



Berkshire Heritage Online Fair

Saturday 6th August
Online
10am - 12 noon and 2 - 4pm

Free to stand holders (invitation-only)

Free to attendees

Organised and hosted by Berkshire Family History Society and Berkshire Local History Association

Event Overview

On Saturday 6th August, we will be holding the first ever virtual Heritage Fair for Berkshire. As a virtual event, location is no barrier to being able to attend, and so we hope to attract visitors from all round the world. The event will be held on Zoom, using breakout rooms, and each participating heritage organisation will be given their own breakout room. We hope to have around 30-40 individual breakout rooms in total, hosted by heritage organisations from across the length and breadth of historic (pre-1974) Berkshire, as well as the Family History Societies from the adjoining counties.

What's a Breakout Room?

Breakout rooms are virtual sub-events within a main Zoom session. They are private and conversations within them can only be heard by those present. If you "share your screen" to show someone a photograph, for example, only the participants of your room will see the photograph.

Each breakout room will be designated to an individual organisation and hosted by their representatives (stand holders). Attendees to the fair will see the list of every organisation attending and will be able to click on the link to their specific room to join the stand holders for a discussion.

Technical help will be on hand for both stand holders and attendees throughout.

Anyone can join a breakout room and each breakout room can host a number of attendees simultaneously. If you represent a larger town or heritage organisation, you may find yourself particularly popular and attendees will end up patiently waiting until it's their time to ask a question. Often attendees stay on to listen to other people's questions, because it may add to their knowledge of a particular place.

If someone wants to discuss something which is personal, and which they prefer not to discuss in front of others, a small number of private breakout rooms will be available which you can make use of.

Attendees will be able to move between rooms by exiting one room and then clicking on the link to their next chosen organisation. So, attendees will come and go and may even return again later - as they do in a face-face exhibition or fair.

What happens in a breakout room?

Attendees may have specific information they are seeking - "my ancestor worked on this farm - can you tell me anything about it?" or they may have information they would like to share with you "I have some old photographs of my ancestors who lived in XYZ Cottage - would you like a copy of them?"

Attendees may wish to purchase books or other products from you - you'll need to work out your own processes for doing that.

You may wish to do free data look-ups for them of your own researched data (no data lookups please using copyrighted material which belongs to someone else).

Mostly, breakout rooms are about connecting with others who share your area of interest and exchanging information.

Who is likely to attend this fair?

Attendees could come from all over the world, and in fact, they're probably more likely to be individuals who live some way from your location.

They will all have one thing in common - an interest in historic Berkshire or some particular location within it. Many will be family historians, whose ancestors may have lived in Wargrave, for example, for 3 or 4 generations. Others may be house historians, military historians or interested in their local history or the history of a particular locality.

With so many heritage societies in one place, your next visitor may alternatively be another stand holder, coming to introduce themselves and their particular organisation.

Attendance is free and attendees may sign up for one or both sessions.

What's the benefit to my organisation of participating?

Hopefully, by this point you're already starting to work out some of those potential benefits, but in precis:

- Opportunity to connect to individuals who have an interest in your particular area of expertise, to help them with their enquiries and potentially, if you want to, to build a longer time connection beyond this event.
- Opportunity to build connections with people who can aid your research and areas of interest and who may be able to supply supporting images, documentation and stories for your archive.
- Opportunity to promote and sell books and other products.
- Opportunity to promote membership of your organisation.

- Opportunity to network with the other organisations present and to exchange ideas, plus of course to build new speaker connections and even come away with ideas of places to visit.

We can't guarantee how many visitors you will receive; you may have extended quiet periods; you may be busy throughout. We will be advertising widely, and we hope that you will also advertise the event to your members.

And of course, there is no cost to your organisation.

What technical knowledge do we need to host a breakout room?

Very little!

If you can use Zoom - you can do this.

If you haven't yet used Zoom but have a computer device with internet access with microphone, speakers and a camera - either built-in or as separate plug-ins (such as a laptop or tablet) - we can help you to be able to use Zoom.

We will send you a guide in advance with practical hints and tips and there will be a choice of briefing sessions just before the event, to give you practical hands-on experience. We recommend having two people hosting each breakout room, if this is possible, but one will be ok. Just like during a Zoom meeting, your co-hosts can be in the same room on the same PC, but we recommend they are in different houses on different PCs if that's practical, or otherwise on different devices in different rooms.

Ideally, we would like your organisation to commit to being present for both the morning and afternoon sessions. This will give the greatest opportunity for attendees to connect with you and is especially important for our overseas attendees. There is no requirement for the same people from your organisation to host both the morning and afternoon sessions - you can change the stand holders for each session. However, if it's only possible for your organisation to do either the morning or afternoon, but not both, then we'll do our best to fit you in. Just let us know when you confirm your interest.

We're interested - what do I do now?

At this stage you just need to register your interest by emailing Ann at: membership@blha.org.uk

Please do this as soon as you can, to avoid disappointment. There is a maximum number of breakout rooms available, and so a maximum number of organisations who can be involved.

In your email:

tell us the name of your organisation,

- whether your organisation is available for both the morning and afternoon sessions (preferred) or just the morning or afternoon,
- give us the name and email address of your preferred contact person.

The deadline to reply is 30th May.