

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

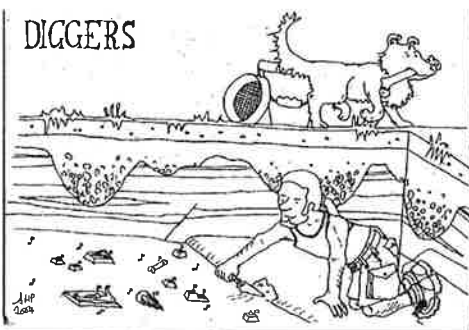


**NEWSLETTER 167**

**May 2004**

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*Cartoons (Table Cards at the Annual  
Dinner) by Alison Pinto*

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004

See the separate Calling Notice for this meeting at Church Cottage, Basingstoke, at 7.30 pm. After the AGM, Barbara Applin will play extracts from **BASINGSTOKE TALKING HISTORY** interviews, to give you some idea of the variety of people and experiences that are now recorded for the future.



*Sue Strawson*

### ◆ VISIT TO SALISBURY

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

We are booked to be taken on a guided tour of Salisbury; our guide will be Mrs Penny May of the Salisbury City Guides. The cost is £2.50 per person, payable on the day. Meet at the Tourist Information Office at 13.50. The Tourist Information Office is behind the Guildhall, which is in the Market Place. The tour will take about 2 hours.

Parking in Salisbury is said to be difficult; however, there is an excellent Park and Ride. To get there, take the A303 to Amesbury. Turn onto the A345 (this is the second turning to Salisbury). Eventually you will turn right, following the Park and Ride signs. For a fee of £1.50 you can park all day and up to 6 people can take the bus into Salisbury. Get off in the Market Square, cross through the market to the Guildhall and go behind this to find the Tourist Information Office.

For those wishing to make a day of it, some suggestions for the morning:

**Old Sarum** This is on the A345 near the turning to the Park and Ride

**Salisbury Cathedral** This is not included in the city tour.

Please ring me (01256 353077) if you intend to join us. We are limited to 25 people, but we haven't reached that number yet.

### ◆ SILCHESTER EXCAVATIONS

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August

Once again, Mike Fulford will guide us round the latest excavations at Silchester. Meet at 6 pm in the car park (the visit starts at 6.30 but we need to allow time to gather and walk to the site). Mike will be also speaking about the Silchester excavations at a Roman Research Trust open meeting at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1 at 5.30 on 21<sup>st</sup> June, followed by a reception. Visitors are welcome, at no charge.

### ◆ ODIHAM AND AROUND

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September

A reminder about this day visit (own transport) Derek Spruce offers to be our guide to Nately Scures and Greywell in the morning, lunching at Greywell or Odiham, and around Odiham itself in the afternoon. You can, if you want, opt for either morning or afternoon – or both. **Please let Sue Strawson (01256 353077) know if you are interested.** Derek is also leading a Hampshire Field Club visit to Odiham on 4<sup>th</sup> September, but with different churches.

## A FORETASTE OF SOCIETY LECTURES

To tempt you, we hope our 2004-5 lectures will include talks on the Vindolanda Tablets, geophysics for archaeologists, the further story of excavations at the Oracle, Reading, and Edwin and Joyce Gifford on reconstructing the Ferriby boat.

### ..... INSPIRED VIEWS OF BASING HOUSE .. ..

Don't forget the last date for entries for this competition is 31<sup>st</sup> May. Any work of art, photograph, poem, drawing or painting inspired by Basing House. Lots of entries are invited, to make a good display at the Willis Museum (from 12<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June) and winners will be announced at an early evening prize-giving reception at the Willis Museum on 15<sup>th</sup> June. The competition is organised by the Friends of Basing House, in conjunction with our Society and the Friends of the Willis Museum, and these societies will then have the right to use any of the images to publicise Basing House.

Post or deliver your entries to Nicola Turton at Basing House, Redbridge Lane, Old Basing, RG24 7HB. Please make sure that your name, address, phone number and age (if under 18) are attached to your entry. There will be two categories: under 18 and over 18.

## ***FIELDWORK***

*Marjolein Mussellwhite*

32 King Johns Road  
North Warnborough  
Hook RG29 1EJ

Tel. 01256 701192  
Mob. 07753 724435  
Email [marjoleine\\_2000@hotmail.com](mailto:marjoleine_2000@hotmail.com)

### **Basing Dig**

Unfortunately, museum politics meant that we had to cancel the Basing Grange dig at very short notice, and Dave Allen sends his sincere apologies to anyone who was disappointed or inconvenienced because of this. The County Recreation & Heritage Services are going through a period of rapid change and he has been caught up in this for the next few months. The promised fifth and, for the time being, final season will take place next Easter, however, and by that time it is hoped that some of the facilities 'across the road' will have been installed.

Some members did turn out for an Archaeological Weekend at Basing (16-18th April) to give a particular flavour to one of Alan Turton's special events. The Friday and Saturday were very pleasant and the diggers nibbled at the truncated wall foundations of the New House and once again carried on from where the Time Team left off. The big agent of destruction in this area was the Basingstoke Canal (1790s - infilled in the 1960s). Most of the work emphasised just how destructive a canal cut can be, and the Sunday, when most visitors were expected, turned out to be a wash-out. Many thanks to those of you who did take part, thank you for your perseverance, and here's looking forward to a good season next year.



*Photo: Dave Allen. The diggers contemplate the New House walls truncated by the line of the canal.*

## Stores

In between times the stores weekends will continue (second Sunday of the month - 10am - 5pm at Chilcomb House). If you have some time and want to come and help, please contact Kay Ainsworth on 01962 826738.

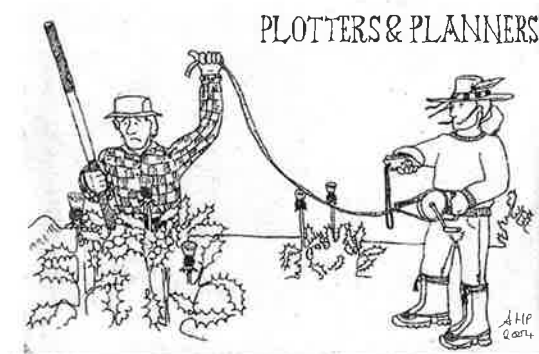


There also will be an opportunity to work on the Basing Grange finds at Andover Museum. We now have scores of boxes of pottery, bone, metalwork, glass, clay pipe etc. and although

it is already neatly packaged, there's a lot of sifting and sorting to be done in advance of specialist reports and the final writing up. In addition, thanks to Alan Turton's researches there are some remarkable and revealing new leads to the date of construction of the Duke of Bolton's mansion. Dave tells me there's a terrible pun in there, but I think the new line of evidence has got them all excited! All will be revealed....

### **Training Day 3 July**

Don't forget that on 3 July we will be running a training day on how to plan and record an excavation. If you are interested in taking part, please do let me know.



### **Field Walking**

The promised field walking programme is still in preparation, but progress is being made. Mark Peryer and some other members of the Fieldwork Committee have managed to find out who the land owners are, and the next task is to contact them to see if we can walk their sites. Once we have permission we will work out when the best time to walk the fields will be and we will contact you (most likely at short notice) to see if you can make it. If you are interested in doing this and you haven't already informed me, please let me know and I'll add you to the list.

### **Worting Ragwort**

Those of you who have been to the BAHS training excavations in Worting are familiar with the field where the digs take place. This field is owned by one of our members, Richenda Power, and for the last three or four years Richenda has let the field go back to its natural state, with lots of wild flowers. However, there is one unwanted interloper in the form of ragwort. Last August a small group of BAHS members went and spent a lovely summer's evening picking the ragwort, and as we enjoyed ourselves so much, we feel that it is well worth doing this again. If you fancy helping out with this, please let me know. We haven't picked a date yet, but it is likely to be some time in July. We might have a picnic beforehand, end up at the pub afterwards, we'll see how it goes.

### **Odiham Castle on the Web**

Although this is not strictly part of our field work, Odiham Castle is an important site within our area and since my move to North Warnborough I feel particularly attached to it! One of the areas in which Dave Allen has been working is to get some details of the Museum Service 1980s excavation onto the web. If you visit [www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/odihamcastle/](http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/odihamcastle/) you'll find a number of images and brief descriptions of the dig.

## **D-DAY AND BEYOND – Basingstoke & Deane's Story**

This exhibition to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings will be on at the Willis Museum from 17<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> July. It will include short excerpts from interviews conducted by our Basingstoke Talking History group (see the Report on page 11), as well as items lent by local people to illustrate their experiences from D-Day to homecoming and demob.

## ~~~~~ BASING HOUSE STUMPWORK ~~~~~

The £3,500 needed for the climate-controlled cabinet needed to display the stump work has now been raised, through donations from our Society, the Friends of the Willis Museum, the Friends of Basing House and members of the public. It is hoped that this will soon go on display in the Willis Museum

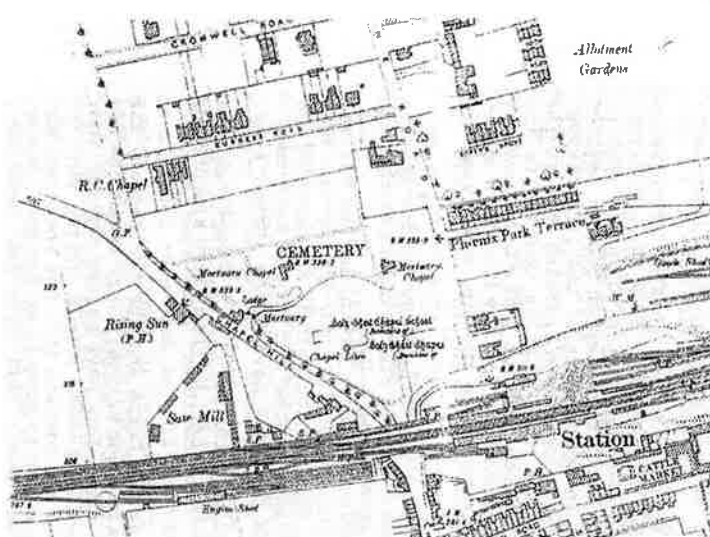
## COOKSEYS, BATTLEDOWN, TRUFFLES AND SOPER

*Barbara Applin*

The copy of Baigent & Millard's *History of Basingstoke* mentioned in *Newsletter 166* has now found a new home with Derek Spruce – and this seems very suitable, as Derek's line of research continues the interests of Eric Stokes, the book's former owner.

### Who was Mr Cooksey?

Derek Spruce was delighted to see that the copy he acquired had once been owned by Mr Willis, and he was intrigued by the inscription on the title page where Dr Millard thanked Mr Charles F Cooksey for his assistance in the preparation of the History. On page 413 of "Baigent & Millard" we find what form this help took: "For the concise history of the House [Basing House] and its vicissitudes of fortune contained in the following pages we are much indebted to Mr C. F. Cooksey, who has kindly permitted the use of a MS read by him before the Berkshire Archaeological and Architectural Society, at Basing, in September, 1881." In our *Newsletter 166*, I mentioned that Mr Charles F Cooksey of Basingstoke had donated various items found in Basingstoke to Reading Museum. The 1936 volume of the *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club* has an article by LRA Grove, then Assistant, Reading Museum, on *Two Bridle Spurs from Basingstoke* "formerly in the collection of the late Mr C Cooksey, who did much excavating in the Basingstoke district at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century" and there is a reference to the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 1880, page 118.



Map marked as 1896 but not showing all houses in the 1881 census.

Derek Spruce then found Charles F Cooksey in the 1881 census, living in Burgess Road. I had hoped to find that the Cookseys' house in Burgess Road might have been either the one now occupied by Anne Hawker or one father along, where Mr Willis had lived. After comparing information from various census lists and Directories, I find they were next

door but one to Anne.

In 1881 Charles F Cooksey was an auctioneer, aged 30. He had a wife, Rose, aged 29 and two sons: Charles F J (11) and Walter N (10) and a servant, Sarah Ann Smith. However, he was not there in the 1891 census, and the 1901 census shows him back in Southampton, where he was born. His first wife must have died, as his wife in Southampton was Alice M (who had been born in Basingstoke). And he had a visitor – Francis Baigent (of Baigent & Millard!) I was sure he must have been involved with the Hampshire Field Club and I found him in the membership lists in volumes of the *Proceedings* for 1893-1905, living at various addresses in Southampton.

### **The Battle of Acleah**

Even better, the 1905 volume contained an article by Charles Cooksey on “The Battle of Acleah” in which he argued that this battle of 851 between the Saxons and the Danes, when the Danes were defeated by Ethelwulf, was not at Ockley in Surrey, as had been thought, but at Oakley near Basingstoke – our “Battledown”. Two forms, *Acleah* and *Aclea* derive from OE *ác* = “oak” and *leah* = “glade” or “clearing”. Interestingly, at the end of his article, Mr Cooksey expressed his gratitude to Mr Francis Joseph Baigent “for his generous assistance in the preparation of the data for this paper”. The 1917 *Proceedings* had an article by F H Baring, agreeing with Mr Cooksey’s identification of Acleah as Oakley (Battledown) and also suggesting that this might be the site of several synods, 782-810.

I wondered what modern Anglo-Saxon specialists thought of this, so I sent photocopies of the two articles to Professor Barbara Yorke, of King Alfred’s College, Winchester – you may remember she has given a talk to our Society, as well as being a frequent lecturer at the Hampshire Field Club.

Professor Yorke doubts if the location of the battle of Acleah can be definitively known. She agrees that the modern name of Oakley does seem to be derived from the Old English name Acleah, while Ockley does not, but she points out that many places recorded in Anglo-Saxon documents cannot be traced today, and Acleah is quite common.

Professor Yorke then says, “One can also approach the matter from another direction, by asking at what sort of sites did battles between West Saxons and Vikings occur in the ninth century? A high proportion of the fighting seems to have taken place around royal vill sites like that recorded at Basing in 871 [see Mr Mayo’s article in our *Newsletter* 79]. These were places where the royal food rent seems to have been paid and probably other surpluses from royal estates were stored. They were therefore attractive locations for the Viking armies where they could replenish their own supplies and deny them to the West Saxon rulers. Therefore it is possible that we should be looking for a site of this type for the 851 battle. That there was an Acleah of this type in use in the ninth century is suggested by a charter of 824 that was granted at Acleah. A site in southern England called Acleah was also used as the meeting site on more than one occasion by the southern church council or synod. Not all the sites used for synod meetings can be identified, but several of those that can are in the vicinity of London with good access from Roman roads and rivers. One of these Acleah meetings was mostly attended by Kentish people and has led to the suggestion that it may have been near the Kent/Surrey border, perhaps in the vicinity of Croydon which was used for at least one royal meeting at this time (see *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c650-850* C Cubitt, 1995). It is possible that this Acleah was also the location of the 851 battle, but the evidence is hardly conclusive.”

So Professor Yorke ends by saying, “On the whole, I would say that the identification of the battle-site of 851 with Oakley in Hampshire has not been generally accepted. However,

Alfred Smyth in his recent *King Alfred the Great* does give it serious consideration. The evidence is too scanty to produce a definitive solution to its identification.”

### What, then, of Charles Cooksey himself and his sons?

I had an e-mail from our member Brian Butler, reminding me that he had once sent me a copy of a letter to his great grandmother from a Fr Charles Cooksey SJ, known to family and friends as “Fred”, so I looked that up. Fr Cooksey mentioned that he had left Basingstoke in 1885, that if his mother was still alive (1944) she would have been 93 last June and that he himself is now “quite an old man of 75”. All this fits very well with the census information about Charles F Cooksey’s eldest son, Charles. Then Brian produced an obituary of Fr Charles Cooksey!



A Fr Ernest Hull described him as “absolutely straightforward, and full of dignity and benevolence; but his insight and his common sense led him to realise the foibles of others, and he would often pass severe judgments on their proceedings, sometimes with amusement, sometimes in honest deprecation, but never with bitterness, malice or prejudice. He was in short one of the most lovable men I ever met.” He had been a prominent Jesuit, working in the missions for 17 years in the West Indies, and in particular in British Guiana, with a period “to recruit his strength” in Barbados. In 1924 he was appointed Superior of the Jesuit Retreat House at Craighead, and Fr Wingfield Digby said “It was the high summer of his career. He was now actor-manager of his own theatre. His vigorous work was rather like a kind of charity performance for the Kingdom of God.”

### Canon Walter Cooksey

The obituary mentioned that not only had this Charles Cooksey (Fred) become a Catholic and then a priest – but his brother Walter had done the same! And then, looking in Mr Ellaway’s cuttings book in the Resources Room at the Willis Museum – Mr Ellaway was one of Mr Willis’s “flinting friends” – I found this letter to *The Times* of 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1939:

#### “TRUFFLES

About 60 years ago, when I was a child, I often watched an old man hunting for truffles in Hackwood Park near Basingstoke. The part of the park in which he worked was generally between the Mansion and the Winslade road, where the drive is (or was) bordered by woodland. The method was that a trained dog – in this case a small mongrel with affinities to a spaniel – nosed about in the spinney till he marked a spot like a pointer marking game. The old man then dug at the spot indicated with a stout two-pronged form on a short handle, and if a truffle was found gave a fragment of biscuit to the dog and set him off on a further hunt. The truffles were small black tubers of irregular shape, the largest being about the size of a walnut. As far as my memory carries me, the tubers appeared to be plentiful and the bag the old man carried soon filled up. The old truffle hunter told us that trained pigs were often used for the business as well as trained dogs.

*The Rev. W. Cooksey, The Presbytery, Caterham, Surrey.”*



### And the grandfather!

Brian Butler also discovered that the original Charles Cooksey's father-in-law was John Burgess Soper, an eminent Basingstoke businessman who was Mayor several times (including 1889, when "Baigent & Millard" was published). In 1876 he ran The Basingstoke Ironmongery Warehouse in Market Place in 1876, as well as a London warehouse in No 54 Arch, next to Vauxhall SW Railway Station. The "copy of the ornamental mediaeval gate of the 15<sup>th</sup> century" on the billhead was made for Basingstoke Industrial Exhibition in 1860.



In the Salvation Army riots of 1889 the "Massagainians" who rioted against the Salvation Army's attack on drinking, tried to break into his house in Vyne Road, attempting to set fire to it and smashing every window. This is now demolished, but it faced the end of Soper Grove and was known locally as "Soper's Castle" (see Bob Applin's article in the *Newsletter of the Friends of the Willis Museum, Autumn 2003*). Anne Hawker's article "The Fuss About Maiden Acre" in our *Newsletter ... 1982*, tells of his plans for the development of plots along Burgess Road, part of Vyne Road and part of Sherborne Road. Burgess Road and Soper Grove still perpetuate his name today.

If you look on the Internet for "The Holy Ghost Parish" you find in their History that Canon Crookall (Parish Priest of Woolhampton 1855-1886) came to say Mass in Basingstoke for a handful of Catholics. One of these was James or William Gibbons, gardener to John Burgess Soper, who then offered Dr Crookall a site for a church on the corner of Burgess Road and Sherborne Road, "at a reasonable price". Was it because of his friendly attitude to Catholics that his two grandsons were able to become Catholics themselves? What a family!

## BUY A BRICK FOR FISHBOURNE!

Fishbourne Roman Palace is one of the "musts" for anyone interested in Roman sites, and it is good to hear of plans to improve its conservation, access and interpretation. The cover building has deteriorated, putting the mosaic floors it covers at risk, so it is due for major refurbishment. A new Collections Discovery Centre is to provide further storage space, house the joint reserve collections of both Fishbourne Roman Palace and Chichester District Museum, and include a conservation laboratory and a research room. Physical access to the site will be improved through more ramps and covered walkways, and there will be a new introductory audio-visual programme, museum and north wing display. The displays will include interactive elements, and a new education workshop will be set up.

See *Current Archaeology 191* for details of the Buy a Brick project just launched to help raise the necessary funds. For £5 you can buy a brick for the new Collections Discovery centre – no upper limit on how many bricks you can buy – even an entire wall! To buy a brick or for further information, contact the palace on 01243 785 859 or [www.sussexpast.co.uk](http://www.sussexpast.co.uk) or send a cheque payable to Sussex Archaeological Society to: Fishbourne Roman Palace, Salthill Road, Fishbourne, PO19 3QR. And you will receive a certificate to recognise your contribution.

## THE DANEBURY VIDEO

Our Chairman, Marjoleine, has been involved in the making of another video – **Danebury, Ritual & Religion in the Iron Age**. It lasts 19 minutes and is available from the Museum of the Iron Age, 6 Church Street, Andover, SP10 1DP, £7.95 (or by post, £8.50 including p& p). We hope to have copies available on our own bookstall. Another "must have"!



## BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

**NEW .....****The History of The Manor of Manydown: Volume 1 1800-1900**  
**Part I The Tithing and Parish of Wootton St Lawrence**  
**Part II The Tithings of Baughurst and Hannington**  
by Ken Smallbone  
Phone or fax the author, 01256 355590, e-mail [Ksmallbone@aol.com](mailto:Ksmallbone@aol.com)

Margot Stokes has sent us a number of books and booklets which Eric had collected on Basingstoke local history, and at the same time Tim Herrington has passed over a splendid collection of booklets on churches (near and far). We shall lay these out at meetings for you to take and put what you feel is an appropriate amount in "the kitty", to go towards the publication of our forthcoming Basingstoke Talking History book.

### ***TAKING THE PULSE OF BASINGSTOKE***

A draft MS, style sheet and sample illustrations (and all this also on a CD-Rom) are now circulating among members for their comments, while we are obtaining quotes for design and printing – and finalising a few odds and ends.

### ***D-DAY EXHIBITION AT THE WILLIS MUSEUM***

We have interviewed 6 people who made contact with the Museum, and are arranging to interview 4 more. As well as hearing of the landings themselves, we hear of the night shift in the ATS when the teleprinters suddenly and eerily went silent – starting again to announce Operation Overlord. We hear of a prisoner of war's experiences in Stalag 344 and on the "Death March", and of the "forgotten Army – and a great range of experiences which are sobering and frightening to record. Sue Tapliss's team will take quotations from our interviews to use in her exhibition. We have also been collaborating with the Basingstoke Camcorder Club, who are making a video.

The membership of our group is growing, but we are always glad to have more help with interviewing, transcribing or researching, so do let me know if you would like to join us: 01256 465439.

### **NEHHAS EXCAVATIONS 2004**

The North East Hampshire Historical & Archaeological Society invites our members to take part in their excavations between Farnham, Surrey, and Alton, Hampshire, to establish the route of the Roman Road. **28-31 May and 27-30 August.** Project Director Dr Richard Whaley

NEHHAS will provide an interesting and enjoyable dig. And a training course will be available.

For details and application forms e-mail [btl.pcil@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:btl.pcil@ukonline.co.uk), write to Dr Whaley (s.a.e. appreciated) at 2 Rotherwick Court, Farnborough, GU14 6DD or ring 01252 548 155.

**STOP PRESS! .....KINGSCLERE DIG** The Kingsclere Heritage Association in association with Southampton University will dig at Henry 's royal house and a Roman farmstead and want to recruit local people, including the disabled (hoping to get funding for special requirements for disabled diggers). Contact Keith Whiteman 01635 2999460 or [keith.whiteman@virgin.net](mailto:keith.whiteman@virgin.net)

## CALENDAR

<b>Thurs 20 May</b>	HCC 2001 CENSUS Robin Edwards	FWM
<b>Sat 22 May</b>	<b>DAY IN SALISBURY</b> (Page 2)	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Sat 22 May</b>	Aspects of Hampshire's Maritime Past: Local History Section Symposium, Hampshire Record Office, 9.30-5.	HFC
<b>Sun/Mon 30/31 May</b>	American Civil War Re-enactment presented by the The Southern Skirmishers from 2 pm	BH
<b>Thurs 10 June</b>	<b>AGM and BASINGSTOKE TALKING HISTORY</b>	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Sat 19 June</b>	Archaeology Section fieldtrip to Butser Ancient Farm and Roman Villa reconstruction ( 2 pm)	HFC
<b>Sat 3 July</b>	<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL PLANNING TRAINING SESSION</b> (page 2)	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> July</b>	Local History Section outing to King's Somborne & Stockbridge	HFC
<b>Sun 11 July</b>	Archaeology Section by coach <i>Two Villas and a Castle</i> , Bignor, Barcombe and Lewes	HFC
<b>Sun 1 August</b>	Marriage of England and Spain 1554: period picnic from 2 pm; bring your own food. Living History display presented by the Armada Militia	BH
<b>Thurs 5 Aug</b>	<b>SOCIETY VISIT TO SILCHESTER 6 pm</b>	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Sat/Sun 7/8 Aug</b>	Mediaeval Craftsmen & market from 2 pm	BH
<b>Fri/Sat/Sun 10/11 Sept</b>	Heritage Open Days with Guided Tours at 3 pm to commemorate the raising of the 1644 Siege of Basing House	BH
<b>Thurs 16 Sept</b>	Is It Worth Saving? How Do We Save It? Ms S Howard Hampshire Textile Conservator	FWM
<b>Sat 25 September</b>	<b>ODIHAM AND AROUND</b> (see page 2)	<b>BAHS</b>

<b>BAHS</b>	<b>Our Society; lectures 7.30 pm at Church Cottage</b>
BH	Basing House
FWM	Friends of the Willis Museum, 7.30 at the museum
HFC	Hampshire Field Club; we can send one representative - Ring Margaret Porter for details

**Secretary: Margaret Porter 01256 356012**