

Thames Valley Family History

A guide to Berks, Bucks and Oxon

By Chad Hanna Enquiries@BerksFHS.org.uk
and Gillian Stevens ComputerBranch@BerksFHS.org.uk

Diocese of Oxford

Oxfordshire 1541 & Buckinghamshire 1839/1845 (from Lincoln), Berkshire 1836 (from Salisbury)

Discussions are ongoing about rights for putting parish records back on-line.

County Boundary Changes

1974 Berkshire lost Vale of White Horse to Oxfordshire; Buckinghamshire lost Slough & Eton to Berkshire

1911 Oxfordshire lost Caversham to Berkshire

1896 Oxfordshire lost Stokenchurch to Buckinghamshire

1895 Hampshire lost Coombe to Berkshire

And so on. Generally Record Offices respect the pre-1974 boundaries for Parish Records.

Civil Registration

Online Indexes

www.freebmd.org.uk (free – not yet complete)

www.findmypast.co.uk (subscription site)

www.ancestry.co.uk (subscription site)

www.thegenealogist.co.uk (subscription site)

Microfiche Indexes at Berks Record Office, Oxford Record Office and the Centre for Bucks Studies

www.BerkshireBMD.org.uk

Over 450,000 Births, Deaths and Marriages for Reading area 1837 to 1950 and beyond.

Online Census Indexes

www.findmypast.co.uk (subscription site) *

www.ancestry.co.uk (subscription site)

www.thegenealogist.co.uk (subscription site)

www.FamilySearch.org International Genealogical Index (IGI)

Berkshire – about 33 of 180 parishes missing

Buckinghamshire – about 59 of 230 parishes missing

Oxfordshire – about 56 of 270 parishes missing

Mainly Christenings and Marriages with a few Burials – good coverage up to 1812

Until there is agreement to put parish registers online again, we suggest:

Use National Burial Index CD

Society baptism, marriage and burial indexes and transcripts on CD, fiche and booklets

Also publications by Eureka Partnership and others

Society Research services

Berkshire Wills Pre-1854 [sic]

Berkshire in Diocese of Salisbury to 1836. Most consistory court wills (and bishops' transcripts) at Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office in Chippenham. Three separate indexes cover archdeaconry wills at Berkshire Record Office. Project beginning, aims to put wills online. Later wills at Oxford but likely many Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) wills at The National Archives.

Oxon and Bucks Wills pre-1854

Very few at Lincoln, mostly with county record offices.

Wills related to Oxford University will be found at the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Court of the Chancellor).

County Record Offices

Berkshire – www.BerkshireRecordOffice.gov.uk

Coley Ave, Reading. CARN card required. Open Tuesday to Friday with late night on Thursday. Good parking (free). Good walk (3/4 mile) or bus from station

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

See Buckinghamshire County Council web site.

County Hall, Aylesbury. CARN Card. Open on Saturdays, closed Sun, Mon. Pay for parking

Oxfordshire Record Office

St Lukes in Cowley. CARN card. Open Saturdays, but not Monday or Tuesday.
Limited parking. Good coffee. See Oxfordshire County Council web site.

Family History Societies

Berkshire Family History Society www.BerksFHS.org.uk

Oxfordshire Family History Society www.OFHS.org.uk

Buckinghamshire Family History Society www.BucksFHS.org.uk

Buckinghamshire Genealogical Society www.BucksGS.org.uk

Berkshire FHS Research Centre

Open every Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 10 am to 4 pm

Late night opening Tuesday 7 pm to 9.30 pm

Open 2nd and 4th Sunday 11 am to 4 pm

Free to members, non-members are asked to contribute £2 per visit

Good free parking and local transport, drinks available plus a fridge

Oxfordshire FHS Research Centre

The Holford Centre at Stanton St John (6 miles from Oxford City)

Open 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 10 am to 4 pm
and one Sunday most months

Plenty of parking but limited public transport (one bus per day)

Free to members, non-members are asked to pay a nominal fee of £1 per session

The Eureka Partnership

www.eurekpartnership.com

Publish A5 booklets for not too much

Surname indexes

Unusual or lesser known records e.g. Canal boat records, Militia Lists

Mailing Lists

<http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/> For county-wide, military and similar topics

Also some forums, chat, etc. e.g. www.british-genealogy.com

Berkshire FHS have their own members-only discussion list

And don't forget www.GENUKI.org.uk