

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## **NEWSLETTER 135** *May 1996*

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1996-67 *Peter Good, Treasurer*

At a recent committee meeting the budget for the forthcoming year was discussed. The General Fund for the current year, 1995-6, will show a slight profit, but because expenditure in 1996-7 is likely to be considerably greater than was the case in 1995-6, the committee had to discuss ways of increasing our income. The likely increase in expenditure arises mainly from an increase in our insurance costs, and in the hire charge for the hall where we hold our meetings. These will entail an increased expenditure of £350. After considerable discussion the committee have reluctantly come to the conclusion that in order to raise the extra income, the annual membership and guest fees will have to be raised as follows:

	<u>Fees for 1996-7</u>	(1995-6 fees in brackets)	£ £
Ordinary membership	£11	(£9.50)	£ £
Family membership	£15	(£12)	£
Pensioners	£7	(£5)	£ £
Students	£7	(£5)	
Occasional guest	£2	(£1.50)	£

The committee regret that it will be necessary to make these increases but hope that they will be able to keep the membership fees at these levels in 1997-8. Subscriptions should be sent to Tim Herrington, 16 Scotney Road, Basingstoke RG21 2SR.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We give formal notice of the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY** in the Conference Room at Queen Mary Centre, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 1996 at 7.30 pm.

Please come and support your Society and give us the benefit of your comments and suggestions about its activities and administration.

The business part of the evening will be followed by a talk about the recent excavations carried out on the **Riverdene Estate** in Basingstoke.

The agenda for the AGM and copies of the annual financial report will be available at the meeting, or subsequently by post from the Hon. Sec (SAE please) by request from members unable to attend.

The present elected committee members are:

<b>Chairman</b>	John Horrocks
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Barbara Herrington
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Barry Ennever (in his absence, the acting Treasurer is Peter Good)

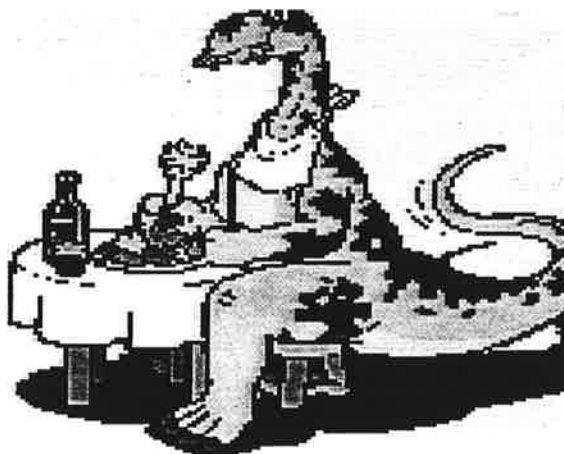
Marta Cock, Mary Oliver, Margaret Porter, Les Fitzgerald, David Miles and John Feuillade. Co-opted members are: Barbara Applin and Tim Herrington.

Of the above members, Barbara Herrington, Barry Ennever and David Miles are not seeking re-election. The following nominations have been taken:

<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Tim Herrington
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Peter Good

We invite further nominations for these posts and for one committee member (please obtain permission from the member concerned and inform the Hon. Secretary in writing, preferably at least one week before the date of the AGM). Nominations may, of course, be taken at the meeting.

## **XXV ANNIVERSARY BARBECUE**



**Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1996**

- This social event, to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will be held in the grounds of Basing House, by kind permission of Alan Turton at 7 pm on 22nd June.
- Entrance off Redbridge Lane, Old Basing.

- Tickets are available now; please apply on the form enclosed with this Newsletter (it would be a great help if you enclosed an SAE).
- The cost is £4.50 (accompanied children £2), which includes the refreshments.
- Please join in these festivities to celebrate our quarter century!!

## ***BOXGROVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS, WESTHAMNETT CHURCH & BOXGROVE PRIORY***

**Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup> 1996**

We have arranged a guided tour of this site of extraordinary prehistoric interest - remember our talk last Autumn!

The visit will be by private cars. Please indicate your interest by returning the form enclosed with this Newsletter. Full details, map etc will be sent to all applicants (SAE, please). A small donation will be requested on the day.

## ***THE BUCKSKIN RECEPTION***

Apologies to any members we didn't manage to notify of this event, which took place on 8th May at the Willis Museum. It was jointly organised by our Society, the Friends of the Willis Museum and the Hampshire County Museum Service to celebrate the publication of the report on the excavation of the Bronze Age barrow at Buckskin, Basingstoke, in the current issue of the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society. Because there had been some doubt about the date when offprints would be available, arrangements for the Reception were rather hurried, with no opportunity to make an announcement in a Newsletter, so we had to announce this at the last meeting and try to get the news around to as many members as possible; but we feel some may have been missed.

However, offprints are available for sale at meetings (price £1.50).

## **FROM THE SOCIETY'S PAST**

### **IN THE BEGINNING**

*Tim Herrington*

<b>The Date</b>	Thursday, 29 <sup>th</sup> July 1971
<b>The Place</b>	Chute House, Church Street, Basingstoke
<b>The Occasion</b>	Inaugural Meeting of the Basingstoke Archaeological Society

The introduction to the meeting was given by John Oliver, Chairman of the Steering committee. John gave a brief history of the Archaeology Group, formed in 1965 by the Willis Museum to help with the rescue work resulting from Town Development. With the formation of the Hampshire County Museum Service, and the subsequent removal of the headquarters to Winchester, direct control of the Group from Basingstoke was no longer possible. The time had come for the setting up of a stand-alone Archaeological Society with its own formal constitution.

John proposed that the Society should be formally created forthwith and that the present steering committee should remain in office until the first Annual General Meeting of the society in 1972, and this was enthusiastically agreed.

Thereafter the embryo society, which was devoted "...to encourage interest in archaeology and local history; to conduct excavations, fieldwork and allied research; to provide assistance to other bodies responsible for excavations in the Basingstoke area" operated successfully until the first Annual General Meeting was called.

The following are extracts from John Oliver's report to the first Annual General Meeting at Chute House on Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> 1972.

The committee elected at the AGM consisted of John Oliver (Chairman), Barbara Applin (Secretary), Bob Applin (Treasurer), Anne Hawker, Mary Oliver and Richard Searle. Additionally, Stephen Moorhouse was co-opted because of his deep interest and knowledge of things archaeological.

A bank account was opened, membership and programme cards were printed and a start made to the Society library. There were 45 full members and 14 student members by the end of the year.

The society became active in fieldwork in the Summer Bank Holiday with a trial excavation at Ructstalls Hill (ref 65155135) on a site chosen from aerial photos and soon [?] to be developed. This dig acted as a training exercise to introduce new members to the techniques of digging, and also as an evaluation of the site. Its date range and any special problems related to more extensive excavation. A grant of £500 was handed out by the Department of the Environment, which was a life saver for this project.

Assistance was offered to the work at the Popham deserted medieval village site necessitated by the M3 extension.

**Lectures and meetings** were held monthly during the Autumn/Winter of 1971/2 at Chute House. The first of these was by Stephen Moorhouse on his excavations at a medieval site at *Oakley* with its "crofts and tofts" [what is a toft?]. Talks followed on the work at *Ructstalls Hill*; *A Bronze Age Urnfield near Andover* (Max Dacre), *Beyond the Memory of Man* (Anne Hawker), *Scientific Aids to Site Surveying* (the fluxgate gradiometer was indeed used at Ructstalls Hill by Mr Anthony Clarke, the lecturer); *Hampshire Place Names* (Frank Wallwork) and *Joseph Locke and the London and Southampton Railway* (Norman Webster).

**Publications** were issued in the form of "Newsletters in August and November of 1971 and these included updates on the 1971 excavations at Ructstalls Hill.

**Associates** were encouraged. For instance, the Society was in touch with the South Hampshire Archaeological Rescue Group; the Farnborough and the Andover Archaeological Societies and we affiliated to the Council for British Archaeology. Two Society members (Mary Oliver and Tim Herrington) were appointed to the Willis Museum & Art Gallery Committee and Mary represented the Society on the M3 Archaeological Rescue Committee."

The Chairman noted the formation of the Basingstoke Industrial Archaeological Group, following a series of WEA lectures; John was one of those who helped to form the Group and expressed a wish that we maintain close ties with them.

John concluded his report, the new Society' first, with congratulations on a successful year and with his hopes that there would be work for us to do for some time to come. Hasn't there just!!!

## **Mary Oliver (Chairman 1986-8)**

In looking back on my two year stint as Chairman, what immediately strikes me is how little the format of Society activities has changed. Ten years ago we were enjoying our lectures, annual wine and cheese party and various outings just as today. In fact, in my present guise as programme secretary, a look at our past programmes has been quite inspirational! Many of the lecturers, such as David Allen, introducing his then newly opened Museum of the Iron Age, and Andrew Lawson, talking on Palaeolithic Cave Art, have remained friends of the Society. The Newsletter of that period still makes interesting reading, with reports of activities to remind us of what we did and items on exhibitions and lectures, contributions persuaded from those who attended them by Barbara, editing then with as much skill as she shows today! In 1987 we organised a long distance outing to see the "sand people" at Sutton Hoo, which is still remembered as a good day out. Less ambitious trips were to famous archaeological sites in Dorset and the Cirencester area, and to local "digs" at Silchester and Danebury, and to the Domesday exhibition in London. We were also just as active in a practical sense, with field walking, and potwashing sessions then held at Kempshott Village Hall. I was particularly struck to see that the Easter Training Dig in 1987 was thought to be the best supported of any held by the Society up to that point. As I try to arrange a similar event for this Easter, I wonder whether we shall match that support? [Ed - Another success]

I began my two years as Chairman at the lowest point in my whole life, just after John's death; the support of my friends in the Society and the comradeship of following a shared interest helped me then and continues to be important to me now.

## **Joy Needham (Chairman 1988-1990)**

Despite having been on the committee and holding the posts of treasurer and programme planner at various times, I was very doubtful about being Chairman. We have had many Chairmen with detailed and educated knowledge of archaeology. I was not one of them. In the event I needed other skills and the two years I was Chairman were to prove very interesting.

I was firmly of the opinion that Chairmen should not try to do everything. They should be a catalyst for action. Sometimes the theory worked well. It worked so well with the video project I still feel guilty about my lack of input. When we agreed to a sub-committee being formed to work on the video project I was privately sceptical. I had a good idea of the commitment involved. I have nothing but admiration for what they accomplished.

One of the most significant changes during my Chairmanship was the move to charitable status. Here I took over the application after the treasurer had a serious

accident. I found myself dealing with fairly exacting paperwork but in the end our funds were safe from the Inland Revenue!

Probably the change most noticeable to our members was our move to QMC for our meetings. We had outgrown the room at Chute House and QMC offered many attractions. Six years later the flourishing Society is still growing.

Being Chairman was a privilege, and the number of Chairmen the Society has had over 25 years is a sign of a healthy organisation. I was very worried about my inadequate background in archaeology but in the event the skills were learnt on the job with help from a good team. The hard work was usually done by the committee and other members of the Society.

### **Richard Dexter (*Chairman 1990-1993*)**

The first time I came into contact with the BAHS was when I was standing in the middle of Fleet on a cold winter's morning in the early 1980s, waiting for the coach to take us to London during one of the many rail strikes. I fell into conversation with a fellow-sufferer, who said why did I not come to the next meeting of his archaeological society in Basingstoke? As I had only recently moved to Fleet from Bristol, Basingstoke was not a part of the world I then knew, even if it wasn't exactly bear and wolf country.

Anyhow I accepted the invitation and went along on the following Thursday. I am not sure what the lecture was that night but I clearly remember two things that struck me quite forcibly. The first was that I had immediately been spotted as a new face and was made very welcome there and then, and the other was what a variety of talent there seemed to be. I am sorry if this sounds banal, but I was very grateful to those who made it so easy for me to come to the next meeting and the next and the next.

I hope those who are new will forgive us if we fall short of perfection in getting you involved. Talent does not need to be archaeological or historical. The great strength of our Society, I am sure, is the sheer diversity of what everyone has to offer, without which not half of what we have achieved could otherwise have been done.

What does surprise me is the way so many members do give as much time and effort as they do to keep the Society going. It is not only the meetings and programme but all the other side activities like little pieces of research that are quietly tackled. Help in this way is always welcome, so do ask if you are interested.

I think it is this which makes our Society so worthwhile and worthy of support.



## ***DINNER CARDS***

Who knows, some day the table cards at our Dinners may become collectors' items, like cigarette cards! This year the tables were named after some Basingstoke "heroes", and the accounts were written by Tim and Barbara Herrington. Further cards will appear in future Newsletters (maybe with some additions).

### **SAMUEL ATTWOOD**

Samuel Attwood was born in 1793 and was brother of the Great-Grandfather of our honoured guest tonight - namely Arthur Attwood.

Samuel's claim to fame in our eyes, as local historians, must be the prodigious diary that he kept throughout his working life and which has survived to this day. The entries in the diary are prefaced by an exposition on the technical aspects of tailoring, to be used as instructions to this new apprentice to the trade.

The first entries list his work pattern as a journeyman tailor and of his various leisure activities. His first year's wages seem to have amounted to £44 13s 8d; his diary continues to record wages but gradually expands to include interesting happenings in Basingstoke, making it a fascinating social document of great value.

What a wonderful picture the following entry conjures up!

***"The fat red faced cook at the Ship died suddenly after a short illness."***

He died at the age of 77 on February 18th 1870. The original diary is held at the County Records Office at Winchester, but a photocopy is in the safe hands of a member of BAHS!

## **WALTER DE MERTON**

Walter de Merton was born between 1200 - 1205, a son to William and Christina le Kuk (i.e. Cook). His mother, Christina Fitzace, was an important woman, holding lands in Basingstoke; her family were freeholders on Crown lands within the Royal Manor of Basingstoke.

As a small boy, he was sent to Merton Priory in Surrey to be educated and later to Oxford, where he was known by the name of his birthplace (Basingstoke?!!) Later, in 1233, he took the name of the Priory, as Walter de Merton and became Parson of Cuddington.

After much travelling in the north in 1236 - 1240, he returned south to become King's Clerk and Chancellor. He was made Canon of St Paul's in 1259 and between 1272 and 1274 he was in place of the King holding the Great Seal of England, not only as Chancellor, but virtually as Regent. In 1274 he was elected Bishop of Rochester.

Fame followed but, despite his achievements, he never forgot his family and his home town. His first foundation, the Hospital of St John at Basingstoke, commemorated his mother and the second, Merton College at Oxford, was originally dedicated to the Education of his Kin. The hospital in Basingstoke came in for a great share of his charity and munificence, and to ensure its permanency he placed it under the King's protection.

In the Spring of 1275 he drew up his will, in which he gave consideration to his kin, friends and servants and to the benefices he had held. He died two years later, on October 27th, 1277, and was buried in Rochester Cathedral. His name lives on here in Merton Road.

## MRS BLUNDEN

Mrs Blunden, wife of a Basingstoke man of considerable reputation, had died in 1674. After feeling ill one evening she had sent her maid to an apothecary to fetch some poppy water (opium). The lady, a steady imbiber, drank so much that she fell into a sleep so deep that she was eventually pronounced dead!

The weather being hot and the lady being fat, her relatives decided to bury her there and then (against her husband's wishes, who had departed on urgent business saying that he could do no good hanging around but would return shortly!)

A day later, boys playing in the Liten heard a hollow voice, as if underground, plainly saying "Take me out of my grave". Repeatedly these words were followed by groans and shriekings. The terrified boys ran away to tell the relatives and then the Schoolmaster - whereupon they were chastised for raising such reports. They returned to the spot and heard the noises again. They told the master once more, and now he did go with them and indeed satisfied himself that something was amiss.

So they dug the poor lady up and found clear evidence that she had certainly struggled to free herself and had torn the winding sheet and bruised her own face. She looked dead now to all and sundry, but it was coming on to rain so they lowered the coffin into the grave and left it there until the next day. On opening the coffin in the presence of the coroner, it was obvious that Mrs Blunden had yet again revived enough to create more damage to herself and the sheet.

This second time she really was dead! The Coroner bound over the relatives responsible for the neglect, but they subsequently escaped punishment, the burden of fines falling on the Town of Basingstoke - said to be "a considerable amount".

# CALENDAR

<i>June</i>	(Date to be announced) Evening walk with Bill Fergie	FWM
<i>20 June</i>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7.30 pm</b> Conference Room	*
<i>22 June</i>	<b>25th Anniversary Barbecue</b> , Basing House	*
<i>23 June</i>	Songs and Dances of Elizabethan England, Basing House	FBH
<i>29 June</i>	Day visit to Christchurch Priory & Castle	HFC
<i>6 July</i>	Evening concert, Basing House	FBH
<i>13 July</i>	Local History Section outing to Aldershot Farnborough	HFC
<i>11 Aug</i>	<b>Boxgrove Archaeological Excavations, Westhampnett Church and Boxgrove Priory</b>	*

*	Society event
FBH	Friends of Basing House
FWM	Friends of the Willis Museum
HFC	Hampshire Field Club

Items for Newsletter to:

Barbara Applin, 138 Old Kempshott Lane, Basingstoke RG22 5EN  
 or Tim Herrington, 16 Scotney Road, Basingstoke RG21 2SR