

**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**BAHS**

**Newsletter 212  
August 2015**

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*Nothing new under the sun  
(see p.18)*

# A Message from Our Chair

*Ginny Pringle*



At the AGM held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June we welcomed William King, Steve Kirby and Nicola Turton to the committee. Barry Hedger indicated his wish to step down as a full committee member to become co-opted, but I am pleased to report Barry remains Membership Secretary. Apart from these, there were no other changes to the Committee.

After the formal business was completed we were treated to an excellent presentation by Tim Schadla Hall and Gabe Moshenska on the results from the UCL excavations at the Stanchester site above the Candover Valley, which was carried out during the summer of 2014. Tim also drew our attention to the possible existence nearby of the site of a demolished ‘Commonwealth House’, which it is hoped will be investigated this summer.

A timely reminder that all membership subscriptions fall due on the 1<sup>st</sup> September and remain at the same rates as last year. If you have not already done so, please do consider renewing by standing order – this avoids us having to spend a considerable amount of time chasing overdue subscriptions.

We also encourage you to complete a Gift Aid Form if you have not already done so, as this enables the Society to claim money back from the Inland Revenue. Barry can provide the appropriate form should you wish to help us in this way.

I hope you are having a lovely summer and I look forward to seeing you again in September when we kick off our 2015-16 season of talks. Our first speaker is David Baker on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September at Church Cottage. David’s talk will be about the excavations at Selborne Priory and we hope to have copies available of ‘Selborne Priory: Excavations 1953–1971’ by David and other contributors (Hampshire Field Club Monograph 12, 2015).

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# Remembering Barbara

*Bob Applin*

St Michael's Hospice received donations totalling £2082 in memory of Barbara. I wish to thank the Society and all those members who made donations towards this magnificent result. The friendship and ongoing support I have received within the Society is very much appreciated.

## The Birth of the British Army?

Notes from a lecture given by Stephen Ede-Borrett

*Nicola Turton*

Thanks to the Victorians, James II is seen as something of a non-person. He was the sneery Catholic king who came after his flamboyant brother Charles II, and quick as you like, we had a glorious revolution and got rid of him for solid and sensible William-And-Mary. However, in James's short reign, he utterly remodelled the army.

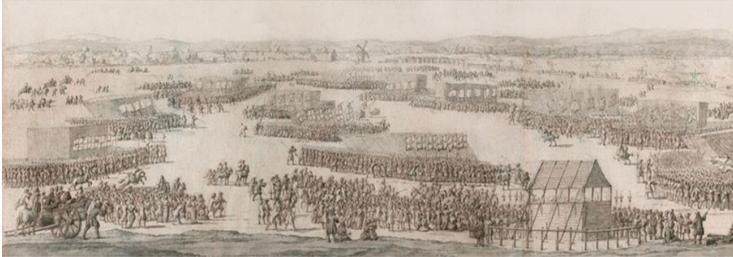
Academics argue whether the roots of the regular, modern army can be found in 1642 (with Parliament's New Model Army) or at the Restoration in 1660. But Stephen Ede-Borrett suggests that James II was the true architect of the British Army.

In 1660, the English army consisted of little more than guards and garrisons, and was 10,000 men strong, but by the time James left in November 1688, the army was close to 40,000, a staggering achievement in only three years.

We also find that companies are regularly moved between garrisons, and the process of moving is complicated and well documented. Documents survive which show that every aspect was subject to heavy bureaucracy, in short, there's a form for everything.

*Order to march. When to march [not Wednesdays or Sundays]. Where to stop. From where the food supply will come. How far [11-14 miles a day].* Also under James, we see what is essentially the first English Drill Book. There had been others prior to this, but John Brill's book is the first to bear a royal order or warrant, thereby standardising the order of drill throughout the army.

This is also the first time that badges of rank can be seen, and this is shown in the colour of the gorget, and the amount of lace (in the Horse). Marks of rank are unknown on the continent until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but were necessary in such a large army, where there was a constant need to identify officers. Continuity of uniform may also be seen, although this disappears under William and Mary and Anne.



*The Grand Review of the Army on Hounslow Heath*  
- Willem van de Velde the Elder

Another new method of training is assembling the army for mass exercises, as can be seen in van de Velde's engraving of 1687, which shows the mock fortifications on Hounslow Heath. There was also a medical corps, and they had a mobile, prefabricated hospital tent. This tent reputedly still exists as the core of a house in London.

All this development demonstrates that James was an experienced soldier, unlike his brother Charles. For instance his general officers, who under both Cromwell and Charles II were largely made up of friends, were for the first time a formal structure of experienced officers. One slightly surprising thing is that there was no corps of artillery, instead each regiment had 2 small guns, but there was no prescribed training, so the guns should essentially be seen as giant muskets.

Interestingly, James starts to form his new army before the battle of Sedgemoor, in fact within days of ascending the throne, but the work was only half completed by the time of the battle in July 1685.

This was a very interesting lecture held at the launch of a new series of Helion books which will be issued over the next two years under the heading of "Century of the Soldier, 1618-1721".

# Laverstoke Mill Re-ImaGINed

*Mary Oliver*

Laverstoke Mill was one of many watermills recorded in Domesday Book, using the water of the infant River Test to grind corn for the villagers. It became famous later as a paper mill, using processes introduced by Huguenot refugees, and producing high quality paper used for bank notes for over 200 years. When it became surplus to requirements and was put up for sale, the villagers of Laverstoke must have feared that it would be re-developed for housing and their historic centre destroyed. But fortunately, rescue came from an unlikely source - Bombay Sapphire Gin distillers from Warrington looking for a larger site on which they could expand.

The Georgian and Victorian buildings have been restored and adapted to their new uses, the site laid out in a very sympathetic way and some exciting new buildings added. It all makes for a very different 'visitor attraction'. I was lucky enough to go round recently and thoroughly enjoyed it all – and not just the gin at the end! There are historical displays and explanations, and the process of distilling is explained in the building housing the two historic stills (which are named after those who discovered the new methods which give Bombay Sapphire its distinctive flavour). One very different experience is the hall where all the 'botanicals' – the plants used in the distillation – are available to be sniffed and there is the opportunity to choose which flavours and aromas you like best and then choose the appropriate cocktail at the end. Examples of these plants are grown on site in two wonderful hothouses, designed by Thomas Heatherwick (of Olympian fame) one for Mediterranean and one for tropical plants; the heat re-cycled from the stills.

The whole enterprise is impressively and deliberately 'green', using the recycled heat for hot water too, and electricity for lighting is generated by a horizontal wheel driven by the Test – so it is still Laverstoke Mill. As a conservation project, it deserves high marks and is worth seeing whether you are a gin-fan or not – you can always bring the free sample home for someone who does like it, and soft drinks are of course available for non-fans and drivers.

## Four Days at Cumberland Lodge

David Taylor [taylor@lammas9.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:taylor@lammas9.fsnet.co.uk)

My wife Ruth and I recently attended a History retreat at Cumberland Lodge entitled “Windsor, Eton and The Great Park: Their Place in History”.

Appropriately, in this 800<sup>th</sup> year since the sealing of Magna Carta, the programme included a talk on the subject and a visit to Runnymede. We were effectively pioneers, for this was the first time such an event had been held there. Invitations were sent to every history society in the country, and although only 34 accepted the number was only six short of the maximum, and proved to be an ideal size of group for our discussions and guided tours.

In addition to a busy programme of visits we also had illustrated talks given by acknowledged experts in their respective fields. Their styles differed, but my test of a good talk is whether it inspires me to further reading and as a result I came away with several books I hadn’t intended buying!

We visited Eton College, Windsor Castle, and the Royal Chapel in the Great Park, Savill Gardens and Runnymede. However, the star of our visit was Cumberland Lodge itself, because for four days we lived in the old fashioned luxury of a country house party. There were no concessions to contemporary hotel practice either in the bedrooms and bathrooms or at meals in the oak panelled dining room. But this was no ordinary country house, but a Royal country house and we walked and talked, slept and ate, where kings and queens had been. Our brief presence was adding to the history of the house; we were insiders not outsiders.

Built in the early days of Oliver Cromwell’s Commonwealth, Cumberland Lodge passed into the hands of Charles II little more than ten years after the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660. For the next 250 years it was the official residence of the Ranger of Windsor Great Park. The position was held by a succession of Royal appointees ranging from the notable to the notorious. However, in 1947 its role changed when King George VI granted the house to the new St. Catharine’s Foundation, with his wife Queen Elizabeth as Patron. The Foundation was the idea of Miss Amy Buller; to create a centre to host meetings and conferences where students, business and professional people could discuss ethical and social issues outside the confines of their specialist subjects. Her aim was the betterment of society

and her aspirations were strongly supported by the King and Queen who played a key role in setting up the Foundation.

The Cumberland Lodge philosophy was well illustrated for Ruth and me by an encounter at breakfast one morning. There were two groups meeting at the Lodge, each with separate tables. The youth of the people around us told us that we were sitting in the wrong place. But this was a serendipity moment. Conversation revealed that we were with twenty five people, drawn from all over the world, attending a conference on child abuse organised by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical medicine. We talked especially to a young female professor from Baltimore, and a Swedish girl working for UNICEF in New York, as well as delegates from Africa and South America. This brief encounter vividly illustrated for us the Cumberland Lodge mantra of ‘exchanging views, inspiring minds’.

On our last evening there was a specially created concert in the Drawing Room, an enjoyable end to a stimulating four days. We hope to find a suitable excuse to immerse ourselves again in the history and luxury of Cumberland Lodge!

PS. In this article I have conformed to the so-called ‘Chatham House Rule’, meaning that I have revealed, “...neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers, nor that of any other participant.”



*The group visit Eton College*

## Japanese Ninjas at Basing House?

*The Turtons and friends*



This is the edited email conversation following the purchase of a mystery item on eBay in February this year (*pictured above*):

**Nicola Turton (NT)** - we've bought this bronze item, found "30 years ago on Basing Common" by a local detectorist. Initially I thought it might be a spanner for a wheel lock pistol. Alan wonders if it is part of a 16/17 century firearm. One end seems suited for holding something, perhaps match. One side is flattened, in order, presumably, to rest/work against another surface. Any thoughts?

**Tony Barton** It could just be a fancy serpentine on a fancy matchlock. But I wonder if it's the serpentine from a snaplock, a bit like the Tudor one they have in the armouries. The front end is certainly a match holder; it's the rear end that is slightly baffling. But it was obviously mounted on a square axle, which would figure for a snaplock, which worked with a little spring on the tumbler/axle. When you lifted the trigger the serpentine snaps forward, rather than the simple lever on an ordinary matchlock. It's the little tail that makes me think it might be rather early.

**Dr Eric Gruber von Arni** - That looks exactly like a serpent from a matchlock firearm. It's fairly crudely made, but you can see the wedged slot for inserting the match and the square hole made to accept the shaft by which it is turned in order to move the match onto the frizzen pan.

**Sam Wilson** - what an interesting find! My immediate reaction is that it is the serpent part of a lock mechanism - although of a type earlier than C17th. I've copied in Graeme Rimer [Royal Armouries].

**Graeme Rimer (GR)** - What an intriguing find to recover from Basing House - especially because it's - **Japanese!** Both the form and the material of this serpentine are what one expects on a Japanese matchlock musket,

but dating is difficult. Japanese firearms were heavily influenced by the Portuguese ones which were brought to Japan after 1543, and therefore preserve the forward-operating snap-matchlock mechanism in use in Europe at that time. When later the 16th-century snap matchlock (like the Brescian ones, fragments of which were found on the Mary Rose), were abandoned, the Japanese held on to the snap-matchlock.

It pivoted on an axle passing through the square hole and was propelled forward by a soft copper alloy spring pressing upwards on the tail (copper alloy was used extensively in Japan for lock parts to overcome the effects of the extremely wet climate). The spring was a U-shaped one fitted to the outside of the lockplate and bore on the underside of the tail of the serpentine. A simple sear mechanism operated through the lockplate and when the serpentine was brought back to cock the mechanism, the sear caught on the tail of the serpentine too. Squeezing a small rounded trigger released the sear and allowed the serpentine to fall forward, propelled by the spring, dropping the smouldering matchcord into the priming powder.

**NT** - thank you so much for identifying our Japanese serpent. I would think from the condition that it is reasonably old, though we note what you say about dating. Alan wonders about William Paulet the 1st Marquiss, who built the great House. He had connections with the Muscovy Company, and collected things, such as the famous African ivory beaker, and we know that when the House was reoccupied during the Civil War, that there were weapons within. But, an interesting find and a worthy addition to the Basing House archive.

**GR** - I've contacted Ian Bottomley, an internationally recognised specialist on Japanese arms and armour.

**GR to Ian Bottomley** - on looking at the object I was immediately struck by the stunning and incontrovertible evidence, which shows that either the defenders or besiegers of Basing House were supported by Japanese mercenaries!

Once you've seen the images I'm sure you'll want to consider how best to deal with the impact which this object brings to previously accepted understanding of the composition of the forces assembled at Basing House. I await with eager anticipation your proposal on how we might make this discovery known to the rest of the world. Joking aside, odd thing to find in the grounds of a house slighted in 1645.

**Ian Bottomley** - Going through my library on the subject I found it is exactly the same as fitted to guns made in Omi province - same shape and mouldings. The serpentines from Omi guns do not have the holes through the match-jaws as this doesn't, and they were fitted to locks with internal spiral mainsprings, which accounts for the square hole. So, it does look as if someone at the siege had a Japanese matchlock. This brings to mind a lady at Edgehill who found a sword in her garden. It was corroded but had a copper habaki - it was the remnants of a wakizashi blade. In the Edgehill case there was nothing to prove it was lost in the battle, but the degree of corrosion didn't rule the possibility out. Popham carried a kastana so I can see no reason why someone owning Japanese weapons didn't use them.



**Royal Archaeological Institute Conference.  
Ships and Shorelines: Maritime Archaeology  
for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 16-18 October 2015**

See the RAI website for details:

[www.royalarchinst.org](http://www.royalarchinst.org)

Speakers to include:

**Garry Momber**, Mesolithic occupation in the Solent:

**Amanda Bowens**, Forgotten wrecks of the First World War

**Julian Whitewright**, South Coasters: two 19th-century shipwrecks

**David Parham**, The Swash Channel, Dorset, 16th-century wreck

**Professor David Sear**, Investigating the lost port of Dunwich,

**Dr Fraser Sturt**, The isles of the British Isles; sea-level changes

**Dr Kieran Westley**, Submerged archaeology in the north of Ireland

**Alexandra Hildred**, Mary Rose research in the 21st century

**Peter Clark**, The Dover Bronze Age boat

**David Gibson**, The Must Farm log-boats

**Gustav Milne**, Thames Discovery Programme

**Professor Nigel Nayling**, The Newport ship

# National Museum of the Royal Navy

*Tim Schadla Hall*

I enjoyed my last trip back to BAHS and also giving the lecture and hearing about the fact there were so many people coming to dig – but over coffee I was amazed how few of the members seemed to know about the National Museum of the Royal Navy – most know of the Mary Rose but just do not realise what the NMRN does, or is. The NMRN is our youngest national museum, but is a museum in a hurry; although a lot of it is based Portsmouth it has tentacles all over the UK, so let me explain.

Around 8 years ago the Royal Navy decided to take a new approach in co-ordinating its museums, believing that they did not speak with a single voice or on a scale fitted to size of this great national story. In 2009 the NMRN was created by bringing together four museums - the Royal Marines Museum at Eastney, the Royal Navy Submarine Museum at Gosport, the Royal Naval Museum at Portsmouth and the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton - into one National Museum.

The NMRN has delivered 3 major capital projects delivered in the last 2 years:

1. The £7m restoration of HMS Alliance a surviving World War Two Era submarine.
2. The £4.5m exhibition gallery development of 'HMS - Hear My Story' which presents a personal naval history of the last 100 years.
3. The £2.5m conservation of HMS M.33 - the only surviving Royal Navy ship from the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915.

Beyond this the Museum has hugely strengthened collections so that they are so very distinct from those at the Imperial War Museum or the National Maritime Museum. It now holds:

5 museum sites,  
10 historic ships and submarines  
99 historic aircraft.

One of the ships is the small matter of HMS Victory. Part of what makes the Museum unique - and which might make a special visit of interest to members - is the archaeological approach that they are developing to these

ships by commissioning research which gives an understanding of them as artefacts, whether this is shipwrights' raze marks on the timbers of HMS Victory or paint analysis of a 20th century ship - it really is cutting edge stuff.

I have spoken to Matthew Sheldon, Director of Heritage, and he's happy to be contacted to set up a visit. [matthew.sheldon@nmrn.org.uk](mailto:matthew.sheldon@nmrn.org.uk)

## Do you have a good quality cassette player...?

Our Basingstoke Talking History group are looking for some extra equipment to help with the conversion of tapes to CDs. If you have an old cassette player with a headphones jackpoint kicking around that you no longer require then please let Ginny Pringle know:

01420 550028 or [ginny@powntleycopse.co.uk](mailto:ginny@powntleycopse.co.uk)



## WHITCHURCH SILK MILL

*Living Weaving Heritage*

### What's On

**Needle Felting Hares**, Saturday 25 July, 10:30-14:30

**Newbury Crafters demonstration**, Sunday 26 July, 10:30-16:00

**Duo Agostino: Crossing Continents, Destination Whitchurch**,  
Sunday 9 August, 19:30-22:00

**Whitchurch Country Show**, Sunday 20 September, 10:00-16:00

# Programme Notes 2015-16

## **Barbara Applin Memorial lecture**

In order to honour Barbara, founder of the Society, scholar, researcher and dear friend, the committee have invited Professor Mike Fulford to give his Silchester lecture on 10<sup>th</sup> March as a memorial lecture. Mike knew Barbara from the start of the Society; he helped us with the pottery report for Ructstall's Hill, and later with the video '*Beneath Basingstoke*'. Barbara always enjoyed the annual visits to the Silchester excavations so this makes an appropriate subject for her memorial lecture. It is always a pleasure to welcome Mike, especially so on this occasion.

## **10<sup>th</sup> September; Excavations at Selborne Priory - David Baker**

Postponed from Jan 15, David will share his work on this (almost) local site which was excavated between 1953 and 1971 by a variety of excavators, their work brought to publication last year in a HFC monograph. Basingstoke's parish church had a connection with the priory from the 13<sup>th</sup> century until 1484 and the wonderful chancel roof which they built in 1464 survived the bombs in 1940.

## **8<sup>th</sup> October; From Waterloo to WWI – The Life of the Common Soldier - Ian Williams, BAHS**

This lecture is a reminder of two of the important military events in our recent history which can be said to have shaped our modern world. Ian has a collection of militaria with which he will demonstrate to illustrate the equipment and life of an ordinary Tommy over that century.

## **12<sup>th</sup> November; A Bird's Eye View of Cranborne Chase – Martin Green**

It is some years since we had the pleasure of a visit from Martin, who farms in Cranborne Chase, and has spent years exploring the archaeology on his land. He has turned his attention to the air photographic coverage of the Chase, so this lecture will give us an overview of an area rich in the type of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites which we do not seem to have locally. Lots of sites of all periods, so something for everyone!

## **10<sup>th</sup> December; Christmas Social Evening**

**14<sup>th</sup> January; Truckle Hill, Wilts; a Roman Bath-House Rediscovered - Phil Andrews, Wessex Archaeology**

The excavation of this Roman site would have been interesting enough in its own right, but it revealed unexpected predecessors which have added to the picture of Roman Wiltshire. The site lies 100m from a large villa excavated in Victorian times, but the bath-house was re-excavated as a rescue operation following quarrying. Wessex Archaeology had considerable help from local volunteers, making this an important community archaeology project

**11<sup>th</sup> February; The Battle of Agincourt – Professor Ann Curry, University of Southampton**

Another anniversary to commemorate, albeit a few months late, the victory of 1415 very familiar through the Shakespeare play. Ann is a distinguished mediaeval historian specialising in the Hundred Years' War; she is also a member and Trustee of the Battlefields Trust (a society which has researched many of the country's famous battlefields and helped to pinpoint their exact sites). Ann will enlighten us on the current state of knowledge on this landmark event.

**10<sup>th</sup> March; Silchester: Iron Age and Roman – 500 Years of Urban Life – Professor Michael Fulford, University of Reading** - please see the note at the start of this section.

**14<sup>th</sup> April; Almanacs, Astrology and Popular Medicine in Early Modern England - Dr Louise Curth, University of Winchester**

Louise has made a detailed study of 17<sup>th</sup> century almanacs and will be able to tell us how our ancestors approached illness and cures.

**12<sup>th</sup> May; Rebuilding the Past - Luke Winter, Centre for Ancient Technology, Cranborne**

Luke was unable to present this lecture in May, however several members went on the excursion to the Ancient Technology Centre in the summer, so they know they can look forward to a treat; hearing Luke give the scientific background and research agenda to these impressive reconstructions and showing us how the latest project is progressing. The buildings include a curved-sided Viking longhouse which now serves to accommodate schoolchildren (and visitors) instead of warriors. Several ancient crafts are also practised on site.

**19<sup>th</sup> June; The Great Wellington Statue - Paul Vickers, Prince Consort's Library, Aldershot (preceded by the AGM)**

This magnificent sculpture has had an exciting life. Originally commissioned to top the triumphal arch celebrating Wellington's victory at Waterloo in 1815, it now has a home in the middle of a wooded roundabout in Aldershot. Come and hear this amazing story – after the AGM, which does not take very long.

**Public Engagement at the  
Odiham Magna Carta Festival**

*Mark Peryer and Oliver Good*

Over the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend, as part of the Odiham Society's celebrations of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Magna Carta, a historical and archaeological festival was held in and around Odiham castle. Attractions at the festival included re-enactors who staged regular battles in the arena; guided tours of the castle by Alan Turton; and an archaeological investigation that the society contributed to.

Earlier this year, Olly Good, who grew up in Odiham and is now a project officer at Cotswold Archaeology, took up the challenge to organise "something archaeological" for the festival. That "something" turned out to be digging nearly 30 test pits along one edge of the main field where the festival took place, with the aim of finding a road or track way leading away from the castle. BAHS volunteers joined a team that included some of Olly's work colleagues from Cotswold Archaeology and a number of local volunteers, some of whom were new to archaeology.

As the test pits started to be dug, we quickly discovered that across the field there was a fairly shallow depth of top soil overlaying gravels. As the weekend progressed the pits neared the end of the field that was closest to the canal, and the ground became more water-logged. Encouraged by Carenza Lewis, who spent Sunday on site, some of the pits were selectively dug deeper into the gravel, and we started to find some burnt flint and the occasional piece of worked flint, possibly indicating some Neolithic activity. Other finds from the various pits include pottery and some pieces of

Malmstone, possibly from the castle. The finds are being worked on to establish some dates and Olly hopes to produce a report later in the year.

There was one test pit that produced some large flints that appeared to be layered in the section and a trench was opened up to explore the surrounding area. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to complete the investigation but the indications were that there was something different about this part of the field, suggesting a man-made surface, warranting possible further work.

Over 12,000 people visited the festival and they all walked past the BAHS display that was located just inside the entrance to the festival field. Dave Allen had lent us some of the finds from the Odiham castle dig and a number of illustrations to add some local colour. The stand was busy for all three days and several hundred BAHS leaflets were taken away.

All in all, a successful weekend, enjoyed by all that took part in digging the test pits and by those that helped out on the display. I should like to thank all of you who contributed to the weekend. Hopefully, another time, when there are fewer people around we shall get a chance to follow up on the track way.



*Test pits to the horizon and beyond*



*The diggers*

# Into the Past: the Ancient Technology Centre

*Compiled by Ginny Pringle*

A group of our members recently visited the Ancient Technology Centre, located in the beautiful area of Cranborne Chase in Dorset. This was to have been a follow up to Luke Winter's talk, but Luke fell ill at the last minute and was forced to postpone his talk until next year. Fortunately Luke had recovered enough to guide us around the ATC on a warm and sunny Saturday morning in May.



Primarily a working experimental and educational operation, it was easy to imagine ourselves hundreds of years back in time, as surrounding the reconstructions of a Viking longhouse, an Iron Age roundhouse and other ancient habitations were all the paraphernalia of ancient life; wood turning lathes, piles of logs and wood shavings, iron tools and such like.

We started in the Viking longhouse, where Luke talked about the thinking behind the construction, based upon Danish posthole evidence, whilst casually striking steel against flint. Within minutes smoke was billowing around and our eyes smarted until the fire settled down. At this point Luke was attacked by a sword wielding young Greek girl in full ancient regalia, but survived to tell us about the children who visit and sometimes stay over for hands on experience of ancient life.

For those of us who love the simple joys of wood smoke, wooden halls and reconstructions, it does make you think when we hear that some of the young visitors have never seen a naked flame. It makes one realise just how important this kind of work is for our modern society, - how can we measure progress if we don't know how people used to live? Luke articulates these

thoughts in a progressive manner and it was encouraging to know that young visitors can experience this for themselves.



After coffee and biscuits (modern life does have its good points) we moved on to another reconstruction, this time covered in green turf and resembling a cross between a Teletubby House and a home for Hobbits. We entered through an arched wooden entrance and emerged into an underground woodland theatre. A ring of large oak trunks supported a purlin and beamed roof, which itself was holding up 70 tonnes of earth. The centre was surrounded by rings of steps, just like an amphitheatre and a circular hole at the apex of the roof drew comment as to how this might have originally been closed. Luke had no problem with using plastic sheeting as a temporary measure whilst various experiments could be made so that eventually the most likely method might be discovered.

We were then taken to the smith's lair where the junior Winters, having accepted their roles as slaves started to pump the bellows with enthusiasm. Once the forge was up to temperature Luke fashioned an iron bodkin – an arrow head capable of piercing armour similar to those used at Agincourt.



The demonstration was dramatic, how a simple rectangular piece of iron can be made into a killing weapon with nothing more than knowledge, practice, skill with a hammer, and of course, plenty of slave power.



Other buildings we toured included a small stone roundhouse with a bonded hazelwood framed roof and a more traditional wattle and daub roundhouse with the thatch reaching down to just above the ground. An imposing antlered porch made for an impressive entrance and it is interesting to wonder about the use of antlers – with the development of iron tools their use as prehistoric tools may have become less relevant, so perhaps they found a new function as decorative fixtures?

This was a fascinating morning. History never stands still and at the ATC we saw for ourselves how life during ancient times evolved in the same way as it has done ever since. Thank you Luke!

*“The activity I enjoyed most of the day was blacksmithing. Our host made an arrowhead from a sharp implement. It was interesting to see how he moulded it with the hammer and anvil. He obviously had a tool with which to cut the arrowhead from its body. It looked so easy but I don’t think I’d be able to do that first time though!” Michael.*

*“We were both struck by Luke’s enthusiasm to promote a ‘hands on’ experience for visitors and especially children who come as part of school groups. His desire for children to learn through partaking in practical activities resonated well with us. The Viking Longhouse was an interesting building in its own right, but the way in which it came about, through Luke’s vision of faithfully constructing from the archaeological evidence, made for a fascinating story. But this was not simply an exercise in recreating the past; the Longhouse is one of the main places used for interacting with visitors, and, for school groups wanting to spend more time at the centre, provides a place to eat and stay overnight. Its appearance like an upturned boat was a thing of beauty but, as we found out, its construction owed as*

*much to the Vikings' knowledge of shipbuilding as it did to their architectural prowess." Steven and Mary.*

*"Luke's way of explaining things such as the time line, if every centimetre was a year (of human existence) and so on really brings home how close we are to say the Romans in technology evolutionary terms." Julian.*



*Even a donkey would get paid for this work!*

## **Cyprus – Best Trip Yet?**

*Nicola Turton*

6 May 2015 – After a delayed flight, we finally reached Cyprus to find the rest of the group *in a bar*, and I have to say, even sunset over Istanbul didn't make up for that!

Once at the holiday village we found our little villas, which had notable touches, such as Rillington Place-type bathrooms, and rouched gold-trimmed net curtain in place of headboard; very tart's parlour.

7 May - Our first trip was to St Hilarion Castle. High on a hill top, set amongst the glorious flowers of Cyprus, and of course ruined, the castle was originally a 10<sup>th</sup> century monastery, and fortified in the 11thC, before being dismantled by the 15thC Venetians.

As we drove back toward Kyrenia, our people carrier developed a flat tyre. Fortunately Ian was able to pull into a garage, and replace the bald, flat tyre with the bald flat spare. Once sorted, and full of lunch, we walked down to the harbour, passing a group of girls who shrieked with laughter and shouted "Silly English hats!" I put my hand to my cheek, and responded with, "Beautiful English skin!"

Then to Kyrenia Castle, which may be as early as 7<sup>th</sup>C Byzantine, but is largely 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>C, and is very impressive. I especially liked the tiny St George's Chapel, which claims 5<sup>th</sup>C origins. The shipwreck museum has the remains of a 400BC Greek merchant ship, which looks as if it is no longer particularly cared for. Certainly not as loved as our Mary Rose.

8 May – a long trip to the "pan handle", the north east peninsula of northern Cyprus. We were to visit the monastery built on the site where St Andrew came ashore and striking the rocks with his staff, caused a healing fountain to spring forth. As you do.

When we arrived, we were greeted by the wild donkeys. With the timeless rugged shore, one could imagine the ships of thousands of years ago. However, the scaffolding on the buildings brought us back to modern times, and we were disappointed to find the monastery closed. Along one side was a ramshackle market, and I bought a modern crotal (sheep) bell – relevant because I have a collection of mediaeval ones, and this one looked just the same.

We went on to a late lunch at the Sea Front Beach Café. Playing on the beach whilst lunch was cooked, I found numerous jelly fish and sea-worn possible Roman tiles. It was a memorable lunch, sitting there and laughing with friends, with the warm breeze on our faces. I rather wanted to bottle the moment.

And finally to the Agias Trias Basilica. A wonderful ruin teeming with fabulous carvings and mosaics. The custodian was delighted to see us and went to each of us in turn taking selfies! Then he fed me mulberries, and told me they were called "doot". There was one wonderful mosaic of sandals with orange fastenings, and Gerda was wearing orange flip flops which were very similar, so she stood with one foot either side of the mosaic [see the front cover].

9 May - The next morning we stopped to see the impressive reservoir near Mavi Kosk, before travelling to the Guzelyurt museum. As we queued for our tickets, we enjoyed the large photo of Ataturk, taken whilst he was deep into his Bela Lugosi phase. Next to the museum, which was small, but had some lovely gold items and nice ceramics, was the church of St Mamas.

His tomb, hung all around with little silver ears, has a hole into which is poured oil (surely 3-in-One oil...). It then oozes out of another hole (hidden under what looks like a loo seat), and is gathered and used to ease earache. The pulpit was 18<sup>th</sup> century, but was pure 15<sup>th</sup>C West Country wine glass style.

After coffee by a bay of crystal green water, we headed to Soli, where we explored the amphitheatre, basilica ruins (more lovely mosaics), and an overgrown Roman settlement.

Post lunch we drove high into the mountains to Vouni Palace, probably 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Persian, and full of wells, and cisterns, and has the most glorious views. The natural beauty of Cyprus, combined with the archaeology and historic ruins make this a dazzling place, but you have to rise above the strange impression caused by the sculptural bones of half-built buildings which are scattered through northern Cyprus. It seems that tax is only payable on a building after completion, so the locals effectively stake a claim on a piece of land by commencing building, and then just leave it. It does look like an artist has gone quite mad with giant installations.

10 May - The next morning, we stopped at what initially looked to be a very unpromising site called Enkomi. Setting off through the gates towards a smudge in a field of golden grass, we walked along a raised path, and all at once, on either side, as far as we could see were the foundations and walls of extensive buildings. I found a 4' long shed snake skin, so I retrieved it and raced off to worry Alan with it. He hates snakes, recoiled and told me to wash my hands.

The next stop was the tomb of St Barnabas. For a few moments, Helen and I were alone in the stone cold tomb, except for the eponymous saint, of

course, and from the top of the stairs, Ian turned off the lights. I erupted from one tomb alcove as if someone had kicked me in the small of my back. Ian apologised and said he thought he was turning the light *on*. He said.

The main church housed a collection of icons and alongside was a very nice museum. I was especially taken by the ceramic sarcophagi, two small and one very large. They had slide-on lids, like pencil boxes, and were magnificent examples of the potter's skills.

Then to the next marvel, Salamis, a Roman site of great quality, with marble baths and the columns, mosaics, and patches of fresco. The place was fairly empty, so we quickly felt like 18<sup>th</sup> century explorers. We walked along deserted rutted Roman roads, and climbed the sides of a reservoir; we looked into abandoned Basilica and marvelled at the ruins, and dreamed about the unexcavated wonders.

Finally that day we went to Famagusta. Climbing to the top of the city wall, I was astonished to see the broken outline of the cathedral (now a mosque). It was so European and incongruous on the skyline of a Mediterranean city. Once in the city we admired the buildings and found a square with piles of 16<sup>th</sup> century roundshot, and further on, a war memorial condemning the "Greek thugs". In front of the memorial were several 16<sup>th</sup> century stave built guns perched on car axels! Alan escorted Helen and me into the Mosque, where we were kindly received. It was my first visit to a Mosque, but what a curious thing. I was reminded of when we left Basing House; we walked round for the last time, and the house felt deserted, and the Mosque felt exactly like that; a place without focus, peaceful, but empty.

Taking in several dear little abandoned and slightly ruined Crusader churches, we joined everyone else at a riverside restaurant. At the bottom of the stairs was a cage of canaries, and I wondered if we were meant to chose the one to be roasted and brought to the table. I had a dreadful pizza, and finally softened towards the endless stray cats and dogs. I wondered what right I had, as a hulking great human to deny sustenance to a thin little cat who hadn't sought to be born. So it had my pizza crusts. It gobbled them down, flanks heaving, and I hoped it wouldn't vomit on my feet. The cats are very handsome; all high in the bottom and rather Egyptian looking.

11 May - In Nicosia the next day, we started at the Dervish Museum. Full of interesting things, such as the tolerance of the 13<sup>th</sup> century founder of the religion, and an assemblage of tall thin gravestones, each with a carved Dervish hat on the top, and 15 or so Dervish tombs in a long row, each covered in a cheerfully bright fitted velvet pall. Sadly the loos were as one expected in Cyprus; no loo paper and grim to the nth.

After walking round the city for a while, and finding it very colonial, we reached the Buyuk Han. Built in 1572, the square open courtyard is surrounded by galleries. Once a Mosque, it is now an arts and restaurant centre, and reminded me of Piece Hall in Halifax. We ate lunch there, and Derick and I decided we were grown-ups, and if we wanted to, could just eat pudding. And we did. Oh the sweet ricotta in fried pastry parcels...

Then we visited the church, sometimes known as St Nicholas of the English, which has been beautifully restored, with a modern roof butting against the remains of the mediaeval one, then Derick took Helen and I into the Mosque, where again we women were welcomed. Alan pointed out that it had been a Mosque far longer than it had been a Christian church, which was a fair point. Still feels odd though.

Taking in the Lapidary Museum, we worked our way towards the Green Line, the border with southern Cyprus. The area was terribly run down, but such handsome buildings, showing that Cyprus used to be a nicely built country. Derick and I walked right to the barricade, and he took out his camera. I was appalled and hissed at him to put it away, but I guess he thought they wouldn't shoot him, and if challenged, he'd simply charm his way out of it!

After meeting the rest of the group, we then departed for Buffavento Castle. The Defier of the Winds stands 3,100 ft above sea level, although one can drive to a car park quite close to the top. Some of us did climb it, and it was richly rewarding to see the views from the top and try and believe that we were actually *there*.

That evening we took supper in Girne. A delightful place, where all the waiters and the chef came out to meet us and shake our hands. As we ate, something caught my eye as it scuttled past. "Oh" I said, "There's a

cockroach" Seconds later a waiter was hotly pursuing it up the wall, which made us all laugh.

12 May – our final full day and we went to Bellapais Abbey. Another ruined monastery; very European yet always surprising in a setting of palm trees. I especially loved the School Room, littered with the remains of columns and carvings, and looking like an 18<sup>th</sup> C antiquarian engraving.

Then some real archaeology – to the village of Karaman, and the Bronze Age tomb complex. Some were forbiddingly barred by spiders' webs, but under the shelter of a little hut one was open, and I climbed in, before reversing into the next cell and peering out onto the main site. The first cell had some interesting carvings, several slots, almost as if for timbers, and the small relief figure of a female, which is the earliest female figure in Cyprus.



*In the tomb at Karaman*



*Carving of a female at Karaman*

Finally to my favourite site of all, Lambousa. We parked by a bleak abandoned hotel, and walked down to the shore. Returning back past deserted and ruinous bathing huts, we found a small area of excavation; small houses, and plastic boxes of pottery sherds, through which we excitedly pawed. Then we set off along another path behind the hotel which led to some open excavations, and we discussed whether they were salt workings or topless tombs. I left Ian and Kay exploring a large underground chamber, and went to find Alan, whom I found in a small gully containing dozens of tombs. Some at ground level, into which one

could walk, and others in storeys running up the rock faces. They looked awfully cosy.

Alan then pointed me towards the shore, and the fish ponds, although some believe that they might have been part of the Roman bathing process. Whatever they might be, they are very impressive, cut from the bed rock and still extant after so long.

Heading back, I caught up with Ian and asked what the chamber had turned out to be. He hadn't explored too far in, but then they'd found dozens and dozens of tombs, and had realised that the ridges along the paths were in fact the eroded remains of other graves.



As one got one's eye in, one could see more and more, and it was incredible. Ian took me across to see one area of the necropolis. I was stunned; tomb after tomb, there were hundreds of them.

And sadly, that was that. Home the next day, and starting to plan for next year.

I think I speak for the entire group when I thank Ian and Cathy Williams for being such kind hosts in their other home, and also Ian Waite and Mark Peryer for patiently driving us round. Hope we weren't too tiresome!

*Small tomb at Lambousa*



*Famagusta*



*Top: Buyuk Han, Salamis & Bellapais Abbey*

*Middle: Soli & Kyrenia shipwreck*

*Bottom: Conquerors of Buffvento & 16<sup>th</sup> C stave built gun at Famagusta*

## 2015 DIARY DATES



**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL &  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

[www.bahsoc.org.uk](http://www.bahsoc.org.uk)

**Penny Martin Tel: 01256 321 423**

[secretary@bahsoc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@bahsoc.org.uk)

**Registered Charity no. 11000263**

**MEETINGS** *Church Cottage, Basingstoke at 7.30pm*

**10<sup>th</sup> September** **EXCAVATIONS AT SELBORNE PRIORY –  
DAVID BAKER**

**26<sup>th</sup> September** **READING MUSEUM TRIP “ART & ARCHAEOLOGY”**  
– booking essential. Contact Penny Martin

**8<sup>th</sup> October** **FROM WATERLOO TO WWI – THE LIFE OF THE  
COMMON SOLDIER - IAN WILLIAMS**

**12<sup>th</sup> November** **A BIRD’S EYE VIEW OF CRANBORNE CHASE –  
MARTIN GREEN**

**10<sup>th</sup> December** **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING**

**14<sup>th</sup> January** **TRUCKLE HILL, WILTS; A ROMAN BATH-HOUSE  
REDISCOVERED - PHIL ANDREWS**

### **FRIENDS OF BASING HOUSE**

*Winter Lectures at 7.30 pm, Basing House Education Centre, The Street*

**13<sup>th</sup> October** **THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL – Roger Cansdale**

### **FRIENDS OF WILLIS MUSEUM**

*At 7.30 pm Willis Museum, Basingstoke*

**17 September** **THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN OVER BASINGSTOKE**

**15 October** **AGM & POSTCARDS OF RAILWAY SUBJECTS**