

Newsletter Number 229

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In Reading Abbey Gate House (see p10)

Ideas from Ipswich: notes by a couple of first-timers on a BAHS tour: Lynn Martin and Richenda Power report back from their first-ever BAHS trip



Important archaeological terminology

This street was the one our Travelodge told us to take to get to the Marina at Ipswich.



Supper by an historic building

*Summer evening, Ipswich
Marina*



How did this BAHS trip work: Mark Peryer organised all the days' trips in advance. We settled up with Mark at the end for the ridiculously tiny sum of just over £14 each. (Some places charged entry fees, which we paid as we went along. National Trust and EH members were at an advantage.) We arranged our own accommodation in Ipswich. Those who don't drive were given lifts, and wherever possible, 'Park and Ride' was used. We met up for some suppers at the Mermaid hotel, where most people were based. The menu was very reasonable (e.g. when Richenda asked for 'two fish and chips at £6 each', the barman asked whether she'd prefer the '2 for £10' offer). Others can report on the giant slabs of cake.

What did we expect from a BAHS trip: Organised tours with knowledgeable guides. Finding out about history and archaeology in an area of England we did not know. Learning new things. Getting to know other BAHS members a bit better.

Were our expectations met: Yes, in so many ways. Here are a few examples:



Guides: An unexpected benefit of managing several guided tours in a short space of time is the opportunity for comparison. Our most unassuming guide (photo left) turned out to have the most knowledge, a gentleman at Sutton Hoo who invited our questions but said he'd just genned up himself and was no expert. It wasn't until the end of our wandering respectfully around a great 'temple' with ovals of napped flintstone marking burials of 'ordinary people' between the 18 great humps of earth for the boat burials of the important ones that he let slip that he had retired from the British Museum, where he'd provided security for the gold treasure for many years. Another guide, a woman at Paycocke's House, was noted for her use of a snooker cue to take our eyes up to the individual carvings in the ceiling (photo right).



History and archaeology: Plenty of it, from Roman Colchester, where we noted making and remaking of the Roman walls, to the latest public building, Firstsite, which people had worried would look too brassy at first. However, a bit like the 'Bacofoil' roof of St. Bede's in Popley, Basingstoke, which is much more muted now, the brassiness is fading as it weathers to a warm old gold.



Dragon of flowers by Colchester Castle



A corner of a Roman theatre, Colchester



BAHS group by an extensive length of Colchester city walls



Firstsite, Colchester



BAHS group reflected in window of Firstsite, and folly in Tiptree's cafe garden



Paycocke's House
(photos left & below)

was notable for its famous people: Gustav Holst and his family, including Imogen, who continued to be involved with the music at Snape Maltings, not so far away. And Eileen Power, who wrote *Medieval People*.



The Grange Barn (left) was reconstructed by voluntary labour, and must be about as big as the Great Barn at Basing House, though is entirely of timber. As we chatted with the man in charge about why we'd come along to find out more about our country, he shared a story of his only trip to York, to report on chocolate-making at Rowntree's factory for a confectionary magazine, with no time to see the Minster or walk on the

walls. Richenda's parallel story was of more than one conference attendance at Essex University, not stopping to stare at Colchester.



Threshing machine at Grange barn

A relatively recent history of cold war surveillance can be seen at Landguard Fort, which closed in 1956 as the nuclear threat further developed. It is a marvellous example of a building for lookout and defence through generations. In 1543 Henry VIII had two blockhouses built which rapidly deteriorated, so in 1552 the guns were returned to the Tower of London. In 1666, under Charles II, repairs were completed and a brick wall constructed around the Fort. There's also a Victorian fort within.



Surveillance at Landguard Fort, 1950s



From the approach to Landguard Fort, looking upriver at contemporary port



*Guides awaiting the
BAHS party at
Landguard Fort*

Learning new things: In Lavenham we learnt some of the language of building as our guide kept us gazing at the construction of wool traders' houses with their main hall (hole in the roof to let out the smoke) and the gabled ends, one for the weavers, the other for the trader and family. New to us were: pamment; pargiter; nogging.



Ochre-washed Little Hall, Lavenham



A reconstructed rescued deconstructed Lavenham home, that had been about to be shipped to the USA

At Framlingham Castle, splendid in many respects and a great place to visit for all ages, a game for children asked them to identify the foods that the rich and the poor might have eaten.



Worts, Framlingham Castle

A 'pottage' (one pot meal) of greens, which might come with meat or mussels



Castellettes Flambé, Framlingham Castle

An elaborate pastry castle, each tower with a different filling, brought to the table in flames

Socialising: This is a very enjoyable aspect of such a trip. You also get to know who the knowledgeable BAHS members are, one example being when we encountered a guide in a bedroom at Melford Hall in a state of shock after asking some of the group a question about a portrait in that room: she remarked 'one of the men in your group knew the answer!' We guessed (correctly) that the man who'd shocked her was Mark. (The portrait was of Lady Paulet.)

Over supper on the Sunday night, we invited people to say what they thought of the trip so far:

Kay, retired from Hampshire County's Museum services, recalled a Landfort guide's personal story. After telling us 'you could pay £75 to spend

a night at the fort to see ghosts’, he went on to mention a 13-bedroom manor house he’d bought where his little boy kept hiding in the bottom of a cupboard each morning, terrified of soldiers telling him to get out of the bedroom. The guide had to get a priest in to exorcise those ghosts.

Beryl said she’d ‘found Lavenham a little bit weird, like going into the past, like a ghost town’, and several others agreed, Kay stressing ‘it doesn’t seem lived in’. But we’d enjoyed hearing some of the houses’ ‘survival’ stories, including one supposedly ‘saved’ by Queen Victoria’s daughter Beatrice.

Ian and Ian most liked Sutton Hoo, and many agreed.



BAHS members on The Great Ship Burial, Sutton Hoo



Sand preserves the buried bones of ‘ordinary’ people, Sutton Hoo

Would we go again: Most definitely yes. Meanwhile, we intend to return to the area, aware we just touched the surface and it would be good to spend much more time there. Ipswich itself has a museum full of Constable’s paintings and we’d like to visit the local places he painted too.

Lynn adds ‘Sutton Hoo is a definite for a return when the museum, the walk and the viewing tower are all finished’. We’d benefited from a reduced entry fee on account of these absences, yet perhaps it was that very absence that made the guide’s stimulation of our imaginations so fruitful.

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Back for a Second Season

Nikki Read, Co-Leader Basingstoke YAC

This summer's archaeological dig at Chilton Manor farm once again had visits from a very lucky group of young people. Basingstoke's Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) were extremely privileged to be given permission by Sue and Charles Marriott to take part in this summer's excavations as they returned to work alongside archaeologists from Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society.



With Hi-Viz vests washed and trowels at the ready, our intrepid young diggers embarked upon two two-day sessions of digging, planning and finds processing. Building on basic skills which they learned from last year's dig, our eager young people set about trowelling, scraping and tickling the soil to get it to reveal its secrets. Discussions abounded as to the origins and stories behind their finds, as the YACsters took well-earned breaks in the shade of the gazebo.

Many had remembered the ancient art of the tea-break and were quick to point out that their biscuits and snacks were superior to those of the grown-ups – however we had to draw the line at the courgette muffins! There are some things in life that you just don't mess with!

From there, our YACsters carefully and very methodically set about finds processing. Our guys listened well to instruction and were reminded of what finds to wash and what finds to dry brush, and there was much excitement as they meticulously revealed what lay beneath the dirt.





The August dig saw our young people introduced to the controversial science of dowsing or divining. Some people swear by it, others are more sceptical.

Whichever side of the divining rod you stand, there was no doubting the fact that when we tried it, it gave interesting results. Two of our lads decided to experiment, and every time the rods crossed, they put in a marker. These marks were then plotted and when we compared against the geo-phys report – we had a match!

Perhaps we had the map upside down, perhaps it was enthusiasm? Either way it gave us much to talk about and was a lot of fun.



The day ended all too soon when the children were surprised by their parents arriving onsite early to see what they were up to. We were very proud to see them showing off their knowledge as they explained to their families all that they had been doing. At least it proved that they had been listening!



Our thanks must therefore, once again, go out to the parents for supporting their YACsters in their interests, and to BAHS for giving up their time to work with our guys and for letting us be with them. Finally, it wouldn't be a proper 'thank you' without ultimately thanking Sue and Charles Marriott for allowing us to dig again. It has been a fantastic opportunity for the children, and they had the most amazing time – roll on next year!

For Your Diary - Stanchester 2020

The dig dates for Stanchester next year:
30 May-13 June and 15-29 August

Visit to Reading Abbey

Nicola Turton

In late September a group of BAHS members met at Reading museum to enjoy a tour of the museum and immediate environs. Most of us started with a visit to the museum's brand-new tea-room. The food was excellent, and I'm sure service will speed-up once the staff memorise the route to the kitchen. And back to the customer.

During an introductory talk, our museum volunteer guide pointed out a few notable exhibitions in the museum before we headed off to walk around the town, passing through the churchyard of St Laurence's, where clothing and a pair of boots seem to have been kindly left for the needy. I couldn't spot a frozen nightclubber crouched among the stones...

On to Forebury Gardens, where in gale-force winds we gathered on the mound which is now known to be an English Civil War gun emplacement, before heading towards the Abbey ruins. On previous visits, these were fenced off due to falling masonry and on-going restoration, so it was a great pleasure to make our first proper visit to the remains of the buildings. With a view of the gaol, we paused and thought for a moment on the terrible injustice of the incarceration of Oscar Wilde and "...upon that little tent of blue which prisoners call the sky".

Moving on along the river and back towards the Abbey gate, we were fortunate to be taken inside the gatehouse, and up to what is now set out as a Victorian classroom. I would dearly like to say that in this very classroom Jane Austen chewed her slate pencil and blew ink balls at the teacher, but while Jane did indeed attend the Reading Ladies Boarding School, the building was allowed to deteriorate so much that although funds had been raised for restoration, in 1861 the front of the gatehouse collapsed during a storm. For good or bad (bad) Gilbert Scott restored it, so it's now a Victorian version, and Jane's shade is rather faint.

It was a trip much enjoyed by all attenders, and our thanks to Mary Oliver for organising it.

Glider Tow Piece - Operation Market Garden

Marjoleine Butler



The glider tow shackle [see page 11] was found by my grandfather, Dirk de Vries [photo left] who was born on 7th December 1890. During WWII he was a member of the resistance in Amsterdam and was involved in falsifying documents and stamps for Jewish people, distributing illegal newspapers, and passing on messages around the network.

He had three young sons under the age of 10 and used to cycle (on a bike with wooden tyres) from Amsterdam to Friesland to try and get food in exchange for doing jobs for people, selling jewellery etc.

It is thought that this caused a huge amount of stress and after the war ended in 1945 he had a nervous breakdown. He was admitted to the Wolfheze sanatorium, and as part of his therapy he was encouraged to go walking on the Ginkelse Heide nearby. Although a lot of remains from the landings had been cleared away, using German POWs, there were still things to be found, and that is where my grandfather found this item.

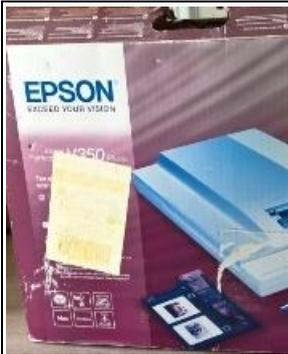
It has been in my family ever since and was given to me because of my love of archaeology. Also, I used to live in Oosterbeek in the early 1980s and a lot of people were still alive who remembered the landings. Peter Mussellwhite and I got married in the old church which was the last post held before the British were taken across the river by the Polish, and our reception was held in the Hartenstein hotel. I remember the annual commemorations in Oosterbeek, and in particular the 40th anniversary when Vera Lynn sang on the steps of Hartenstein, and I was surrounded by veterans in red berets. It was very moving.

My parents were staying with me a couple of weeks ago, as well as my nephew, and they were looking for something to do so I suggested the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop. I also suggested that my dad take a picture of the shackle to see what they thought of it. The curator was very excited and asked if we would consider donating it as they didn't have one. Apparently, they are quite rare as most of what was recovered



from the fields was melted down for reuse. With the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden coming up we felt it would be appropriate for it to be given to the

museum. It will now be displayed as part of the Arnhem display.



Cathy Williams has given temporary accommodation to a currently homeless printer: an Epson V350 film strip scanner/printer.

It longs to go home in time for Christmas and bears a faded label with the postcode RG22 5HJ. Please let Cathy know if it's yours. cthwlms@hotmail.com

All is Not What it Seems!

Tony Wright

While Ginny and I were cataloguing the display collection of Border ware pottery collected by NEHHAS [North East Hampshire Archaeological & Historical Society], we noticed what appeared to be the clear design of a leaf on a branch on the base of a tripod pipkin. It wasn't a modern mark as the glaze run on the base filled the scratch. (see photo)

I thought it was a potter's mark, but apparently Jacqui Pearce, one of the ceramics experts at MOLA [Museum of London Archaeology] thinks it is a combination of manufacturing marks – wire removal marks from the wheel head, which typically form arcs as the wheel moves while the wire is drawn under the base of the pot, and marks left by attaching the feet and smoothing in the clay of the attachment to the base.



She has seen these kinds of marks so many times on Border wares and other pots and this particular example just happens to look more like a deliberate mark. When potters do incise their marks, they tend to be much more definite than this and are apparently extremely rare. She has seen the name JOHN written in cursive script under the base of a Harlow black ware 17C mug (done before firing).

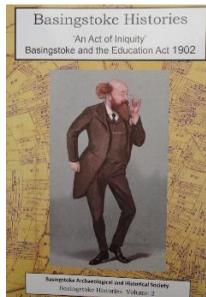
An Act of Iniquity by Roger Ottewill: Volume 2 of the Basingstoke Histories

Review by Barbara Large

A dashing cartoon of the 6th Earl of Portsmouth introduces us to the political and religious turmoil in Basingstoke caused by the 1902 Education Act, which caused national disquiet and contributed to the bringing down of a government four years later. In a climate of chronic underfunding of the school system, Basingstoke Council set up its own School Board in 1885, which was dominated by Nonconformists (religion and education being closely linked), and the author gives us full details of its activities and interests along with denominational election results in the Appendix.

But there was conflict when the 1902 Act came into effect, when it was perceived that, with the abolition of school boards, control, finance and influence were being assigned to local authorities, who were primarily Anglican in character. The book describes this argument, with interesting details, statistics and quotes from various figures, including the Earl of Portsmouth. It goes on to describe a failed attempt in 1904 to dislodge the sitting County Councillor and replace him with a Nonconformist Basingstoke borough councillor – there are a number of quotations and newspaper clippings here, which provide detail and background.

Despite this, matters resolved themselves in time due to a general spirit of accord and tolerance between the ‘sides’, giving rise to non-denominational pragmatism when dealing with problems of education in Basingstoke in the early 20C. An interesting and little-known chapter in our town’s history.



*L-R:
Book signing*

The book cover

Mr Mirfin with his copy

Three Men in a Boat

Ian Waite

With a combined age of 210 years, Mick, Paul and I decided we were just about old enough to embark on a trip along one of England's historic canals namely the Llangollen Canal.

Our journey began back in the spring of 2019 when we headed north some 185 miles to Ellesmere in Shropshire to collect our 57ft narrow boat to cruise part of the canal to Llangollen. The entire canal is 46 miles long with 21 locks and links Hurleston in South Cheshire with Llantysilio in Wales. Historically, built in 1793, this canal was in fact the Ellesmere Canal and only became the Llangollen in 1956 when British Waterways issued it a cruising guide. The canal was a bold attempt to link the rivers Mersey, Dee and Severn with the main line from Chester to Shrewsbury but as often happens, only the Poncysyllte to West Lullingsfield section was built with branches radiating out from West Frankton to Llannymynech and Ellesmere. And it was soon obvious that it would never reach the Dee or Severn so the canal company cut eastwards to form a canal from Ellesmere to join the Chester canal near Nantwich and eventually on to Hurleston in the year of Trafalgar. Some years later Ellesmere, Chester and Birmingham Liverpool Junction canals joined forces to become the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company, and Ellesmere became the HQ with large offices which have now been converted into residential premises following the demise of the canal company.

Due to the location of the marina, our journey started partway along the canal and, heading westward, we soon (even at max 4 knots) found ourselves deep into open countryside skirting the playing fields of Ellesmere College (a Woodward Boarding School) and the shop-less, pub-less village of Tetchill - not worth stopping here then.

The next point of reference on the journey is Welsh Frankton or Frankton Locks where a left-hand spur takes you into the Montgomery Canal but following a breach in 1936, its days were numbered. The breach was at the aqueduct where it crossed the River Parry and sadly LMS Railway who

owned this stretch refused to repair and within 8 years it was abandoned. Some 50 years later due to its scenic splendour it underwent a major revival for pleasure use and continues today. The Llangollen however continues above the Perry Valley and to the west the Berwyn and Breidden hills of the Boarder Marshes rise up to New Marton where Mick and I encountered our first exercise of the day operating 2 locks, raising the canal by 12ft 4in, whilst Captain Paul navigated expertly through. No more locks before Llangollen but these again on our return.



Rolling Shropshire farm land behind us and still heading west, we approached the Welsh border and mountains as we glided gently to the outskirts of Chirk where we moored overnight just before the aqueduct and tunnel which we would navigate tomorrow.

For the rest of the day we took a 1.5 mile walk to Chirk Castle and en route we passed the old tram station currently being excavated and known as the Glyn Valley Tramway which was used to serve the mines and quarries at the head of the Ceiriog Valley but fell out of service in 1935.

Walking uphill through the fields on a warm sunny day towards the castle was most pleasant but looking behind we were faced with the huge industrial plants of Cadburys and Kronospan timber manufacture belching out vast plumes of steam from even taller chimneys. Rounding a corner of woodland and fortunately losing site of the industrial works we were confronted with the large and complete castle of Chirk. In 1282 the Chirklands were granted to Sir Roger Mortimer of Chirk and he set about building some of what we see today which for 300 years served as a border fortress. In 1322, Roger Mortimer of Chirk was locked up in the Tower of London for treason and died there in 1326. From then until 1595 the Castle passed through 22 different owners including the Earl of Arundel, Sir William Stanley and Robert Dudley. Sir Thomas Myddleton bought the castle in 1595 for £5000 with the aim of turning it into a grand family home

where it continued for 400 years through both the English Civil Wars and Industrial Revolution. From 1642-1659 Sir Thomas Myddleton 2nd was a General in the Civil Wars first supporting Parliament and then the restoration of King Charles 2nd.

1764 Landscaper William Eames (a contemporary of Capability Brown) created the estate parklands.

1845 A.W.N.Pugin received his largest private commission to redesign the castle interiors in the Gothic revival style

1911-1946 Lord Howard De Walden and family leased the castle from the Myddleton family.

1946 Colonel Ririd and Lady Margaret Myddleton return to the castle and in the 1950's opened it to the public.

1981 The National trust took ownership of the Castle and 480 acres of estate.

When looking around the central courtyard it is clear to see the differing styles used to extend the building; too many to list here but worthy of a visit. After dinner on board we tested Chirk's Bridge Inn, being both the local hostelry and the last pub in England.



After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast, we set off to cross the English/Welsh boarder (no passport control here) turning right to be faced with a splendid view of the aqueduct over the River Ceiriog built by Thomas Telford with the foundation being laid on 17th June 1796 and completed in

1801. Built of yellow sandstone to a height of 70ft, it is 710ft long with 10 arches each of 40ft span supporting a cast iron tray. It stood alone for 40 years before the arrival of the railway when a viaduct of 100ft high was built alongside but not connected to the aqueduct.



On reaching the other side we waited for a boat coming through the tunnel as this is only single file then proceed through its 459 yard length followed by another of just 191 yards and then through Offa's Dyke country to Froncysyllte on the outskirts of which is the former Pen-y-Craig limestone quarries where the stone was brought down to the canal by tramway

wagons, and limekilns extend along the canal tow path. As we bore round to the right, there stretched out in front of us for 1000ft the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (pronounced Pont-ker-sulth-tee). It is 127ft tall with 18 stone piers supporting a cast iron trough and was completed in 1805, the year of Nelson's death at Trafalgar. Designed and built by Thomas Telford and William Jessop, across the Dee valley floor, it has a towpath and railing on one side but nothing on the other but the edge of the trough at deck level and no railing – not good for vertigo sufferers.

To continue onto Llangollen the canal turns very sharply left at Trevor on the other side of the aqueduct, but it was originally planned to continue up over the ridge (now occupied by a huge chemical plant) and down through Wrexham to join the Dee at Chester. This route would have required many locks, a very long tunnel and several boatlifts but given the constructional and financial requirements and the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars it would have led to the bankruptcy of the Ellesmere Canal Company and a decision was made to route to Llangollen as a feeder from the river Dee at Llantysilio.

Considerable difficulties occurred on this route as well, but it is most memorable as a section of narrow single-track width canal aquatic odyssey. The final section runs above the grey rooftops of the town to the wharf which now acts as a base for the horse-drawn boats taking tourists along the shallow section to the start of the canal at



the crescent shaped weir known as Horseshoe Falls. A small valve house constantly feeds water from the Dee into the Llangollen canal situated in a picturesque valley overlooked by the Llantysilio Mountain.

This latter section was walked by Mick and me as Paul's knee was misbehaving and on the way back, we discovered a chain bridge, built originally in 1817 by Exuperius Pickering (a local entrepreneur) to join the canal with the London to Holyhead road for transporting coal and limestone. It was rebuilt in 1826, in 1929 and again in 2015 and fully reopened.



A sign then directed us to the ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey which was an impressive home for 13th century Cistercian monks but is sadly now in ruins and although located in a campsite it is a hauntingly beautiful building. That evening we dined in The Corn Mill overlooking the rapids of the Dee running through

Llangollen. Ironically this was a mill built in the 13th century by the Cistercian monks from Valle Crucis Abbey, rebuilt in 1786 and working as a mill until 1974. From then until 1990 it was in danger of falling into the river, but then leased to a pub company who reinstated the waterwheel and created a very pleasant venue.

The following day we turned around for the leisurely journey back to Ellesmere following our most interesting voyage, but at one point we became aware of fast approaching leaden skies. Before we could find a safe mooring place we were confronted by a serious hailstorm which reduced the temperature considerably. It departed as quickly as it arrived but it was possible to actually brush the hailstones from both the deck and inside the galley. Goodbye Wales and thank you.

Walking the Wall, or Things to do Before I'm 50

Nicola Turton

2003 the Hadrian's Wall path became the 15th National Trail, and I thought, "Hmmm, one day..." 2018, and someone on TV was walking it, and I thought, "hmmm, one day..." but I also thought, "Well what am I waiting for?" So I asked my friend Maggie if she would like to come with me and she did and we booked accommodation, albeit nine months in advance.

It rained as Alan took me to the carpark at Guildford Tesco and handed me over to Nigel and Maggie. It rained solidly all the way to Newcastle, and when we arrived it was so chilly that we thought we might need to buy woolly hats and gloves. But Friday dawned bright and pleasant as we made our way to Segedunum, in Newcastle. And off we went. Day 1 was long – we had our first break along the Tyne, where Newcastle was celebrating a rugby event, and had Astro-turfed a great stretch. And there we took our first cocktails of the trip, and Jackson the poodle loved wriggling on the scratchy green grass. After that it was a long haul through industrial archaeology, across major roads, and along interminable lanes to Newburn, 11.6 miles from the start. Alan (who wasn't with us) asked if we'd walked round the 1640 Newburn battlefield. After 11.6 miles? No.

The next day, Nigel, who made the whole trip possible, dropped us off in the same carpark, and we started the 11.36 miles to Wall Houses. Here we caught our first glimpse of the Wall, at the helpfully named Heddon-on-the-Wall. Some hours later we stopped for lunch on a corner of a field and without warning the most tremendous hail storm was upon us. Having wrecked a camera lens last year by getting it wet, I quickly scrambled into my clear rain-poncho, but panicked and couldn't find the head hole, so just crouched in it cuddling my camera. As the hail eased, Maggie looked at me and burst out laughing, "Are you about to pupate?"

Later in the afternoon, while getting our trail passports stamped at the Robin Hood Inn, we learned that they sold Hadrian's Wall gin. Well it would have been rude not to. This was the point where I suggested that Hadrian's Crawl would be a good name for our Great Adventure.

Day 4 was the first of the two very steep days, and as expected we only managed 10 miles. Our hard work was rewarded by the most stupendous views along the Whin Sill, where it was hard to believe that we were actually there. Equally hard to believe was the line of the Wall stretching ahead of us, and that we would have to walk. *All. Of. It.* Stopping for water and a rest at Housesteads, we chatted to a couple who asked if we were rough camping. “Darling.” I said, dropping my voice to Fenella Fielding levels, “Do I *look* like I would rough camp?”

The end of that day saw us at Sycamore Gap, famous from its appearance in *Prince of Thieves*, and something Maggie had really been looking forward to. Then we reached the Steel Rigg carpark by scrambling down the Cat Stairs. I was glad that I hadn’t known in advance about that vertiginous, almost vertical bit of rock climbing. Jackson of course took it like a mountain goat, but he is both four-wheel-drive and considerably less troubled by gravity.

Day 5 – *only* 7.5 miles, but challenging ones as we walked from Steel Rigg to Greenhead. We saw a lizard, which reminded me of the lizards at Poppea’s Villa (BAHS trip). More breath-taking views, and I hopped over the Wall line, saying “This side – civilisation. This side, savages!”

The guidebook promised a tea-room as we dropped from the high point, and I could see the picnic tables, and encouraged Maggie with visions of pots of tea. But as we approached, not only were we sad as we were coming to the end of the hard but most beautiful parts of the walk, but we were crushed (*crushed*) to see that the tea room was boarded up. In a degree of desperation, I approached two water-board chaps, and asked if they could top up our bottles from the main pipe with which they were playing. Sadly no, but they could give us some bottled water. Huzzah. Thus refuelled we finished the last leg into Greenhead, where we waited at a pub for Nigel and ALAN! Alan had given a lecture to a group in Romsey the night before and caught the train to join us (I was rather envious of the journey).

The next day was a day off, and Alan and I visited Vindolanda, a marvellous site, where they keep discovering such treasures from the anerobic layer – shoes, boxing gloves, writing tablets...

Then back to it on Day 6 – Greenhead to Old Wall – a long day of 14 miles. Just before Gilsland, we passed through a field of sheep. Usually friendly fluffy little souls, we were menaced by one with a flat face, and mad staring eyes. It didn't charge, but then it didn't need to. I turned aghast to Maggie, who was looking wide-eyed at this zombie of a sheep. "My god," she said, "Wouldn't like to meet that on a dark night" Even Jackson seemed unhappy, and content to stay on his lead.

We decided to push the next day too, and polished off 14 miles on our journey from Old Wall to Burgh-by-Sands. It was a hot day, and we took refreshment at the curious village of Rickersby, which reminded me of Portmerion in a make-believe sort of way.

Going along the river and skirting round Carlisle, we were utterly plagued by flies, and used cow-parsley as fly whisks. And Jackson, perhaps sensing that it was becoming a dispiriting trudge, started to play with us, peeping from behind clumps of grass and teasing us into chasing him. Dear little chap, he always seemed to know when we needed to have our spirits raised. Some walkers finish at Carlisle, but we decided to go to the end of the National Trail, which is at Bowness-on-Solway, and meant only 8 miles on our last day. Much of the final part was across the causeway from Burgh, where we explored the fortified church of St Michael's, which was built on the Roman fort of Aballava, and is where Edward I lay in state after his death in July 1307.

Reaching Drumburgh I fell for the lovely medieval pele tower. But it wasn't for sale, so we pressed on. We enjoyed a cuckoo calling in the distance and looked with concern at the heavy rainclouds, but the Wall gods were kind to us, and we finally reached a little bus-shelter type place over-looking the Solway Firth. Decorated with mosaic and looking very pretty, it was further enhanced by having Nigel and Alan and a bottle of pop to celebrate. Maggie and I shared a rare embrace and decided that we were still friends and that was it. We wandered off, and explored the church then found a new visitors' centre (it was day 1 for them!) and had ice-cream, or in my case G&T sorbet and in Jackson's Doggy Ice-Cream, which was clearly the finest thing he'd ever eaten.

My thanks to Maggie and Jackson for their company, and making the Great Walk such fun, and for Nigel for making it possible with his patient taxi-service, and to Alan for good-naturedly listening to endless “When we were walking Hadrian’s Wall...” And we raised £1710 for cancer research, so thank you to all who contributed.



We are sorry to inform you of the recent deaths of two of our ex-members.

Garth George has died after a short stay in hospital. For many years he served as Membership Secretary of the Society and only gave up his membership a few years ago. He and Elizabeth always joined us for Christmas parties. Originally from South Africa, where he trained as a pilot in their Air Force, he came to the UK to join the RAF and after the war, worked at Aldermaston where he had a long and distinguished career. We send our condolences to Elizabeth, his wife of 61 years, and their family.

Alan Roach has died, having been in failing health for some years. His career was as an administrative Civil Servant, but he had a great interest in the past and served as Chairman of both BAHS and more recently of The Friends of the Willis Museum.

Our sympathy goes to his widow Doris.

2019-20 DIARY DATES

**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



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Registered Charity no. 11000263

MEETINGS *Church Cottage, Basingstoke at 7.30pm*

14 November **LIFE & DEATH in the DORSET IRON AGE – Dr
Miles Russell**

12 December **RURAL SETTLEMENT IN ROMAN BRITAIN –
Professor Mike Fulford**

9 January **THE OVERTON SILK MILL PROJECT –
John Mitchell**

13 February **ISLANDS OF STONE; NEOLITHIC CRANNOGS
IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES – Duncan Garrow**

FRIENDS OF THE WILLIS MUSEUM

At 7.30 pm Willis Museum, Basingstoke

21 November **History of Thornycroft – Garry Bone**