

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER 155

May 2001

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## **SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2001 - 2002**

At a recent Committee meeting, it was agreed to move the start of subsequent subscription years to September 1<sup>st</sup>. This will make things easier for the 'official side' and will more logically coincide with the start of the new season of evening lectures after the summer break. Present members will enjoy an extended membership year for 2000-2001 and will be eager to renew their subscription at the first meeting in September at the latest.

Subscription rates will be confirmed and renewal forms will be enclosed with the August Newsletter.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2001 in Church Cottage, Church Square, Basingstoke at 7.30 pm**

The formal calling notice and details will be found on the separate sheet enclosed with this newsletter. Please let Tim Herrington (01256 322090) know if the sheet was not enclosed.

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## **VISITS**

**VISIT TO THE HISTORIC DOCKYARD AT CHATHAM  
Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> June**

We regret that this visit will not now take place, as there was very little support forthcoming (8 people would rather rattle around in a 30 seater coach and would be faced with a large outlay to pay for the pleasure!).

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**BRAMSHILL HOUSE  
Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2001**

Happily, we have attracted a full quota of 20 members to this visit. If anyone drops out before the day I will be open to offers. If you would like to be put on a waiting list (none as yet) please 'phone Tim on 01256 322090.

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**VISIT TO THE SILCHESTER DIG  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2001**

It is hoped that a visit to the excavations at Silchester can, once again, be arranged for this date. You must let Mary Oliver know that you wish to come by 'phoning her on 01256 324263. Meet at the Silchester car park at 6.00 pm for a 6.30 pm tour of the site (it is a longish walk from the car park to site).

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## **PROGRAMME SUMMARY: June to December 2001**

*(All the lectures, unless otherwise stated, are held at Church Cottage, Church Square and start at 7.30 pm.)*

### **Thursday 14th June**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by MOSAICS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE  
Marten Harris (BAHS member)

### **Thursday 13th September**

SOCIETY VISIT TO MILESTONES

### **Thursday 11th October**

RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN THE BASINGSTOKE AREA  
Roy Entwistle, Berkshire Archaeological Services

### **Thursday 8 November**

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ROMAN BRITAIN  
Neil Faulkner whose book of the same title will be available to buy

### **Thursday 13th December**

Christmas Wine and Cheese evening

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## **EASTER DIG AT BASING**

Many thanks to all our members who helped out at this year's dig. Another good turn-out by BAHS members despite some dreadful weather.

This year's finds included a 17th Century token and the front walls of the mansion house. Dave Allen hopes to have an interim report ready in time for our AGM.

Don't forget, year 3 of this 5 year programme continues next Easter. If you can help out for a day or two, a week or longer – then make a note in your diary and look out for details in the February 2002 newsletter.

Margaret Porter

**CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY**  
**Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2001**



*Jane Austen by Atherton Harrison*

**PLEASE NOTE AMENDED DATE - 22 SEPTEMBER 2001**

Although the manor of Chawton was mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, the present Chawton House was built in 1590 by John Knight. It was the descendant of a royal manor house built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by John St John, who served as deputy to Edward the First in Scotland.

In the eighteenth century, Mr and Mrs Knight adopted Jane Austen's brother John (who was a distant relation). John took the Knight name, and in time inherited the house and estate. In 1809, John was able to move his mother and sisters to a cottage in the village of Chawton. This we now know as Jane Austen's house.

The Knight family finally vacated Chawton House in 1987, and the lease was bought by Sandy Learner, whose ambition is to transform the house into a research centre and library. The House is now undergoing restoration and adaptation to support a research centre and will house a unique collection of the work of early English women writers (1600 - 1830). Much of the collection is currently in Redmond, Washington, and consists of over 6,200 books and manuscripts. The plan is to move the books to Chawton in 2003 once the building is suitably converted.

It is hoped that in time the house and grounds can be returned to their late eighteenth century condition, which will include a Wilderness, and terracing. The archaeologist involved in the project is Chris Currie - those of us who worked at the Vyne a few years ago will remember Chris, and plotting the fishponds and landscape garden. With guidance from the local planning authority and English Heritage, work on the House has included demolishing the dilapidated late 19<sup>th</sup> century extensions in the inner courtyard and consequently rediscovering a Jacobean mullioned window.



There is a quarterly newsletter called the Female Spectator, which gives the latest news about the project, and also fascinating articles about woman writers. As we know, Jane Austen concealed her writing from visitors to the house, as it wasn't seen as appropriate for ladies to be so employed, and this was often a difficulty for woman writers. Over 400 of the works in the collection are anonymous.

The Library and grounds are open to pre-arranged visitors, and I have arranged with the Director, Professor Michael Wheeler for us to pay a visit during the morning of Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2001, from 11am to 1pm. Unfortunately, due to ongoing work, the House is currently a hard hat area, but Professor Wheeler has offered to give us a tour of the outside of the House, the grounds, and the church of St Nicholas. The church is a 19<sup>th</sup> century rebuild, but is apparently very fine. Jane Austen's mother and sister are buried there. If there is sufficient interest, we might also visit Jane Austen's cottage in the village. Professor Wheeler also recommends the Greyfriars pub, and says we can prebook tables.

There is no admission charge to Chawton House but as an additional three million pounds is needed for the project, I suggest we make a donation of £2 per head. Please let me know if you would be interested in coming: my phone number is (01256) 467 294.

Nicola Turton

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***Barbara Applin***

Some time ago I mentioned that Mike and Josie Wall had kindly lent us a Sanyo transcribing machine, which plays back "real" audio cassettes and is foot operated, leaving hands free to type – a great asset. Now, thanks to David Kansler of "Link", Sanyo kindly offered us a special price for a new version of that machine – and the Friends of the Willis Museum paid for the Museum to acquire another which we can use. We were getting quite a backlog of transcriptions, as it takes ages to do if you have to use hands to pause and restart the playback as well as type, so it is wonderful to have three on the go at once. An added bonus is that when you lift your foot from the control pedal, the machine doesn't just pause the tape – it goes back a few words so that you can be sure you haven't missed anything when you press your foot down to go on.

The Friends' donation to the Willis Museum also covered the cost of a zip drive so that we can copy photographs held on our zip disks onto their system for archiving – these are photographs related to our interviews.

We're continuing to do more interviews on Health matters, in what we hope is a last spurt before putting the book together. Also more interviews about Hackwood Park, with some unexpected incidents like Alan Gregory being sent from Lanham's store in London Street to do specialised cleaning, lifting carpets etc. And we are still following up the Nancy Powell saga. And, of course, doing many "general" interviews which reveal some fascinating aspects of Basingstoke life, like the "Co-op Treats" – if anyone else has memories of those, please let me know (01256 465439).

## LOCAL SOCIETIES CONFERENCE

### *Edna and Alan Fielding*

On Saturday, 21 April we went with other members of our Society to the Hampshire Local Societies Conference hosted by the Winchester Archaeological Rescue Group, at Peter Symonds College, Winchester.

Several Societies had set up display stands showing some of their projects and 'finds'. The 'finds' on the BAHS table were from the Beggarwood Lane site.

The morning session started with a welcome by the Chairman of HAC, Richard Whaley. This was followed by an excellent talk given by Dr. Andy Russel, on the River Itchen Project., which included the search for the remains of Roman occupation along the foreshore of the river. Not an easy excavation, the river being tidal, and having to wait for exceptionally low tides at the right time of the day - a 'mud larks' story!!

Then followed an amusing talk by Geoff Hoare (helped on by his wife Maisie). This was on ten years of excavation on a small Jacobean Mansion at Heckfield. Because of the complete demolition of this house, so many years ago, nothing remains above ground. All that is left to discover now are footings, cellars, and the drains!

After a break for lunch, Richard Whaley talked about the Hampshire Archaeological Committee and their plans to help local Societies, with possible financial aid to get more projects underway. Also to the setting up of a form of Media Data Bank - an expansion of the present Directory of Hampshire Archaeology.

This was followed by Graham Scobie, who on behalf of the Winchester Museum Community Excavation Programme, talked about 'The search for King Alfred, and other mysterious goings on'. Poor Alfred, he had quite a few final 'resting' places, and still nobody knows exactly where he has ended up. Graham Scobie - a Jewish, French Canadian knows a lot about English History, and Religion!

Basingstoke was very well represented. Firstly, by Dave Allen (Hampshire Museums Service, based in Andover) with an update on the recent 'dig' at Old Basing. This has resulted in a lot more information, and finds, on the site of the Duke of Bolton's Mansion at the Grange Farm site, across the road from the ruins of Basing House. Although the 'dig' has now closed for this season, it will continue again next Easter.

Marjolein Mussellwhite then gave a most interesting talk on the Beggarwood Lane site. There was only one day, and five people to do the 'dig' before the developer started again. (Considering she said it was the first time she had given a talk, it came across very, very well - we award her a gold star!)

Barbara Applin brought us up to date with our own 'Talking History' outlining the ongoing research into Nancy Powell, her early childhood spent in France, and later her escape, at the early part of the Second World War, back to this country and Basingstoke. This is yet another aspect of finding out about the past.

The discussions at the close of the day dwelt mainly on the proposed private sale by the Hampshire County Council of Grange Farm House, Old Basing. The local community, and many others are strongly opposed to this. Dave Allen referred to it as much as he felt able to. We will have to await further developments from that quarter.

A lovely day, enjoyed by all who attended.



## SILCHESTER FIELD SCHOOL

As many of you will know from our August evening visits, the Archaeology Department at the University of Reading runs a training excavation for its students every summer at the Roman town site of Silchester. The excavation is organised in conjunction with the Silchester Field School which affords the opportunity for those who are not students at Reading to work on the dig. This year the Silchester Field School runs from Monday 9th July to Sunday 19th August and I have extracted the following information from the University website for your information:

The Field School works a six day week. New arrivals set up camp on the Sunday evening and begin training from Monday morning until Sunday afternoon. Transport is available to and from the University of Reading at the beginning and end of each week for those who request it in advance. Friday is a free day each week. We work from 9.00am until 5.30pm every day with short morning and afternoon breaks and a longer break for lunch. On Sunday we start at 9.30 am and finish at 5.00pm.

All meals are provided (but NOT on the day off) and consist of a self service breakfast, a picnic lunch and a hot evening meal; all are served in the large tent which is the focus of the campsite. For those participants wishing to camp while excavating at Silchester, the camp site is located adjacent to the excavation, within the Roman town walls. Portaloos are provided on site and there will be regular shower trips to a nearby sports centre.

For those attending the excavation daily, there are various means of reaching the site details of which are set out in the website (see address below). For those with cars, parking is available in the Silchester Town Walls Car Park.

Full details of what to bring will be sent to participants on receipt of their application form.

### Accreditation

There is a formal accreditation system for degree students and a signed Certificate of Attendance is available for all Field School participants.

### Course Costs.

- One week at the Silchester Field School costs £200.
- This cost covers all campsite facilities and meals (except for the day off), all training on site and off site (there are talks about finds processing, etc) and continuous supervision during the working day.
- Some bursaries may be available to those who submit an application in writing. Please contact Amanda Clarke for further details. Discounts are also available to degree students of archaeology and to those at school.
- A non refundable £50 deposit will be required on acceptance of application and full payment will be required by 25th June 2001.

### Applications

Applications can be made in writing to the Assistant Site Director, Department of Archaeology, University of Reading, PO Box 218, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 6AA or by completing the on-line application form at the University Website [www.rdg.ac.uk](http://www.rdg.ac.uk). Any email enquiries can be made to [a.s.clarke@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.s.clarke@reading.ac.uk)

## **SILCHESTER FIELD SCHOOL – SPONSORSHIP FOR BAHS MEMBERS**

The Committee have decided that it would be appropriate for the Society to sponsor up to three of our members to attend the Silchester Field School for one week during this year's dig and Professor Michael Fulford has kindly arranged for these three places to be offered to us at a discount.

The Field School offers an opportunity for training in several aspects of archaeological fieldwork on a site of local and national importance. Activities include excavation, planning and surveying, finds processing and environmental processing.

We plan to continue our programme of work at Worting and we also want to expand our fieldwork activities, we realise that to do so we need more members who are not only willing fieldworkers but members who have had a certain level of training and who can lead and supervise fieldwork activities for the Society in the future.

If you wish to be considered for one of these places and you are willing to share the benefit of your experience with the Society, please contact me in the first instance on 01256 356012 or write to 58 Minden Close, Chineham, Basingstoke, Hants RG24 8TH.

Margaret Porter

## **UPDATE ON LOCAL ISSUES**

### **THE WILLIS CLOCKS**

In March it was brought to my attention that Hampshire County Museum Service may be considering proposals for some rearrangement of the Willis Museum which might involve the Willis Clocks being moved outside Basingstoke.

I wrote to Stephen Locke, Director of the Museum Service seeking some assurance that was not the case. Stephen Locke responded to this letter and confirmed that the Museums Service are indeed formulating proposals to redisplay the top floor of the Willis Museum. A meeting was arranged with the Museums Service and Barbara Applin and Mary Oliver attended to represent the Society. Subsequently, Stephen Locke wrote to us with an outline of their basic proposals and commented that no detailed planning had yet been done.

So far the responses from the Museums Service fall short of guaranteeing that the Willis clocks will remain in Basingstoke. On a positive note, we have made the Museums Service aware of our concerns and we will maintain contact so that we will be kept informed as their proposals develop.

### **BASING GRANGE**

It has also come to my attention that Hampshire County Council are proposing to sell the house at Grange Farm. I had previously understood that an application was to be made for a National Heritage Lottery grant but it would seem that that course has not been followed through.

I understand that the Council have stated that the Grange will not be sold but that some sort of lease arrangement may be made. Whatever the arrangement, it would be a great pity if the house was not developed as part of the Basing House complex. I have written to the Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council expressing the Society's support for any bid for a National Heritage Lottery grant and urging them to reject the idea of selling the house. I have also asked for further information on the Council's plans for Grange Farm but to date I have not received a response.

Watch this space.

Margaret Porter



## A TALE OF TWO NEWSLETTERS

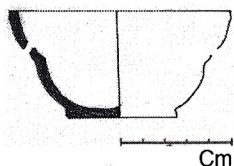
Having recently come across a copy of Newsletter No. 2 of the Society, I thought it might be interesting to compare BAHS then and now with reference to the content of its newsletters.

Newsletter No. 2 was issued in November 1971 so the appropriate issue for comparison seems to me to be that issued in November 2000, Newsletter No. 153. Incidentally, for those of you who are interested in the mathematics, the newsletter is published quarterly, so unless someone has lost count, we must have had a few bonus issues along the way and that would not be a bad thing.

Newsletter 2 begins with information on forthcoming events and refers to details of lectures being given on the programme card. Thankfully, this historic document was still attached to the newsletter which I have in my possession. I can confirm that the first lecture ever given to the Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society was given by Max Dacre on the subject of 'The Bronze Age Urnfield at Kimpton, Andover' on 25 November 1971. Also included in this list of events was a schedule of dates on which work was to take place on sorting, marking and drawing pottery from excavations at Ructstalls Hill with the request to bring along a mapping pen and a bottle of Indian ink! Newsletter 153 contains a full calendar of events from November through to June, including information on those organised by the Hampshire Field Club and the Friends of the Willis Museum. Common to both newsletters is the event of the year, the Christmas party, also common to both is the request to bring along "objects of interest" for the delight of other members.

Attached to newsletter 2 is the Interim Report on the first season's excavations at Ructstalls Hill. The need to excavate this Iron Age/Romano-British settlement before a housing development destroyed the site, was the catalyst for the formation of BAHS. The report explains the site with reference to three distinct phases of occupation and includes a plan of the site showing the main features of the excavation. The report also gives a summary of the pottery, metal and other finds. According to the report the prize find was a bronze brooch of the La Tène type. The brooch, which was dated to the end of the 1st century AD, was complete and was made from a single piece of bronze decorated with rows of punched dots. Newsletter 2 gave details of two further seasons' work on this site planned for 1972. The full results of the excavations at Ructstalls Hill were subsequently published in the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club, Vol. 35.

You will probably have guessed what comes next, yes, Newsletter 153 also contains an Interim Report. This report gives an account of the finds from what appears to be a single Romano-British cremation at Beggarwood Lane. Again, the site was earmarked for housing and a layer of topsoil had been removed around the perimeter of the field, probably by the developer. A keen eyed walker had spotted some pottery and had alerted the County Archaeologist. The County Archaeologist asked the Society for help and an initial examination of the site revealed three distinct rings of pottery, it appeared that the digger may have scooped away the top of the pots along with the earth. On 1 July 2000 a small team of BAHS members excavated the site. It was quickly established that the remains of five pots were visible on the surface of the site. There did not appear to be an edge to the feature so each pot was excavated individually. As soil was removed the tops of two further vessels appeared. They turned out to be shallow dishes buried sufficiently below the surface to escape the digger. In all, the remains of seven vessels were recovered and by late afternoon the finds had been photographed and removed. Fortunately, Malcolm Lyne, an expert in Roman pottery from this area, was able to examine the pottery for BAHS and his report is also included in Newsletter 153. He identified the pot illustrated below as a Dragendorff 27 samian cup copy with a suggested date of c 70-110 AD, likely to have been produced locally by a small scale Flavian-Trajanic industry.



With the exception of a notice of EGM, I have mentioned all of the contents of Newsletter 2. In addition to the elements already mentioned, Newsletter 153 contains a number articles contributed by members of the Society. Not only do we now have more members contributing more articles, but the technology to which we have access in producing our newsletter means that there are very few practical restrictions on its size and content.

What this comparison does highlight is just how much has stayed the same. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that many of the founder members of BAHS are still actively at the helm as the Society approaches its 30th anniversary. Or perhaps it is simply a matter of ...if you have the right formula ... stick with it.

Margaret Porter

## CALENDAR

<b>Wed 16 May</b>	<b>Bevin Boys</b> Morris Pearce & Eric Chuck	TADS
<b>Thurs 17 May</b>	<b>Barnes Wallis and the Adventures of the Research &amp; Development Dept</b> Bernard Russell	FWM
<b>Wed 30 May</b>	<b>AGM and King Arthur's Round Table</b> Martin Biddle, 7.30 pm, Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds' College, Winchester (Free but advance booking needed; Robin Iles, 01962 848269	HFC
<b>Thurs 31 May</b>	<b>The Cock that Crowed: Pathe's pictorial record Of Hampshire on Film</b> WFSa theatre, HRO, Winchester 1.15-1.45 pm, free.	HRO
<b>Sat 9 June</b>	<b>The Historic Landscape of Estuaries</b> Landscape Section conference (places limited) 10 am-4 pm	HFC
<b>Thurs 14 June</b>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and MOSAICS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE</b> Marten Harris	BAHS
<b>Thurs 28 June</b>	<b>Hampshire at Work</b> 15 years of Rescuing Business Archives: WFSa theatre, HRO 1.15-145pm, free	HRO
<b>Sun 1 July</b>	<b>Visit to a number of churches on the Hampshire-Sussex border</b> (Landscape section)	HFC
<b>Wed 18 July</b>	<b>AWE 1981-2000</b>	TADS
<b>Thurs 16 Aug</b>	<b>VISIT TO SILCHESTER EXCAVATIONS</b>	BAHS
<b>Wed 22 Aug</b>	<b>Fieldtrip to Roman site at Fullerton</b> , 6 pm (contact Robin Iles, 01962 848269	HFC
<b>Thurs 13 Sep</b>	<b>VISIT TO MILESTONES</b>	BAHS
<b>Thurs 20 Sep</b>	<b>London's Lost Railway</b>	FWM
<b>Sat 22 Sept</b>	<b>VISIT TO CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY</b>	BAHS

**BAHS** = Our Society Lectures at Church Cottage, 7.30 pm  
**HRO** = Hampshire Record Office, Sussex Street, Winchester  
**HFC** = Hampshire Field Club; as institutional members we can send one representative on outings.  
**FWM** = Friends of the Willis Museum, 7.30 pm, Willis Museum  
**TADS** = Tadley & District History Society, 8 pm St Paul's Church Hall, Tadley