Box 72

# The Berkshire Echo

The Newsletter of Berkshire Record Office

NO. 12 WINTER 2000

## On the Move

Our move to new premises in Castle Hill will be getting under way towards the end of January. Most staff will be involved in making sure that our documents are safely and securely moved from Shinfield Park and correctly allocated to their pre-allotted shelves in the new Record Office strong rooms.

A small public service team will remain at Shinfield Park during January and February. The service that we are able to offer during the move at the old Shire Hall premises is expected to be as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **January 2000:** | **Film, fiche and access to most original documents (check with staff as to availability). Production times will be less frequent in the second half of the month.** |
| **February 2000:** | **Film and fiche consultation only** |
| **March 2000:** | **Closed** |
| **April 2000:** | **Re-open in the new building. NB because there have been some delays in fitting out the office, this is now likely to be towards the end of the month.** |

We will be maintaining a postal, telephone and e-mail enquiry service throughout the period of the move, but our ability to answer some enquiries will be affected by the lack of access to original documents from February and to film, fiche and finding aids for periods in March and April.

Circumstances may mean that this schedule will have to be adjusted at short notice. Therefore, if you are hoping to come to the Record Office, we strongly recommend that you check with staff in advance to make sure that you will have a worthwhile visit.

New information leaflets, including one on how to find us, are in production.

**Elizabeth Hughes**



RECORD OFFICE L/6456 BERKS

# What's New in the New Berkshire Record Office?

**OUR ADDRESS!**

Our new address from 1 April 2000 is:

Berkshire Record Office
9 Coley Avenue
Reading
Berks RG1 6AF

Our telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address remain the same. They are:

Tel. 0118 901 5132
Fax 0118901 5131
Email ARCH@Reading.gov.uk

**OUR RESOURCES**

Our reception area will include a small permanent exhibition, a refreshment area (with a drinks machine we hope!) and a public telephone, as well as the usual coat hangers and lockers and sales stands.

We have a larger search room to accommodate up to 32 people. There is also more space for each visitor and more microfilm and fiche cabinets to spread out the storage of these resources.

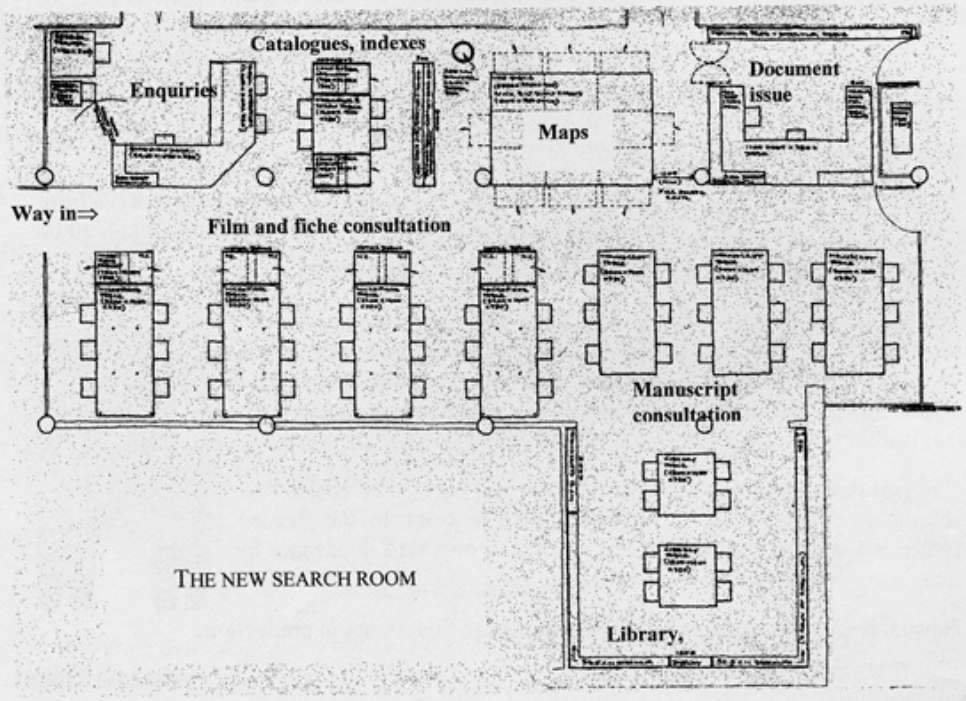
We are planning to replace missing fiches of the National Probate Index and General Register Office Index. We have also ordered five more years of the GRO index to bring the coverage of births, marriages and deaths up to 1997, and are looking at other resources that we might acquire to improve the service we offer.

Another new facility in the search room will be two public terminals. These will have internet access, and we hope in future to extend the facilities available on them.

We also have a separate library area within the search room, where the transcripts can also be consulted.

A new lecture/exhibition room means that we will able to accommodate visiting groups much more easily and will be able to start up our exhibitions programme again.

**Elizabeth Hughes**

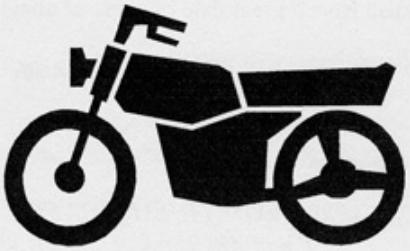



THE NEW SEARCH ROOM

# Just Catalogued

Preparations for our forthcoming move have inevitably meant a reduction in the amount of time we have been able to devote to cataloguing in recent months, but we have been able to complete one large estate catalogue, namely substantial additions to the papers of the Hunter family of Beech Hill, 1651-1958 (**D/EHR**). The family, originally London merchants, settled in Beech Hill in the mid-18th century, and in the 19th century a junior line with baronetal rank lived nearby at Mortimer Hill, Stratfield Mortimer. This branch is well represented in the family archive, as the last baronet died in 1924, with his estates devolving on his Beech Hill cousins. The estates included property in Swallowfield, Shinfield and Spencers Wood.

An unexpected stray in this collection was the papers of the solicitors of Apsley Cherry-Garrard of Lamer Park, Hertfordshire, 1910-1915, 1924 (**D/EHR Z5-11**), mostly relating to the management of the estates he had inherited from his Cherry forebears in Denford and Little Wittenham, on his absences overseas. The papers include a few letters from Cherry-Garrard in the Antarctic, where he was a member of Captain Scott's 1910-1912 expedition, and from a later (1914) scientific expedition to a war-torn China. There is also light shed on his war work: a plan in August 1914 to use dogs to track down wounded soldiers at the Front, and his work later that year as a motorcycle dispatch rider, which he described enthusiastically as "Kipling in real life!" serving in the ranks "with a lot of rough but very good diamonds".



Other estate papers recently received relate to property in Caversham, Sonning, Eye and Dunsden, and Essex, belonging to the Ewen family, 1840-1935 (**D/EX 1544**). A fine map of the Wallingtons estate in Kintbury, dated about 1770, and copied from an earlier version of 1652 (**D/EZ 127**) was purchase with the aid of a grant from the Friends of the National Libraries, and we also bought a 1398 deed of a messuage in Ascot (**D/EZ 128**).

Records from a number of schools have been transferred to us recently. Perhaps the most interesting was Newbury Girls' British School, with records from 1836 to its closure in 1909, including admission registers for 1862-1897 (**99/SCH/1**), followed by Newbury Girls Secondary Modern School (later Shaw House School); 1909-1970, with registers to 1950 (**99/SCH/2**); and a separate deposit of newsletters, 1910-1915 (**D/EX 1594**). There were also more modern records of the Turnpike School, Newbury, 1973-1995 (**99/SCH/3**); of Bradfield Church of England Primary School, 1978-1989 (**D/EX 1552**); and Princess Margaret Royal Free School, Windsor, 1985-1989 (**D/EX 1568**). We also acquired some photographs of classes at Wexham Court Junior School, Slough, from the early 1960s (**D/EX 1557**).

Church schools were also represented in our latest deposits of parish records from Great Coxwell and North Moreton. From Great Coxwell (**D/P 44**), we received items dating from 1703 to 1990, including churchwardens' accounts, 1703-1771 (sadly too fragile for consultation at present), parish memoranda, 1912-1936, accounts of Pinsents charity, 1787-1865, and the National School's accounts, 1885-1903.

South Moreton records, 1788-1996 (**D/P 87**), include managers' minutes for the parish school, and an early example of oral history in the form of a volume of historical notes and memoranda compiled by the rector between the 1880s and 1911, including information received from local people born in the 1820s and 1830s. Earley St Bartholomew has deposited records including deeds of the church site, 1867-1994 (**D/P 192**). We also purchased the will of John Sowtheby of Buckland, 1599 (**D/EZ 129**), which established a charity whose records are already in the parish records.

Businesses are somewhat under-represented in our holdings, so we were especially pleased to receive the records of David Basset, a Maidenhead corn dealer, 1871-1880 (**D/EX 1577**). We have also acquired some papers from Kinneirs', a Wiltshire solicitors, relating to clients in Longcot, Shrivenham and other parishes in north-west Berkshire, mostly consisting of securities for loans, 1631-1973 (**D/EX 1567**).

Finally, Berkshire County Council minutes and agendas have been listed for the period 1989-1993 (**C/CS**).

**Lisa Spurrier**

## A Dubious Marriage

Family historians will be aware of the Hardwick Marriage Act of 1754, which restricted legal marriage ceremonies to the Church of England, Jews and Quakers. Before that date less formal ceremonies might still be legal. One such is revealed in a 1710 letter from Thomas White of Shrivenham to John Greenaway, apparently the Official Principal of the Archdeacon of Berkshire, found among the churchwardens' presentments :

"Sir,

There is a report, and very true, as I am inform'd, That one Gabriell Rose, a Dairy-Man, living in ye Parish of Shrivenham, lately Married a Couple in a publique-House; Hee is a fellow of loose behaviour, and deserves punishment; and therefore I thought it my duty to let Mr Official understand it least ye Person should goe unpunished, and by yt meanes so encourage others in ye like falt. The Persons so married were Albert Williams of Longcott, and Wilmott Pike of Shrivenham, by ye aforesaid Gabriell Rose…"

Gabriel Rose was clearly not the most respectable man in Shrivenham, for in 1713 he and his wife Mary were presented for "antenuptial fornication" (by vicar George Stephens – "because it is not easie to bring the Church Wardens who are old men to a right understanding of their duty … If they have any trouble on that account I shall have a great dale of clamour about my ears and the parish will grudge the Charges").

**Lisa Spurrier**

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