

BRO

The Berkshire Record Office
The Archives of the Royal County

The Berkshire Echo Issue 49

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From the Editor

We hope that you enjoyed our first journey into food in the previous edition, and that you are looking forward to part two. This second bite of the archival cherry will let you try your own hand at some 18th century recipes, and be nostalgic for a world when tea cards seemed very important.

I can never tire of the personal stories that emerge from the archives. These are stories that have probably been forgotten since the moment they were written down, and have waited centuries to be rediscovered. Our tale of soldiers up to no good in seventeenth century Reading is one such story. You can almost taste the beer and smell the bacon as it was trailed through the house. I wonder who the poor lady was who gave birth during that disorderly night?

If you cannot enjoy your food without guilt, then we also have something for you. The BRO is following up our foody Echoes with a healthy sports survey. We intend to try and record the county's sporting heritage over the next two years - quite an undertaking, but one which we hope will lead to the much better preservation of the archives of sports clubs and events across Berkshire. If you are involved in a sports club, then be prepared for us making contact in the near future. If you want

to contact us first, then so much the better, and you can do so at our usual addresses. The grand plan is to finish the survey with an exhibition at The Museum of Reading, just in time for the 2012 Olympics.

Back to the present, it was good to welcome so many people to both our Heritage Open Days events and to our introductions to research. The latter were oversubscribed three times and we were able to offer extra days. Hopefully no one was inconvenienced by not being able to have their first date of choice. We continue to offer these visits and also our quarterly family history evenings with the Berkshire Family History Society. The next one of these is imminent as we go to press (13 October). All these events are free and at the BRO.

Finally, we are pleased to report that we are now Wi-Fi enabled. This means that not only can researchers log on from their own laptops, but also that you can come along and have a coffee in reception while you surf the net. The BRO as an internet cafe - who'd have thought it!

Mark Stevens
Senior Archivist



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DAY SCHOOLS AT BRO

Two short courses will be held at the Berkshire Record Office. On Saturday 5 December 2009, there will be a practical day school discussing the eighteenth-century parish and its records, with an opportunity to use BRO documents in workshop sessions. On Saturday 30 January 2010, a day school will focus on people and places in Tudor and Stuart Berkshire, including sources for local research, patterns of consumption, the role of church courts and the contribution of women to the domestic and local economy.

These courses are run through the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education. For further information or to book a place, please telephone: 01865 270368 or visit: www.conted.ox.ac.uk.

STOCKTAKE DATES ANNOUNCED

This year, BRO's annual closure for stocktaking will be later than usual. We will be closed to the public from Tuesday, 1 December through Friday, 11 December 2009 inclusive. We hope the timing of stocktake this year will inconvenience fewer of you. The annual stocktaking closure allows essential behind-the-scenes work to take place, as well as improvements to the searchroom.



To Make Apricocks Cakes Mrs.
 Take your Apricocks infuse them, then put them into your pan and boile them till all the thin be boild away, to every pound of this put
 Juice of Gooseberries and a pound and a half of double
 Size Spoonfulls of water boile them all together till they are
 equalid then put a spoonfull in a Chaffing dish & let y^e lye b
 turn them out of the pan & put them either in a Stove or

To Make Apricocks Cakes Mrs. Starlet.
 Take your Apricocks infuse them, then put them into your pan and boile them till all the thin be boild away, to every pound of this put
 Juice of Gooseberries and a pound and a half of double
 Size Spoonfulls of water boile them all together till they are
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A taste of the past

In a factual-looking collection of manorial records, deeds and estate papers of Hinton Waldrist, there is a small series of recipe books (D/ELS/Z1-4). These provide a glimpse into life for a domestic goddess in the 18th century. The recipe book extracted below dates from c.1775, and probably belonged to Mary Loder, wife of Revd. John Loder of Hinton Waldrist (D/ELS/Z1). Other recipes in the series feature instructions for preserving meat, fruits and vegetables as well as various medicines and cures for animals. Although BRO staff have not tested the two recipes here, they were selected as they looked appetising. Bon appetit!

To Make an Oyster Omelette

Take a pint of oysters and skirt them, cut them not too small, season them with pepper and three beaten cloves. Take a handful of parsley, half an onion & a little thyme, shred them very small and mix them with your oysters. Put to the crumb

of a stale half penny loaf grated fine, then take 12 eggs, beat them very well with two spoonfuls of water. Mix it with your oysters, then have ready a frying pan with butter in it hot. Pour in your omelette and fry it but of one side, then turn it on your dish the fry side uppermost. Take care it does not burn in frying and fry it not too hard.

Mrs Grove's Seed Cake

Take a pound and a quarter of the finest flour very well dried, a pound of butter, and a pound of fine sugar, nine eggs - leave out half the whites. Beat the eggs very well, and dry your sugar, break your butter into the flour, then add all the rest of the things, keeping it beating with your hands for an hour till you put it into the oven. You must add an ounce and a half of caraway seeds. Put into a dish. An hour and a half will bake it.

Bacon, beer and a lamb pie: Stolen by the soldiers!

Soldiers billeted in Reading in the seventeenth century made a thorough nuisance of themselves stealing food and drink, as witnessed by a complaint to their captain, a draft of which has just been discovered in the Reading borough archives (R/Z2/1/1). The naughty soldiers refused to give their names to their unwilling Reading hosts.

Four men quartered with a local man named Tubb were allegedly very abusive to him,

"and notwithstanding other dyett was provided for them, they cutt downe 6 or 7 pound of his Bacon out of ye Chimney, eate what they could of itt, gave a parte

to their dogge & put ye rest in their knapsacke."

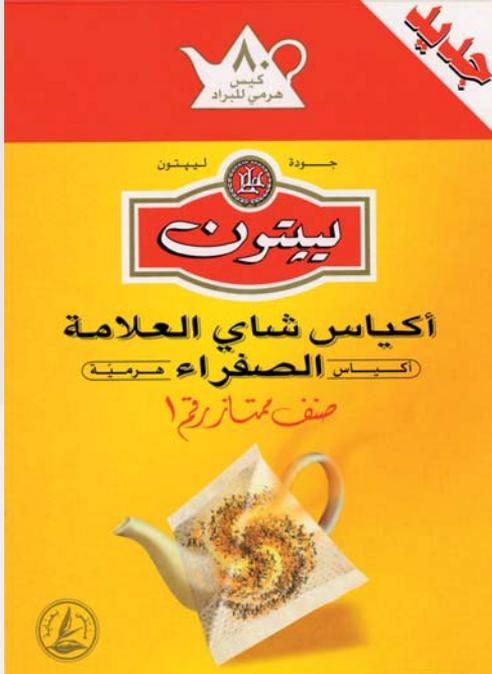
The men quartered at one Welbeck's house:

"dranke 13 jugges of beere, discharged 3 muskettes with bulleattes in ye night time which much affrighted ye weoman of ye house being then greate with childe & neere her time of delivery, & besides were very disorderly otherwaies, & came to ye Constables att 4 of ye Clock in ye morninge acquainting him their Landlady was in Travell [travail, i.e. labour] & gott another Tickett from him to have Quarter att one Speede's house where they forced in and demanded

victuals which was sett before them, a Lambe Pye & other victuals, & when they had broak their fast they pul'd ye Children in ye house out of their beddes & there lodged themselves, & afterwarde [went] away without giving any satisfaction to either house."

The officers who stayed at the Crown Inn were no better: they ordered 20 shillings worth of wine and beer which they drank, but never paid for. Most of the rest of the soldiers would apparently have been prepared to pay up, but because the captain was absent they had not received their own wages.





(left) D/EX1667/6/2/1, (below) D/EX1667/6/2/1

Illustrating the perfect cup of tea

Since tea came to Britain in the seventeenth century it has been a national passion. Staff at the Berkshire Record Office have recently catalogued a collection that helps to demonstrate Berkshire's part in the last 100 years of tea-drinking culture.

Arthur Brooke began selling tea in 1845 and by the turn of the 20th century Brooke Bond and Company Ltd had become a very prosperous and important player in the British tea industry. In 1902 Arthur Brooke purchased a grocers and tea dealers in King's Road, Reading, called Salmon Ltd. He used the premises for tea packing. By 1908 the premises was being used for printing labels and making fricker [tea] bags under the name the Berkshire Printing Company. In 1911, the Berkshire Printing Company became an independent company in its own right, albeit still headed by the Brooke family. The Berkshire Printing Company continued to print tea labels for Brook Bond teas but also branched out. It started

producing labels for other tea brands and for other food products, and the collection includes many examples of tea labels dating from the early to mid twentieth century. With changes in tea packaging, the emphasis of the company switched from labels to packaging. In 1954 they started printing picture cards for Brooke Bond teas. This became a large part of their business and by 1970 they were producing more than 600 million picture cards a year. The Berkshire Printing Company closed around 2002.

The collection, including examples of packaging, is now available for consultation in the searchroom (ref D/EX1667).



Sports Records Survey

September 2009 saw the launch of BRO's Sports Records Survey. The aim of the survey is to build up a picture of sports organisations in the county and understand what types of records they keep. All sports clubs in Berkshire will be contacted over the next two years, and will be asked to complete an online survey about their historical records.

We are hoping that many clubs will wish to deposit their records and an exhibition featuring some of them will be held at the Museum of Reading during the 2012 Olympics to celebrate sport in Berkshire. We would like to hear from anyone who has records for old or current sports clubs so that we can preserve these records for the future.





New to the Archives

Parish & burial board records

New parish registers have come in from:
California (D/P189): baptisms, 1989-1997,
and banns, 1990-2007.

Crowthorne (D/P102B): baptisms, 1977-1997,
marriages, 1978-2002, and banns, 1871-1995.

Newbury St Nicolas: banns, 1987-1993.

Reading St Paul: baptisms, 1936-1976.

Shaw-cum-Donnington: baptisms, 1981-1999,
marriages, 1985-2005, and banns, 1989-2006.

Wokingham St Paul: marriages, 1976-1995, and baptisms at
the workhouse (later Wokingham Hospital), 1904-1962.

These are mostly rather modern, although the newly
deposited Wokingham St Paul records include other material
dating back to the church's foundation in 1864. Exciting
for both local and family historians was the discovery of
churchwardens' accounts, 1748-1922, and church rates,
1839-1864, for Great Shefford (D/P108). More recent records
excluding registers have come in from Stubbings (D/P195),
including church accounts from 1903. We have also received
the minutes of Bucklebury Burial Board, which ran the
cemetery on Bucklebury Common, 1884-1895 (CPC28).

Business records

Local business activity is represented by the records of the
Reading-based Berkshire Printing Company, 1900-2001
(D/EX1667). The company was originally the in-house printer
for Brooke Bond teabags and packaging, later branching out

into other work as well. From the 1950s the firm produced
picture cards included in boxes of tea, many of which are now
collectors' items, and the archive includes a number of these.
See the article on the collection in this issue for further details.

Visual archives

A really delightful small collection of prints and drawings of
Berkshire views, mostly for places along the River Thames,
c.1793-1881, is a particularly pleasing addition to our holdings
(D/EX2102). A postcard shows Bearwood House in 1919, when
it was in use as a hospital for wounded Canadian soldiers
(D/EX2122). A large collection of copies of photographs in
private hands relating to the history of Brightwalton has also
been deposited (D/EX2123).

Official records

The Slough Borough yearbooks, 1954-1973, have been
listed (S/AZ). These useful volumes give lists of alderman,
councillors and chief officers, together with information on
committees. Our rating records project continues with the
completion of cataloguing and conservation work on the rate
books and valuation lists of Faringdon Rural District, 1892-
1973 (RD/F) - an exciting resource for house historians.

Sport & leisure records

Sport and leisure are represented by the records of Reading
Bowling Club, 1874-1989 (D/EX2084). The papers of the
Bowyer family of Reading include a photograph of the
Reading Winter Bathers ready for action in the River Thames
on Christmas Day 1912 (D/EX646). The records of the
Whitknights branch of the Townswomen's Guild are also now
available (D/EX2112).

Opening Hours

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

Contact Information:

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Email: arch@reading.gov.uk

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