

B A S I N G S T O K E
A R C H A E O L O G I C A L
S O C I E T Y

NEWSLETTER

No
10.

OCTOBER 1973

Contents

FIELD WALK, POPHAM
COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY Open Meeting
RUCTSTALLS HILL Excavation
MEMBERS' EVENING
SPECIAL BOOK OFFER
FIELDWORK REPORTS

Calendar of Events

Thursday, 1st November	Lecture at Chute House, 7.30 pm Mr D.R. Stephens MEDIEVAL SOUTHAMPTON
Saturday, 3rd November	Annual Open Meeting, Group 12 of the Council for British Archaeology, Pool Exhibition, Guildhall Museum 10 - 5; Lectures, Arndale Centre 2.30 - 5.30.
Saturday, 10th November	Fieldwalk (M3 extension) Explanatory talk by Peter Fasham, at 10.30 am , Willis Museum annexe; Fieldwalk - meet in drive to Popham Court, 2 pm.
Thursday, 29th November	Lecture at Chute House, 7.30 pm Dr A. E. Werner (British Museum Research Laboratory) THE SCIENTIFIC EXAMINATION OF FAKES AND FORGERIES
Thursday, 13th December	Members' Social Evening, including LINKS WITH THE PAST, at Chute House, 7.30 pm

FIELD WALK, POPHAM
10th November 1973

On 10th November Mary Oliver is arranging a further field walk of the section of the M3 extension route which has been allocated to our Society for observation. Several members took part when this was walked last year, when a considerable number of sherds were found - Saxon, medieval and later, but it needs more than one walk, in different conditions and time of year to give this area a good coverage. The aim is to find out as much as possible about the archaeological potential of this section without excavation.

For many of us who haven't done this kind of thing before, it will be interesting to discover what a methodical affair a field walk is, and Peter Fasham, who has recently been appointed as Archaeological Director for the M3 Archaeological Rescue Committee (known as MARC 3), has agreed to lead the field walk and also to give a talk beforehand explaining its purpose and the system involved.

The talk will be in the large room of the annexe behind the Willis Museum, New Street, Basingstoke at 10.30 on the morning of Saturday, 10th November, with the field walk the same afternoon, meeting at 2 pm in the drive leading to Popham Court (off the A33 immediately after leaving the M3). A field walk is best done with a large group of people advancing steadily like beaters, so we hope as many as possible will come.

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY
 Annual Open Meeting, Poole
3rd November 1973

The Society is a member of Group 12 of the CBA (covering Dorset, Hants and Wilts) and members are invited to the Group's annual Open Meeting at Poole on Saturday, 3rd November. This is a gathering of amateur and professional archaeologists of the region, to report on excavations and fieldwork during the year, and to exchange ideas and information; it is a very good opportunity to find out what is going on elsewhere and to meet members of other societies.

There will be an Exhibition, open from 10 am to 5 pm in the Guildhall Museum, Poole and the Open Meeting itself starts at 2.30 in the meeting room of the Library at the Arndale Centre (5 minutes' walk from the Museum). Mr Peter Reynolds is the principal speaker, on the progress of the Butser Ancient Farm Project. After tea (provided in the Centre for a small charge) a number of local speakers will give brief reports on recent work in the CBA 12 area, until about 5.30 pm. The Arndale Centre is near the railway station, and there is a multi-storey car park in Hill Street (off High Street). Further details and tickets (50p for admission to both the exhibition and the lectures) available from Barbara Applin. Anyone who can offer a lift or would like a lift should consult Barbara Applin or any of the Committee.

RUCTSTALLS HILL
Excavation

The last short season of excavation produced some surprises and delights. Apart from further ditch and pit sections most of the work concentrated on the very puzzling area in the south west corner of the site, which turned out to include a complex of working hollows and a deep pit-like feature at the turn of the inner enclosure ditches. At the bottom of this feature was a child burial - older than the babies we have already found, probably as much as 18 months old, but the greatest excitement was the discovery in a higher layer (Roman by the pottery) of an iron object which has been identified as a pair of dividers or compasses, of the kind used by a builder or carpenter. This is a much more sophisticated find than one would expect to have on a simple farming settlement like Ructstalls Hill, and we are consulting experts on Romano-British metalwork, hoping to hear of any known parallels.

Another find of particular interest this season is a coin, from the working hollow area, which can be dated very closely. Duncan Russell reports as follows:

"The coin is an AE 3 (a particular type of bronze coin) with silver wash present on much of the surface.

Obverse Radiate, draped and cuirassed bust left.
(Head with spiky crown, facing left, with part of robes and cuirass shown below).

Legend: FL. CL. CONSTANTINUS IUN. N. C.
(Flavius Claudius Constantinus, Iunius Nobilis Caesar - Constantine II as Caesar, before he became Emperor, so this is between 317 and 337 AD; the Iunius means this is Constantine the Younger, i.e. Constantine II.

Reverse Two Victories (winged goddesses) placing a shield on an altar. The shield is inscribed VOT. P.R.
(Vota Populi Romani); this means that the people of Rome were dedicating the shield as a votive offering to the emperor and his sons.

Legend: VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC. PERP. (Victoriae Laetae Principium Perpetuae - the happy eternal victories of the princes, i.e. the emperor and his sons.

Mint mark PLN (Pecunia Londinium).

According to M. Jules Maurice's paper which appeared in the Numismatic Chronicle, 3rd series, Vol. XX, 1899, London's mint output is divided into seven periods. He ascribes this particular example to period VI, AD 320-324. The condition of this coin is virtually as struck and must, therefore, have been deposited within months of manufacture; which suggests that the latest date of deposition for the layer (layer 2, feature 213) is 326 AD or, if Maurice's theory is correct, 324".

Also in the working hollow area were two complete pots, one at least containing cremated bone. The pots with contents are being passed to the County Museum Service for examination.

The site has been visited by Dr Geoffrey Wainwright, of the Department of the Environment, and Mr Colin Bowen of the Historic Monuments Commission, who have both shown considerable interest in the work that has been done and have given us some very helpful suggestions on interpretation.

We were, of course, only able to give our visitors the sketchiest of ideas of the nature of pot etc. found, which is crucial to the interpretation of the site as a whole. There is still some washing and marking to be done, and a great deal of sorting. Numbers on Thursday evenings recently have fallen drastically, so we must plead for more help! Please come if you possibly can - 7.30 pm onwards in the annexe behind the Willis Museum, every Thursday except lecture Thursdays.

MEMBERS' EVENING
Chute House
Thursday, 13th December 1973

We are planning to hold another Social Evening at Chute House, with light refreshments, and again we invite members to bring any old or interesting objects for LINKS WITH THE PAST, or any slides they would like to show. Don't forget to keep this date free.

Special Book Offer
Pre-Publication Price
MEDIEVAL SOUTHAMPTON
Colin Platt

As members of the Hampshire Field Club, the Society has received a special offer of pre-publication price for MEDIEVAL SOUTHAMPTON by Colin Platt which is to be published by Routledge & Kegan Paul in November. The published price is £6.90, and the pre-publication price £5.50 (or £5.80 including postage). The Secretary has further details and the special order form, which has to be sent through one of certain Southampton booksellers before the end of November. Anyone interested should contact Barbara Applin IMMEDIATELY.

FIELDWORK REPORTS
by members

I Inner Loop Road (Western Section), Basingstoke

As this section of the Loop Road nears completion, only limited digging is taking place, but still of interest are several large soil heaps. These are being used as topsoil for the chalk banks.

The first I will deal with is situated at a point where the Loop Road crosses over Mortimer Lane. It is from this heap that I have found several interesting items. Nearly all are Victorian, the first being a No. 7 iron and trivet found so close to each other that I would think that they had been discarded by the same household.

My hobby is bottle and clay pipe collecting, so I was very pleased to find my first complete clay pipe. It is a Brosely pipe of around the 1880s. It has one fairly uncommon point, that the mouthpiece has been dipped into a green glaze to harden the pipe at this point.

From the same soil heap I retrieved a round bottomed 'Hamilton' soda-water bottle. This meant that the bottle had to lie on its side to keep the cork moist. It must have been a nightmare to keep them from rolling off the shelves. This one is embossed 'Schweppes' and is also about 1880.

Moving towards the town, there was a small soil heap near the old scrap yard. From this came a clay pipe bowl made like a cane basket, late Victorian. Near this heap a brick wall has been built to screen the old buildings and remaining scrap yard. From the small trench dug for footing, a Codd's marble stoppered lemonade bottle embossed 'Basingstoke Mineral Water Co.' was unearthed. Also a John & May beer bottle, this being embossed 'John May Brewer Basingstoke'. This bottle was made in dark green glass. I don't think these two bottles can be older than the 1920s.

Across the road from the junction with New Street I had a clay pipe bonanza in soil that is being used as top soil. This yielded six bowls plus many stems, all slightly damaged but still a welcome find. These are c. 1750-1800. The only thing about this particular find is that I cannot say exactly where the soil came from. The date, however, falls in line with earlier finds at this point.

I would like to mention the great array of broken plates littering the most of the length of the road - once again mostly Victorian, but of wonderful design, mainly blue and green and with a marvellous glaze.

Richard Rushent-Oram

II Old Basing

The site behind the Bolton Arms, Old Basing, which yielded the mesolithic axe (Newsletter 9) has also been one of the places where I have been lucky. A find of a 16th or 17th century horse or sheep bell - by design or by accident it has become filled with an indeterminate substance of considerable weight which completely obscures its original function.

Richard Rushent-Oram

III Church Cottage, Basingstoke

We were summoned recently to look at a doorway which had been uncovered in the corridor behind the Chapter Room at Church Cottage, and which was due to be plastered over. We quickly took a measured drawing, and the architect took photographs. The doorway was of wood, forming a flattened arch, and appears to be of Tudor date. In the Chapter Room itself, the panelling backing onto this doorway follows its shape in more Victorian style.

Anne Hawker and Barbara Applin