

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER 159

May 2002

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## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2002/2003**

Membership fees will be due on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 . The rates are unchanged at £11 for individuals, £15 for family, and £7 for students and over 60s. The over 60s family rate is £12. Cheques, payable to BAHS, can be sent to Garth George, 71, Camrose Way, Basingstoke RG21 3AW; tel 01256 464763. He will be more than happy to take membership renewal now!

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2002**

We give formal notice of the Annual General of the Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society to be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002 at 7.30 pm in Church Cottage, Church Square, Basingstoke

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome & apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2001 AGM held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2001
3. Matters arising from the above minutes
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report & presentation of accounts
6. Election of Officers
7. Election of Auditor for 2002-2003
8. Any other business

**After the formal business, there will be a talk by David Allen who will give us an update on the excavations at the Duke of Bolton's House in Old Basing**

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### **Notes**

The current Committee is:

Tim Herrington (Chairman), Margaret Porter (Hon.Sec.), Peter Good (Hon.Treasurer), Garth George (Membership Sec.), Barbara Applin, Susan Strawson, Les Fitzgerald, Marten Harris; co-opted members: Mary Oliver, Mary Shelley, Andrew Hunt and Marjolein Mussellwhite

All of the Committee members have indicated their willingness to serve for another year, except for Andrew Hunt. There will, therefore, be one vacancy on the Committee for the election of one co-opted member of Committee

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## THE NEW SEASON'S PROGRAMME

*Mary Oliver*

**12 September Roman Coins and coin hoards**  
John Hutchinson, Reading University

To start the new season, it will be good to welcome back John Hutchinson, who used to be one of our members and who now lectures in the Classics Department at Reading. He has made a special study of coins, and will give us a fascinating look at the variety of Roman coins and what they can tell us, explaining the meaning of all those strange mint marks, the changing styles of portraits and the news value of the reverse sides. He will also underline the archaeological importance of coin hoards. It is a long time since we had a lecture on this subject, so I feel sure it will be popular.

**10 October Woodland crafts in North Hampshire and the Kennet Valley, Berkshire; their rise and fall**  
Prof. Ted Collins, Rural History Centre, Reading University

I'm sure most members will have visited the Museum of Rural Life in Whiteknights Park, part of the Reading University campus. Prof. Collins was Director of the Rural History Centre there until his retirement. When discussing his talk with him, he said that the finest hazel in the country was grown at Herriard, and his talk will definitely have a local slant. There is still a sawmill at Herriard, but many of the tools and products have changed over the last century and in many ways he will be describing a familiar but almost vanished aspect of rural life.

**14 November "There is nothing like it this side of Arcadia" ; The Grange at Northington**  
John Redmill, Architect.

Those members who have not seen The Grange at Northington, which, as the quotation implies, sits like a Greek temple in an idyllic landscape, are surely in for a treat! This extra-ordinary house has had a most interesting history which has been thoroughly researched by John Redmill, an architect practising in Dublin. Happily for us, he also teaches in London on Thursdays and Fridays, and has agreed to come down to give us this lecture. This is an opportunity to see (via slides) inside the building, which is not open to the public. The Grange has long been a family favourite, and I recommend this lecture to you.

**12 December Cheese and Wine Social Evening**

This is our annual social event/Christmas party and will follow the usual formula, found to be popular with all the members, This is your chance to have more time to chat and catch up with old friends.

2003 programme to follow!

*Don't forget...*

**... JUBILEE PICNIC**

**At Basing House, 22 am to 6 pm, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June;** bring your own picnic – Tudor dress?

**... A DAY OF THREE CHURCHES**

**Meet at the church at North Waltham, 10.30 am, Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June;** also visit Steventon and Deane churches; pub lunch and if fine tea in Atherton Harrison's garden. Let Tim Herrington know if you want to come and will want a pub lunch (01256 322090)

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**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUMS SERVICE**

**Basing House**

**Annual Excavation 2002**

**Monday 20 May - Friday 7 June 2002**

***Marjolein Mussellwhite***

This year we will examine the area between the front of the mansion and the street wall, to try to determine the nature of the massive brick foundation found in the corner of last year's excavation. This structure appears to be contemporary with the brick-lined drain and would therefore be earlier than the house. It could even belong to the Civil War phase at Basing. We may also investigate an area to the north of last year's dig, which should clarify some of the details at the rear of the mansion.

Suitable instruction and encouragement will be given during the dig and larger digging tools will be provided, but it is essential for you to have your own 4" WHS forged trowel - tanged not riveted, if you are going to do any hand digging. Other essential personal gear includes strong footwear, and waterproof clothing in case of rain.

The working day will run from 9am to 5pm, with breaks from 10.45-11am and 3.15-3.30pm, and a lunch break from 12.45-1.30pm. We anticipate being able to provide tea/coffee and biscuits, but please bring your own packed lunch, and any other particular sustenance you require.

Grange Farm will again be the headquarters of the building for the project, and the focus of finds processing activities. There will be some car parking space in this locality, but as this is limited the preferred parking area is the official Basing House car park north of the railway viaduct.

Should you wish to take part, please contact Marjolein Mussellwhite on 01256 325387, or 07753 724435.

**BAHS TRAINING DIG – CHURCH LANE, WORTING**  
*Marjolein Mussellwhite*

We have now fixed the dates for the training dig for the **7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of September**. Please put these dates in your diary, and although it's only May, if you want to take part would you please contact me on 01256 325387, or 07753 724435. You can also contact me on my email address: [marjoleine\\_2000@hotmail.com](mailto:marjoleine_2000@hotmail.com).

**A DAY TO  
RECALL**

*By Tim Herrington*

**THOUGHTS ON  
"A DAY IN TUDOR  
BASINGSTOKE"**

**Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>  
2002**



It all started when a letter arrived from the Local History Society to me asking our Society to consider what contribution we could make to national Local History Week (May 4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>). I brought this to Committee and ideas were enthusiastically debated. At the end of the evening we had committed our members to the seemingly (to me!) impossible task of staging a historical entertainment depicting a day in the life of Tudor Basingstoke.

From that moment we never looked back – except in time. Barbara Applin and Anne Hawker together took Anne's research on our Town as a basis for the play and Barbara then wove this skilfully into a script suitable for the stage.

Early on, it was crucial to the success of the venture to recruit the best possible director, capable of advancing the capabilities of a group of (mostly) absolute amateurs from within the Society to the point of being competent enough to 'carry the day'. In this, we were blissfully lucky; we approached Rosemary Kershaw, Head of Drama at Bishop Challoner School, who agreed to take charge of the presentation for us. She began to perform miracles for us and I began to believe that now it could all actually happen! Especially when more polished performers from outside the Society agreed to take part.

As for the technical back-up, the breakthrough here was the availability of a computer-driven screen display, engineered by our own Mark Peryer with generous help by Brendan Burns of the Haymarket Theatre. Music there had to be and we came up lucky again when Brian Archer agreed to provide the overture and incidental music – including the Pavane for Catherine of Aragon written by him for the occasion!

Douglas Cumming, too, took a solo role on lute (guitar) and Paulline Williams accompanied on tabour. Sharing the music at the evening performance we welcomed the Orpheus Ensemble and we are grateful to them for their delightful contribution.

As to costume, I still can hardly believe that Sheena Archer, helped by Jean Turner, could possibly have turned discarded, redundant material into a visual display of Tudor dress praised by all who saw the walking, welcoming realisation of her inspirations.



The actors – what about them? They were glorious to a (wo)man! Hidden depths were brought to the surface by the Director, possibly to the surprise of the owners of the depths. We were sure that our key man Paul Connolly (bless you for being conned into taking part) would project the right image and have the audience hanging on his words and so it was. As did Alan Turton and Nigel Pierce in their leading roles – Alan Turton portrayed the full authority of the Bailiff and the Constable certainly frightened me. I pitied the miscreants in the court scene.

The supporting cast deserve the highest praise for their enthusiasm from the beginning and their climb up the ladder of confidence. How about the younger actors from Bishop Challoner and Cranbourne Schools then! – thank you all for giving us your time and dedication. Live long and prosper!

And then there was the catering, all in the true Tudor style under the direction of our own Sue Strawson together with her helpers/cooks. The results of your labours, brought round by the serving wenches, were in very good taste if I may say so and complemented the show beautifully.

Lastly, my sincere and heartfelt thanks to the display teams and the booksellers, especially for the displays set up by South View and Manor Field Junior Schools; and to those of our Committee and members who worked throughout the very long day seeing to the ticketing, programmes (what a good programme booklet Barbara!), and humping and arranging props for the show.

We ran two performances on the day, both of which were a sell-out – that is 200 people in all. Both the matinee and the evening show ran to schedule and received generous approval from the audience. The day exceeded our fondest hopes. Well done all of you !!

*The Committee decided that £500 of the costs of this performance could legitimately be borne by our Projects Fund, so that most of the ticket money will go to the Tower Appeal for St Michael's Church. This will be added to from the profit on the programme, from sales of pomanders and nosegays made by Jo Kelly and Mary Oliver, and from Dennis Freeman's Dress Rehearsal photographs which can be obtained from Paulline Williams at £1 each – or £1.50 for reprints (01256 333182). We were fortunate to have had the performance and displays videoed by members of the Basingstoke Camcorder Club. We thank them for this and we hope that copies of the video will be on sale before long – again, in support of the Tower Appeal.*

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## **FIELDWALKING AT NORTH WALTHAM**

*Mary Oliver*

We were recently asked by the North Waltham Historical Society to assist them in fieldwalking a field adjacent to the site at The Wheatsheaf Inn, North Waltham. Over the years, various Roman finds have been made in this vicinity, which is halfway between Silchester and Winchester and is a likely spot for a 'mansio' or maybe a market; see also Barbara's piece on the BENEATH BASINGSTOKE video about her discoveries during the building of the M3. The permission to fieldwalk was only for one weekend, because of the condition of the crop, and we were fortunate in getting together enough members (who had already volunteered to Marjolein) to augment the North Waltham members. We did not manage to walk the whole field, but we quickly realised on the Saturday morning, as large chunks of recognisable Roman tile were picked up, that this was perhaps the most exciting field walk we had ever undertaken, and that it was very likely that there was a Roman building on the slope of the hill.

Since then, a small team of dedicated potwashers - or, more accurately in this case, tile weighers - have met in my kitchen to deal with our finds, aided in their efforts by wine libations! The amount of pottery found was not as large or as varied as might have been expected, but it does include fragments of Samian ware (high status table ware) as well as greywares and other cooking pots. No coins or brooches, alas, but there were fragments of wall plaster and opus signinum (flooring material). The pattern of distribution of the brick and tile seems as significant when weighed as it did in the field. There is a definite concentration on a sort of shoulder of the slope, which is the south facing side of the valley and close to the course of the Roman road. It seems very likely that there was a substantial Roman building on the site.

The Chairman of the North Waltham Society has arranged for a member of Wessex Archaeology to come to talk to the village children, and to demonstrate a resistivity meter on the site (in the field next to the one we walked, which is no longer available to us). It would be splendid if traces of a building were picked up. Watch this space!

**Barbara Eastabrook**

First of all, some very sad news for anyone who hasn't heard: Barbara Eastabrook died just before Easter. Barbara's clear thinking and good sense and good humour were always welcome at our BTH meetings – which she attended in a wheelchair, having come in by taxi from Axford. And she did sterling work with transcriptions, being very fierce with interviewers who cut across the speakers. But finally MS and cancer claimed her. I shall miss the phone calls starting "Barbara, it's Barbara", the tone enjoying the neatness and the absurdity of the announcement. Although we never actually interviewed Barbara on tape, she did give me an account of her life, see page 11.

**Nancy Powell**

Some interesting news on the Nancy Powell project. Brian Butler, Nancy's cousin, has sent us various papers to copy. He is transcribing the diary of Nancy's Aunt, Ethel Lizzie Moody for the year 1894-5 when she was 21. He is annotating her entries with explanations of people, places etc and will be glad of our help with some Basingstoke details. At the time she was teaching in Chiswick but came back to Basingstoke in the holidays.

M. Jean-Pierre Bagland, one of the people Bob and I met at Nogent-le-Rotrou who had known Nancy and her family when she lived there, has sent me copies of correspondence and legal papers about a Free French pilot Lieutenant Pierre Leplang, who was shot down over Brunelles near Nogent in August 1944. Because his Spitfire was burnt out, it was assumed that he was English, so he was buried as an unnamed English pilot. However, some time later a gold Cross of Lorraine was found near the crash site and identified as his by one of his colleagues. Also the only Spitfire missing on that mission was identified as his. So he was then reburied in the French section and his name added to the list "Mort pour la Patrie". The connection with Nancy is that she used to meet the Free French pilots based at Odiham, who were given "open house" by a Mrs Young in Basingstoke – and in fact Pierre Leplang became engaged to a Basingstoke girl. When he died his mother (living in Paris) wrote to Mrs Young and said that she wanted to visit his grave but didn't know how to get from the station at Nogent to Brunelles. So I have a copy of a letter from Nancy, then back in Basingstoke, to her friends in Nogent, asking them to meet Mme Leplang's train and take her to Brunelles. It seemed strange to read one of Nancy's letters in French! I caught the end of a TV news item about a reunion at Odiham attended by Free French pilots – and there was a piece in the Gazette. I have a contact to follow up.

**Hackwood**

The Hampshire Archives Trust are having a visit to Hackwood's Spring Wood, and Peter Good tells me that the new owner of Spring Wood opened it on 12<sup>th</sup> May. We've had a request from a Canadian film maker for information about Hackwood House when it was used by the Canadian Medical Corps in WW2. We were able to give him some contact names, notably Brian Spicer who knows so much about Hackwood, and David Buckland and Beryl Streether, whose father was chauffeur to Lord Camrose; they both remember the Canadians there. This is not for a documentary, as you might expect but as background for a spy film!

**Talks**

I have given talks to the Friends of the Willis Museum, the Mothers' Union at St Joseph's and the Riverdene and Eastrop Over 60s Club.



## FROM ROUNDHOUSES TO ROUNDABOUTS

We have been asked to contribute to this exhibition of Local History in Basingstoke & Deane at the Willis Museum from 22 June to 7 September and are planning to display one of the Tudor costumes, and to do a BASINGSTOKE TALKING HISTORY display.

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### VISIT TO THE HISTORIC RESOURCES CENTRE WINCHESTER

*By Clive K Hawes*



The evening of 25<sup>th</sup> April found us, hot-foot from work, at Hyde Abbey in Winchester. Hyde strikes us as a 'tucked away' pleasant sector of the City, which one would drive through and miss rather than take a quiet stroll and view the buildings. It reminded us rather of the St Cuthbert's area of Bedford.

We met at the Study Centre and were welcomed and treated to an interesting overview of the building's history and contents as well as the current purpose and use by Robin Iles, the Curator of the Centre.

The origin of much of the contents had come to the small museum somewhat by default, with folk donating or bequeathing their collections over the years. In earlier times it had been fashionable to visit Egypt in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and, of course, historic artefacts would be brought home a souvenirs. In those days, one could easily obtain such important items, no doubt very cheaply. Thankfully there is much tighter control over such plunder these days.

We were invited to walk round to see the exhibits. The downstairs area consisted of Egyptian items set out to aid the school educational visits. The atmosphere of the place was very pleasant, being a mixture of stone with brickwork vaulting in the basement. Several mummified items were set out, including a tiny crocodile as well as radiographs. Most of the items were burial objects intended to appease the various Gods during the deceased's journey. There were no unwrappings on this visit though.

The hidden tomb allowed us to try out the 'Howard Carter' approach, with the aid of torches. (There surely were scorpions in there).

There were further treats for us upstairs, with polished bronze mirrors and ceramic scarabs for us to handle. All of this leads us to consider the methods of manufacture that were employed, especially the means of obtaining such a high polish on the mirrors. Sadly, now there is considerable corrosion on the metal surfaces.

Also we saw a skeleton which had been found locally. It appeared that there were signs of head injuries, possibly a murder or combat victim. Finally, we saw a number of death masks in the form of ceramic heads, these as yet uncatalogued. They were intended to demonstrate the now discredited science of Phrenology as proposed by Franz Josef Gall, (1758-1828).

In Victorian days, the subject of Phrenology was considered important and these heads had been manufactured to aid further study, one of the collection was of a serial killer that had been detained and presumably hanged at Winchester Gaol. The heads were still in the crates and partially wrapped. There even was one with rope marks on the neck! Somehow, they seemed slightly gruesome. We can remember Parents and Grandparents saying that so-and-so needed their bumps read and there used to be 'experts' who claimed to practise this art.

A wonderful visit. It is appropriate to record our thanks to all concerned for arranging the visit and refreshments.

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## A Brief Remembrance on Phrenology

### ***A recollection of the Rev. G.C. Rankin, looking back on his school days in the eastern United States, circa 1870***

***Clive Hawes***

"Among the students was a bright young fellow who had been under the tuition of the old teacher three or four years and he had been making a specialty of phrenology, and occasionally the boys would congregate in one of the rooms and Bob Rutherford would examine their heads, especially the new boys. He would take the boy, measure his head, place his hand upon the several bumps and call them by name and then decide whether or not he had any aptitude for study or any outlook for development.

I had to submit to this ordeal. It was not exactly hazing, but it was on that order. I was somewhat credulous and disposed to believe what was ordinarily told me and, in some sense, this was a serious matter to me. It was made such by those who witnessed the proceeding.

The fellow proceeded to measure my head from the forehead to the back, and from one ear to the other, and then he pressed his hands upon the protuberances carefully and called them by name. He felt my pulse, looked carefully at my complexion and defined it, and then retired to make his calculations in order to reveal my destiny. I awaited his return with some anxiety, for I really attached some importance to what his statement would be; for I had been told that he had great success in that sort of

work and that his conclusion would be valuable to me. Directly he returned with a piece of paper in his hand, and his statement was short. It was to the effect that my head was of the tenth magnitude with phyloprogenitiveness morbidly developed; that the essential faculties of mentality were singularly deficient; that my contour antagonized all the established rules of phrenology, and that upon the whole I was better adapted to the quietude of rural life rather than to the habit of letters.

Then the boys clapped their hands and laughed lustily, but there was nothing of laughter in it for me. In fact, I took seriously what Rutherford had said and thought the fellow meant it all. He showed me a phrenological bust, with the faculties all located and labeled, representing a perfect human head, and mine did not look like that one. I had never dreamed that the size or shape of the head had anything to do with a boy's endowments or his ability to accomplish results, to say nothing of his quality and texture of brain matter.

*I went to my shack rather dejected. I took a small hand-mirror and looked carefully at my head, ran my hands over it and realized that it did not resemble, in any sense, the bust that I had observed. The more I thought of the affair the worse I felt. If my head was defective there was no remedy, and what could I do? The next day I quietly went to the library and carefully looked at the heads of pictures of Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Napoleon, Alexander Stephens and various other great men. Their pictures were all there in histories.*

Among them all there was but one that gave me any encouragement, and that was John C. Calhoun's. My head, so far as I could observe, looked somewhat like his. Then I read a great deal about him and concluded that if John C. Calhoun had made the great man who figured, as he did, in National affairs, there was some hope for me! But the mischief done me by that foolish incident gave me anxiety for some time to come."

*-Rankin, The Story of My Life Or More than a Half Century as I Have Lived It and Seen It Lived. 1912, pp. 123-4.*

## CALENDAR

|                         |  |             |
|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| <b>Wednesday 29 May</b> | AGM and THE BLACK DEATH AND HAMPSHIRE<br>Tom James 7 pm, Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds College, Winchester          | HFC         |
| <b>2, 3, 4 June</b>     | STEAM AND VINTAGE WEEKEND,   | Milestones  |
| <b>Monday 3 June</b>    | <b>JUBILEE PICNIC</b> at Basing House  |             |
| <b>Thursday 13 June</b> | <b>AGM and AN UPDATE ON THE EXCAVATIONS AT THE DUKE OF BOLTON'S HOUSE, OLD BASING,</b> David Allen                           | <b>BAHS</b> |
| <b>Saturday 22 June</b> | HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT IN HAMPSHIRE Field Day, 9.45 am The Castle, Winchester; afternoon in King's Somborne | HFC         |
| <b>Thurs 27 June</b>    | CRIME AND PUNISHMENT Last Thursday Lecture, 1.15-1.45, Hampshire Record office   | HRO         |
| <b>Friday 28 June</b>   | A TRIP AROUND ALTON 7 pm, Curtis Museum  | FWM         |
| <b>Saturday 29 June</b> | <b>A DAY OF THREE CHURCHES</b><br>Meet at North Waltham Church 10.30 am  | <b>BAHS</b> |
| <b>2 and 3 August</b>   | TO THE FRONT: WW1 Reenactment  | Milestones  |
| <b>Tuesday 3 Sept</b>   | THRUXTON ROMAN VILLA fieldtrip<br>6 pm for 6.15  | HFC         |
| <b>Thursday 12 Sept</b> | <b>ROMAN COINS AND COIN HOARDS</b> John Hutchinson, Reading University   | <b>BAHS</b> |
| <b>Thursday 19 Sept</b> | DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A SHEPHERD<br>Mr L Atkinson  | FWM         |
| <b>Saturday 28 Sept</b> | WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM Day Conference<br>9.30 – 5, Cinema, Hampshire Record Office<br>£10 (£5 students)                          | HRO         |
| <b>Thursday 10 Oct</b>  | <b>WOODLAND CRAFTS IN NORTH HAMPSHIRE AND THE KENNET VALLEY: THEIR RISE AND FALL</b> Prof. Ted Collins                       | <b>BAHS</b> |
| <b>Thursday 17 Oct</b>  | AGM and A LOOK AT LATE VICTORIAN BASINGSTOKE George Plummer  | FWM         |

**BAHS = our Society. Lectures at Church Cottage, 7.30 pm**

HFC = Hampshire Field Club

FWM = Friends of the Willis Museum; 7.30 pm at Willis Museum

HRO = Hampshire Record Office, Winchester