

WOKINGHAM LIBRARIES

LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY

RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN WOKINGHAM LIBRARY

Books

We have several shelves of book stock dedicated to local history, mostly covering the Wokingham Borough area, but also Berkshire more generally. We have books covering:

- Specific areas, eg. The Book of Sonning, Wokingham: A Pictorial History
- Specific topics, eg. Berkshire Murders, Folk Songs of the Upper Thames
- Buildings, eg. The Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading Abbey
- People or families, eg. The Surgeon of Crowthorne, Henry Woodyer: Gentleman Architect
- Businesses, eg. Suttons Seeds, Great Western Railway

We also have a few books on neighbouring towns and areas, such as Reading, Windsor and Henley, and some books on how to research local history.

Titles of Interest include:

- *Victoria County History of Berkshire* – 4 volumes (plus an index volume) published between 1906 and 1927. The first 2 volumes have articles arranged by subject (eg. natural history, schools, political history etc), and volumes 3 and 4 have entries arranged by place.
- *Pevsner's Buildings of England: Berkshire* – arranged by town/village, giving brief details of any buildings of architectural merit.
- *Local Studies Information Pack (green ring binder)* – photocopies of local maps, population figures, coat of arms, local villages and buildings; information on the Town Hall, local museums and record offices.
- *Local Studies Resource Pack (blue ring binder)* – aimed at schools, produced by the Berkshire Education Library Service in 1991. Contains a brief history of Wokingham and a history of transport in Wokingham. Includes copies of directories, maps, cuttings, historical prints and photos.
- *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* – produced by the Dept of the Environment. A blue ring binder covering Wokingham and Wokingham Without, dated 1999. Also bound copies covering Charvil & Twyford (1984), Remenham, Ruscombe & Wargrave (1983), and East Hampstead (1972).
- *Monumental Brasses of Berkshire* – published in 1924, a list and description of monumental brasses in Berkshire churches.
- *Place Names of Berkshire* – 3 volumes, giving derivations of place names throughout the county.
- *County Maps and Histories: Berkshire* – uses a selection of old maps to illustrate the history of the county.
- *Roll of Honour (Land Forces World War 2)* – 6 volumes, arranged by regiment.

- *Magna Britannia Berkshire* – first published in 1806. A general history of the county followed by small sections on each significantly-sized town and village.
- *Historical Atlas of Berkshire* – maps on a variety of topics, eg. towns, markets, population centres, churches, farming, disease, poor law unions etc.
- *Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers* – 2003 edition. County by county, maps of parishes with dates of the earliest existing records. Indexes parishes alphabetically, listing which registers are held and where to find them.
- *Berkshire Archdeaconry Probate Records 1480-1652* – 3 volumes, containing indexes arranged by personal name, place name and occupation, with reference numbers to the wills held in the Berkshire Record Office.

(To see a complete list of our local history books, go to the catalogue page on our website, <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/libraries/library-services/search-renew-and-reserve-items/>, click on the 'Search our Catalogue' option, followed by the 'Advanced' option. From the 'Collection' list, select 'Local Studies: Lending' and 'Local Studies: Reference', and click on the 'OK' button.

If you want to see which books are in a specific library, select that library from the 'Location' list before clicking 'OK'.)

Pamphlets

At the end of the book stock are two shelves of pamphlet boxes containing pamphlets and other material relating to the Wokingham area. Each box covers a separate topic, eg. Churches, Nature, Houses etc.

There are also some box files (open and closed) at the beginning of the local history shelves, covering Towns & Villages, Walks, and Family History.

Material held in the pamphlet boxes includes:

- Publications of the Federation of Family History Societies
- Publications of the Society of Genealogists
- Local journals (see below)
- Wokingham town/district guides
- Sale catalogues of local houses
- Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society publications
- A small collection of photographs and postcards
- Booklets produced by local churches
- Supplements from local newspapers

Newspapers

We hold copies of the following local newspapers on microfilm:

- Bracknell Times Aug 1968 – Nov 1971
- Wokingham & Crowthorne Times Jan 1981 – Aug 1981
- Bracknell Times Jan 1983 – Dec 1987
- Wokingham Times Jan 1988 – Jun 2009

Journals

Local journals, held in pamphlet boxes unless otherwise stated:

Berkshire Archaeological Journal – volumes 67 - 76, covering 1973 – 2003.

Berkshire Old and New – issues 14 – 31, from 1997 to 2014. Produced by the Berkshire Local History Association, with articles covering the history of Berkshire.

Berkshire Local History Newsletters – issues 57 – 105, covering 1997 – 2013, are held behind the counter.

Wokingham Historian – 11 issues published between 1989 and 2001. Published by the Wokingham Society Local History Group, articles covering a wide range of topics including people, places, buildings and more general topics.

Berkshire Family Historian – copies from 2010 – 2012 are held in the magazine cabinet.

Wokingham Society Newsletter – copies from 2009, held in a blue ring binder behind the counter.

Twyford News – most issues from 60 – 79, covering 1997 – 2006. Published by Twyford Parish Council.

Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society Journal – most issues from 41 – 65, covering 1997 – 2011.

Street Directories

All of these directories will have a listing of local businesses. Some will have a listing of private residents (ie. the head of the household in a private residence), and/or a street directory (listing the occupiers of each building). Most will give brief details of each town (eg. public buildings, schools etc.)

We hold several directories, which are filed in the book stock. The earliest is the 1854 Berks, Bucks & Oxon Directory, and the latest is the 1971 Reading, Berks & Oxford Trades Directory.

In addition to this, we have photocopies of the relevant pages from 30 directories in one of our pamphlet boxes. The earliest is 1796, and the most recent is 1940.

We have 5 volumes of Wokingham Remembered, filed on the local studies bookshelves, each covering a different street – Market Place, Rose Street, Peach Street, Denmark Street and Broad Street. These contain information on each building in the street, compiled from almost 40 directories dating from 1828 to 1971.

Also useful is the Street Survey compiled by the Wokingham Society Local History Group, which is in a blue ring binder on the local studies bookshelves, and contains a listing of businesses for a number of town centre streets, for each year from 1990 to 1996.

Census Data – Returns

On microfilm, we hold the census returns for Wokingham District for the years 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901. These are arranged by parish, and the areas covered by each film are listed on the box.

These are transcripts of the actual census returns, and contain information for each household, with the age, birthplace, marital status and occupation of each member of the household.

Census Data – Statistical Reports

Bound volumes of statistical breakdowns of the census data for Berkshire, covering the census for the years 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991. There is also data from a sample census from 1966, based on a 10% sample of the population.

There are no details of individuals, but they give a range of statistical data taken from the census, including population data broken down by age, sex, ethnicity, household type, etc.

The 1991 volumes give the greatest level of detail, with statistics broken down to the level of individual wards, as well as for Berkshire County as a whole, and each Borough within the county.

Local Plans

We hold the following local plans, which are kept behind the counter:

- *Wokingham Town Centre Investment Strategy* (2001)
- *Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016* – Deposit Draft (2002), Statement of Decisions, Reasoned List of Proposed Modifications & Deposit Draft (2004), Report of the Panel (2007)
- *South East Plan* – Draft Plan for Submission to Government (2006)
- *Assessment of Gaps and Green Wedges within Wokingham District* (2006)
- *Site Allocations: Initial Options DPD List of Sites* (2006)
- *South East Plan* – Companion Document, Schedule of Changes and Reasoned Justification, Supporting Document (2009)
- *Regional Special Strategy for the South East* (2009)
- *Berkshire 2016* – Background Papers
- *Where will our new homes go - 2016*

Photographs

There are a large number of photographs of the local area. There is a subject index at the beginning of the sequence. Most of the photographs are arranged by place, but there are some subject headings eg schools, inns, libraries.

As well as the main sequence of photographs, there is also a set of aerial photographs of the local area, and some photograph albums from the Week in Wokingham, June 1992, and the building of Wokingham Library.

Monumental Inscriptions

On the local studies bookshelves there is a book of All Saints Monumental Inscriptions.

Weather Data

Lists of daily weather statistics, eg. maximum and minimum temperature, rainfall, wind speed etc. Lists from 1978 – 2005 are held in blue ring binders behind the counter, from 2006 onwards are in blue ring binders on the local history bookshelves.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN OTHER LIBRARIES

Woodley Library

Goad Maps for Woodley, from January 2012 and December 2013.

Copies of the *Woodley and Earley Master Plan* (Interim Report, 1971 and Consultants Report, 1972, covering land use, housing, transport, social and economic concerns, etc), and the *Plan for the Comprehensive Development of Lower Earley* from 1973 (covering land use, housing, commerce, transport, education etc).

Local Studies box - includes the *Woodley Residents Survey* of 1999, *A Design for Hurst* (parish statement from 2005), *Sonning Parish Design Statement* from 2004, and *Protected Monuments: Berkshire* (as at 15/08/2000).

Local Studies Pack (red ring binder) - photocopies of local maps, street directories, population figures, local villages and buildings.

Book stock – several shelves of books covering the local history of the area. Titles of interest include:

- *Victoria County History of Berkshire* – 4 volumes covering the history of the county.
- *Magna Britannia Berkshire* – A general history of the county.
- *Historical Atlas of Berkshire* – historic maps on a variety of topics.
- *Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers* – 1995 edition. Listing of parish records and where to find them.
- *County Maps & Histories: Berkshire* – county history illustrated by a selection of maps.
- *Pevsner's Buildings of England: Berkshire* – architectural guide to the county.
- *Wokingham: A Chronology* – produced by the Wokingham Society. Chronology of the town from the Middle Ages to 1986.
- *The High Sheriffs of Berkshire* – includes a list of High Sheriffs from 1066 – 2001.

Lower Earley Library

In the Lending Section there are 3 shelves of local history books, mostly covering the Earley/Woodley area but also other outlying areas. Also copies of the *Wokingham Historian*.

Branch Libraries

All our branches hold a small collection of local history books.

SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARY

Online Resources

The family history database Ancestry.com can be accessed from the public computers in any of our libraries. This database contains Birth, Marriage & Death records, Census records, Military records and much more.

The British Newspaper Archive can also be accessed from our public computers. It contains millions of historic local and national newspapers, including the Wokingham Times (from 1951, 1988-93, 1995 and 1996), and the Bracknell Times (from 1972-79, 1981, 1988, 1990-94 and 1996).

To access these resources, visit our website:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/libraries/libraries/our-services/online-reference/>

Local History Surgeries

At Wokingham Library from 10am – 12pm on the last Friday of the month, a local expert is available to help with your local history queries.

At Finchampstead Library from 2pm – 4pm on the first Thursday of the month, drop in to view the Finchampstead Society archive and find out more about the local area.

Family History Advice Sessions

Held at Wokingham Library from 2pm – 5pm on the last Tuesday of the month (except December). These drop-in sessions are held by members of the Berkshire Family History Society, and is suitable for anybody, regardless of where their ancestors come from.

OTHER LOCAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Berkshire Record Office

9 Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire. RG1 6AF
(0118) 937 5132

Archive of records relating to Berkshire and its' people, including official records from councils and courts. They hold a large amount of information useful for local and family history research. Anyone can visit the Record Office – it is advisable to book in advance, which can be done via the website. They also offer a research service, for which there is a charge.

www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk

Museum of English Rural Life

University of Reading, Redlands Road, Reading. RG1 5EX
(0118) 378 8660

Hold over 100,000 books in their library, and have archives covering over 4.5 kilometres of shelving. Anyone can visit to use the collections, but it is best to contact them in advance.

www.reading.ac.uk/TheMerl

Museum of Berkshire Aviation

Mohawk Way (off Bader Way), Woodley, Berkshire. RG5 4UE
(0118) 944 8089

Based at Woodley Airfield, the museum holds pictures and archives relating to the history of aviation in Berkshire.

www.museumofberkshireaviation.co.uk

Berkshire Local History Association

Aims to promote interest in local history. There is a 'Queries' section on the website (on the 'Activities' page), where you can post a query or contribute to a discussion.

www.blha.org.uk

Berkshire Family History Society

Centre for Heritage and Family History, 2nd Floor, Reading Library, Abbey Square, Reading. RG1 3BQ
(0118) 950 9553

Anyone can use the resources in the Research Centre, where volunteers are available to offer help and advice. The society also holds regular meetings and events which non-members can attend.

www.berksfhs.org.uk

Berkshire Archaeological Society

Aims to explore, promote and protect the historic environment of Berkshire. Run a regular series of events, and publish the Berkshire Archaeological Journal.

www.berksarch.co.uk

Berkshire Record Society

Berkshire Record Office, 9 Coley Avenue, Reading. RG1 6AF

The Society's aim is to publish scholarly editions of documents important to the history of Berkshire. A list of their publications is available on the website.

www.berkshirerecordsociety.org.uk

The Wokingham Society

An independent, non-political Civic Society which aims to protect and promote Wokingham's interests, particularly in the area of conservation and development. Their website includes short snippets of Wokingham history, information about the town's blue plaques, and details of the Society's publications.

<http://www.wokinghamsociety.org.uk/history.html>

NATIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

National Archives

Kew, Richmond, Surrey. TW9 4DU
(0208) 876 3444

National repository for archives, over 5% of which are available and searchable online, with more being digitised all the time. You can also visit the Archives – there is a searchable catalogue on their website so you can see in advance what they hold. The catalogue can also help you locate details of over 2500 archives across the UK. There are also a huge number of research guides available on the website to help you use the archives effectively. (NOTE: The National Archives do not hold copies of birth, marriage or death certificates – see General Register Office below).

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

British Library

96 Euston Road, London. NW1 2DB
(0330) 333 1144

To use the Reading Room you will need to apply for a Reader Pass. You can view the British Newspaper Archive for free here. (There is a charge to view it online, although searching is free). Over 17 million digitised pages are available from local and national newspapers, including the Berkshire Chronicle (1825-1909), Reading Mercury (1770-1939), Windsor & Eton Express (1812-1876), and several Buckinghamshire papers.

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

General Register Office

(0300) 123 1837

The GRO holds a central copy of all birth, marriage and death registrations in England and Wales. You can order copies of certificates online, and also search the GRO historic birth and death indexes.

<https://www.gov.uk/general-register-office>

ONLINE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

National Library of Scotland

<https://maps.nls.uk/>

Historic maps covering the entire United Kingdom, including Berkshire.

Free BMD

<http://www.freebmd.org.uk/>

Website which provides free access to UK birth, marriage and death records. This is an ongoing project, and more records are constantly being added.

Free CEN

<http://www.freecen.org.uk/>

Website providing free access to UK Census records between 1841 and 1891. This is an ongoing project, and more records are constantly being added.

Free REG

<http://www.freereg.org.uk/>

Website which allows free searching of birth, marriage and burial records gathered from Parish Registers across the UK.

Cyndi's List

<http://www.cyndislist.com/uk/>

Extensive lists of free and subscription-based websites for all aspects of family history.

Family Search

<https://familysearch.org/>

Run by a non-profit family history organisation. Access to worldwide records, and software to help create a family tree.

Roots Web

<https://home.rootsweb.com/>

Allows you to share your research online, and benefit from the research that other people have shared.

GENUKI Berkshire

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/BRK/>

Details of and links to a huge amount of family history resources relating to Berkshire.