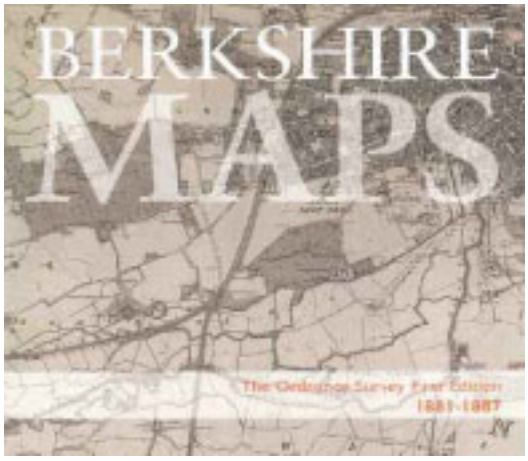
The
Berkshire Echo

Berkshire Record Office Newsletter Issue 31 Spring 2005

Ordnance Survey Maps of Berkshire on CD

Berkshire Record Office and the Berkshire Family History Society have produced a CD of the fifty-one 6 inch maps of Berkshire published by the Ordnance Survey between 1881-1887. These maps cover the whole of Berkshire including Slough and Caversham.

The CD costs £10 (+£1 p&p if ordered by post from the Record Office), and is available from Reception at the Record Office. Please make cheques payable to Reading Borough Council.



Ivone Turnbull

Dates for your diary

Further dates have been added for Introductory Visits for newcomers to the Office. The new dates are: **11th July** and **10th October 2005**. If you would like to attend, please ask at Reception to put your name on the list, or call 0118 901 5132.

Ivone Turnbull

Royal grant of Easthampstead Park discovered

History experts are excited by the discovery of Charles I's original grant of Easthampstead Park to William Trumbull in 1636. The charter had long been thought lost, but was recently discovered in London. It has now been purchased by Berkshire Record Office with support from the MLA/Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund.

William Trumbull was the son of another William, who had been British Ambassador to the Netherlands and had been first gifted the Park in 1628. The grant of 1636 gave the Park to the Trumbulls permanently.

The Trumbulls used the grant as a starting point from which to build up their estates. By the nineteenth century their heirs, the Downshires, had the largest single landholding in the whole of east Berkshire.

The document includes a detailed portrait of Charles I within its initial letter. It is written in Latin and lists a number of places included in the estate, such as Ennworth Meadow, Queen's Meadow and Barres Coppice.

Cllr Dorothy Hayes, Bracknell Forest Borough Council's Heritage Champion, said: "This discovery is fantastic news for residents of the borough and local historians. To uncover such a key document on the history of the area is very exciting and gives a great insight into how the borough has developed over time".

County Archivist, Peter Durrant said: "This is a really exciting discovery, and we are delighted that this important document for the history of Bracknell will now be safe for the community".

The document is available to view at the Record Office, reference D/EZ 150.acc 7504.1 (please note, this is not its final reference).

Mark Stevens

Aquatic conclusion to school opening

When Wargrave deposited some parish records in October 2004, the Record Office was delighted to discover that among them was a set of parish magazines, which were both the earliest and the most complete in all its parish collections. Dating from 1861 and continuing to 2002 they provide a fascinating picture of life in Wargrave over nearly 150 years.

Engraving of the new Piggott schools from the cover of a Wargrave Parish Magazine, June 1862 (reference D/P145/28A/1).

A wide variety of important and less important events are chronicled ranging from the times of services and the deaths of prominent parishioners to horticultural shows, cricket matches and visits to the Crystal Palace. At times there was even space for details of local GWR trains and the finding of lost dogs.

An event such as the opening of the new Piggott schools on 16 October 1862 is vividly described. The day started with a service and sermon at 11 o' clock in the church attended by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, Archdeacon Randall, about 30 neighbouring clergy and all the school children.

At its conclusion everyone formed a procession and marched slowly through the village to the new schools, magnificently decorated with wreaths and monograms and baskets of ferns and exotics. The actual opening ceremony then took place, with a further homily, before everyone returned to the village for some much-needed refreshments.

After lunch, the festivities concluded in a somewhat unexpected way, and one, which it seems unlikely, has ever appeared in a biography of Wilberforce. The clergy of the parish took the Bishop and Lord Braybrooke out in a four-oar boat, rowing them down to Henley and round Temple Island, while the Rector stood with parishioners on Henley Bridge and led the cheers as the boat sped up the river.

Sabina Sutherland

Protestation Returns for Berkshire, 1641/1642

On the eve of the English Civil War, Parliament ordered that a protestation be made as an oath of allegiance to the King, to Parliament and to the established church. Signed initially by members of Parliament in 1641, the order to take the protestation was later extended to all males in England and Wales over the age of eighteen. The officials of the parish were required to make the oath in front of the Justices of the Peace of the hundred, and then in turn the parish officials administered the oath of loyalty for their parishioners.

The returns usually take the form of a list of the names of all of the men in the parish over the age of eighteen who took the protestation. Very occasionally, children and servants are listed, as in the case of Sutton Courtenay; or women took the protestation, as in the case of West Shefford. Those who refused to take the oath also had their names listed. The returns were later used to identify Roman Catholics by their refusal, who were then subject to increased taxation.

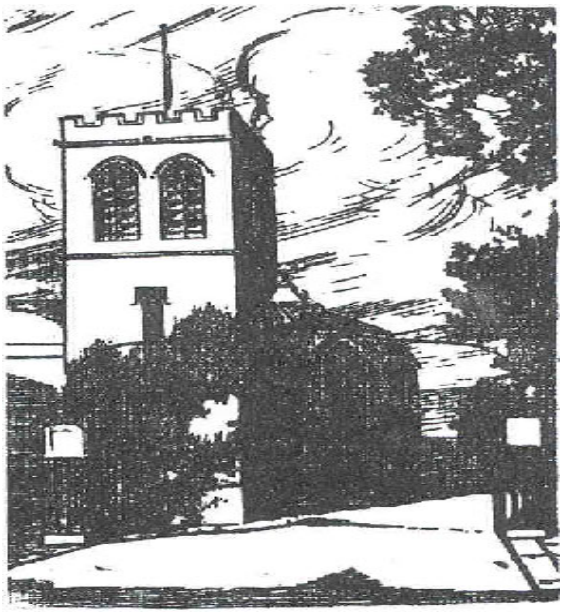
Berkshire Record Office has a copy of the Protestation Returns for Berkshire (reference T/A 40) for consultation; the originals are held at the House of Lords Record Office. The returns that survive for Berkshire offer partial but substantial coverage, with most of central Berkshire extant. A new index to the places covered, is available at the front of the Protestation Returns copies, and will help researchers access the information contained in this wonderful source for family, local and social historians.

Lindsay McCormack

Just catalogued

We are delighted to announce that we have received substantial deposits of records from several Berkshire parishes. Newly available material from Ashbury (D/P 9) includes a banns register, 1824-1867, churchwardens' accounts from 1791,

19th century vestry minutes, and, perhaps most exciting, hitherto unknown 18th and 19th century overseers' records. From Wargrave (D/P 145) we have received material including 20th century parish registers, and 19th century churchwardens' accounts, vestry minutes, and parish magazines.



Maidenhead St Andrew and St Mary Magdalene in Maidenhead High Street (D/P 180; exterior view of the church shown here), often known as St Mary's, was an extra-parochial chapel in the Middle Ages, becoming a parish in its own right in the 1870s. Its records include 20th century registers of baptisms and burials, vestry minutes from 1838, records of parish charities from 1835, and the managers' minutes of Maidenhead Infant School, Brock Lane, 1870-1884. Other parish records have arrived from Spencers Wood (D/P 194), including the marriage register, 1983-2003.

We have also completed cataloguing of the records of the various Methodist circuits of Newbury and Hungerford (D/MC 7-13). Most usefully for family historians, these include the baptism registers for chapels originally in the main part of Hungerford Wesleyan Circuit, 1837-1937, for the Lambourn section of the same circuit, 1837-1954, and the Aldbourne section of Hungerford circuit, 1969-1986.

Topically in the light of the recent ban on hunting, we recently acquired the South Berkshire Hunt's handbooks of hounds, 1950-1951 and 1959-1960 (D/EX 1877). The county's rural history is also reflected in the records of Reading Corn Market and Cattle Exchange, 1936-1965 (D/EX 1669). We have also catalogued records of the Walsh family of Warfield Park, mainly deeds relating to Warfield and Winkfield, from the 13th century to 1876 (D/EO).

Lisa Spurrier

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Berkshire Record Office, a countywide archive service supported by all local authorities in the Royal County of Berkshire: Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham.