications; its records include recipes, patents and advertisements for various products (R/D132). The records of Windsor Royal Gas Light Company include an interesting photograph of the 1947 floods (D/SG7). We have also catalogued records of gas companies in Ascot (D/SG1), Maidenhead (D/SG4), Pangbourne (D/SG5), and Newbury (D/SG11). A photograph shows the steam powered van of S & E Collier Ltd, brick, tile and pottery manufacturers of Reading in the early 20th century (D/EX2662).

A large collection of records belonging to clients of a Wokingham solicitor's firm has been catalogued (D/EX208). The firm had several names, starting out as the practice of John Wheeler in the early 19th century, and was known successively as Wheeler & Sargeant, Sargeant & Haye, and Haye & Son. They had clients mainly in south Berkshire.

### Local authorities

We have received the records of several civil parish and town councils. Those of Datchet (CPC200), Brimpton (CPC26), Englefield (CPC52), Leckhampstead (CPC34B) and Swallowfield



(CPC129) date back to their foundation in 1894. The Hungerford Town Council records are even earlier as they include the 1820 enclosure award (CPC71). Wokingham Town Council has deposited various deeds of playing fields and allotments, 1867-1979 (CPC154). Bisham Parish Council records include photograph albums commemorating two visits by HM Queen Elizabeth II, in 1974 and 2002 (CPC18). Her Majesty also appears in photographs of her opening Shire Hall (then the new Berkshire County Council HQ) in 1982, in an album created by the Fire Brigade (D/EX2551). We have acquired a report discussing potential sites for a sewage works for Slough, 1871 (D/EX2728). Also of interest are the records of Frilsham Clubroom (village hall), 1953-2016 (D/EX2570).

### Sport

We have recently acquired the records of Warfield Badminton Club, 1856-1999 (D/EX2665). A small collection of papers relates to Berkshire Cricket League, 2006-2010, and more generally cricket playing in the county, 1968-2013 (D/EX2464).

### Opening Hours

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

### Contact Information:

Tel: 0118 937 5132 Fax: 0118 937 5131  
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### Funding Partners

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

Top left: Shopfront of Messrs A.H. Bull Ltd, 59 Broad Street, Reading, decorated for Coronation of George V and for the shop's sale, 1911 (D/EX1655/1, p. 51)  
Top right: Watson Brothers' store in Minster Street, Reading, late 19c (R/D127/3/8)

*Click here to recommend a friend*

