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The Berkshire Record Office
The Archives of the Royal County

The Berkshire Record Office

Annual Report

For 2018-2019

Berkshire Record Office, a countywide archive service for all
local authorities in the Royal County of Berkshire

T 0118 937 5132 arch@reading.gov.uk
F 0118 937 5131 www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk

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





*Are you ready? Preparing to cut the 70th birthday cake
(turn to p8 to see an 'after' image)*

Introduction

Celebration was in the air in 2018 as we celebrated our 70th anniversary. On 10 August 1948 my predecessor, Felix Hull, threw open the door of his office in the old Shire Hall and waited for his public to arrive.

It took them four days to do so. Then his first visitor, a high court judge, came to check the public rights of way over his property.

Things were different then. Felix, if he were still around, would probably be amazed at the size of our current research space and also at the diversity of our customers. Interest in archives has gone way beyond high court judges and become widespread.

But there is also much about the present-day service that Felix would recognise. We still have the same drive to develop collections, make sure they are safe and treasured, and to tease out what is in them to better understand our county. We also still look to achieve much through partnerships with others.

This year, our partnerships picked up where last year's left off - with the completion of our Coleshill project, funded by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and supported by the National Trust, and with the publication of our volunteers' research into Berkshire schools. A new partnership came through the University of Reading's undergraduate research programme, who we joined to investigate LGB lives within the archives. This was our first joint piece of research with the University.

All of these activities explore our own collections. This also harks back to Felix's time, when the archivist was seen as custodian and interpreter. It was important for staff to participate in research because the value was in sharing it.

That approach - archivists quite deliberately devoting time to looking through documents - is certainly something that Felix would recognise, even if he might be amazed at how the sharing is conducted increasingly over the ether. It is facilitating research not only through cataloguing but also through storytelling.

And perhaps that is my prediction for the next 70 years: that the Record Office spends more and more time sharing our collections across media and platforms known and as yet undeveloped. The future is one where, as well as our own front door, many other doors will be thrown open.

Mark Stevens
County Archivist
June 2019

Welcoming Visitors and Enquirers

It was another excellent year in terms of feedback about our customer care. In the national survey of distance enquiry services for UK archives - evaluating the experience of those who write to the Record Office - we achieved a 97% satisfaction rating. This was higher than any other county service in the region. The survey is managed by the Institute of Public Finance so this is a valuable piece of independent evidence for how we are doing. We will strive to keep up the good work and ensure that all visitors and enquirers take away a positive impression of the service and the county. I would like to note the results and, as ever, record my warm thanks and congratulations to staff.

The visitor experience

Website is excellent

I think you are all brilliant

Your Wilde exhibition was excellent

Berkshire Record Office and its staff really are a great resource

You were amazing and enormously helpful

We have analysed the last ten years of usage figures included at the end of the annual reports to look at long-term patterns. The results confirm the anecdotal observation that 'customer not present' interactions - either enquiries or the supply of copies - have increased while direct visits continue to shrink. We expect this pattern to continue though there are signs that it might become stable.

Our customer guarantees stood as follows:

- 99% of visitors got their first choice of visit time
- 99% of written enquiries were answered within 5 working days
- 95% of all copies were supplied within 10 working days
- 96% of original documents were produced for visitors within 15 minutes of order

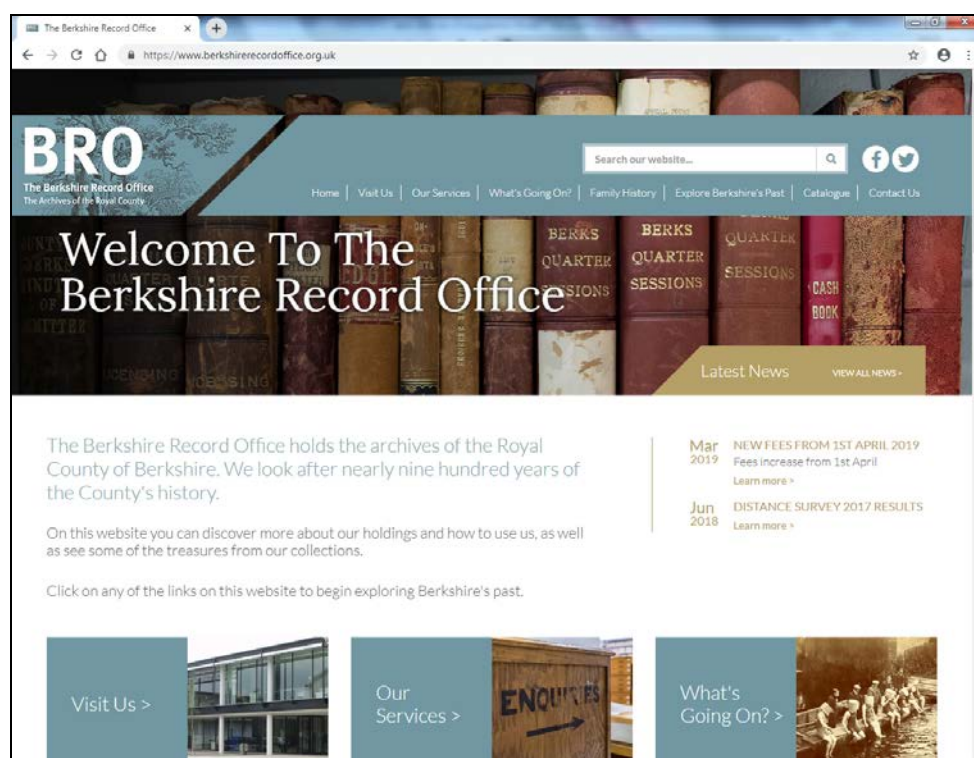
During the year the Archives and Records Association announced that the current national readers' scheme - the CARN card - would be withdrawn in favour of a new, similar scheme called the Archives card. The Record Office has signed up to the new scheme, which is expected to launch in autumn 2019.

For the Online Customer

Online communication only grows in importance, so we were very pleased to have our new website available from November.

It was quite sobering to realise that hundreds of pages of content required transfer to the new site; and good to report that we did not lose a thing. The new site has been created from open source software called October, which has proved flexible enough to accommodate everything we had in our old, bespoke system. Thanks are due to our contractor, Farrow Creative, for building it.

The new site has the great advantage of being 'responsively designed' - that is, it will resize itself to fit the screen on which it is being viewed. This should make the site a lot more comfortable for mobile phone and tablet users to navigate.



The new Berkshire Record Office homepage

The volume of pages to transfer reminded us that, although a lot of people now use our social media feeds in preference to the website, the latter is still the most useful way of presenting content online to browse. We continue to add pages for things like our monthly highlights, which this year included pieces celebrating the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, the re-opening of the Reading Abbey ruins, and the 1918 armistice.

Meanwhile, our Twitter followers have grown to 880 and our Facebook friends to 930. We contribute regularly to national campaigns, such as #archiveshelfie - staff with documents - while we also ran a very popular series of local posts identifying photographs from the collection of Maitland Underhill, local antiquarian and stalwart of the Berkshire Archaeological Society. This is where social media is so useful - our followers kindly crowdsourced information that we lacked. We also entered into the international 'colour your collections' promotion - where black and white line drawings are posted online for people to download and colour in.



Colour our collections

Engaging the Curious

The usual range of local talks saw Sue Hourigan speak on preserving family memorabilia to the Bracknell branch of the Berkshire Family History Society and the Sandhurst Ladies Golden Circle, while Ellie Thorne gave her Plenty's history talk to the Newbury District Field Club. I spoke about Victorian Broadmoor to the Berkshire Masonic Widows in Sindlesham and the Reading East Probus group at Sonning Golf Club, the Henley U3A, Reading National Trust, and the 'open group' at All Saints, Reading. We ran another three of our half-day sessions on reading old handwriting and another three 'behind-the-scenes' tours, while similar tours were arranged for the Heritage Open Days weekend, when we were joined by members

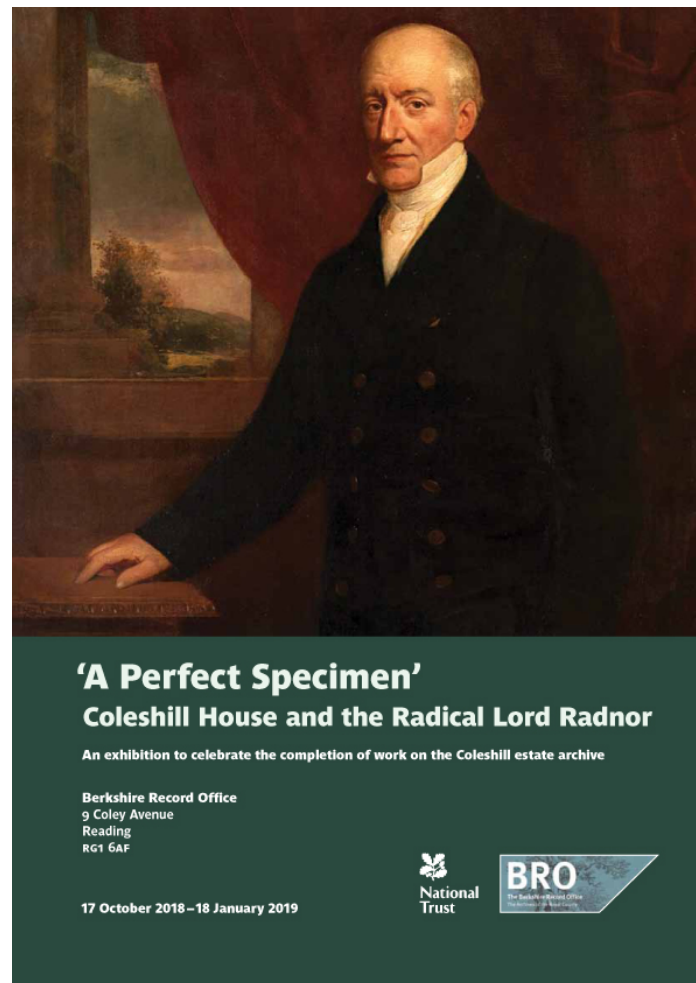
of the Reading-Dusseldorf twinning association who spoke about their archives. We also hosted visits from the Berkshire Geologists Society, Berkshire Archaeological Research Group, Radstock WI and the Windsor and Maidenhead museum, arts and libraries team.



Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead staff looking around conservation

Our display of illustrated editions of Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, 'Colours More Than Sentences', continued into the year. Despite the unfortunate timing of the higher education pensions strike, which buried the intended publicity campaign, the exhibition drew guests from across the globe and was positively reviewed in *The Wildean* magazine. We were especially grateful that Sarah MacDougall of the Ben Uri Museum came to give a public lecture on 'Whitechapel Girl' Clare Winsten, one of the artists who featured prominently in the display.

In autumn we celebrated the completion of our Coleshill project. This featured heavily in last year's annual report, but it is worth repeating our thanks to the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, whose generous funding allowed a nine-month conservation project to the Coleshill collection. From October to January we then hosted a display of Coleshill archives, augmented by objects from the estate that had been kindly lent by the National Trust. The exhibition was particularly appreciated by residents of Coleshill village, who made several trips to see it and read the story of the great, lost house - the 'Perfect Specimen' - that was once their centrepiece. The story boards have now been passed to the National Trust where they will form a new display at the Coleshill estate offices.



Poster for the Coleshill exhibition

Our other in-house event marked our significant 70th birthday, which we observed with a gathering of friends and a delicious cake, courtesy of Warings bakery in Tilehurst. Such birthdays are always a time for reflection and it is sobering to think not just how the collections have grown - recording so many different elements of the county's history - but also how interest in them has grown too.

As if to illustrate that fact, the birthday was picked up by all strands of the local media, featuring in print and online and also on That's TV, the Radio Berkshire Morning Show and even a live Radio Berkshire broadcast one morning throughout its Breakfast Show.



The 70th cake, approximately three minutes after the picture on p2 was taken

Radio Berkshire also picked up on Coleshill; the 14th century 'assize of bread' in the Welford Park archives, which was used to promote the *Great British Bake Off*; and the war diaries of Sydney Spencer, Stanley's brother, parts of which were read by actors for an Armistice centenary broadcast. Our social media campaign on Underhill photographs was picked up by BBC South Today, while we had a radio debut on 4LEGS - the community station serving Lambourn, Eastbury, Garston and Shefford - who wanted to meet us and find out more about what we did.

We contributed our usual columns to local historical society journals and published another four editions of the *Berkshire Echo*, featuring Coleshill, the 70th birthday, the Armistice centenary and our historic LGBT project - of which more later. There were also the familiar learning events for University of Reading students: a modern literature MA session; a talk to history undergraduates about dissertation sources; supporting two undergraduates in the 'discovering archives' module; and awarding the Berkshire Prize for best history BA dissertation, which this year went to Amie Bailey for a study of patient experience in Victorian Broadmoor. In addition, we gave a talk and tour for the University's museum studies MA and history MA students, with the latter having a further session on the history of Reading Prison. We also reprised a session for conservation undergraduates from the University of the Arts London.

Developing Collections

The biggest deposit this year consisted of public records from magistrates courts across the county. The Newbury and Maidenhead courts have recently closed and so we helped review the older records that they had. This led to transfers of material from both sites as well as from the Reading court. Every jurisdiction across Berkshire is represented; the result is that our magistrates' records have now transitioned to the 20-year rule and we will receive 'new burdens' funding for them from The National Archives in due course.

The largest new private collection related to Basildon Park. This was several chests' worth of legal papers handed to the 2nd Lord Iliffe when he purchased the estate in 1953. Most of the items are title deeds and reflect the period from 1549 onwards as Basildon grew under the ownership of the Fane, Sykes and Morrison families. The property has changed hands several times over the centuries and, as a result, the Basildon archives dispersed - making this a welcome addition that complements other related collections here.



Just a few of the bundles for Basildon Park

Other legal archives continue to come to light. The Vale of White Horse District Council passed us deeds from the old Wantage RDC as well as some related papers for the Wantage Water Company. Colleagues in Wiltshire gave us a quantity of dormant clients' records from Merriman, Porter and Long, solicitors of Marlborough, most of which relate to properties in Hungerford and Newbury.

Community club and society records came from the Berkshire Sail Training Centre in Theale, Colnbrook Scouts, Maiden Erlegh Ladies Club, Reading Ramblers, Reading Festival Chorus and Reading Philatelic Society, Warfield Parochial Charities, Woodley Horticultural Society and the Women's Institutes of Falkland, Hungerford and Padworth. We also received the programme collection from Reading FC Supporter's Trust, which is our first major deposit relating to the club and which has been created through donations.



Hard-fought success: rare games when Reading FC won some silverware

There were more local business records from car dealers Gowrings of Reading, and Godwin Arnold, architect, while an anonymous donation was made of a magnificent panoramic photograph of workers and families by the Thames at the Samuel Elliott annual sports meeting, 1919. Parish council records came from Beedon, Bray, Brightwalton, Finchampstead, Purley and Shinfield, while we also took in the archive of the Hungerford Tragedy Trust, which was set up through the town council to support the local community after the shootings of 1987. Although its contents will be closed for decades, it is an important bookend to how Hungerford coped with the aftermath of the tragedy.

Longstanding contacts with local churches resulted in deposits from around 40 places. There were parish registers from Aldworth, Didcot, Letcombe Bassett, Marcham, Warfield and White Waltham; and other nineteenth century material from Ascot Heath, Cumnor, Wantage and All Saints, Reading. The Reading Methodist Circuit deposited baptism registers from 1831 and other Victorian registers from churches at Twyford and Reading Wesley, while the Society of

Friends deposited Reading Monthly Meeting minutes from 1818. Early 20th century material was received from Methodist churches in Britwell, Cookham Rise, Maidenhead and old and new Windsor alongside more recent material for elsewhere in the Maidenhead and Slough areas.

The oldest items to join the collections were both purchased at auction - a Winkfield deed from 1382 and Shinfield estate papers dating from 1435. We also purchased a poor rate book for Shrivenham and an album of photographs from Beaumont College, Old Windsor, which was once one of England's most important public schools. These acquisitions were met by our documents purchase fund. We were then delighted to receive funds from the Wokingham Society to buy two early modern deeds for 'Edwards Lands', while the Friends of the National Libraries made a generous grant for us to acquire a splendid 1694 plan of Honey Bottom House in Winterbourne, together with an 1812 rating valuation of the same place.



The plan of John Sherwood's land- now known as Honey Bottom House - in Winterbourne, 1694

We have also now begun to systematically take in electronic records, as Bracknell Forest Council is routinely sending us its committee papers in this form. From April 2019 we are signed up to Preservica, a secure cloud storage system, and we will begin to experiment with depositing our electronic records in it.

Making the Collections Available

This year's highlights were within the field of local politics. Firstly, the accumulated archive from campaigns against the Newbury bypass form a fascinating insight into the public inquiry and subsequent direct action. Although ultimately unsuccessful, the protestors were well organised and this is reflected in the archive. There are formal meeting records, promotional campaign material and detailed documentation concerning arrests and prosecutions from what was styled as the 'Third Battle of Newbury'. The bypass protests were a topic of national discussion and we are delighted to look after such a key resource. By coincidence, we received the archive of the bypass supporters' group at the same time and this too will shortly be available.



Musicians play as police watch on during clearance of one of the bypass protestors' camps, 1996

Our second political collection dates from earlier in the 20th century: these are the personal papers of Phoebe Cusden. Phoebe was active in trades unionism and politics from a time long before women had the vote. She later became a Reading councillor and championed the provision of nursery education, which remained one of her lifelong passions. She was also instrumental in twinning the town with Düsseldorf after the Second World War - the first such initiative, and which was inspired by the positive treatment her husband received while interned in the First World War, as well as a belief that Germany's prosperity was necessary for Europe to be safe.



Phoebe Cusden (centre) on a visit to the Henkel-Persil works in Düsseldorf, August 1947

Phoebe died in 1981 and her papers came here shortly afterwards. They are a big collection - over 800 items - and the catalogue is the result of many years' work by both staff and volunteers. It includes some rare items: minutes for early socialist groupings that were later subsumed into the Labour Party; handbills and other ephemera for Marxist lectures, sports and drama held in Berkshire; and a vivid collection of contemporary drawings by her husband, Albert, of the Ruhleben Camp where he was interned. While the focus of the suffrage centenary was on national campaigners and the subsequent female MPs, Phoebe's archive provides a wonderful asset for researching women's influence on politics and policies.

Phoebe remains well-known within Berkshire but hers was not the only catalogue for local landmarks. A plethora of places were represented in sale catalogues from Drewett Neate of Newbury, while two collections were added from the old Jackson's department store in central Reading. Client records from the solicitors of Seymour Aram (now part of Field Seymour Parks) and Haye and Reid offered up many papers for properties and people in central and east Berkshire - the latter, significantly, including the disposal of the Bearwood estate in 1911.

We were also pleased to celebrate amateur dramatics with sizeable additions to the archives of Wokingham Theatre and Progress Theatre. Staff also continued listing coroners' records from between the wars, with the largest group from Maidenhead district.

Spreading the Impact of the Collections

Watching social media posts get shared makes you realise how much of our information is now spread through informal conversations. We have never really had such good evidence of that before. Our thanks go to friends and visitors for sharing our messages and for their own social media use of our collections.

More traditional local history projects included transcripts of material from Faringdon Union and Thatcham Congregational Church; a biography of Arthur Hill, Reading dignitary; web pages by the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association; and an article on the Reading St Laurence churchwardens' accounts in *Berkshire Old and New*.

Documents went out on loan to exhibitions at Yattendon Primary School, Burghfield St Mary and for Heritage Open Days at Lambourn, Shaw and the Reading churches of St Giles and St Mary. A local design company also made use of some Suttons Seeds advertisements for display panels in a nearby care home.

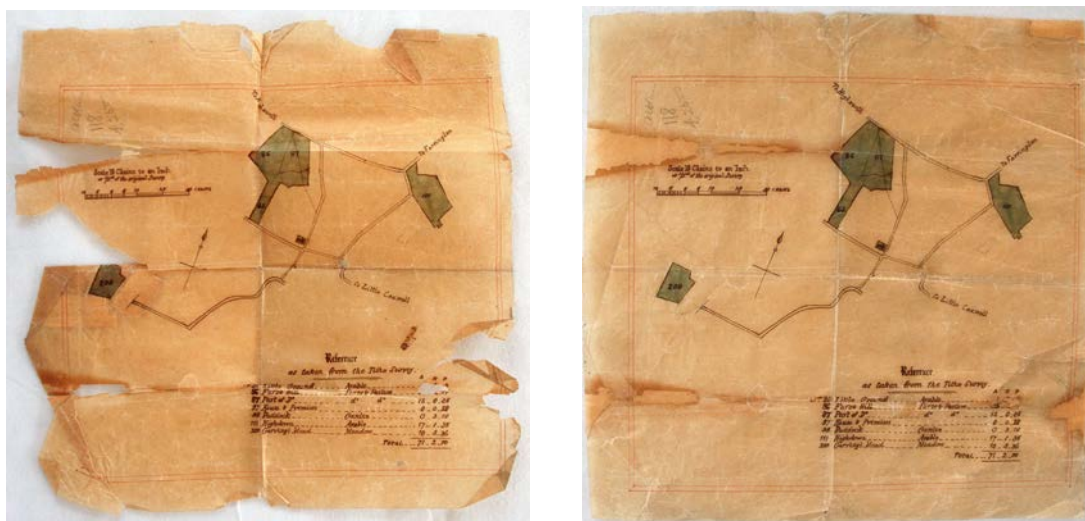
Academic study was reflected by an article on the 20th century tea wars in the Yale University Press, which made use of some ephemera here; by the inclusion of various sources online in the Records of Early English Drama - mostly of performances in Berkshire towns, but also probates from players; and assistance for various articles in the latest volumes of the *History of Parliament*. Popular history use included some favourites from previous annual reports: items from the Artangel exhibition in Reading Prison for the BBC *Imagine* documentary on Rupert Everett; the photograph of convict Henry Bushell in a new biography of Oscar Wilde; plus a feature on the Royal Merchant Navy School in *Family Tree* magazine. We also appeared on the BBC's *A House Through Time*, via two girls cared for by the Clewer Sisters, and twice on the *One Show* - once with Yellow Pages to coincide with the final print editions, and the other for a piece on a Reading-Düsseldorf reunion between two of the original exchange students from 1949.

Caring for Collections

Alongside the support for students, detailed elsewhere, we have continued to help Jane Mac Tarling as she studies for her conservation certificate. Jane's training has meant that she is able to broaden further the types of repair that she is able to complete. This year had a focus on parchment and we gave her opportunities to practice what she had learnt.

We took on a paying student, Father Hugh from Douai, over several months as we taught bookbinding skills to help him care for the Abbey library. We also continued

to offer a wide range of digital photography and restoration, while the Coleshill conservation work was completed within time and budget.



A Coleshill tracing: before and after

Special Projects

Educating Berkshire

The year saw the culmination of one volunteer research project and the beginning of the next.

Our new project on school building in Berkshire 1870-1914 was launched in April. We had a dozen prospective volunteers who have now begun research. This period saw an enormous investment in public elementary, and later secondary and technical education. The plan is to produce a series of illustrated essays about individual schools built during it.

Sadly, the launch event turned out to be the last time we saw Sue Clifford, who had been our editor on the first project and was also to supervise the new one. Sue died suddenly in August. Hers is a loss that we keenly feel.

For Sue was a big part of *Berkshire Schools in the Eighteenth Century*, the book that resulted from the volunteers' earlier work and that we launched, in conjunction with the Berkshire Record Society, at the end of February. Thanks are due not just to Sue but to Diana Barker, David Cliffe, Ewart Davies, Joan Dils, Peter Durrant, Iris Hunt, Jill Hutchinson, Penny Stokes and Glennis Wade, who all helped to find so much information and who saw the project through to its conclusion.

The book is a guide to the hundreds of schools that existed in the county in the time before state funding. Virtually every parish had some form of charitable or religious education, while private schools and academies flourished in the towns. The completed text is a remarkable achievement and a fantastic legacy for the volunteers' work, and Sue's dedication in turning it into a narrative with context.

The Record Society has kindly sent a copy of the book to each of the county's maintained secondary schools.



The schools volunteers enjoy a day out in Uffington

Offences Against the Person? Hidden LGB Histories

Last spring we joined with Dr Katherine Harloe from the University of Reading to bid for funds from the university's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP). Our proposal was to use court, prison records and family history sources for the Victorian and Edwardian period to tell the stories of Berkshire people prosecuted for same-sex relationships.

We were doubly successful with our bid and were funded to take two students over the summer. They were George Stokes (studying classics) and Amy Hitchings (studying law). George and Amy spent six weeks looking into historic LGB offences between 1861, when the Offences Against the Person Act was passed, to the end of the First World War. They found 80 individuals across Berkshire as either defendants or parties to an offence - with numbers increasing significantly after the 1885 creation of the new offence of 'gross indecency' - and then investigated a handful to build biographies to tell the a story beyond the courtroom.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme


University of Reading
BRO

Tracing hidden LGB histories through Berkshire Court Records, 1861-1919

Amy Hitchings and George Stokes; Dr Katherine Harloe and Mark Stevens

Introduction:
Our research focuses on the individuals charged under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and s.11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 for offences of gross indecency between 1861-1919. The rationale is to humanise the lives of the men by uncovering their personal stories; we hoped to go beyond merely their offence.

Methodology:
Through the use of datasets such as the Calendars of Prisoners for Berkshire Assizes and Reading Borough Quarter Sessions, Reading Prison Registers and newspaper reports, we collated a list of people charged with committing a homosexual 'act'.




Results:

- The study located 78 individuals charged for a homosexual 'act'; the offences were described as 'acts' of gross indecency, buggery, sodomy, or indecent assault.
- The offences discovered were only committed by men.
- The introduction of section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 increased the rate of prosecution.


Biographical research:

- The archival documents provided minor biographical data; this was inputted into databases such as Ancestry and FindMyPast to locate the life stories of the men charged from records like Electoral Registers and Census Returns.
- The research generated common life trends shared between the men:



Gladstone Lowell Main:

- Sentenced to 12 months hard labour for 17 counts of buggery with 5 different men
- Gladstone was born in Canada and worked as a timber merchant until he enlisted to fight in World War One
- Senior officer at Milton camp, and whilst there he resided at 'The Nook'.
- Main's defence in the trial concerned his unawareness of the illegality of the 'act'...




"It is thought nothing of in such countries [Canada] for male persons to sleep together, and is most usual."

Francis Thomas Scriven:

- Scriven was sentenced to 4 years for buggery with Dobson
- Oxford alumni and respected curate; he was ordained in 1894
- Judge: Scriven was a "corrupter of the body [and]...the mind"

John Dobson:

- Sentenced to 12 months for gross indecency with Scriven
- The men were tried together, as a research team we concluded this was a clear indication that it was a consensual relationship.
- Served in the Royal Navy in 1903, and after he lived a rural life.



Arthur Gale:

- Reoffender: four separate charges for gross indecency between 1906 and 1914
- Lived with his mother, Ellen Cripps, (widow) in Wokingham.
- Worked as an insurance agent
- Died aged 42 in Taunton, Somerset

Conclusion of research project:
Our aim was to humanise the lives of the individuals captured by public policy in order to transcend their criminality. The hidden stories once remained in the archival documents; we hope this research illuminates those biographical narratives, which are vital for developing any legitimate understanding of 'the crime'.

1. Acknowledgements to Sutton Courtenay Local History Society for the photo of Gladstone's residence
2. Acknowledgements to the Berkshire Record Office for publication use of the Calendar of Prisoners photo, Arthur Gale and the use of the archives.

This project was supported by the UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme) scheme at the University of Reading. UROP is managed by Careers.

George and Amy's UROP project poster

George and Amy provided proof of concept that this research was possible and that it can provide a wealth of data about these previously unknown lives. In February, both spoke at a public event here; they have also delivered presentations within the university and intend to write up their research for publication. The project has also inspired further activity: a local LGBT charity, Support U, have submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to expand the research and provide an even broader picture over a longer timeframe. We support that bid and, if it is successful, will help deliver that work.

Newbury Churchwardens' Accounts

The year's other new project has been generously funded by Sabina Sutherland's charitable trust. The trustees have awarded us £10,000 to repair the two earliest volumes of churchwardens' accounts from St Nicolas, Newbury.

The two volumes span the period 1602-1795. Each comprises around 320 pages of handmade paper, sewn with linen onto raised cords and then bound in brown reverse calf, which has tooled decoration. The accounts include much about the fabric of the church as well as entries relating to the parish workhouse and other

aspects of local welfare. The earliest volume also has wider significance as it records costs for the burial of soldiers after the Civil War Battles of Newbury.



Damage to the earliest volume of churchwardens' accounts

The project will begin in April 2019. Work will take 16 weeks and a dedicated project conservator will be employed. We are pleased to report that Aimée Crickmore, our Coleshill conservator, will be rejoining us in due course.

With Thanks to Our Staff

That we have provided such a range of activity is very much due to the Record Office staff. I would like to thank them very much for all the work they have done to give friends and customers such a positive experience of us.

We had a handful of staff changes. Aimée left in April once the Coleshill project was complete, while archivist Louise Woof left for a post at the Royal Archives and Elly Southwell returned to her previous employer, Norwood. We also said goodbye to Jeremy Taylor, who retired after twenty years in the post of archivist, having previously spent five years in Berkshire County Council's records management service. Jeremy plans to spend more time gardening, cycling and wood-turning and we pass on our best wishes to him.

Samantha Baxter, previously at Buckinghamshire, filled Jeremy's part-time role. She was joined by Imogen Burrell and Rosie Everitt in the full-time posts - Imogen directly from the UCL archives course, and Rosie returning from spells at Imperial College and the Surrey History Centre.

We also continued to offer support to others. I carried on as a visiting research fellow in the University of Reading's History Department and as Vice-President of the Berkshire Family History Society, while I also joined the Wellcome Trust's Research Resources Committee, which makes grants to heritage collections for the medical humanities. Ellie Thorne is on the council of the Berkshire Record Society and Lisa Spurrier on the editorial committee of the journal *Berkshire Old and New*. Sue Hourigan remained an assessor for the Archives and Records Association's conservation certificate.

And with Thanks to Our Volunteers

As usual, we were helped in our endeavours by a number of people prepared to give generously of their time. The greater number of these helped with conservation tasks. Peter Durrant spent another year providing what should now be described as bookbinding expertise, rebinding several early parish registers and finishing with the large and technically difficult court book for the manors of Wargrave, Warfield and Waltham St Lawrence, 1729-1747, which is in the Neville papers. Some of the preparatory sewing for Peter's work was undertaken by our volunteers from the Berkshire WI and Wokingham Theatre, who also finished their part of the Coleshill project amongst many other jobs: thanks are offered to Wendy Backhouse, Sue Baughan, Greta Dixon, Ann Knee-Robinson, Christina McCann, Jean Parsons, Marion Searle, Ros Smith and Heather Young.

Conservation also benefitted from Lizzie Smith, who came to us on a month's placement as part of her MA course at the University of the Arts, London, while University of Reading history undergraduates Rachel Cronin and Chloe Thompson spent 10 days with us for their discovering archives module - helping us list material from Lynette Edwell's Greenham Peace Camp archive.



Lizzie Smith at work

Tony Place and Ray Sewart have been listing and cleaning a large number of plans and drawings we have from the Thames Conservancy. Gemma Dolan also wrote summaries for some of the Conservancy committee minutes - all part of our preparation to bring this collection to public attention - as well as tackling some seal repairs. Rebecca Price helped sort some of the Newbury Bypass material; Judith Attar continued to index grants from Archbishop Laud's charity and John Cox continued indexing the Reading Poor Law Union minutes. Alex Fenn contributed to our First World War blog; Paul Gardner joined us to list probate documents from Blandy and Blandy while Sophie Broad listed the additions to the Wokingham Theatre collection.

Key Numbers

Visitors and enquiries

	2018/19	2017/18
Visitors to the search room	2106	2231
Written and telephone enquiries	5620	5793
Documents produced	6341	6323
Microforms consulted	3960	4645
Copies supplied	9808	7167
Visits to online resources	82891	77114
Talks and visits: number	23	31
Talks and visits: attendance	470	714

Accessioning and cataloguing

Accessions received: number	228	204
Accessions received: volume	6.727m ³	6.045m ³
	6.15GB	1.56GB
Catalogues completed: volume	4.722m ³	10.503m ³
Accessions catalogued: number	222	243
Items catalogued	4405	8511

Conservation and preservation

First aid	130	81
Tipping-in	122	860
Sewing	118	20
Packaging	167	137
Encapsulation	7	56

Staff resources

Headcount of permanent staff	19	19
Number of full-time equivalent posts	13.40	13.40
Headcount of project staff	1	1