

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER 117

OCTOBER 1991

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SUBSCRIPTIONS - A (VERY) LAST REMINDER !

The subscriptions for 1991-2 fell due on 1st May. They remain:

Single	£7.50	Family	£10.00	OAP/Student	£3.00
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Please send your subscriptions NOW to the Treasurer, John Horrocks, 5 Oak Close, Oakley.

The "period of grace" is running out and anyone who has still not paid will NOT receive the next Newsletter.

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL 11th December, at 7.30pm.

A reminder that this year the Social Evening will be on WEDNESDAY (not Thursday). It will take place in our usual meeting place, the Conference Room, and will include a buffet supper, for which a small charge will be made. The programme for the evening will feature some "light entertainment". Please come and bring a friend !

SILCHESTER

Talk by Professor Michael Fulford
at the Central Studio, Thursday 14th November

A reminder that this update of excavations at Silchester will be held at the Central Studio (not the Conference Room). Do tell any friends who might be interested, so that we can once again have a good audience for our "special" lecture.

SUSAN VERSTAGE

We were very saddened by the death of Susan Verstage, one of our longest-established members. Susan has always been a great support to the Society, delighted that the family printing firm produced Anne Hawker's Voices of Basingstoke for us. For many years her incisive questions after lectures opened up new ideas and gently led the lecturers to expand on interesting points. And at how many Christmas parties was Susan the winner at some fiendish quiz? Even after her strokes confined her to a wheelchair, we were always glad to see her husband Allin bringing her again to our meetings. We shall miss her very much.

We sent a letter of condolence to Allin and he kindly replied to say how much Susan and he had enjoyed their membership of the Society, and always looked forward to the meetings, visits and friendly membership.

FRANK BUTLER

We are sad, too, to announce the death of another long-standing member. Frank Butler did not come to many of our meetings, but he faithfully kept up his membership, keen to keep in touch through the Newsletter.

BASINGSTOKE HERITAGE SOCIETY have written to us to bring our attention "to the fact that a Public Enquiry is due to be held over the planning application for industrial development on the plot of land in Vyne Road within the curtilage of the Holy Ghost Ruins. This scheduled ancient monument and its surroundings are of great historic and archaeological importance, and hope that your Committee will support our objection to development of this site."

Your Committee is sending a letter to the Town Planning Committee voicing our objections and pointing out that this site has never previously been built on and has always been common land.

DISCOVERING ANCIENT LANDSCAPES : An Autumn Series of Lectures in Reading.

Your Secretary has details of a series of eight weekly lectures to be given in the Town Hall, Reading. They start on October 15th but can be attended on a "one-off" basis. Prof. Michael Fulford, Prof. R.J. Bradley et al tackle the topics such as "Man against the sea: Reclamation, settlement and sea level: the Severn Estuary"; "Island Archaeology in the Adriatic"; "The Romano-British Countryside ..." etc. Sounds like an extremely interesting series. Telephone Basingstoke 22090 and ask Barbara Herrington for details !

TILE MAKING IN ODIHAM

A recent article in the Hampshire Field Club Section Newsletter (New Series No.16, Autumn 1991) by Sheila Millard describes the fascinating history of medieval tile production in the Odiham area, together with some details of the brickworks. We hold a copy of this newsletter. Please tel. Basingstoke 22090 and your Hon.Sec. will be happy to pass it on to you on loan.

THE STORY OF BASINGSTOKE FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO 1964

The above is the title of the video cassette just issued (October 7th) and available for purchase in Hammicks bookshop in Basingstoke. This excellent transcription of the original slide/tape presentation, originally produced by Derek Wren with the Basingstoke WEA in 1964, still has the main commentary by John Arlott. This video version has been produced in co-operation with the Regional Centre at Queen Mary's College. The Mayor was presented with a complimentary copy of the video by Derek Wren at its official launch on October 7th, chaired by Gareth Thomas and attended by an invited audience. The Society was well represented and indeed was given the opportunity to say something of the progress of our video "Beneath Basingstoke".

THE COUNTY ARCHIVE SERVICE & CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A recent letter to the Society from Rosemary Dunhill, Archivist at the County Records Office, expresses grave concern as to the effects on the County Archive Service following the proposed abolition of the upper tier of local government.

She explains that the appointed Local Government Commission may favour unitary authorities of a similar size to existing local district councils so as to bring the elected nearer to the electors.

Unfortunately it may well follow that the respective archives will be

fragmented to district level without specific arrangements to keep them together. The present 44 Shire archives could proliferate to 296 which is the present number of Shire districts !

At first glance it may sound attractive to have the archive nearer to one's home but, from the archivist's and user's viewpoint the immediate drawback is that documents will no longer be held in well-organised, purpose-built central buildings where searches over a broad area can be made in one place. Records will be split up and, in the absence of further finance, will be kept in unsatisfactory storage with shortages of equipment and trained staff. Hampshire is currently constructing its own new archive building next to Winchester railway station, ready for Spring 1993.

Rosemary Dunhill's greatest fear, however, is that Whitehall will condone the retention of the old Shire County archives but will only "look to" the new Districts to co-operate without compulsion. When the Metropolitan Counties were abolished in 1984, two of the five Archive services were dismembered and two others have not been able to agree with the local Districts on funding.

At present, a consultation paper "The Structure of Local Government in England" has been published in which it says that local people's views will be considered in determining the form in which Local Government will be set up in their area.

It is most important that all those who use the archives for historical, educational or personal research should express their views. As a registered charity, this Society is not allowed to undertake political lobbying, but members who have strong views should put them to the appropriate body. Your Committee would be glad to hear the views of any members who do this.

Richard Dexter.

VISIT TO CRICKLEY HILL & GLOUCESTER : A REPORT

When we planned the Summer outing in January I did not know where Crickley Hill was! But I had a letter encouraging our Society to visit the site and have a guided tour. Richard Dexter told us that Gloucester was a good place to visit in the morning, with a wealth of museums, its own docklands and, of course, the Cathedral. The day had planned itself.

Six months later, 27 of us travelled to Gloucester and quickly dispersed to sample the delights of the City. The Cathedral, originally a monastery, contains the tomb of Edward II and, as we wandered around looking at statues, modern embroidery and the high vaulted ceilings, the choir was rehearsing. We think we found the timber-framed building in the Cathedral Close where a Parliament was held.

From the quiet of the Cathedral area we went to Eastgate Street and, outside Boots, peered through the windows in the pavement at the Roman remains which are in this area. After a quick dash into the Museum to see the 'Birdlip Mirror' we came forward in time to see the Docklands where the warehouses have been converted into shops, museums, a pub and the County Council offices. On returning to the coach most people agreed that they would return again for a longer visit.

The afternoon was spent at Crickley Hill. High above the lowlands stretching to Gloucester, this southern outpost of the Cotswolds was home to Neolithic,

Celtic and Dark Age peoples. Initially, all seemed disorganised as several parties had been booked to visit the site. However, we first had a talk by Sue who was in charge of the Finds. I was amazed by the Psions and Amstrads which are now an essential part of the finds processing today. Many finds were minute. The Director, Dr Philip Dixon, showed us round the site. He has been site director for 25 years ('I started as a babe-in-arms you understand') and huge areas have now been excavated. The overall impression was that the people who lived at Crickley Hill chose a defensive position with superb views. Many books in Basingstoke library mention Crickley Hill and surroundings and, for anyone wanting to follow up the visit by reading, the class number to find is around 936.101

Joy Needham

A DIGGER'S VIEWPOINT

Part of the archaeological side of my course at Bristol University is to gain four weeks' digging experience. This summer I have been lucky enough to fulfil this requirement by working on two sites of different periods. My first dig was with students from Reading University, excavating the North Gate at Silchester. My second dig was with Nottingham University, working at Crickley Hill, Glos. on the Neolithic long mound. By coincidence, both these sites were visited by the Society this summer as outings - it was good to see some familiar faces amongst all the new ones!

Gaining experience from these two digs has been very interesting and revealed the variety of archaeological techniques and practices associated with sites of different periods. The scale of the two digs was the most striking and obvious difference - Crickley Hill had 170 volunteers and is a long-term research project of 22 seasons to date, whereas Silchester was a 4-week project to investigate a specific area, with just 30 diggers.

I was glad to have Silchester as my first dig, as it provided a good introduction to excavating. There was a clear sense of teamwork and co-operation that led to a pleasant working environment. All the effort of digging was amply rewarded by lots of finds, mostly of bone, tile and nails and also some nice bits of pottery. There was a good depth of stratigraphy, which made the jump from textbook to practice very clear, as the changes in soil texture and colour were clearly marked.

The situation at Crickley Hill was quite different. The community feeling wasn't so strong, due to the sheer numbers involved and the constant comings and goings; however, there was still a common bond, felt mostly at camp, so this was where friends were made. The most worrying difference at first was how small the finds were - some were only a few millimetres in length and we were expected not to miss anything! There was a lot more variation in finds at Crickley (seeds, charcoal, bone, flint, pot, daub, pebble) but nothing of any great note was found on the long mound while I was there. At Silchester, however, I had found a lovely bone pin with a carved head in three separate pieces, which was obviously the highlight for me.

Crickley Hill had very little depth to the site, so no vertical sections were really necessary or even possible, as the stratigraphy was all within a few inches. The difference in depths and the nature

of the finds on the two sites meant recording the data was carried out very differently. All of the individual finds at Crickley were placed in small plastic bags on the position of their discovery and then later were 2-dimensionally recorded. They were recorded both on cards and using a PSION which was then fed into the computer. The layer number, feature number along with the co-ordinates and cutting number were recorded. Most of the objects found at Silchester were put in the finds tray which referred to a particular layer in a specific area. The interesting finds such as coins and worked pieces of bone were recorded individually and immediately as they were found. They were given 3-dimensional co-ordinates by using a level. The recording at the actual site was also carried out differently. On the cutting where I worked at Crickley Hill, it was planned at every 2 cm of depth. At Silchester only the major stages and unexplained features were planned, but the whole site was constantly monitored by written description.

As Crickley was a much larger dig, there was a chance to participate in more activities and gain new skills. I had done some pot-washing with the Society but being in the finds hut at Crickley was very different. The finds were often very fragile and so small that a tiny paint brush and cotton-buds were the only implements suitable. The environmental evidence at Crickley has helped establish much about the lifestyles and environment of those who lived on Crickley Hill. The activity known as "scrunging", which is washing samples of soil in muslin bags to different gauges, was a new experience to me. It gave information on the vegetation and climate through the humus content, small snails and seeds. I also had more practice at planning and was able to draw the profile of a shallow hollow.

I enjoyed both digs very much, despite their differences - I appreciated them for this, as it widened my experience far more than had I stayed the four weeks on only one dig. The practical knowledge I have gained through my four weeks' digging, I think, has helped clarify and complement the theory taught at university. I look forward to further seasons' digging.

JANE OLIVER

THE KEMPSHOTT SKELETON

In our last Newsletter Peter Heath reported on the excavation of a skeleton at 120 Old Kempshott Lane. Sue Anderson, for the County Museum Service, has sent us a report on the bones. A full version is being submitted to the Newsletter of the Hampshire Field Club - and can be seen by any interested member. A slightly shortened version follows.

1 Condition

The skeleton was fairly complete and in fair-good condition, although the torso was poorly preserved. Most of the left humerus and the bones of the left foot were missing.

2 Age and sex

The skull and long bones were very robust and this, together with the

appearance of the pelvis, indicated that the individual was probably male.

The wear of the teeth suggested an age of 25-35 years. However, an estimation of age was also possible from the pubic symphysis, which suggested that death had occurred between 44-50 years. All the sutures of the cranial vault were completely obliterated, which is usually found to occur in old age. The presence of degenerative disease also implies that this man was no longer young. Since most of the evidence points to a man in middle or old age, it seems likely that death occurred after 45 years of age. The low rate of tooth wear could be accounted for if the individual ate fairly soft foods throughout most of his life.

3 Metrical and morphological analysis

Measurements taken from the individual's skull show that he had a medium-rounded head, a wide nose, a long narrow palate, and a slightly prognathic (protrusive) facial profile.

The estimated height from the femur and tibia was 165.3 cm (5' 5"), which was shorter than average for men in the Roman to Medieval periods.

Very few non-metric (genetic) anomalies were seen in this skeleton - all fairly common in populations of most periods and locations.

4 Dental analysis

Both upper and lower jaws were complete. Three teeth had been lost after death, and the right lower molar was unerupted or congenitally absent. Considering the estimated age of this individual, his teeth were remarkably healthy, showing no sign of caries, periodontal disease or tooth loss before death. As stated above, tooth wear was not particularly great, and this may have contributed to the lack of dental pathology. Slight-medium calculus (tartar) was present on all the teeth, which is often a sign of poor oral hygiene, so it seems likely that this individual was blessed with genetically strong teeth and that decay was prevented by good fortune rather than by regular brushing.

5 Pathology

Very little pathology was seen in this skeleton, apart from degenerative changes. Osteoarthritis was present on some ribs, vertebrae and joints. Osteophytosis (bony lipping) was present to some degree on most joints, most noticeably on the lumbar and the third cervical vertebrae.

Other possible signs of disease were noted, but no definite conclusions could be reached about either. Firstly, both tibiae were rather bowed towards the lateral side, but as they were symmetrical it is possible that this was simply due to normal variation rather than a disease such as rickets. Secondly, an oval hole at the front of the skull may have been due to an attempt at trephination (surgical penetration of the skull), but if so the individual died before the brain was reached. The inner table of the skull was intact (although it had been broken after death) and there was no sign of healing (although the edges of the hole were slightly rounded by erosion after death). The shape of the hole and its position certainly do not rule out the possibility that it was a trephination, but without evidence for cutting, scraping or healing such a diagnosis should not be made.

Summary

The skeleton was that of a strongly-built male of below average height, probably in middle- or old-age at the time of death. He had very healthy teeth, but was not so lucky with his bones, and probably suffered from a painful lower back, as well as stiff joints particularly in the neck and the feet. A hole on the right side of his head may have been made in a primitive operation attempt, in which case this was the likely cause of death, but the evidence for this was inconclusive.

A PLAIN MAN'S GUIDE TO THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION OF 1688

One of the great advantages that we have with our heritage is that, since the time of King Alfred, it has been possible to recount the sequence of events in the history of our Country by narrating them as a story, particularly when dealing with the succession of our monarchs. Indeed, it is the very succession itself which makes the narrative approach so attractive; children love it.

There are periods, however, when this simple technique fails to work because the inter-relationships of events is too subtle and complex for a facile account to give a true picture of what happened. A prime example is the Renaissance and another is the Reformation. But for me the most puzzling period of our history to unravel is the 17th C. I liken it to my "broom cupboard" where I have swept up and stored away all the old anecdotes from history lessons, pictures, buildings and famous events of that period without ever having sorted them out. Kipling's six honest serving men "What and Why and When, And How and Where and Who" just have not been given a chance to get to work.

The 17th C. starts with the death of a late medieval monarch leaving a succession crisis which is nearly blown apart by a Gunpowder Plot and it ends with a modern nation having a system of government based on ideas which have been emulated by every developing country since; the King, Parliament and the Nation were able to stand aside and watch the French Revolution unfold. The fairy story of a good or bad king being followed by his son or daughter fails to convince when you start looking at the Commonwealth and Restoration. There are far too many unanswered questions such as if the Commonwealth was a failure why is Oliver Cromwell given so much credit for creating a modern nation? And why, following the Reformation and Charles Ist's execution, was a Catholic king allowed back onto the English throne? Again, if there was a revolution why was the Church still allowed to remain as part of the Establishment and the landed gentry allowed to retain their property? And how was it that not a single drop of blood was shed when other countries counted the cost of their revolutions in thousands or millions of lives??

In the past I have tried to get to grips with this period but without much success, principally, I think, because I was reading about the Civil War and Cromwell himself.

The other day, however, by chance I came across a little book of just over 100 pages by Mary Howarth. She says that she does not pretend to give a definitive or an authoritative account of the English Revolution but just a simple description of the main events. She had access to some books and papers belonging to her late husband and from them she has produced this very readable and beautifully clear, succinct account of the main events.

Her approach is to regard the accession of William III and his acceptance of Parliament's terms for his accession as the natural conclusion to the English Revolution. By doing this she is able to explain the rise and fall of Oliver Cromwell and Parliament's struggle to wrestle executive power from the King. This culminated in the 1689 Bill of Rights, notwithstanding that Cromwell himself had been vilified and posthumously hanged, drawn and quartered.

The Long, Short, Rump and Barebones' Parliaments as well as the comings and goings of Prince Rupert, Monck, the Old Pretender, Judge Jeffries and the Earl of Manchester are simply recounted, together with the changing fortunes of the Royalist cause. In simple words, she has been able to explain why Cromwell declined the Crown in 1657 and why Charles II was able to return to England. More particularly, she explains that the real crunch came when James II's second wife, Anne of Modena, a Catholic, eventually gave birth to a son in some very strange circumstances (the warming pan baby). By producing a Catholic heir-apparent, James made himself immediately unacceptable both to Parliament and the Country. To safeguard the Protestant succession, William and his wife Mary (James' daughter by his first and official wife) were encouraged to claim the Throne.

In consequence, William with his troops and supporters, landed unopposed at Torbay and approached London from the west. James and his companions, meanwhile, quietly left the Capital by going east. Whilst they travelled down the Thames, James dropped the Great Seal into the water and so abrogated his authority to rule the Country. After being inconveniently arrested by well intentioned opportunists, he took a boat to France, where he remained a guest of Louis XIV for the rest of his days.

Mary Howarth makes much of the way William himself behaved when commenting on the success of his accession. William realised that the only way he could cement his rather tenuous claim to the Throne was to keep a very low profile and let the English Parliamentary cause fight his battles. In doing so, he fell into the Parliamentarians' hands by allowing them effectively to control the Exchequer and run the Country; an arrangement which suited everybody and was the recipe for the successful parliamentary democracy which we have today. According to Mary Howarth, one of the main problems was how to justify, constitutionally, an accession of a new monarch when the old one had not died (a problem that did not occur in 1660!).

This excellent little book was first published in 1988 and I am told by the Author that it was not reviewed at the time by the usual papers or periodicals. This is a great shame because it provides a wonderful introduction to the events of the time, being easy to read and attractive in its presentation. It is now in its third edition.

For anybody puzzled by the events and chronology of the 17th C. and the Civil War this is the book for you. Although it does not specifically mention the Vyne and Basing House, their role can be seen in the context of the period. William III's journey can be traced on the map which she provides and this does cross our part of southern England.

A Plain Man's Guide to the Glorious Revolution 1688
Mary Howarth Regency Press £4.95

Richard Dexter.

LOOKBACK AT ANDOVER 1991

The second volume of this journal has just been published by the Andover History and Archaeology Society. We took some orders at our last meeting, and will get more on sale or return. The main articles will be:

The Excavation at Bury Hill, Upper Clatford, 1990 (Cynthia Poole)
The Manor and Court of Quarley, 1646-1741 (Diana K Coldicott)
150 Years of Pharmacy in Andover (David Kennedy & Jane Kennedy)
New Street Ragged School (H. W. Paris)
Electricity comes to Andover (Erica Tinsley)

CALENDAR

(Society activities are in CAPITALS)

Sat	9	Nov	The Other Half: The Archaeology and History of North East Hampshire: Arch Section AGM & Conference, Odiham	HFC
Thurs	14	Nov	RECENT WORKS AT SILCHESTER by Prof. Michael Fulford at the Central Studio	*
Thurs	21	Nov	Aspects of Change in the Hampshire Downland Landscape since the 16th Century by Gavin Bowie, 7.30, Willis Museum	FWM
Fri	22	Nov	Portsmouth Cathedral by Michael Drury, 7.30 at King Alfred's College, Winchester	HFC
Wed	11	Dec	Christmas Social Evening (NB NOT Thursday!)	*
Thurs	9	Jan	BUTSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL FARM IN THE 90s by Peter Reynolds	*
Fri	7	Feb	Members evening, 7.30 at Historic Resources Centre, Winchester (Historic Buildings Sect)	HFC
Thurs	13	Feb	THE MOAT AT YATELY HALL by Geoff Hoare	*
Thurs	5	Mar	Computerised visualisation in the context of Archaeology by Paul Reilly, 7.30 Hyde Historic Resources Centre, Winchester	HFC
Fri	6	Mar	The Architecture and History of Milner Chapel, Winchester by Peter Bogan, 7.30 at Milner Hall, St Peter's St, Winchester (Hist Buildings Sect)	HFC
Sat	11	Mar	Spring Symposium, Local History Section, King Alfred's College, Winchester	HFC
Thurs	12	Mar	ANCIENT SICILY by Denise Allen	*

* Society function (Conference Room, unless otherwise stated)
HFC Hampshire Field Club
FWM Friends of the Willis Museum