

Records of the Berkshire, South Oxon and South Bucks Congregational Union and its predecessors, 1840-1991.

(25 vols, 7 bdls, 2 rolls, 4 docs)

Deposited in November 1995 (acc. 5708); September 1996 (acc. 5891); June 2003 (acc. 7230); June 2007 (acc. 8046)

Cat : LS 1/1996; 10/1996; 11/2003; 7/2007

Schedule of accessions

Acc. 5708 : 1/1/1-2; 2/1/1-7; 2/3/1; 2/6/1; 3/1/1; 4/1/1-6; 5/1/1-3; 5/2/1-2;
5/3/1; 6/1/1; 6/3/1; 8/1-2

Acc. 5891 : 2/7/1

Acc. 2003 : 1/2/1

Acc. 8046: 1/2/2; 2/3/2; 2/9/1; 2/10/1; 3/1/3; 3/2/1-2

Introduction

The Berkshire Association of Independent Ministers and Churches was traditionally formed c.1796 (as stated in 1847) or 1798, but no records survive before 1840. The association was certainly in existence by 1799, when a meeting was reported in the *Evangelical Magazine*. The founding churches were Abingdon, Aston Tirrold, Maidenhead, Newbury, Reading Broad Street, Wallingford and Windsor, all in Berkshire; Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire; Marlow, Wooburn and High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire; and Staines, Middlesex. Meetings were originally held three times a year, and were of a predominantly religious nature. It appears that minutes were not at first kept.

The Association was reorganised in 1813, and rules drawn up. An annual letter was henceforth sent to the churches, but this apparently made no reference to local or denominational matters. In 1840, following the death of the Revd. Archibald Douglas, minister of Broad Street since 1797 and secretary of the Association from its inception (and the first Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1831), the Association split into two. Fourteen of the churches formed the Oxfordshire & West Berkshire Association; the remaining fifteen the East Berkshire Association. However, the schism was brought to an end in 1845, when the two bodies reunited under the name of the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Association.

In 1855, the name was altered to the Berkshire, South Oxon and South Bucks Association, and in 1908 the last part of the name was altered to the national body, the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

It was divided into Eastern and Western districts in 1866; the former included Caversham, the latter Reading and Oxford.

By 1900, the Association was divided into three districts : Eastern, consisting of East Berkshire, including Windsor and Maidenhead, two Middlesex churches, and the registration districts of Amersham, Eton and Wycombe in Buckinghamshire; Central, consisting of western and central Berkshire, including Newbury and Reading, a few churches in north Hampshire and Henley registration district in Oxfordshire; and Northern, which included the Vale of White Horse and North Berkshire, and the Oxfordshire registration districts of Oxford, Thame, Headington, Bampton, Burford and Witney.

Each district sent delegates to the Executive Committee, which ran the Association together with an elected President, treasurer and two secretaries. This was formed (as the Committee) in 1848. By 1900 there was also a Special Reference Committee, which dealt with ministerial matters, and a Trust Property Committee, which held in trust chapels and manses, and kept their deeds. A Young People's Committee was established in 1911, as was the Confidential Committee. In 1915 a Temperance Committee was appointed. Laymen's Committees were in existence by 1921; they were designed to increase interest locally in the Union's work. There were committees in each district, and one overall United Laymen's Committee.

Introduction (cont.)

In 1926 the Union was incorporated, so that it might act as trustee of church property. A Women's Auxiliary was formed in 1931. A Church Extension Committee was formed c.1934-5.

In 1946 the Temperance Committee was absorbed into the newly-formed Life and Work Committee, and an Advisory and Sealing Committee and Lay Preaching Committee were also formed. In 1949 a Youth Council was formed, supplemented in 1958 by the Youth and Education Committee (Youth and Children from 1964). In c.1954 a Citizenship Committee was formed, dealing with social issues including temperance and sabbatarianism. In 1964 the Women's Auxiliary was renamed the Women's Committee; in 1966 the Advisory and Sealing Committee became the Finance and Advisory Committee, being renamed again in 1968 as the Finance General Purposes Committee.

In 1972 the Union finally ceased, with the creation of the United Reformed Church. *See* D/N 26 for records of the Wessex Province of the U.R.C. However, the Incorporated Union, which had been established in 1926 to act as a corporate trustee for church property, continued in existence. In 1991 its work was incorporated in the Wessex (URC) Trust Ltd, but the Incorporated Union survived as a dormant company.

Summary

ADMINISTRATION : minutes, 1840-1972 (gaps); accounts, 1847-1849; correspondence, 1940-1953.

COMMITTEES : Executive Committee minutes, 1848-1972; Finance Sub-committee minutes, 1870, and memoranda, c.1890-1895; Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes, 1968-1969; Constitution Sub-committee minutes, 1865; Trust Property Committee register of deeds, 1891-1901; Life and Work Committee minutes, 1946-1960; Laymen's Committee Provident Fund Management Committee minutes, 1926-1969, and rules, 1933.

INCORPORATED UNION : minutes, 1926-1950, 1973-1991; annual statements of accounts, 1973-1990 (incomplete).

PUBLICATIONS : yearbooks, 1900-1972; miscellaneous, 1954.

EASTERN DISTRICT : minutes, 1933-1972; Executive Committee minutes, 1951-1972; deacons' meeting minutes, 1952-1953; Lay Preachers' Association minutes, 1965-1971.

CENTRAL DISTRICT : minutes, 1965-1967; Council minutes, 1966-1972; Executive Committee minutes, 1965-1972; Young People's Branch minutes, 1934-1939.

MISCELLANEOUS : report on history of Association, 1848; maps of boundaries, c.1925.

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

Records in other collections

Accounts, 1841-1893

D/N 9/13/1/1

Cataloguing scheme

[Please note that not all sections may include deposited records.]

- 1 ADMINISTRATION
 - 1 Association/Union minutes
 - 2 Correspondence

- 2 COMMITTEES
 - 1 Executive Committee minutes
 - 2 Executive Committee papers
 - 3 Finance (later Finance and General Purposes) Committee minutes
 - 4 Finance (later Finance and General Purposes) Committee papers
 - 5 Trust Property Committee minutes
 - 6 Trust Property Committee papers
 - 7 Life and Work Committee minutes
 - 8 Life and Work Committee papers
 - 9 Laymen's Committee (including Provident Fund Management Committee) minutes
 - 10 Laymen's Committee (including Provident Fund) papers
 - 11 Miscellaneous committee minutes
 - 12 Miscellaneous committee papers

- 3 INCORPORATED UNION
 - 1 Minutes
 - 2 Accounts
 - 3 Title deeds
 - 4 Miscellaneous

- 4 PUBLICATIONS
 - 1 Yearbooks
 - 2 Miscellaneous

- 5 EASTERN DISTRICT
 - 1 District meetings
 - 2 Executive Committee
 - 3 Lay Preachers' Association

- 6 CENTRAL DISTRICT
 - 1 District meetings
 - 2 Executive Committee
 - 3 Young People's Branch

- 7 NORTHERN DISTRICT

- 8 MISCELLANEOUS

1 ADMINISTRATION

1/1 Minutes

- 1/1/1 Minutes of meetings of the Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Association of Independent Churches, October 1840-April 1845; of the Berkshire & Oxfordshire [later Berks, South Oxon and South Bucks] Association of Independent Churches & Ministers October 1845-October 1868; of committee meetings, September 1848-April 1867 (described as Executive Committee, March 1867), and of sub-committee appointed to consider altering the constitution, October 1865.
(Includes lists of, and reports from, individual churches; a report on the history of the association and its present state, 1848, including copy of constitution adopted in 1813; and annual accounts, 1847/8 and 1848/9.)
- 1/1/2 Minutes of meetings of the Berks, South Oxon and South Bucks Association of Independent Ministers and Churches, April 1869-April 1893.
- [For minutes 1894-1909, 1911-1919, 1921-1923, 1926, 1934-1953, 1957-1961 and 1967-1972, *see* D/N 25/2/1/3-7.]

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

- 1 ADMINISTRATION
- 1/2 Correspondence
- 1/2/1 County Secretary's correspondence file. 1 bdl 1941-1953
 (Includes correspondence relating to individual churches:- Berkshire:- Bracknell, 1951-1953 (in section 3); Great Coxwell, 1953 (section 6); Faringdon, 1946-1951 (section 5); Fernham, 1946 (section 13); the Longworth Group (formerly the Frilford and Longworth Home Mission), 1949-1951 (sections 5 and 8); Maidenhead, 1947 (section 9); Newbury, 1950 (relating to visit by Presbyterian minister) (section 10); Castle Street, Reading, 1950-1951 (sections 13 and 14); Coley Hall, Reading, 1947 (section 13); future development of Free Churches in Reading, 1944-1951 (section 13); proposed church at Southcote, Reading, 1953 (section 14); Shellingford, 1950 (section 14); Slough, 1950 (section 14); Sonning, 1951-1952 (section 14); Spencers Wood, 1947-1950 (section 14); Stanford [in-the-Vale], 1951 (section 5); Sutton Courtenay, 1947 (section 14); Twyford, 1950 (section 14); Wargrave, 1951 (section 16); Windsor, 1950-1951 (section 16); Woolhampton, 1951 (section 16); Buckinghamshire : Chesham, 1948 (section 4); Stokenchurch, 1947 (section 14); Oxfordshire : Collinwood Road, Headington, Oxford, 1945-1951 (sections 11 and 13); Thame, 1946 (section 15); Witney, 1950 (section 16). Also includes correspondence relating to the Reading and District Congregational Monthly, 1950-1951, and draft statements of accounts, 1945-1947, 1949-1950 (section 9); post-war plans for the whole area, 1943 (section 13); transfers of ministers from other Congregational Unions, 1941-1951 (section 15); and various churches' statistical returns for the Congregational Year Book, 1945-1951. Most of the correspondence relates to property, finance and ministerial oversight.)
- 1/2/2 County Secretary's correspondence file. 1 bdl 1940-1952
 [Contents differ from those in D/N 25/1/2/1.]
 (Includes correspondence relating to candidates for the ministry, 1941-1949; circular letters to church secretaries, 1940-1946; correspondence relating to deeds of covenant (subscriptions from churches), 1943-1944; Marlow

1 ADMINISTRATION

1/2 Correspondence (cont.)

1/2/2 (cont.) Congregational Church extension fund accounts, 1951-1952; correspondence concerning negotiations with the London Missionary Society over superannuation contributions for the Revd Dr H V Martin, recalled unwillingly from the mission field in India, 1948-1950; annual statement of accounts, 1951, and notes, n.d., relating to Coley Hall, Reading; correspondence relating to Stoke Row Congregational Chapel, Oxfordshire, 1942-1943; and notes on the history of Woolhampton Congregational Church, 1942.)

2 COMMITTEES

2/1 Executive Committee minutes

[This committee was formed in 1848, and was known until 1867 as "the committee". For minutes, 1848-1867, *see* D/N 25/1/1/1.]

2/1/1	Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, April 1867-April 1869, September 1872-April 1892. (Includes minutes of special committee comprising the officers of the Association and its districts, May 1889.)	1 vol	1867-1892
2/1/2/1-6	Draft minutes of [Executive] Committee meetings, October 1869-November 1871, and of sub-committee meetings, May-December 1870.	1 bdl	1869-1871
2/1/3	Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, January 1893-April 1917, and of general meetings of the Association (Congregational Union from 1908), April 1894-March 1909, April 1911-April 1917 (printed from 1904). (Includes memoranda concerning the date of foundation of the Association, 1896; and report of Special Trust Property Committee, March 1901.)	1 vol	1893-1917
2/1/4	Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, January 1918-October 1923, and printed minutes of annual meetings of the Union, 1918-1919, 1921-1923. (Volume has been damaged by water, causing the ink to run. Many entries, especially for the period January 1919-January 1921 are barely legible.)	1 vol	1918-1923
2/1/5	Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, January 1924-September 1943, and of assembly meetings, April 1926 (printed), April 1934-April 1943 (printed 1940-1943). (Indexed.)	1 vol	1924-1943
2/1/6	Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, January 1944-April 1964, and of Union, April 1944-April 1953, November 1957-February 1958, April 1959-April 1961 (annual meetings printed). (Includes (at back) attendance register, October 1954-April 1964.)	1 vol	1944-1964 Closed until 2015
2/1/7	Minutes of Executive Committee meetings, October 1964-September 1972. (Includes minutes of Union Assembly, November 1967-April 1972, and of Incorporated Union, September 1970-June 1972).	1 vol	1964-1972 Closed until 2023

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
 CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

- 2 COMMITTEES
- 2/3 Finance and Advisory and Sealing (later Finance and General Purposes) Committee
 [This committee was appointed in April 1870.]
- 2/3/1 Minutes, May-October 1870. 1 vol 1870-1911
 (Includes minutes of Finance Committee meetings, May 1870-October 1870; financial notes and memoranda, c.1890-1895; and Executive Committee and annual meeting agendas, 1895-1911.)
- 2/3/2 Minutes, January 1968-March 1969. 1 vol 1968-1969
- 2/5 Trust Property Committee minutes
 [For minutes relating to property after 1926, see D/N 25/3/1-2.]
- 2/6 Trust Property Committee papers
- 2/6/1 Register of deeds of church property vested in the Union deposited at Mansfield College, Oxford. 1 vol 1891-1901
 (Includes details (sometimes transcripts) of the deeds of Tetsworth Congregational Church, Oxfordshire, 1825-1889; of Burnham Chapel, Buckinghamshire, 1790-1902; of Langford Chapel, Oxfordshire, burial ground, schoolroom and manse, 1853-1883; of Filkins Chapel, Oxfordshire, 1832-1887; of Great Haseley Chapel, Oxfordshire, 1841-1892; of Goring British School, Oxfordshire, 1663-1893; and of Summertown Old and New Chapels, Oxford, 1852-1901.)
- 2/7 Life and Work Committee minutes
 [This committee was established in 1946 to deal with spiritual matters.]
- 2/7/1 Minutes of Life and Work Committee meetings, March 1946-June 1960. 1 vol 1946-1960

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

2 COMMITTEES

2/9 Laymen's Committee minutes

Provident Fund Management Committee

[The Provident Fund was established by the Laymen's Committee to permit the Union to make grants to needy widows, children and dependents of ministers dying in service of the Union, and to needy ministers and their dependents. A Management [Sub-]committee reported to the Laymen's Committee.]

2/9/1 Minutes, April 1926-June 1969. 1 vol 1926-1969
(Includes names of recipients.) **Closed until 2020**

2/10 Laymen's Committee papers

Provident Fund

2/10/1 Printed rules and statement of objects. 1 doc 1933

2/11 Miscellaneous committee minutes

[For minutes of sub-committee appointed to consider altering the constitution, 1865, *see* D/N 25/1/1/1.]

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
 CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

3	INCORPORATED UNION		
	[Established in 1926 to act as trustee of church property.]		
3/1	<u>Minutes</u>		
3/1/1	Minutes of meetings of Incorporated Union, January 1926-December 1950. (Indexed.)	1 vol	1926-1950
3/1/2	[Number not used; minutes, 1951-1972, not deposited.]		
3/1/3	Minutes of Management Committee, January 1973-February 1974, and of directors' meetings, May 1974-June 1991. (Indexed. Includes annual statements of accounts, 1973-1985, and treasurer's report, 1990.)	1 bdl	1973-1991 Closed until 2022
3/2	<u>Accounts</u>		
	[For annual statements of accounts, 1973-1985, <i>see</i> D/N 25/3/1/3.]		
3/2/1	Annual statement of accounts, 1987.	1 doc	1988
3/2/2	Annual statement of accounts, 1990.	1 doc	1991

4 PUBLICATIONS

4/1 Yearbooks

[The Association (Union from 1908) yearbooks were printed annually and contained the official reports presented to the annual assembly.]

4/1/1	Yearbooks.	1 vol	1900-1906
4/1/2	Yearbooks.	1 vol	1907-1925
4/1/3	Yearbooks.	1 vol	1926-1933
4/1/4	Yearbooks.	1 vol	1934-1947
4/1/5	Yearbooks.	1 vol	1948-1967
4/1/6	Yearbooks.	1 vol	1968-1972

4 PUBLICATIONS

4/2 Miscellaneous

4/2/1 A Layman Speaks to Laymen by 1 doc 1954
David T. Ebsworth.
[Address by the Chairman of the Berkshire,
South Oxon and South Bucks Congregational Union.]

5 EASTERN DISTRICT

5/1 District meetings

5/1/1	Minutes of district meetings, January 1933-October 1947, October 1952-September 1960. (Includes minutes of executive committee, December 1951-September 1960; and of district deacons' meetings, March 1952-March 1953.)	1 vol	1933-1960
5/1/2/1-10	Minutes of district meetings, October 1948-October 1951.	1 bdl	1948-1951
5/1/3	Minutes of district meetings, September 1961-March 1972. (Includes minutes of executive committee, September 1961-January 1968.)	1 vol	1961-1972

BERKSHIRE, SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

5 EASTERN DISTRICT

5/2 Executive committee

5/2/1/1-4 Minutes of executive committee meetings, 1 bdl 1949-1951
October 1949-October 1951.

[For minutes, 1951-1968, see 5/1/1,3.]

5/2/2/1-19 Minutes of executive committee meetings, 1 bdl 1968-1972
July 1968-June 1972.

5 EASTERN DISTRICT

5/3 Lay Preachers' Association

[This association was formed in 1965.]

5/3/1 Minutes, October 1965-October 1971.

1 vol

1965-1971

6 CENTRAL DISTRICT

6/1 District meetings

6/1/1	Minutes of district meetings, September 1965- May 1967, and Council meetings, January 1966-September 1972. (Includes minutes of executive committee, January 1965-September 1972; and of a conference for delegates to the May Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales [held in Reading], 1966.)	1 vol	1965-1972
-------	--	-------	-----------

6 CENTRAL DISTRICT

6/2 Executive committee

[For minutes, 1965-1972, see 6/1/1.]

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE, SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

6 CENTRAL DISTRICT

6/3 Young People's Branch

6/3/1 Minutes, July 1934-May 1939.

1 vol

1934-1939

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

BERKSHIRE, SOUTH OXON AND SOUTH BUCKS
CONGREGATIONAL UNION RECORDS

D/N 25

8	MISCELLANEOUS		
8/1	Map showing Berkshire, South Oxon and South Bucks Union area and district boundaries.	1 roll	n.d. [c.1925]
8/2	Printed copy of 8/1.	1 roll	n.d. [c.1925]