

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



N E W S L E T T E R      1 1 0

February 1990

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## CALENDAR

Mon 26 Feb	Start of <i>Basingstoke Past, Present &amp; Future</i> at Regional Centre	see p2
Wed 28	<i>Mediaeval Timber-Framed Buildings in &amp; around Basingstoke</i> Bill Fergie	"
Sun 4 Mar	Walking tour around Basingstoke's town centre	"
Tues 6 Mar	<i>The History of Basingstoke</i> tape/ slide presentation "	"
	NB Society members have been invited to take part in the discussion afterwards	
Thurs 8 Mar	<i>GREEK &amp; ROMAN PERIOD OF EGYPT</i> by David Johnston	*
Thurs 15 Mar	<i>The Pensinsula Barracks Excavation</i> , Winchester Dick Whinney, 7.30 at Hyde Historic Resources Centre, 75 Hyde St, Winchester	Hants Field Club
Sat 17 Mar	<i>Local History Sources in Portsmouth</i> Day study tour, Hampshire Archives Trust (£3; bookings by 2 March; form from Barbara Applin/Joy Needham)	
Thurs 12 Apr	<i>DORCHESTER</i> by Peter Woodward	*

\* Society lecture: 7.30 pm, Chute House

## BASINGSTOKE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

February 26th to March 23rd

The Regional Centre at Queen Mary's College have planned a month-long series of FREE exhibitions, debates, slide shows and guided tours "to explore the facts behind the myths" of Basingstoke past, present and future. A wide range of planning, environmental and social issues are covered, but the following are of particular interest to anyone concerned with local history:

### TALKS

Wednesday 28th February

7.30 pm in the Conference Room

A slide show by Bill Fergie (Director of Planning, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council) on *Medieval Timber-Framed Buildings in and around Basingstoke*.

Tuesday 6th March

7.30 in the Central Studio

A tape/slide presentation *The History of Basingstoke* made in 1964 by Derek Wren, commentary recorded by John Arlott.

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Please note: Members of our Society have been specially invited to attend and to take part in a discussion after the presentation - so do please come and be ready to speak out. Anne Hawker will be bringing her models of the house of Thomas Lane, the Tudor mercer, and the Felgate bookshop (1920s).

### TOURS

Sunday 4th March 2 pm

Meet outside Willis Museum

Guided walking tour around the town centre, led by Andrew Benson-Wilson, Bill Fergie and Eric Stokes. (Places need to be booked by 28th February.)

### EXHIBITIONS in The Street, Regional Centre

*The History of Basingstoke*

Material from the Teacher's Centre and from the County Record Office; from 1830 to 1905.

*Basingstoke Then and Now*

Robert Brown's collection of photographs: 1840 to today.

Further details from Jacqueline Simons, Regional Centre: 810703.

## GREEK & ROMAN PERIOD OF EGYPT

Thursday 8th March

Our March speaker, David Johnston of Southampton University's Extra-Mural Department, has visited us several times, often with an exotic theme. Now he is investigating a particularly complex and intriguing aspect of Egyptian archaeology.

DORCHESTER

Thursday, 12th April

Peter Woodward of the Trust for Wessex Archaeology, will bring us up to date on recent excavations.

FIELD WALKING

Latest report

The walking of the field up by Rooksdown Crossroads is going very well, considering the size of the field and the weather, but it looks as if, as last year, we are going to be in competition with the crops growing.



Approximately a third of the field has now been walked, starting this year on New Year's Day. Tim and Eric set out the ranging rods, and walking continued till lunch-time, at which stage cold fingers and toes decided it was time to call a halt. Again, unfortunately I have to report quite a barren morning, with very little finds, although we cannot be sure until whatever was picked up has been washed and sorted.

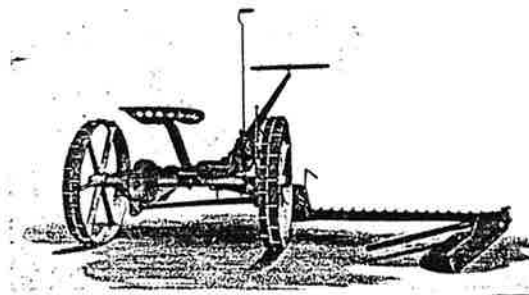
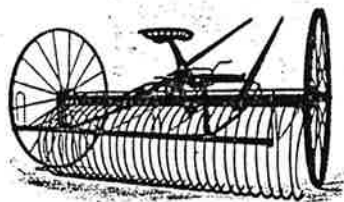
We started on 13th January with hope, as a hard frost had broken the soil the night before. But the hope was then stifled by the mist which made it impossible to see the other side of the field to take proper bearings to work from - so work began using approximate bearings. This walk again carried on till lunch-time, this time helped by a fine find by Mary Oliver of a flint which has yet to be cleaned but seems likely to be an arrowhead or small scraper, seemingly well shaped and finished. But alas, again not very much from the Iron Age - what we expected from the crop marks in the field.

PETER READ

*Anyone interested in field walking should make sure that Peter has your telephone number, as weather conditions often make it necessary to phone round at the last minute. Peter's number is Basingstoke 472610.*

## MUSEUM OF ENGLISH RURAL LIFE

Those members who braved the weather to visit the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading on 13th February were rewarded by a fascinating evening. The museum was founded in the early 1950s when it was realised that many of the old crafts and equipment were dying out and that there was a need to preserve them. It has now become the largest collection of its kind in the country.



The evening began with a slide presentation which took in turn each aspect of country life. The Tadley area featured prominently because of the woodland crafts of hurdle, broom and rake making carried out in this district. Many of these crafts have now died out but there are still one or two people carrying on the traditions. Another feature of rural life in Victorian times was the dairy where the butter was made. It appeared to be very much

a showpiece on the larger estates, with marble tables, tiled walls and even stained glass windows, the object being to keep the dairy cool in summer.

We then looked around the exhibits on display. These included a wide range of hand tools, the interior of a Victorian farmhouse, displays of smocking and basket making and a splendid foot-powered lathe for turning bowls. There were sections on crafts as diverse as hedging and ditching and brickmaking, while there were displays of waggons, early tractors and threshing machines.

Unfortunately there is only room to show part of their collection, so we finished the evening behind the scenes, looking around the reserve collection, library and archives.

The museum is easily accessible, opening every day except Sundays and Mondays, and well worth a visit.

CHRIS BULLMAN

### TOWN CLERK V. TITHINGMAN

The *Reading Mercury* and the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 1851 have recorded a fascinating legal battle between Basingstoke Borough Council and one of its own Councillors:

The Queen v. Franklin.

Franklin was George Franklin, who appeared in the *Pigot Directory* of 1844 as Grocer and Tea Dealer (and tallow chandler) of Church Street, Basingstoke, and as one might expect, his Defending Attorney described him as a "respectable tradesman". The *Reading Mercury* of 4th January 1851 reported that a bill of indictment had been found against George Franklin at the Quarter Sessions, and on 25th January they reported that he had been held to bail, himself in 40/- and with two sureties in 20/- each. Although the proceedings were in the name of the Queen, they had been brought by Basingstoke Borough Council, and the Plaintiff's Attorney at the Lent Assizes at Winchester that year was Joseph Charles Shebbeare, Town Clerk for Basingstoke.

What was the dreadful crime? George Franklin had refused to take up the office of tithingman! Anyone who has read Anne Hawker's *Voices of Basingstoke* will know that the office of tithingman had a long and respectable history. In the 14th to 16th century the tithingman represented his area of the manor and was responsible for reporting any disturbances in it, and for collecting the "Cert Money" (see *Voices* for more details).

But things had obviously changed. Mr Shebbeare did his best to represent the office as honourable and essential to the wellbeing of the manor (and therefore the Borough, which was co-extensive)

but the only duties he could enumerate were to present all encroachments on the manor, to summon the jury and to attend the court of quarter session (which Mr Franklin had clearly done in a rather unexpected way that year). The defending attorney asked the jury "whether a man had to be punished for refusing to serve the office of tithingman, whose duties were to furnish a list of those who were to succeed him, a list of the jury, and to summon them, and to eat a dinner at the expense of the body corporate." There is rather more to this than meets the eye, and this strange indictment shows some of the uncertainties and conflicts (power struggles?) still going on 16 years after the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act. In 1835 as a result of that Act, Basingstoke's old Borough of Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses was replaced by the new Borough of Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors (many familiar names recurring in both lists). The first stage in this particular "conflict" can be traced back to the following year, when first Town Clerk of the new Borough W. A. Lewis, died and he was replaced by none other than J. C. Shebbeare.

The Borough Minutes of 11.3.1836 contain a letter to the Council from Mr George Lamb (who had himself tried to resign from the Council at the previous meeting but been prevented). It is a fierce complaint that deserves to be given in full:

Gentlemen,

A representation of the unparalleled proceedings exhibited at a meeting of the Council on Monday last, and the extraordinary if not wholly unwarrantable behaviour of the Mayor [Thomas May, the brewer] in the Chair, with reference to the election of a Town Clerk on that day has left me no alternative (under an imperative sense of regard to my Friends and Justice towards myself) but to lay before Counsel a statement of all the facts and occurrences, with a view to such future proceedings against the Mayor for his conduct upon that occasion in the performance of a public Duty and also to avoid the miscalled but farcical Election of a Town Clerk then said to have taken place, as I may be advised to adopt - I distinctly protest against the Election of any Town Clerk pretended to have been had at the Meeting in question as altogether nugatory; and with every respectful feeling towards the Council, I caution them against swearing in or otherwise recognising any Gentleman as such officer, alleged to have been then and there (but unduly and illegally as I contend) Elected to fill the yet vacant situation of Town Clerk.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your very obedt servt,

GEO LAMB

A motion conveying this protest was put forward by Thomas Workman (surgeon) and supported by George Paice (auctioneer) and Henry Brownjohn (wine & spirits merchant) but defeated. What is more, in September of that year the Borough Council "Resolved unanimously that J. C. Shebbeare be appointed Steward of the Manors of Basingstoke and Nately of which the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses are the Lords."

However, Mr Lamb, being a solicitor too, was quite serious in laying the matter before Counsel. In January 1837 Mr Shebbeare was called upon by a *Quo Warranto* writ to say on what authority he was acting as Town Clerk of Basingstoke. He "disclaimed" the office - and was promptly re-elected at the following meeting.

Mr Shebbeare was already, in fact, a sort of "Lord High Everybody". He had been a Pavement Commissioner for the town in 1815 and in 1832 he had made a substantial contribution of £2.2.0 (note, guineas rather than pounds) to the New Town Hall. In the *Pigot Directory* of 1844 he appeared as Attorney (& clerk to the magistrates, town clerk and coroner, as well as actuary to the Savings Bank that opened every Wednesday in the Town Hall, and agent for the Royal Exchange fire & life insurance. He lived in Church Street, in what was then the very smart Queen Anne House.

Mr Lamb too was agent for a fire & insurance company (the Sun), and he had been a Commissioner for the Market Act which set up the new Market and Town Hall in 1829. He appeared in the 1841 census in Winchester Street, a 45-year-old Attorney at Law, with wife, five children and three female servants, and he too appeared in the *Pigot Directory* of 1844. What was more, it was his firm that provided the Defence Attorney for George Franklin.

So what happened to Mr Franklin? In his speech for the prosecution, Mr Shebbeare made much of the fact that the Corporation of Basingstoke were lords of the manor of that town, having the right of holding Courts at which they were in the habit of appointing tithingmen. (You will remember, of course, that Mr Shebbeare himself was now Steward of the manor of Basingstoke.) He referred back to a writ from the time of Cromwell.

The *Hampshire Chronicle* for 8th March 1851 reported the case. It was held before Chief Baron Pollock, who gravely agreed that before the Municipal Reform Act the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of Basingstoke were indeed lords of the manor. However he considered the office of tithingman a subordinate one, "a sort of mixture or cross between a constable and a summoning officer" and that "if the question now before the Court was of any importance to Basingstoke, he should pause before he decided on it; but he did not view it in that solemn point of view, and he conceived that it would be anything but satisfactory to a man in the situation of the defendant to be appointed to such an office." He added sternly that "The sooner that it ceased to be insisted on the better, and he would recommend that there should be no further litigation in the matter. In his judgement the tithingman had ceased to be a peace officer from the time that Basingstoke came within the provisions of the Municipal Act, and he believed that the object of the act was to extinguish all political distinctions, and the 21st section appeared to put an end to the election of any petty constable, headborough, or tithingman, except under the authority of the Act in question." Not surprisingly the jury "without hesitation" returned a verdict of Not Guilty, a fact gleefully recorded by Samuel Attwood in his diary for 4th March 1851.

The *Reading Mercury* of 10th May carries a tailpiece; a meeting of the Borough Council decided that the costs of the case should be paid by the Borough Treasurer.

In addition to his Winchester Street premises, George Franklin also leased a cottage and premises in Winchester Street. In June the Borough Council considered his application for renewal of the lease; however they decided that this was "not expedient", since he had not performed his covenant for repairs, which they warned him they were prepared to enforce. He was still recorded in Church Street in *White's Directory* for 1859, the year when Samuel Attwood noted "Mr Franklin grocer son gone to sea about 20 Feb; come home again 3 March".

George Franklin can also be found in Church Street in the 1861 census, carrying on his "respectable trade" - 13 houses down on the west side. He was then 49, with a wife Elizabeth the same age. The census records that he had been born in Essex, but his children had all been born in Basingstoke (Herbert 18, Frederick 14, Alfred 13, Edward 11 and Catherine 10). Business can't have been too bad, as he had a grocer's assistant (25-year-old George Wood) and two house servants, Lydia Pidgeon and Frances Marsland. The County Museum Service have billheads for George Franklin, Grocer, Tea Dealer and Tallow Chandler, from 1843 to 1868.

The County Museum service have bills from many traders for George Lamb's purchases. Between 1825 and 1844 they come from Basingstoke Wharf (1 hamper, £2.2.0); J M Birnie (Fly Boats & Barges); Pushell (Deal & Timber Merchant); Robert Cottle (Printer); James Dawes, I Marshall and Nathan Dunn (Drapers); W Y Gibbs (Mason); Wm Gregory (Clockmaker); Pistell & Ayliff (Plumbers etc) - and George Franklin. He is not recorded in the 1859 Directory, and about that time apparently moved to Worthing, where he was sent bills from Frederick Blunden (Wine & Spirits); Thos Budden (Mason & Builder); B Owen Johnson (Silk mercer & Draper); R S Hulbert (Chemist); George Joyce (Basket Maker & Turner); John Dawkins (Wheelwright); J Moody (Cabinet Maker etc); Thos Palmer (Painter, Plumber & Glazier) and W M Powell (Music Repository - Xmas 72). Bills from Thomas Burberry (Clothing manufacturer '83) and H J Goodall (builder, '84) are to his Trustees, suggesting that he died in the early 80s.

The 1859 Directory includes the firm Lamb Brooks Son & Challis in Winchester Street. The *Reading Mercury* of 22nd March 1851 refers to "Lamb, Brooks, solicitors", so Mr Challis must have joined them in the meantime. No doubt this firm was the predecessor of today's firm of Lamb, Brooks, Wills & Chandler.

Finally, Samuel Attwood recorded "Mr Shebbear the Lawyer married to Miss Wilcher of Petersfield November 26 1852" and "Joseph Charles Shebbear, town clerk, died 30 March 1860, aged 71 years."

BARBARA APPLIN