



Off The Record

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies Quarterly Review

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Seasons Greetings from all at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

Archive Awareness Campaign 2006

As you know, the Centre has once again participated in the nationwide Archive Awareness Campaign this year, which used the theme of Woods and Neighbourhoods as its starting point. As our contribution, we have produced an exhibition on researching local history, entitled 'Where Do You Think You Live?' based around Horn Street, Winslow. The exhibition remains on display in the Centre's Coffee Room until the end of December.



Of course, we also held our highly successful annual Open Day on Saturday 11th November. Alongside the usual tours of the archives strongrooms, we also had displays of documents and other sources relating to Buckinghamshire woods, including the Boarstall Cartulary showing one of the earliest village maps known in the country. For the youngsters, there was an opportunity to add a leaf to our 'Tree of Life' or create a Green Man mask.

We're now planning next year's contribution with the theme of Freedom and Liberty.

Welcome to 'Ancestry'

In case you were unaware, we now have a library subscription to 'Ancestry.com'. This means that for £1 per half hour (the charge for the use of the 'Peoples' Network' computers) you can download anything from Ancestry at no extra cost.

All of the UK censuses are on the site, giving quick and easy access to non-Buckinghamshire censuses – an extremely useful tool.

However, one word of warning; there can be transcription errors. So don't be surprised if you are unable to locate an ancestor on every census. The following is an example I found whilst helping one of our customers:

We were looking for a Richard Read and wife, Sarah. Sure enough, there they were in the 1891 census living in Brill with their two children. However, the transcript view lists 11 people in their household. It had included all the names of their next-door neighbours, listing them as 'Reads' when in fact they were the 'Browns' (probably because Jane Brown was described as 'wife' rather than 'head'). Of course, had you have been searching for one of the Browns your search would have been fruitless!

Rachel Simon
Senior Archives and Local Studies Assistant

Let it Snow!

Historic Bucks Photographs

The Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies holds many thousands of photographs. These photographs have been collected in over the course of many years by the Local Studies Library, Buckinghamshire County Museum and the Archives (Buckinghamshire Record Office as was). The Centre holds these photographs together so that access may be provided through the Archives searchroom.

The majority of the photographs held are made available through the County Council website, and are held within a searchable database <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/photo_database>. If you have an interest in Buckinghamshire and would like to view historic photographs of your area, please use the website. The database includes photographs of all ages, both black & white and colour. The photographs shown there, and more, are available to view in their original format in the archives searchroom.



This photograph shows a snowy scene in Aylesbury in 1908, and is just one example of a local photograph held here [Ref: phAylesbury1170]. Photographs can be printed out from the database at perfectly adequate quality, but they do not reproduce well when manipulated as they are scanned at a low resolution for the website.

Nicéphore Niépce took the first photograph in 1826, a very crude start of the process. Louis Daguerre made a lot more progress in the 1830s, and his process of Daguerreotype was very popular (still forming the basis of Polaroids today). The basis of modern photography comes from William Henry Fox Talbot who developed the first negative/positive photographic process. The first colour photograph was taken in 1861 by James Clerk Maxwell, but did not become widely available until the twentieth century. Photography became more widespread with the introduction of the Kodak Brownie in 1901 making the art of photography available to more people. A revolution in photography came in 1981 when Sony introduced the first digital camera, leading to the widespread adoption of digital photography that we know today. Most of the photographs on the database are twentieth century, although there are some from the nineteenth century. At the moment the database is not being added to, but who knows what we may do in the future!

Laura Robertson
Senior Archivist

Hall Barn Estate Deeds

We have just received a wonderful collection of deeds with beeswax pendant seals (see Accessions opposite, AR 93/2006). There is a partial verdigris Great Seal, relating to a Charter of Confirmation to the Abbey of Burnham, dated 1414. Henry V on displayed on horseback on the recto and enthroned on the verso of the seal.

Other smaller seals have ornate coats of arms and have the red pigment, vermillion or green pigment, verdigris added to the beeswax. These seals date around 1378-9.



The whole collection required cleaning and using a firm small brush the dust and dirt was removed mechanically. Then a very mild conservation detergent was mixed with 2 parts water and was applied with cotton swabs and then it was removed with cotton wool. Each seal was cleaned and allowed to dry before placing back into original box. Some of the Great Seals that were damaged were packed into archival material. Some are now on display in the Archive Searchroom.

Sam Joiner
'The Document Doctor'

Accessions

[AR 82/2006](#)

Adstock parish registers of baptisms, 1860-2006, marriages, 1837-2005, and burials, 1926-2005

[AR 93/2006](#)

Additional records of the Hall Barn Estate in Beaconsfield, including deeds and charters relating to property in Beaconsfield, Burnham and elsewhere in Buckinghamshire, 1286-1714, including 3 royal charters to the Abbey of Burnham, 1414, 1436, 1523, and some court rolls for the manor of Burnham (146 items in 4 boxes), grant by Edward VI to Sir John Williams of right to hold a market and fair in Beaconsfield, 4 Jul [1551]

[AR 94/2006](#)

Minute Books of Berton with Broughton Parish Council, 1910-1973

[AR 95/2006](#)

Records relating to Wycombe General Hospital (and predecessors), including: Minute Books of Cottage Hospital, 1873-1891, Minute Book of Air Raid Precautions Committee of the War Memorial Hospital, 1938-1939, Booker Hospital, Register of smallpox cases, 1929-1932

[AR 101/2006](#)

Minute Book of Weedon Parish Council, 1963-1992

[AR 103/2006](#)

Register of banns for Whaddon, 1824-1886

[AR 105/2006](#)

Records of the 10th Bucks Battalion Home Guard, including reports of their activities, mostly at Iver, 1941-1944, and reports of the Night Section, 1944

Did You Know?

It is a little known fact that Buckinghamshire County Council's Freedom of Information Officer works within the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies. Neil Doling, also the Council's Modern Records Manager, has responsibility for ensuring that the Council complies with national Freedom of Information (2000) legislation, which was implemented in January 2005.

Since the start of 2006, the Council has received 393 requests for information under the auspices of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts, and Neil has the unenviable task of tracking each request and offering advice to officers to ensure that responses are issued within the statutory time limits..

Requests come from a variety of sources including journalists, commercial organisations hoping to sell the Council their services, other officials and local government bodies as well members of the general public.

A listing of the requests received in 2005 is available on our website: http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/foi/request_log/2005/index.htm, although the strangest request is one from this year - what is the Council's readiness for dealing with an outbreak of West Nile Virus!

Open Meeting 2007

For the last few years, the Centre has held an Open Meeting to discuss issues regarding the service we provide and to give you the opportunity to have your say on what we do and the way in which we do it.

The 2007 meeting will be on Thursday 8th February at 2pm. This year, we have responded to requests to hold the meeting during the day, as evening meetings were not popular. We hope that more people will feel able to attend and get involved in discussions.

The agenda will include opportunities for volunteering and the possible establishment of a 'Friends of the Centre' group. If you have anything to say on these matters, or anything else you would like to raise, please come along and give us your views. If you're not able to attend, but would like to comment, please let us know on the contacts below. A full agenda will be published at the start of February.

Laura Robertson
Senior Archivist

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies
County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UU
Tel: 01296 382587 (Archives) or 01296 382250 (Local Studies) Fax: 01296 382771
Email: archives@buckscc.gov.uk or localstudies@buckscc.gov.uk
Website <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/archives>

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

