

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



N E W S L E T T E R 105

January 1989

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Items for the next Newsletter to
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Please do illustrations in black ink and send them
with firm card to prevent creasing in the post

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder that several subscriptions for 1988-9 remain unpaid. Future Newsletters will only be sent to paid-up members, so if your Newsletter carries a X on the front page, please send your subscription now to the Treasurer, Martin Morris, 8 Clarence Road, Fleet.

£6 single; £8 family; £3 OAP/student

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

At the Special General Meeting held at Chute House on 8th December, it was unanimously agreed to authorise the Committee to seek registration of the Society as a Charity. The Treasurer will be happy to give details of this decision to any member who was unable to attend the meeting.

THE TEST VALLEY MEDIEVAL PROJECT

Lecture by Francis Green

7.30 pm at Chute House on Thursday, 12th January

After the Egyptian flavour of our Christmas Social, with Peter Heath's excellent talk on his holiday there, we return closer to home and nearer to our own time for the first lecture of 1989. Francis Green, of the Test Valley Archaeological Trust, will tell us about their Medieval Project.

WORK OF THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION OF ENGLISH HERITAGE

Lecture by Gerry McDonnell

7.30 pm at Chute House on Thursday, 9th February

The name ENGLISH HERITAGE probably makes most people think of sites: castles, hillforts, Stonehenge etc. But just as important is the technological work that goes on behind the scenes, conserving and investigating the remains of the past. This is something that links the past, present and even the future in a special way, since the skills demanded are often at the forefront of modern technology. Gerry McDonnell will give us a glimpse of this hidden side of ENGLISH HERITAGE.

THE BROOKS CONFERENCE

12th November 1988 (Hampshire Field Club Archaeology Section & Winchester Museums Service)

The excavations at the very large Brooks site in Winchester were concluded in July, and this Conference gave a welcome survey of their main results and significance. The morning was devoted to the Roman period, the afternoon to the Medieval, with an introduction from Ken Qualmann and a summing up by Martin Biddle.

The site lay just north of the centre of the Roman town of Venta Belgarum, covering parts of two insulae, so it was no surprise that substantial town houses were discovered. It is ironic that the best preserved town house with the largest fragment of mosaic should be discovered only in the last weeks of the excavation, underneath the site museum and shop. Mike Morris described the various phases of rebuilding of these houses, also the conformation of the road grid and new information about the topography of the valley floor. Perhaps the most significant discovery was an early timber-lined ditch, running east-west beside the road, which could have been for drainage or more probably for water supply. The excellent state of the timbers will provide a dendrochronology date.

David Johnston gave a detailed look at the five mosaic fragments, most of them geometric designs typical of the fourth century central southern group of mosaicists who worked in this area. The most impressive fragment, found under the site museum, was of high quality work of the mid to late second century. It was probably laid by a Colchester mosaicist whose work has also been recognised at Silchester and Crondall.

During the lunch hour, many of us took the opportunity of seeing the cream of the finds from the Brooks displayed at the City Museum.

The programme continued with Graham Scobie, who explained that land levelling since the Medieval period meant that the Medieval deposits were concentrated at the northern end of the site. Two burials have yet to be dated, also a thin gravel spread which overlay the Roman demolition layers and contained many important glass fragments, but they probably represent Late Saxon occupation on the site, disappointingly absent elsewhere. The two main Medieval tenements identified were a large, high status property fronting Upper Brook Street and a smaller house and workshop overlying a chalk-lined cellar, fronting Middle Brook Street. Most of the finds came from the numerous pits, some of them lined with wood or wickerwork, one containing a companionable double lavatory seat.

Derek Keene traced the history of the area from the documentary records, with Upper, Middle and Lower Brook Street coming alive as Shulworth (Shield-makers') Street, Wongar Street and Tanner Street. He was able to name some of their occupants: Robert the Fat, Hugh at Hook, John Baker the tapener (a kind of weaver) and,

most importantly, John de Tyting, a merchant, mayor and MP for Winchester, who certainly lived in the high status house at the end of the thirteenth century. The decline of his house can be traced in the documents, where it is finally described as a garden plot with "tenters" for stretching cloth in 1495 - important information adding detail and dates to the archaeological record.

At the end of a very full day, Martin Biddle spoke for everyone present in congratulating all those involved in the excavation on the high quality of their work under very difficult circumstances. He then set the results in the wider context of Winchester archaeology: so much had been learnt, but there were still disappointments - the Roman origins of Winchester were no nearer being understood and, more seriously, the Late Saxon period, when Winchester was pre-eminent in England, was severely under-represented.

But it was his comments on the conditions under which the excavations were undertaken which were most disturbing. During the course of the excavations, the criteria for funding were changed, and this could have been disastrous but for the generosity of Winchester City Council. And the planning of the development changed more than once, ending with a "crater redevelopment" - the removal of the whole area to a great depth for underground car-parking, in such a way as to make a watching brief impossible. Similar projects in other archaeologically important cities are planned, presenting archaeologists with a new situation. The massive scale and comprehensive destruction of these developments, leaving nothing for future generations, means the cost of excavating and recording to today's high standards, even with developer funding, may be too great and the scale of lost evidence unacceptably high. It may be that the greatest significance of the Brooks site has been the recognition of these problems, and the stimulation of debate on methods of procedure for the future. Martin Biddle highlighted a subject we shall surely hear a great deal more about.

MARY OLIVER

BUTSER CONFERENCE

A day conference was held on 4th December at Nexus House, headquarters of the Butser Ancient Farm Project.

The first talk was given by the Director of the Ancient Farm, Dr Peter Reynolds, who in his own inimitable style described the partial construction of a Viking Town House in Ireland. This was done in conjunction with the setting up of what was described as "a poor man's Jorvik" in Dublin. Dr Reynolds described with some regret how the scientific results had taken second place to

commercial interests in the centre, although he hoped that some further research projects might be financed on Viking Dublin.

The second session was a talk on "The Turquoise Coast of Turkey" by Dr David Price Williams, who, in addition to lecturing on extra-mural courses for London University, acts as a guide on Temple World Tours to the area, in which he worked for some years. While to some extent appearing as an advert for next year's tour, both the talk and the high quality slides gave an excellent introduction to the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine sites along the Lycian coast.

After lunch the main session of the afternoon was taken by Dr Ian Stead from the British Museum, on the subject of "Lindow Man, the Body from the Bog". Dr Stead took the story from the first discovery of a skull in Lindow Bog to the latest find of a hand. The earliest and most recent finds were from a separate body to the more famous "Pete Marsh". It was the latter body which formed the main topic of the talk, with many pictures showing its recovery and scientific examination. The one question he was unable to resolve with certainty was the date of death. At present the Harwell and Oxford radiocarbon dating laboratories give figures differing by several hundred years, although both agree on the dating of the peat, which they find older than either of their dates for the body.

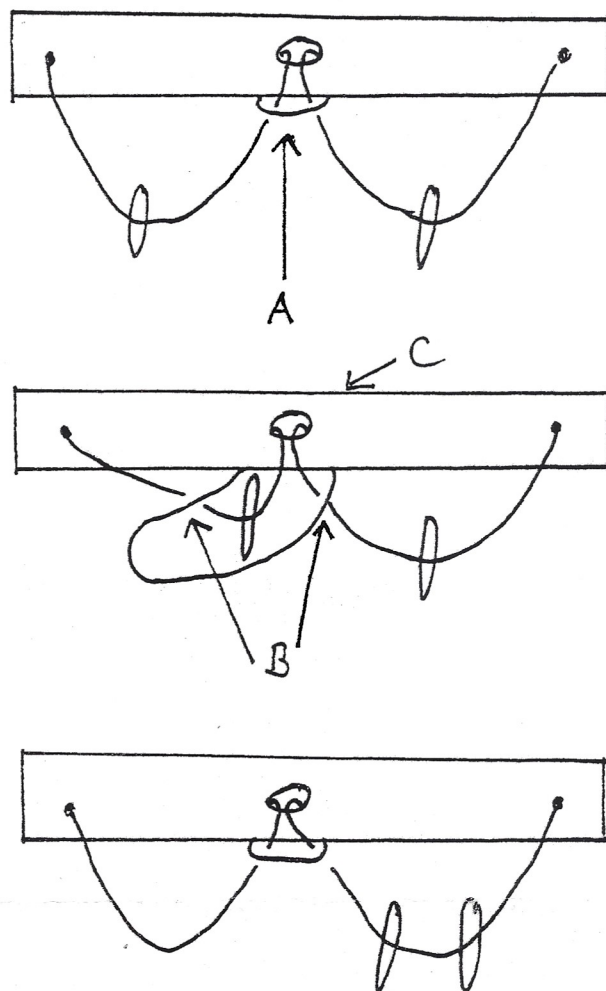
The conference was concluded by Dr Reynolds giving a brief summary of the Farm's research work for the year. As well as the continuing agricultural work, increasing work is being done on ancient methods of metal working, the weathering of earthworks and the effects of modern agriculture on archaeological deposits. The excavation of a storage pit in Dorset was also reported. This included an unusual feature in that complete animal bodies had been deposited in the base of the pit, then these had been covered with stones and further layers of bodies and stones had been built up. Dr Reynolds also gave some details of a project on which he has been asked to advise. This is an Archaeological Theme Park to be built near Amersfort in the Netherlands. He expressed his hope that the exhibits would have a good scientific basis, although he was not optimistic.

R J GUNN

THE PITT-RIVERS MUSEUM PUZZLE

Having pondered, after my visit last summer to the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford, whether or not the puzzle I described in Newsletter 104 was really possible, imagine my surprise at Boxing Day lunch when my nephew thrust the self-same puzzle at me with a challenge to do it!

The aim, you will remember, was to place both rings or beads onto the same part of the twine without having undone any of the end knots.



The Solution

Pull down the noose A and slip the left hand ring under it. Then, keeping both rings to the front of the wooden batten, push the dangling twine back, particularly the cross-over points at B, and stuff it through the hole C from the back to the front.

It will then be possible to thread the left ring under the respective loops.

Stuff the twine back through the hole C from the front to the back and slip the ring back under the noose A; this time it will be on the right.

RICHARD DEXTER

THE ANGEL, BASINGSTOKE, AND A SHARP DEALER

In *VOICES OF BASINGSTOKE*, Anne Hawker mentions that the Angel, Basingstoke was owned as a private house at the end of the sixteenth century by Sir James Deane who founded the almshouses in London Street. He was a man of property, with a manor at Ashe, and in his will of August 19th, 1607 he also left money for a Lecturer to instruct the people in religion and a good scholar and grammarian to teach children - as well as money for laying a causeway between the Angel Inn (in Market Square) and the Church gate.

However, I have recently come across a less salubrious character who had a brief connection with the Angel. What is more, he had a catastrophic effect on the course of English literature!

This man is Ingram Frizer, described by William Urry (I'll give the source later) as "an unpleasant personality with a career of sharp dealing". This was first apparent when he acted as an intermediary in some complex land deals in Wales, at some time between 1580 and 1625. He was also involved in a fraud based on a fictitious sale of some iron guns lying at Tower Hill. What startled me was that he is said to have "made a killing" in Basingstoke, where in 1589 he bought the Angel Inn and resold it less than 2 months later. I read that "one of the vendors of the Angel imprudently entered into a bond with Frizer for £240, but failed to discharge his obligation by the stated term, whereupon Frizer seized the golden opportunity and secured judgement against him at the Easter term, 1592".

However, the killing for which Ingram Frizer was more famous occurred not in Basingstoke, but in Deptford - have you guessed it yet? At Mrs Bull's house there, on the morning of Wednesday, 30th May 1593, he met Nicholas Skeres, Robert Poley and ... Christopher Marlowe. In his book *Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury*, Faber & Faber (1988), William Urry quotes the following account from William Vaughan, in *The Golden-grove*, published in 1600:

"...one Christopher Marlow, by profession a playmaker, who, as it is reported, about 7 years a-goe wrote a booke against the Trinitie: but see the effects of Gods iustice; it so hapened that at Detford, a little village about 3 miles distant from London, as he meant to stab with his ponyard one named Ingram, that had invited him thither to a feast, and was then playing at tables, he quickly perceyving it, so avoyded the thrust, that withall drawing out his dagger for his defence, hee stabd this Marlow in the eye, in such sort, that his braines coming out at the daggers point, hee shortlie after dyed. Thus did God, the true executioner of divine iustice, worke the ende of impious Atheists."

William Urry gives full details of the Coroner's inquest, which concluded that Ingram Frizer had killed Christopher Marlowe, but

in self-defence. The dagger was held forfeit to the value of 12d. Ingram Frizer was held in prison till the pardon was issued, within the month.

The loss to English literature, of a playwright who is only overshadowed in his time by Shakespeare, is also quoted by William Urry, from Thomas Nashe's epitaph for Marlowe in *The Unfortunate Traveller*:

"It was one of the wittiest knaves that ever God made ... His pen was sharp-pointed like a poniard; no leaf he wrote on but was like a burning-glass to set on fire all his readers. Learning he had, and a conceit [wit] exceeding all learning, to quintessence everything which he heard..."

Finally, William Urry tells how Ingram Frizer "seems to have settled down to responsibility", being established by 1602 at Eltham, a few miles from Deptford and Chislehurst. He died in 1627 and was buried at Eltham.

Well, Anne, can you find any other trace of Ingram Frizer's brief appearance in Basingstoke? I am assuming that it was Sir James Deane who bought the Angel from Frizer, but who, I wonder, were the unfortunate vendors who lost money to him?

BARBARA APPLIN

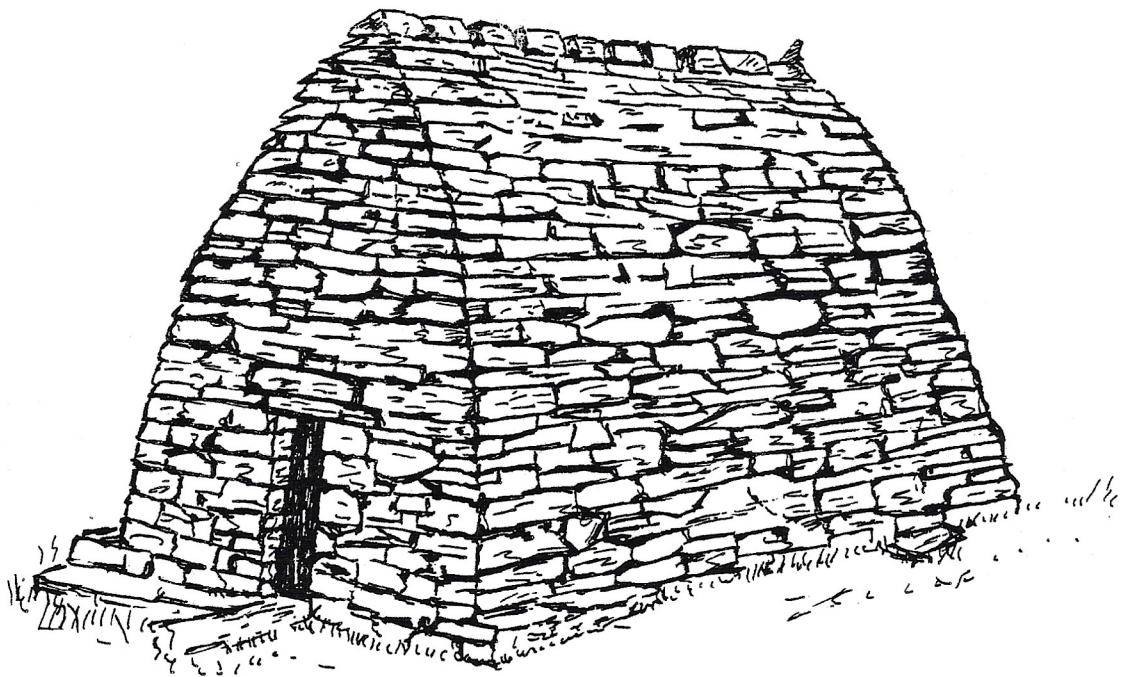
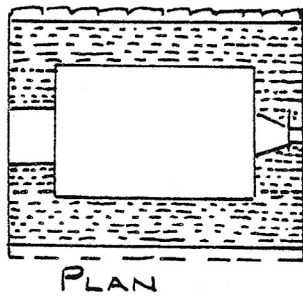
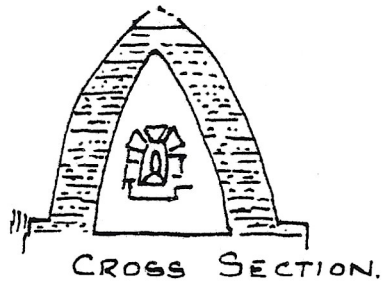
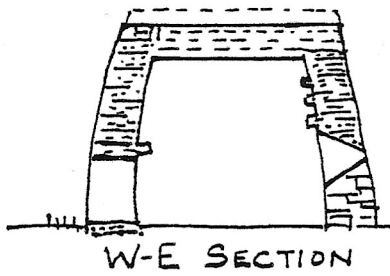
THE GALLARUS ORATORY

Reading about Sue Headley's holiday in Southern Ireland (*Newsletter 104*) reminded me that a few days earlier I had bought an old postcard showing the Gallarus Oratory in the Dingle Peninsula. I decided to see how much I could discover about it. The following was culled from the postcard, various pamphlets and books.

The Gallarus Oratory is situated near Ballyferriter. The earliest Irish churches were of cruck frame construction, a primitive form of timber framing using curved tree trunks joined at the apex and built in one or more bays. The roofs were covered with rushes or shingles; antae and gable finials were characteristic.

Due to the lack of wood on the west coast, small rectangular oratories like the Gallarus were built of unmortared stone slabs with a rounded corbelled vault and the appearance of an upturned boat, with walls approximately 3 feet thick. The space enclosed is about 10 feet by 15 feet, with a doorway situated at the west end with evidence of provision for door jambs. At the east end is a small half-round window. Outside and nearby is a 4 foot high pillar stone with a cross in a circle and other markings on it.

Dating the Oratory is rather indefinite and at present can be put no closer than the eighth to the twelfth century.



GALLARUS ORATORY

GEORGE LANGRAN

CALENDAR

January

Thurs 12	<u>THE TEST VALLEY MEDIEVAL PROJECT</u> Francis Green	*
Wed 18	Meet the residents of Gregory House, Hook	L
Thurs 19	<u>The History of Park Prewett Hospital</u> Dilys Smith	F

February

Thurs 9	<u>WORK OF THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION OF ENGLISH HERITAGE</u> Gerry McDonnell	*
Tues 21	<u>The Archaeology of the Bronze Age Chilbolton Burial</u> Dr Andy Russel, Andover Museum 7.30 pm (the museum will be open from 7 pm for a chance to view the Chilbolton gold earrings)	H
Wed 22	Report back	L

March

Thurs 9	<u>MAIDEN CASTLE AND ITS HINTERLAND</u> Andrew Lawson	*
Sat 11	<u>Woodlands in the Landscape</u> , Botley Farm Museum	H
Sun 12	Field Trip in conjunction with Woodlands Conference - meet Botley Farm Museum 1 pm	
Thurs 16	<u>Hampshire & Berkshire Monasteries of the 12th Century</u> David H Farmer	F
Fri 17	<u>Nineteenth Century Church Building and Restoration in Hampshire</u> Rodney Hubbuck, King Alfred's College, Winchester 7.30 pm	H
Sat 18	<u>Local History Fair</u> on the theme of <u>Publication</u> , King Alfred's College, Winchester	H
Thurs 30	<u>What do Conservators do for Archaeology?</u> Suzanne Keene, Willis Museum, Basingstoke 7.30	H

- * Society lecture, 7.30 pm Chute House, Basingstoke
- L Lyde & Whitewater Local History Group
- F Friends of the Willis Museum, Museum 7.30
- H Hampshire Field Club