

**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**BAHS**

**Newsletter 216**

**August 2016**

**CONTENTS**

<b>Page 3</b>	<b>Durotriges Big Dig Open Day</b>
<b>Page 5</b>	<b>Mary Rose – Report and Future Visit</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>Anne Hawker - Obituary</b>
<b>Page 8</b>	<b>1918 Aircraft Crash in Basingstoke</b>
<b>Page 9</b>	<b>Cream Teas and Rain on the Basingstoke Canal</b>
<b>Page 10</b>	<b>Programme Notes 2016-17</b>
<b>Page 13</b>	<b>The Book of Proverbs</b>
<b>Page 14</b>	<b>Uffington – Why is it There?</b>
<b>Page 16</b>	<b>Fieldwork Report and <i>Dig Basing!</i></b>
<b>Page 19</b>	<b>Shropshire Trip – Report and Photographs</b>



*Members of the Society at the Wroxeter Roman Villa*

# A Message from Our Chair

*Ginny Pringle*

Following our AGM held on 9 June, I am delighted to welcome Nikki Read to the Committee. We thanked Barry Hedger for his support over many years as Membership Secretary and William King for taking over the reins from Barry earlier in the year. William has become a regular face, welcoming members and guests at the door on our talk evenings.

At the AGM we discussed our considerable collection of reference books, which has grown over the years, often through generous donations of books from the Membership. Without easily accessible premises, storage of the collection has become a concern and at the AGM it was decided that we should seek to find a library willing to acquire the collection. If this is not possible we will offer the books for sale at our meetings. To this end we are working on a catalogue which we hope to have ready for the autumn.

In May, we celebrated our 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a sold-out outing aboard the Pinkerton narrowboat. Despite showery weather we had a fantastic time; being entertained on board by Derek Spruce with a talk on the history of the canal, followed by a guided tour around Odiham Castle with Alan Turton. On the return trip, we tucked into homemade scones baked by Nicola Turton. The celebration went swimmingly and we acknowledge with sincere thanks the contributions made by Nicola, Alan and Derek.

In June, we enjoyed our annual trip away, this year a long weekend to Shrewsbury, which you can read about in this newsletter. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Mark Peryer for arranging this trip. We are already thinking about where to go next year!

May I remind you that your BAHS membership subscription is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> September? Rates remain the same as last year. Please consider renewing by standing order, which saves us the headache of chasing lapsed subscriptions. I look forward to seeing you again in the autumn. In the meantime please continue to send in your articles to Nicola, either by email [newsletter@bahsoc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@bahsoc.org.uk) or by post to The Keep, 28 Badger's Bank, Lychpit, RG24 8RT (01256 321 192).

# Durotriges Big Dig Open Day

*Annabel Stowe*

In the middle of the rolling Dorset countryside south of Blandford Forum, a team from Bournemouth University, under the direction of Dr Miles Russell and Paul Cheetham, is making ground-breaking discoveries at a late-prehistoric/Roman site, *Duroopolis*. On 10 July, a day of breezy sunshine, I joined an interested group of keen visitors at the Big Dig Open Day 2016, to find out more about this intriguingly-named site. The term “Duroopolis” was coined, partly tongue-in-cheek, to indicate that this is a substantial settlement of the Durotriges, the native British tribe of Belgic origin who, during the Iron Age, inhabited what is now Dorset, along with large areas of southern Wiltshire and south-east Somerset. The Durotriges Project was set up to investigate the transition between the late Iron Age and Roman Period in Dorset, and to study the effects of Roman occupation on a native British settlement.

After a fortifying cappuccino and home-made cake at a stall in one of the barns at North West Farm, we went by minibus to the site, where Dr Russell gave us a most interesting briefing. The Project, which began in 2009, focused last year on discovering how the Durotrigians lived, with this year’s focus being on finding the limits of the settlement, to try and assess its size. Crop marks in aerial photography indicate somewhere between 200-300 roundhouses, of which 16 have been found to date, many with substantial ring gullies. Although the principal period of occupation of the site dates from the late Iron Age, c200-50BC, there is evidence of activity at least 2000 years earlier, in the shape of a beautifully-smooth late Neolithic polished flint axe head, dating to around the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The Bronze Age has left its mark too – we were shown a possible roundhouse with ring gully from around 1000BC – and, from the Roman Period, a putative flint quarry, grain-drier and brewing trough.

One of the unusual features of the site is the number of burials (largely crouched), as the normal practices of the time were cremation, excarnation, or sometimes depositing the body in water. Relatively few inhumations have so far come to light outside Dorset and East Yorkshire. On the very last day of this year’s dig (typical!) a skeleton has begun to emerge, possibly of a young woman, with a newborn baby on top. A crouched

burial, also found this season, had an Iron Age pot by its head, the long bone of an animal across the chest, and a rack of ribs close to the body.

Strange ritual practices involving animals seem to be a feature of the site. The top half of a cow's skull had a horse's lower jawbone; three pigs were found with the flesh still on, at the bottom of a storage pit, and, bizarrely, an almost-intact cow's skeleton with a sheep's skull carefully positioned at its rear end! We can only make wild guesses at the symbolism and significance of these deposits.

With plenty of food for thought, I made my way back through the windy cornfields, reflecting on what I had learnt. Does this unenclosed, and potentially extensive, settlement indicate (as the Directors suggest in their article in *Current Archaeology* no. 313) a significant shift from the hill forts that declined in around 100BC? Can we conclude that this area of Dorset enjoyed a period of relative stability and prosperity in the late Iron Age?

Roll on next year's dig, to answer more questions. But that's enough metaphorical food for one day – the mobile fish and chip van waits in the farmyard, next to the Sunny Republic Brewery. Let's leave the past for the moment and enjoy the present!



*Clockwise from top left; view of roundhouse, excavation of crouched burial and grain pit. Photos: Nicola Turton*

# The Mary Rose

*Nicola Turton*

The Mary Rose museum has been closed since late last year, and in July Alan and I were able to attend a preview day for the new display. This is now essentially the finished version of the Mary Rose ship museum. If you visited the old ship hall, you will recall the tiny, often dirty windows through which you could glimpse the ship. In the new museum the viewing slots were slightly larger and cleaner and one could see the Mary Rose as she went through the final conservation processes. For the last few years she looked like an alien being kept alive by a network of tubes, although in fact these pipes were helping to dry the timbers, and as a result, an excess of PEG (polyethylene glycol) accumulated in white clumps on the wood.

However, as one now enters the ship hall, for the first time one is properly aware of the great size of the ship. The new windows run from floor to ceiling, and as I listened for a few minutes, every person to enter the hall said “wow” or gasped in delight. The upper deck is without glass, with just a low barrier on which one may lean to look in wonder at our wonderful ship, and for the first time one is in the same case as the ship. We certainly felt privileged to be there on a preview day and able to spend as long as we wanted peacefully looking at the Mary Rose. The lifts will provide views along the length of the ship from either end, although on our visit the windows were covered, pending the press preview. But being ever quietly subversive, as soon as the lift doors closed, I pulled the blind away from the Velcro and peeped. Alan and the other couple in the lift tutted disapprovingly, but I shrugged and pointed out that I could see Mary Rose and they couldn’t!

Meeting Chris Dobbs later, we gave our feedback, and Alan suggested placing a decal outline on the end walls, showing the profile of the ship, as it isn’t easy to appreciate her dimensions from the approximate “half” which survives. We both said we weren’t keen on the slide shows, which project images of people into the cabins and on deck, but they plan to tone them down slightly, and make them more ghostly. I also complained that I could see people in a window on the starboard side of the ship, and I couldn’t get in there. Chris took pity on us and took us through a locked door! We were the first people to whom he had shown this view, and he

and Alan spent some time talking technically about rigging and fouling and chain plates...

## **Stop Press !! Stop Press !! Stop Press!!**

### **Mary Rose Visit**

We are organising a visit to the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth on Sunday 16 October 2016.

We will meet at the main entrance at 9.30 am for a 10am start.

The prices are £13.50 for seniors (over 60) and £14.20 for adults.

To come on this trip we need to know as soon as possible. We therefore need to you send names and a cheque payable to BAHS to Steve Kirby  
1 Mothes Houses

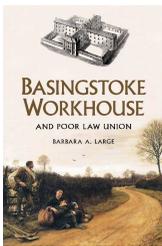
10 The Green

Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 3PQ. Tel. 01189 817 104.

E [rikker@talk21.com](mailto:rikker@talk21.com)

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

## **Basingstoke Workhouse**



Members may recall the fascinating talk given by BAHS member Barbara Large about the Basingstoke Workhouse, and will be interested to learn that The History Press are about to publish her book on the subject.

The book explores all aspects of life in that feared institution. From the staff who lived and worked there to the poor souls kept in the medical wing, it reveals a side of Basingstoke that has long since been forgotten.

It covers the problems of administration and oversight, the stresses and strains suffered by the new, untrained and inexperienced officers who had to make it work, and the sometimes-excruciating difficulty of getting every detail sanctioned by London. It also details how caring for the destitute and unfortunate often depended on the personalities of the people in charge, and

how the poor law union became a whole new tier of local government, still operating today.

Basingstoke Workhouse and Poor Law Union, by Barbara A. Large, and published by The History Press, on 5 September 2016, Price £12.99

## **RIP Anne Hawker**

*Mary Oliver*



The Society has received the sad news that Anne Hawker has passed away. She moved to be near her daughter some years ago and had been suffering from dementia, so had lost touch with her friends in Basingstoke.

However, many of us remember her well; she was a founder member of the Society and made a Life Member for her considerable contribution to local history. A mathematician by training, she became expert in palaeography and was passionate about the documentary sources and the stories they could tell. She worked on the town records stowed away in the basement of the then Town Hall (now the museum) and made sure the documents found their way to the County Record Office.

The Society's first publication *Voices of Basingstoke* resulted from her work on 16<sup>th</sup> century wills, and our dramatic performance *A Day in Tudor Basingstoke* was based on it. She also wrote *The Story of Basingstoke*, and cooperated with Barbara Applin on *Going Down Church Street*. I was very grateful for her help when researching Church Cottage, and have happy memories of perching on a chair among the piles of books and files in her front room while she shared some pertinent little discovery with me.

She was a very kind lady, lively company and always glad to show you round the garden – gardening was her second passion. Her daughter has suggested that I plant something in her memory, and I shall certainly be doing that in memory of a good friend.

# 1918 - Aircraft Crash in Basingstoke

*Dave Hopkins*

“Aeroplane Falls in a Field. An aeroplane crashed to the ground in a field adjoining the Aldermaston road near Park Prewett War Hospital, on Friday, last week [8 February], both its occupants being killed instantaneously. The machine belonged to a flying squadron stationed at Stonehenge, and the two airmen whose tragic fate was involved in the disaster were Lieut. F. G. E. Smith, Royal Flying Corps, and Flight-Sub-Lieut. Cyril Jewell, of the Royal Naval Air Service. Within a few minutes of the disaster a number of boys just released from school rushed to the spot, but were kept at a distance until the bodies of the unfortunate airmen had been removed. After this the boys and a number of soldiers assembled about the machine, certain valuable parts of which, besides others of lesser account, were taken away. Three boys were charged with larceny and fined 10s. each”.

The two airmen who died were 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Frederick George Smith RFC aged 20 who was buried in Coventry and Cyril Jewell RNAS aged 19 who was buried at Sundridge. They were flying an FE2b A5760 from No 1 school of Navigation and Bombing Stonehenge. The crash is noted in the war Diary of the Canadian Hospital at Park Prewett. “Flt Lt Smith and Lt Jewell whilst flying over the hospital, smashed to the ground and were both killed”. This incident is reported in the *Hampshire and Berkshire Gazette*. The plane crashed just to the west of the Aldermaston Road close to the hospital and whilst both airmen died in the crash hospital staff and patients rushed to the scene and their bodies were taken to the hospital mortuary. It seems the aircraft’s engine was dead and as they approached to make an emergency landing the pilot made a sudden turn to avoid the road and the plane corkscrewed in and burst into flames. The wreck was looted by souvenir hunters and several boys in the area were subsequently taken to court for theft of government property (although their defence was that they were given the items by Canadian soldiers who were first on the scene). The diary notes that on 9 February “The civil authorities conducted an inquest on the bodies of the two RFC officers who were killed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February” (from the Reading Mercury Saturday 16 February 1918).

This is one of the anecdotes to be found in a short history of the First World War hospital on the Worting scouts web site as part of their WW1 commemorations. <http://www.wortingscouts.org.uk/first-world-war/park-prewett-canadian-hospital>

# Cream Tea and a Spot of Rain

*Nikki Read*

Well, what a fine time we all had on a damp afternoon in May! It was wonderful to see so many BAHS members gathering at the John Pinkerton boatyard to help celebrate our 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Once safely aboard, we took a leisurely cruise along the canal whilst enjoying Derek Spruce's hugely informative commentary on the canal's history. The soggy spring blossom and occasional dragonfly added to the awe and wonder of those of us brave enough to stand out at the front of the boat in the drizzle.

There was then time to disembark for one of Alan Turton's amazing whistle-stop tours of Odiham Castle, before the promise of Nicola Turton's cream teas lured us back on board (rumour has it that Nicola was baking scones in her sleep, only stopping when the flour ran out!). The whole thing was delicious, and everyone was amply fed – for services to baking – Nicola we salute you!

The rain persisted, but it didn't dampen our spirits as we laughed, chatted and steamed up the windows all the way back to the boatyard.

As 45<sup>th</sup> anniversaries go – not a bad day out. Our thanks go to Derek and Alan for services supplied and to Mark Peryer and Nicola for organising!

I love a little narrowboat, I love the old canal,  
Imagining the tales these ancient waterways could tell,  
I love to work the lock, those oaken gates so firm and strong,  
With know-alls up above to tell you what you're doing wrong.  
From *I Love a Little Narrowboat* - by Pam Ayres



*On board the Pinkerton.*



*Rain? What rain?*

## Programme Notes 2016-17

### **8 September; The Black Death in London; Barney Sloane, Head of Strategic Planning & Management at Historic England.**

Barney is a medievalist who worked at the Museum of London; due to the many large-scale projects in the capital he has first-hand knowledge of the recently excavated plague cemeteries, and a particular interest in the effects on London society. Study of documentary records has amplified the dig results, and he has new theories about the Plague to share with us.

### **13 October; The Avebury waterscape; Steve Marshall, Independent archaeological researcher and writer.**

Steve has a different background to most professional archaeologists, and he is also a musician, but his research into the Avebury landscape, shaped by natural and man-made watercourses, throws new light on the development of this world famous site. His book *Exploring Avebury* has had very good reviews and he will bring copies on the night.

### **10 November; Aethelred the Unready and Cnut the Great: a tale of two kings; Dr Ryan Lavelle, University of Winchester.**

Ryan is a history lecturer at Winchester, and he's had a busy time due to Cnut's anniversary; 1000 years since his accession to the throne. There have been conferences, lectures and the launch of *Danes in Wessex*, co-edited with Simon Roffey. The last days of Anglo-Saxon England and the rise of the 'Vikings made good' under Cnut, and the Danish contribution to the development of our country will make for an interesting evening.

### **8 December; Christmas Party with the Redding Morreys**

Continuing our 45<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, we are planning a special Christmas meeting; the Redding Morreys will tell the story of Morris dancing from its origins in 1513, and also give us a demonstration. Maybe there will be an opportunity to try it out...? Also food, wine and the chance to chat to friends, the usual formula!

### **12 January 2017; Portable Antiquities in Hampshire; Recent Finds; Katie Hinds, Finds Liaison Officer for Hampshire**

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is one of the great success stories of archaeology in recent times. The reporting of their finds by metal

detectorists makes a real difference to the county period-distribution maps and therefore to our knowledge of settlement and activity in the past. Katie has been in this post since 2012. She will tell us what has been discovered recently in our area and the implications – an evening of surprises perhaps.

**9 February; Excavations at Kennel Farm, Basingstoke; Damian De Rosa, Cotswold Archaeology.**

Members may have seen this excavation at Hatch Warren on the north side of the road to Winchester, and may remember visiting the site, or hearing Mark's description of the dig. Houses are now being built and the post excavation work is being done. Damian, who led the work, is coming to share the results with us. Another piece of Basingstoke's past.

**9 March; Jane Austen's Houses; Derek Spruce, local historian and BAHS member.**

There have been many anniversaries to commemorate in the last few years, but not many are as close to the hearts of the people of North Hampshire as a Jane Austen anniversary. It is 200 years since she died in Winchester in 1817. Derek is an active member - he kept us entertained with salient facts about the Basingstoke canal as we sailed upon it for our birthday trip, he is Odiham's local historian and a key member of the VCH Basingstoke research team. He has found time to make a study of the houses Jane would have known and visited and which formed the background and inspiration to those famous novels.

**13 April; Almanacs, astrology and popular medicine in early modern England; Professor Louise Curth, University of Winchester.**

Last year Louise was coming to give this lecture but was unable to make it at the last minute. She has kindly agreed to re-schedule so we look forward to hearing from the written sources how our ancestors coped with everyday medical problems. I wonder how much we shall still recognise!

**11 May; The Ebbsfleet elephant butchery site and the Acheulian invasion of Britain; Dr Francis Wenban-Smith, University of Southampton**

We shall be taken back 420,000 years by this lecture on the exceptional site discovered during the work on HS1 railway at Ebbsfleet and excavated by Francis. The quality of the evidence - bones of the massive and extinct

straight-tusked elephant found with flint tools, has added considerably to the understanding of this distant period. 'Acheulian invasion' is a new term to me, a fascinating evening awaits.

**8 June; John the Painter: the first modern terrorist; Alan Turton, historian and BAHS member.**

Alan will follow the AGM with this story which has emerged from his research on John the Painter, who definitely got up to no good in a big way, who went on the run and was caught in Odiham before being taken to Portsmouth for execution. Now I've given the end away – but come and hear all the detail!

**CBA Wessex Annual Conference – 5 November 2016 –  
Basing Village Hall, RG24 7DA**

**Women in Wessex: The Archaeology, Objects and Personalities which  
have had an impact on the History of Wessex**

The standard history of Wessex has tended to focus on the role of men in shaping the region and its major institutions. Whether in the form of warfare or political leadership, the descriptions of past societies and their activities has tended to focus on men. This conference takes the opportunity to celebrate some of the hidden stories of the past, to balance the books and demonstrate the important role that women have played in the history of our region.

This full day conference will cover a wide range of topics and women who have left their mark on the region, including prehistoric burial patterns, the development of medieval institutions; the stories of some of the leading female researchers that have been instrumental in uncovering and exploring our past and objects that have been found which reveal a rarely discussed side of our history.

CBA Wessex members £15, non-members £20, and includes free car parking on site, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Registration starts at 9.30am and conference begins at 10.00am.

Book online at [www.cba-wessex.org.uk/events](http://www.cba-wessex.org.uk/events) or email Andy Manning at [events@cba-wessex.org.uk](mailto:events@cba-wessex.org.uk) or phone 01722 343406.

Editor's Warning - the following article may offend; proceed with caution!

## The Book Of Proverbs

*Bob Clarke*

John Ray (1628-1705) was a naturalist and botanist. He is often referred to as the father of natural history in Britain. He travelled all over England collecting plants and developed a system of classifying plants. Among his other works he produced the definitive *Catalogue of English Plants*. He also collected proverbs and local dialect words. He developed a network of correspondents who would send him examples of local sayings, similes and words. He published *A Collection of English Proverbs* in 1670 and *A Collection of English Words not generally used* in 1674. Both books went into several editions during his lifetime as he found new material. Both books were later incorporated into a single volume and reprinted from time to time after his death. I have the 1737 edition.

It is difficult to imagine in which circumstances in day-to-day life when one would need to make any of the following remarks:

*Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.*

*He that hath no head needs no hat.*

*You'll be good when the goose pisseth.*

*It's very hard to shave an egg.*

*It's good farting before one's own fire.*

*He that would have good luck in horses must kiss the Parson's wife.*

*When a man's house burns it's not good playing at chess.*

*You cannot hide an eel in a sack.*

*Foxes when they cannot reach the grapes say they are not ripe.*

*He that pisseth against the wind wets his shirt.*

*Two whores in a house will never agree.*

*He that stays in the valley shall never get over the hill.*

*Where the Turk's horse once treads, the grass never grows.*

Sometimes Ray kindly gives an explanation of what the proverb means:

*He that would an old wife wed, must eat an apple before he goes to bed*

*Which by reason of its flatulency is apt to excite lust.*

In some cases the meaning is obvious:

*She lies backward and lets out her fore-rooms.*

The section *Proverbs and Proverbial Observations referring to Love, Wedlock, and Women* includes the following:

*He that woos a maid must feign, lie and flatter; But he that woos a widow, must down with his breeches and at her.*

*He that loses his wife and a farthing, hath a great loss of his farthing.*

*A dog's nose and a maid's knees are always cold.*

*A dead wife's the best goods in a man's house.*

Finally, it is a shame that the following similes have fallen into disuse:

*As brisk as a body louse.*

*As free as a dead horse is of farts.*

*As hasty as a sheep, so soon as the tail is up the turd is out.*

*As quiet as a wasp in one's nose.*

*As surly as if he had pissed on a nettle.*

## The Uffington White Horse – Why is it there?

*Penny Martin*

The Uffington White Horse is a stylised figure of a horse carved into the chalk of White Horse Hill, close to Uffington in Oxfordshire and above the aptly named Valley of the White Horse. It is best viewed from a distance, and on a clear day, from about 4 miles away on the B4508 or the Swindon to Reading railway line.

The reason for its existence and location has been the subject of much controversy over many years and it is only now that, given modern archaeological research and technology, some light has been shed on its construction, enabling archaeologists and me to come up with a number of theories in answer to the question, *Why?*

The White Horse of Uffington is the only chalk hill figure reliably dated to the prehistoric period. The Optical Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) soil samples taken date the soils below the figure to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age period, making it roughly contemporary with the nearby Uffington Castle Hill fort, which is dated to around 700BC. There are a number of other prehistoric monuments in the area including, the ancient Ridgeway, the Neolithic burial monument at Wayland's Smithy - half a mile away, a further Neolithic long barrow and Bronze Age round barrows on the same hillside as the figure. It was clearly a location which was of some importance to the people of the area.

The White Horse exists in an area of geological interest with features including Dragon Hill, disappointingly now proven to be a natural feature following a coring exercise undertaken in 2015 by Jim Leary of Reading University, but long thought to be a man-made mound similar to Silbury Hill. Glacial terraces known as the Giant's Stairs are cut into the landscape below the White Horse adjacent to a deep combe (the Manger) and the sources of seven springs are to be found close by in the Valley below. These features form a special and unusual landscape which today looks much the same as it would have been in the Late Bronze Age.

It seems likely that the proximity of such impressive-looking geological features is at least partly responsible for the location of the White horse on this particular hillside by the Iron Age people who created it. The earlier archaeological features from the Neolithic and Bronze Age together with the close proximity to the Ridgeway, which was a well traversed path for people of this period for the purpose of trade, added to the special nature of the area and made this hillside a desirable place to create the monument.

It is likely from the dating evidence that Uffington Castle (hill fort) was built as a base for the considerable activity undertaken by the early Iron Age people of this area in the construction of the monument. The reason for the location of the monument may never be known, however it is likely to be a combination of all of the archaeological and geological features which existed in the area.

The reason that the monument was created at all is equally elusive and the number of theories is ever increasing. The urge to create the monument and expend the considerable amount of precious resources it would have taken must have been immense. My own view is that the combination of the 'special' look of the natural landscape, together with the existence of the earlier man-made features, would have been well known to and 'owned' by the local people, who then identified this as a 'special place'.

The stylised shape of the horse and its similarity to known art of the period in particular Iron Age coins indicate that horses were particularly prized in this area, much as they are today in nearby Lambourn. The white horse may have been created to symbolise the importance of horses to the local community or to mark the location of the local tribe and advertise to those

travelling on the Ridgeway that horses, a rare and prized commodity, were available here.

In my view the latter option is more likely as this would perhaps increase their opportunities for trade and create wealth for the community and this would in some way justify the expense incurred for the resources used to build both the hill fort and to create the White Horse and of course this has continued for hundreds of years with the upkeep and continual scouring of the figure into the present day.

## Fieldwork Report – August 2016

Mark Peryer (Tel: 07770 832397 email: [mperyer@f2s.com](mailto:mperyer@f2s.com))

Over 18-19 June BAHS members took part in the first *Dig Basing!* 2016 weekend. This year we were joined by some NEHAS members who enjoyed the opportunity to do some fieldwork. The first weekend resulted in 9 test pits being dug and their content recorded. All of the pits were dug along The Street, between St Mary's church and the railway bridge. The pits were more or less in adjacent gardens. The initial impression of digging in such a concentrated area is that the find spread is fairly consistent across all pits. However, the detailed finds analysis work is in progress and there may something more interesting to say as a result.



*Ginny with  
Magnetometer*



*BAHS members  
try to make  
sense of the  
trench at  
Odiham Castle*

Thanks to the generosity of Winchester University, we were able to use a Magnetometer to survey two sites over the *Dig Basing!* weekend. The first geophysical survey was in the field between Basing Village hall and

Yeomans, which is owned by Robert and Bridgit Innis-Ker. This survey showed that there was considerable disturbance in a line at the eastern end of the field, but elsewhere seems rather quiet. In a subsequent discussion with Robert Innis-Ker, he revealed that a drain had been put in along the eastern edge of the field, so the disturbance was recent.

The second survey was at Oliver's Battery, the site of an early motte and bailey castle. This was a much larger scale exercise, and it took two days to collect the readings. We are still working on the data, and trying to interpret it with different types of software. However, the initial reaction to these results is that they are indicative of a site that had timber buildings, and we did not find anything suggesting of stone walls.

Over 1-2 July, we ran a weekend excavation as part of the *Odiham Besieged* festival. Liz and Gerry Good helped us facilitate the dig with the Odiham Society, and it was well supported by BAHS members. We were able to field around 12 diggers on each day, as well as having two people to work on the finds and a floater to discuss the dig with members of the public attending the festival.

The objective was to confirm the existence of a made-up surface, believed to be part of a road or track leading from Odiham Castle, which showed up in one of the test pits dug last year during the Magna Carta celebrations. In the best traditions of field archaeology, our trench did not confirm a road, but seemed to suggest the presence of a wide-spread surface made up of large flints roughly 10 cm in size, with a possible boundary feature consisting of flints of the same size detected in our trench. We probed over a large area and confirmed that the flint/gravel surface was spread over most of the field. The current theory is that the area was raised up using flint in-fill, in order to make it usable, given that in the past the whole area was very marshy.

Our next *Dig Basing!* is planned for 18-19 September. All members are welcome to take part and if you would like to do so, please contact either Mark Peryer (details above), or Ian Waite (07963 372989).

# **Dig Basing 2016–Reflections of a Pot Washer**

*Bob Applin*

Following Mark's appeal for volunteers I decided that, although I was past digging holes in people's gardens, it would be nice to get back to doing some practical archaeology. So I volunteered to pot wash. That is where I started in archaeology in the mid 1960s – helping Mary Oliver (Atkinson as she was then) in the old Willis Museum on a Thursday evening.

My friend John Oliver had been roped in and I went along to see what it was all about. The rest, as they say, is history. I spent many hundreds of hours digging on the sites exposed during the housing developments, gained a wife – Barbara - and helped found the Archaeological Society.

I turned up at about 11am on Saturday at the finds tent in Mary's garden and was welcomed by the lonely figure of Mick Buckwell who already had more than enough trays of finds to deal with. He set me to work and I had forgotten just how long it takes to wash a tray of finds – 2 hours for one of the trays. I must not pre-empt the official report of the result, there were a few interesting pieces but by the end of the day I had seen enough CBM – bits of brick and tile to you and me.

Mick and I had been joined in the afternoon by Paulline Williams and Mary Oliver and the four of us continued our efforts on the Sunday. However, we only managed to process about half the trays; the remainder Mick took home to process at his leisure – a glutton for punishment.

We were sustained in our efforts by coffee or tea from Mary and cakes from Ginny – a delicious Rocky Road was one.

What is the point of the above? It is a recruiting plea for the September session. The active diggers need back-up and provided you do not mind getting your hands wet (I wore rubber gloves the second day) come to help. No experience needed – you will 'learn on the job'.

## Shropshire 23-28 June 2016

*Nicola Turton*

BAHS has another jolly adventure, which started outside Shrewsbury Abbey for a tour of the slightly bland mediaeval building. Although interesting, some of us found the local red stone to be somewhat dismal. Moving on to the museum, we enjoyed the fabulous Roman collection and whipped round the other galleries (Alan and I visited recently). I felt rather stalked by a volunteer, who kept popping out of different galleries to remind me to see this object or that. I grew adept at spotting him out of the corner of my eye, which allowed me to sprint in the opposite direction.

After lunch our group decided to visit Montgomery, a ruined castle which was new to Alan, and of course to the rest of us too. The views were stupendous and marvellously softened by viewing them through the rain. In the splendid little village, we fell in love with the Old Bell museum, housed in a tiny building, and quite charming. Tea and a visit to the excellent and old-fashioned hardware shop seemed to round off our visit until Julian suggested the church. I thought the church looked dull, but was surprised and delighted by the treasures within. Stunning timber roofs, excellent tomb figures, funerary achievements and lovely misericords.

We stopped for dinner in a sweet village called Bishop's Castle, and afterwards climbed the steep street up to the Castle Hotel, to try and find the castle remains, which in 1958 were described by Pevsner, as "scanty". Now not there *at all*, as far as we could see. On the way down Julian spotted the chalk board outside a pub, where a band called POOBAHS were due to be playing. He'd quickly spotted that POO BAHS was not exactly a warm welcome for our Society!

At glorious Stokesay Castle the next morning we enjoyed the sunshine on the ravishing buildings, and sat among the beautiful borders for coffee and buns. As we reached Ludlow, however, the sky grew darker. Taking a guided tour of the castle with a badly costumed guide, who grew testy if anyone lingered, we sheltered in a window embrasure as it rained. It was such a downpour that Alan said it looked like an unconvincing BBC drama.

Alan and I have been visiting the beautiful, quiet and simple Langley Chapel for many years now, and apart from a hornet once, and a mouse, we have seldom encountered any other living creatures there, so it was odd, but nice to see it so busy. Flying visits were paid to Acton Burnell church and castle, and we bagged Telford's 1813 Cantlop Bridge before dinner.

Sunday already and we started with a walk round Ironbridge, before moving on to Blists Hill. Years since we've been there, but very enjoyable. I was most taken with the way in which some of the costumed people occupied their houses, as if they truly lived there. I was moved to knock on the door of one, as it felt rude just to wander in. With my famously poor ear for regional accents, it all got slightly odd when I wanted to buy a bath brush in the pharmacy shop. "Ah, a buttock brush" she said. I blinked. Alan swiftly took over, and bought the BODY brush for me. One of the things we learned about was the Squatter's Cottage, a tiny single floor building, with two rooms and a pantry under the eaves. In this case, squatter is not a pejorative term, but simply describes a place where the resident does not own the land but pays rent.

Starting early next day, we visited Wroxeter church, which has a Saxon north wall, built from Roman stones, and the font is made from a large, hollowed-out capital of a Roman column. Then back to the Wroxeter Roman Remains, where we enjoyed a guided tour, and had a group photo (see front cover) taken outside the Roman Villa, built six years ago for the BBC programme, *Rome Wasn't Built in a Day*.

Some of us moved on to Much Wenlock, a pretty town with a Squatter's Cottage which is still lived in and seems just as tiny as the one at Blists Hill. The abbey ruins are some of the prettiest we've ever visited, set in ravishing gardens.

On our way back to the Travelodge, we visited Pitchford church. The village is so called because of the bitumen well, and the church is close to a vast half-timbered house, c1580 and later, which is now empty. The church has a very striking wooden effigy of a knight, John Pitchford, 1280. He is over seven feet tall, and has a very realistic face. I cupped my hand against his cheek, and he is such a speaking likeness that I wouldn't have been

surprised if he'd looked back at me. Alan said to be careful in case he grabbed me.

All weekend, I nagged Alan to visit Claverley Church. It has a famous wall painting, which bears a striking resemblance to the Bayeux Tapestry. Indeed for a long time since its rediscovery in 1902, it was indeed believed to be a depiction of the Battle of Hastings. It is now thought to be an illustration of noble knights fighting the seven vices, and dates to 1200. Alan was rather grumbling and wanted to get home, but I kept saying, "Trust me". And sure enough he was most impressed by the painting, which runs most of the length of the chancel beneath the clerestory.

And then home, with more memories of lovely times with dear friends. Thank you all for your company and of course Mark and Ian for another triumph.



*Julian and a warm welcome at Bishop's Castle*



*A merman, on Much Wenlock church pulpit*



*Wroxeter Church font; a reused Roman capital*



*Stokesay Castle*



*Langley Chapel interior*



*Much Wenlock Abbey*



*Langley Chapel*



*Montgomery Church*



*Much Wenlock Abbey*



*Ludlow Castle*



*Funerary achievement,  
Montgomery Church*



*John de Pitchford, Pitchford Church*



*Wall painting, Claverley Church*

# 2016 DIARY DATES

The logo for the Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society (BAHS) consists of the letters 'BAHS' in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a dark blue rectangular box.

**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL &  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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

**8 September** THE BLACK DEATH IN LONDON – Barney Stone,  
Historic England

**13 October** THE AVEBURY WATERSCAPE – Steve Marshall

**10 November** AETHELRED THE UNREADY & CNUT THE  
GREAT: A TALE OF TWO KINGS – Dr Ryan  
Lavelle, University of Winchester

**8 December** CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH THE REDDING  
MORREYS

**FRIENDS OF WILLIS MUSEUM**

*At 7.30 pm Willis Museum, Basingstoke*

**15 September** THE ALTON QUILT – Sue Dell

**20 October** READING'S ABBEY QUARTER - John Mullaney

**17 November** JANE AUSTEN AND THE MILITARY – Alan Turton

**15 December** AGM and FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS PARTY