

Local Newspapers in Reading Central Library

In Reading Library we have comprehensive holdings of the newspapers published in Reading. There are 5 major titles, and several minor ones.

Reading Mercury (1723 - 1985)

The Reading Mercury, or, Weekly Entertainer 1723-1725
continued as The Reading Mercury and Oxford Gazette, etc. 1767-1831
continued as Reading Mercury, Oxford Gazette and Berkshire County Paper, etc 1831-1839
continued as Reading Mercury, Oxford Gazette, Newbury Herald and Berks County Paper, etc. 1839-1960
continued as Reading Mercury, etc. 1960-1970

This is the earliest Berkshire newspaper, and one of the earliest local newspapers in the country. First published in July 1723, it predates *The Times*. We do not have every single copy from the 18th century, but we do have a lot, for instance 12 May 1746 with a battle plan of Culloden. Our 18th century holdings are listed on the Newspaper microfilm cabinets in the Family History centre.

It was a quasi-national newspaper, with very little local news to start with. It was Liberal and was the only newspaper in Reading until 1825. It was published until 1985.

Nineteenth and early 20th century copies are good sources of inquest reports. Although published in Reading, it covered stories from across Berkshire & South Oxfordshire though tending to focus on the western side of the county.

Held on microfilm on the 3rd floor. The Reading Mercury 1789-1903 is on The British newspaper Archive website www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. You can search the index but not view articles as the library does not have a subscription. The Reading Mercury 1770-1903 is also on Find My Past and the library has a subscription.

Berkshire (Reading) Chronicle (1825 - date)

Berkshire Chronicle 1825-1912
continued as Berkshire Daily Chronicle 1912-1914
continued as Berkshire Chronicle 1914-1961
continued as Reading and Berkshire Chronicle 1961-1965
continued as Reading Chronicle 1965-

The second local newspaper, first published 29 Jan 1825 as Conservative competition for the *Mercury*. Renamed *Reading Chronicle* in 1962.

2 year file kept on the 1st floor, older issues, back to the beginning, held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

As with *Mercury* 19th and early 20th century copies are good sources of inquest reports. Although published in Reading, covered stories from across Berkshire & South Oxfordshire tending to focus on the western side of the county.

Reading Chronicle, 50 Portman Road, Reading RG30 1EA Tel 0118 950 3030, their website is <http://icberkshire.icnetwork.co.uk>

Reading Observer (1873-1924)

A development of the former *Berkshire Telegraph*. Announced itself as the Liberal newspaper in Reading. Very good for football coverage, included a season supplement and a midweek edition. On its demise it was incorporated in the *Reading Standard*

Held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Reading Standard (1891- 1965)

Source of *Berkshire & the War*, good for Photos. Became the Evening Post when it was relaunched in 1965.

Not to be confused with the short lived *Reading Standard*, which was the title of the *Evening Post*'s free weekly newspaper.

Held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Evening Post (Reading) (1965 - date)

The only daily newspaper in Berkshire. Grew from the Reading Standard. 14 Sept 1965. The *Evening Post*, was the first in Britain to use computerized typesetting when it started. Used to be published 6 days a week, stopped coming out on Saturdays in February 1989 (Fri 3 March 1989 was the launch of "Weekend" supplement). Saturday edition was tabloid by Jan 1989. Originally a broadsheet, it became tabloid on 22 April 1991. Became Reading Evening Post in 1994.

Until recently it had a free weekly sheet, since March 2000 called *Reading Central*. It used to be called *Reading Standard*, and when it started it was *Reading Herald & Post*. We keep *Reading Central* on the 1st floor for 12 months, but we also have a file of the *Reading Herald & Post* from 1983-1989.

2 year file kept on the 1st floor, older issues, back to the beginning, held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Evening Post, Tessa Road, Reading RG1 8NS Tel 0118 918 3000, they have a website at www.getreading.co.uk

Summary of main holdings

1723 - 1825	One title (Mercury)
1825 - 1872	Two titles (Mercury, Chronicle)
1873 - 1891	Three titles (Mercury, Chronicle, Observer)
1891 - 1924	Four titles (Mercury, Chronicle, Observer, Standard)
1924 - 1965	Three titles (Mercury, Chronicle, Standard)
1965 - 1985	Three titles (Mercury, Chronicle, Evening Post)
1985 - date	Two titles (Chronicle, Evening Post)

These are held on microfilm in the Local Studies Collection, on the top floor.

Minor Titles

Berkshire Chronicle (Wokingham) 1771 - 1775

Not to be confused with the more familiar *Chronicle*, this was a short-lived newspaper, running from 14 Jan 1771 - 29 Dec 1775. Held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Minor 19th century titles

After the abolition of stamp duty, a number of titles appeared in Reading. Some are known from a single copy, others merely from a cutting. For more information see Burton p. 148-152, also p. 271-277.

2 folders in Newspapers room have National supplements, also copies of local papers not otherwise in stock eg Newbury Weekly News, also Reading Times (2 from 1868), Windsor & Eton Express, also Newbury Express, which became Reading Standard BTW. We have The Newbury Express 1891-1898 on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Football Chronicle 1919-1936

Published by the *Chronicle*, but bound separately.

Reading Citizen 1924 - 1952

Held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Evening Gazette 1935 -1939

First evening newspaper in Reading, short-lived experiment which folded at the beginning of World War II. Very good for Darts coverage. Held on microfilm on the 3rd floor.

Other local newspapers

Current issues of other local newspapers are kept on the 1st floor. We keep each of the following titles for three months. For earlier copies of these titles, contact the local Library for that area - we can give you the details.

Basingstoke & North Hampshire Gazette
Bracknell News
Henley Standard
Maidenhead Advertiser
Newbury Weekly News
Oxford Times
Slough and Langley Observer
Wokingham Times

We also have substantial holdings of local periodicals and magazines of all types.

Press Cuttings

We maintain several files of press cuttings on subjects of local interest e.g businesses, buildings and people, these are all drawn from local papers and are openly available to the public dating back for fifty years.

Print Holdings

If microfilm holdings are available print copies can only be consulted in special circumstances.

Recommended reading

Burton, K.G. *The early newspaper press in Berkshire (1723-1855)* Reading, 1954 (B/UX)

Watts, A.T. *The Newspaper Press in the Town of Reading 1855-1980* D.Phil Thesis, University of Stirling, 1990 (qR/UX)

Stokes, Penelope *"...no apology is needed..." The story of the Newbury Weekly News 1867-1992* Newbury, 1992 (BT/UX)

Gibson, Jeremy, Langston, Brett and Smith, Brenda W. *Local Newspapers 1750-1920; England and Wales, Channel Islands, Isle of Man. A Select Location List* Federation of Family History Societies, 2nd edition, 2002 (929.3)

Eagle, Selwyn and Dixon, Diana. *NEWSPLAN: report of the Newsplan project in the London & South Eastern Library Region (LASER), January 1992 - December 1995*. London: British Library, 1996. Lists newspapers by town or London Borough and tells you which libraries hold the titles.

(there is an associated website <http://laser.newsplan.co.uk/modules.php> in which it is possible to search for local south-east newspapers, or link to other regional lists)