

B A S I N G S T O K E
 A R C H A E O L O G I C A L
 S O C I E T Y

N E W S L E T T E R

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* * * * * Calendar of Events * * * * *

- * / Saturday 11th May AGM of Hampshire Field Club and lecture RECENT *
 * 2.30 pm EXCAVATIONS AT DANEBURY (Prof. Cunliffe) *
- * / Saturday 18th May Hampshire Field Club excursion to Grims Ditch, *
 * Bokerley Dyke, Dorset Cursus and Knowlton Circles *
- * Thursday 30th May Walk round SILCHESTER led by Duncan Russell. Meet *
 * 7.30 pm in the car park of St Mary's church, Silchester *
- * / Saturday 1st June Hampshire Field Club day on Kennet & Avon canal *
 * *
- * Sunday 23rd June Visit to SOUTHAMPTON led by Philip Morris; coach *
 * 1.30 pm from Basingstoke via Overton & Whitchurch. About *
 * £1. Application slip enclosed *
- * / Wednesday 26th June Hampshire Field Club Day in Dorset with Thomas *
 * Hardy *
- * Saturday 6th July Full-day excursion to DEVIZES area. Details to *
 * be announced *
- * Thursday 11th July ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Basingstoke *
 * 7.30 pm Archaeological Society at Chute House *
- * / Tuesday 16th July Hampshire Field Club excursion to Blenheim *
 * Palace *
- * Sunday 4th August Visit to BUTSER ANCIENT FARM. Meet in the car *
 * 2 pm park at Little Butser *
- * / see details inside *
- * Practical sessions on the treatment of excavation material are *
 * being discontinued until the autumn, but members wishing to look *
 * at material or books in the Muscum annexe are welcome on Thursday *
 * evenings. Ring Mary Oliver (Basingstoke 24263) or Barbara Applin *
 * (Basingstoke 65439) first. *
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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 1974-5 are now due. £1 for ordinary members; 50p for students and £1.75 joint subscription for husband and wife.

SILCHESTER WALK

Thursday, 30th May 1974

Duncan Russell will be leading a walk round the Roman town of Silchester on Thursday, 30th May. Meet at 7.30 pm in the car park of St Mary's church, Silchester. Be prepared for a fairly long walk.

VISIT TO SOUTHAMPTON

Sunday 23rd June, 1974

Philip Morris has again offered to lead an afternoon visit to Southampton, as several members were disappointed when this was cancelled last year. He is preparing a very interesting itinerary, and we shall go from point to point by coach, with a stop for tea. Leaving Basingstoke (Lower Wote Street, at the side of Jackson's Garage) at 1.30; picking up at Overton bus stop at 1.50 and at Whitchurch (near the silk mill) at 2 pm. Cost about £1. Anyone who would like to come should write this firmly in their diary now and send the enclosed slip to Phil so that he knows what kind of transport to arrange. Please let him know of any cancellations.

MUSEUM - PRACTICAL SESSIONS ON EXCAVATION MATERIAL

We are reconsidering the arrangements for practical sessions, and ways of making them more interesting and purposeful. For the time being we have decided to call a halt to pot washing etc while Mary and I concentrate on checking the remaining problems, and we shall announce a revised programme of practical sessions in the autumn. In the meantime, Mary and I shall be in the Museum annexe most Thursday evenings at the usual time and will welcome any member who would like to come and look at or borrow books from the book box or try some pot-drawing etc. However, we shan't commit ourselves to being there every Thursday, so please ring Mary (Basingstoke 24263) or myself (Basingstoke 65439) first to check.

BARBARA APPLIN

HEDGEROW DATING FIELDWALK

Unfortunately the owner has denied access to the land for further fieldwalking, so this has to be cancelled. However, plans are being made for further fieldwork and details will be announced later.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB

Annual Programme

The Society is affiliated to the Hampshire Field Club, and members are invited to attend its meetings and excursions. Tickets for excursions by coach are obtainable from Southgate World Travel, 1 Black Swan Buildings, Southgate Street, Winchester (please send a stamped and

addressed envelope with the fare, which now includes gratuities, and make sure you get your coach ticket at least four days before the excursion).

Saturday, 11th May Annual General Meeting of the Hampshire Field Club in the John Stripe Theatre, King Alfred College, Winchester, at 2.30 pm, followed at 3.30 by an illustrated lecture by Professor Barry Cunliffe on 'Recent Excavations at Danebury', with tea and biscuits at 4.30 approximately (10p).

Saturday, 18th May Excursion to Grims Ditch (Late Bronze Age/ Iron Age), Bokerley Dyke (Romano-British), Dorset Cursus (Neolithic) and the Knowlton Circles (Bronze Age), led by Colin Bowen of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments who has recently been doing work on these sites. Coach leaves Winchester Railway Station 11.15; Tidpit Common 7 miles SE of Salisbury on Cranborne Road, SU 070182. Walk to Bokerley Dyke; 1.15 pm picnic lunch; 2 pm visit Grims Ditch, Cursus and Knowlton Circles. Picnic tea 5 pm (approx); leave for Winchester. Fare 80p. NB This excursion will include some rough walking -- gum boots advisable if wet; bring your own picnic lunch/tea.

Saturday, 1st June A Day on the Kennet and Avon Canal, Director Mr E Grove. Limited to coach party only. 9.30 am coach leaves Winchester Railway station; 11 am horsedrawn barge joined at Newbury where there will be a short stop, for a four-hour journey westwards to Kintbury Lock where the coach will be rejoined. There is a bar on board where tea, drinks and light refreshments may be obtained. On the return journey Hamstead Marshall Church and the site of the great house will be visited with Mr Kaines-Thomas, President of Newbury District Field Club, and Mrs Kaines-Thomas, FSA. Arrive Winchester approx. 6 pm. Barge/coach fare £1.50.

Wednesday, 26th June 'Another Day in Dorset with Thomas Hardy', Director Mr H.A. Collinson. 9.30 am coach leaves Winchester Railway Station; 11.30 St Mary's Church Puddletown, followed by some visits to other Hardy countryside places. Picnic lunch. 2.30 pm County Museum, Dorchester; 4 pm leave for Winchester. Fare £1.30.

Tuesday, 16th July Blenheim Palace, near Oxford, Director Mr E Grove. 9.30 am coach leaves Winchester Railway Station; 10.30 short stop at Newbury; noon picnic lunch in coach in Palace car park, followed by guided tour of Palace (Party adm. 50p, OAPs 25p). The park and gardens are also open. Refreshments available. 5 pm leave for Winchester. Fare £1.05.

The current volume of the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club can be borrowed by members (preferably for not more than a fortnight at a time) - contact either Mary Oliver or Barbara Applin.

WEST HAM SKELETON - 30th March (report by John Oliver)

Thanks to a tip off from Maureen Garner, Mary went out to West Ham Park where it was reported that a skeleton had been found. While laying a new water main a digger driver had found some bones. Luckily he had informed the County Museum Service and one of the staff from

Winchester had spent a day on the site recording and lifting the skeleton. When Mary arrived the digger had revealed a second skeleton; as there was little that could be done at that time, arrangements were made for us to lift the bones the next day (Saturday) on behalf of the Museum Service.

Soon the telephone lines were busy with calls to Winchester and it was established that the first skeleton was probably of a Roman woman, dating evidence being provided by a bone hair pin. The only other finds had been some nails, probably from a wooden coffin, and green stains on the bones suggesting perhaps that coins had been deposited with the body, although there was no other trace of these.

The next afternoon, Mary and I with Barbara and Bob Applin arrived at the site. It was a perfect day for digging. The digger had obligingly cleared the top soil from the grave and it did not take too long to get down to the level of the bones. Unfortunately the skeleton was in a sorry state; both legs had been amputated just below the hips at the time of its discovery, the front of the skull was missing (possibly also by the action of the digger) and many other bones had decayed right away. When eventually everything was cleared up it was found that the shoulder bones, some vertebrae and most of the ribs and finger bones had decomposed. The grave had been quite neatly cut into the chalk, but the body had not been carefully placed, judging by the position of the bones, and the only accompaniment into the next world was a small broken piece of black pottery and one nail. We were glad to be able to help the County Museum Service by excavating this skeleton.

JOHN OLIVER

EXCURSION - DEVIZES AREA

Saturday, 6th July

Plans are being made for a full-day excursion to Devizes and the surrounding area on 6th July. Make a note of the date and look out for details later.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, 11th July

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm at Chute House on Thursday, 11th July. Please make a note of the date and let the committee know of any matters you would like to be raised.

VISIT TO BUTSER ANCIENT FARM

Sunday, 4th August

Another date to note is that of our visit to Butser, where Peter Reynolds is running the Ancient Farm project (of which an account is given in the Hampshire Newsletter - see below). This is a most fascinating reconstruction of farming methods in the Iron Age, with

experiments in breeding sheep and pigs and growing the kinds of cereals known in the Iron Age, and storing corn in storage pits, also reconstructing Iron Age round houses, ovens and kilns. Peter Reynolds has agreed to show us round the site and also to give us a follow-up lecture in more detail during our next lecture season. For the visit, meet in the car park at Little Butser at 2 pm. Butser is just off the A3, halfway between Petersfield and Horndean, SU 717 203.

CHURCH COTTAGE EXCAVATIONS 1974
Preliminary Report

Excavations were carried out during Easter week 1974 at the rear of Church Cottage, Basingstoke, in order to gain further information on the present building, its development, and its possible precursors: previous excavations inside Church Cottage were reported in the BAS Newsletter for July 1973, No 9.

A 7m x 2m trench was excavated to a depth of 1.5m, parallel to, and 2m outside, Church Cottage hall. The following main layers and features were revealed.

- Layer 1: Black loam, 70 cm deep, much building rubble. This appeared to have been deliberately deposited during the last half century to build up the ground surface; it filled a number of shallow pits and ditches contemporary with the use of the Church Cottage's coal fired boiler. Slate pencils, marbles and stoneware and glass inkwells dated to the late 19th century school; and a large quantity of earthenware, white glazed pottery and medicine and other glass bottles dated from the same period. The layer was cut both to the North by several pits dug to dispose of builders' waste, and also East-West by a recent waterpipe trench.
- Layer 2: Grey clayey silt, 25 cm deep, cut in the south section by a brick privy.
- Layer 3: Light brown silt, 20 cm deep.
- Layer 4: Small stones and grit, grey clay, 10 cm deep.
- Layer 5: Light brown and grey clay natural, excavated to about 25 cm depth.

Layers 3 and 4 appear to be the original ground surface and subsoil respectively. At the trench centre they were cut by a steep sided flat-bottomed ditch running N-S, of depth 1m and width 1m (both measurements at original ground surface). 2m to the east, a chalk post setting 50 cm diameter by 15 cm deep was cut into the ground surface. No finds (other than tiny tile fragments) were made below the ground surface, and no medieval pottery above it - unusual in view of the frequency of 17th - 19th century pottery. This absence of finds suggests that the ground surface, which is suspiciously flat and even, has in fact been artificially levelled during the later medieval period, whether by normal yard cleaning or for building purposes. We are therefore almost immediately upon pre-medieval levels; the ditch produced (in addition to many pig bones) one large and two small fragments of Romano-British coarse pottery, and it is reasonable to regard the steep-cut ditch, the associated ground surface, and possibly the chalk packed post setting as of this date.

In conclusion, then, we may say that, since this post-setting is far too large to be a fencing or boundary post and is presumably therefore part of a building, the excavation appears to show the existence of Roman occupation on this site.

P. M. C. JUDKINS

HAMPSHIRE NEWSLETTER
1973 issue

A double spring/autumn issue for 1973 is now available (price 30p) and can be obtained from Mary Oliver or Barbara Applin. It includes articles on Abbotstone Races, the excavation of a small enclosure at Amberwood, activities in Andover, extracts from the reminiscences of Frank O'Brien Adams of Bembridge, details from a booklet on Andover before 1825, an account of the progress of the survey of gravestones in Hampshire churchyards and notes on two hand-axes from Hampshire in the Worthing Museum. Reports are also included from the Andover Local Archives Committee, the Basingstoke Archaeological Society - Mary Oliver's account of our activities - the Butser Ancient Farm Project, Fareham Local History Group, the Hampshire Record Office, Rescue, the South Hampshire Archaeological Rescue Group (known as SHARG) and Romsey Abbey excavations.

NOTE: Excavations are being planned for the summer. Details in the next Newsletter.