

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**NEWSLETTER 169**

**November 2004**

## **CONTENTS**

<i>Page 2</i>	<b>CHRISTMAS PARTY SUBS REMINDER ANNUAL DINNER MESSAGES FROM THE CHAIRMAN</b>
<i>Page 3</i>	<b>MARY SHELLEY</b>
<i>Page 4</i>	<b>BAHS FIELDWORK</b>
<i>Page 6</i>	<b>BASINGSTOKE TALKING HISTORY MILESTONES CHRISTMAS GALA EVENINGS</b>
<i>Page 7</i>	<b>THE CHURCH EMBROIDERIES EXHIBITION</b>
<i>Page 8</i>	<b>A VISIT FROM THE HAMPSHIRE FIELD SOCIETY LOCAL HISTORY SECTION MILESTONES VOUCHERS</b>
<i>Page 9</i>	<b>FRIENDS OF BASING HOUSE – OUR FRIENDS! WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY PRACTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY TRAINING COURSE</b>
<i>Page 12</i>	<b>CALENDAR</b>

# CHRISTMAS PARTY



Apologies for putting the wrong date in the last Newsletter!

7.30 pm, Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004  
Church Cottage, Basingstoke  
£2.00

As usual, this is planned to be a relaxed get-together, with a glass of wine or soft drink and a finger buffet – and a quiz or two. If you're new to the Society, now's your chance to meet people and chat. Offers of help to prepare or supply buffet food will be welcomed (the Society will refund expenses) by Diana Medley, who will be ringing the regular contributors nearer the time. If she hasn't rung you, and you want to help, you can e-mail her on [dmedley@lineone.net](mailto:dmedley@lineone.net) (or ring Barbara Applin 01256 465439 and she'll pass the message on). Hope to see you there!

## SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER..... Subs were due on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

If you haven't yet paid, please do! £11 individual, £15 family, £7 students and over 60s, £12 family over 60s, payable to BAHS, sent to Garth George, 71 Camrose Way, Basingstoke RG21 3AW. And please don't forget to sign a Gift Aid Form if you haven't done that already!

## ANNUAL DINNER

6 pm for 6.30  
Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005  
£17

*Book this date now for a really enjoyable  
social occasion – good food, good company  
and an entertaining after-dinner speaker.  
More details later*

## MESSAGES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I'd like to float the idea of a trip to Pompeii – anyone interested? If so, please ring me on 01256 701192.

*Marjolein*

*Please don't forget to sign the list when you come in to a lecture meeting – we need to do this, for Health & Safety rules.*

# *Obituary*

## **Mary Shelley**

*Margaret Bailey and Jean Freeman*



Members of BAHS will have been sorry to learn of the death of Mary Shelley, née Harvey, on September 1<sup>st</sup>. She was a member of the Society for many years, serving on the committee and taking an active part in the Talking History group until ill health made it difficult for her to participate.

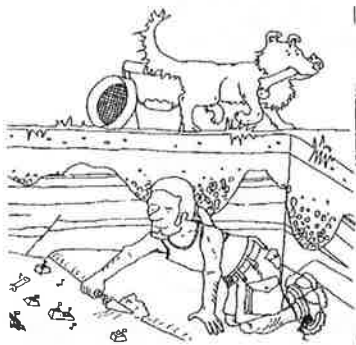
Mary had lived in Basingstoke from an early age, moving to live with her aunts in Hackwood Road when her mother died. As a small child she attended Miss Pink's School in Richmond Road and later went to Basingstoke High School, now Costello Technology College. She then trained as a teacher at Rolle College in Exmouth. She taught in several Hampshire schools and finally settled at the Richard Aldworth School, where she taught English and became Head of Hackwood House.

After retiring from teaching in the 1980s, she gained an Open University degree in History, which was always a subject dear to her heart. She became a governor of Ruckstall Primary School and served in this capacity until her death.

In 1984 Mary married David Shelley at Eastrop Church and they enjoyed a happy 14 year marriage until his death in 1998. She and her husband attended All Saints Church and St Thomas à Beckett Church at Worting. She was a member of the choir there and various other local choirs. She had a keen interest in music, so was a member of the Concert Club. She was a guide at Winchester Cathedral, where she had a particular interest in leading school parties. She was a member of the U3A and led a study group on famous historical people. Recently she joined the European Movement, as she had been an active member of the Liberal Democrats since the 1980s.

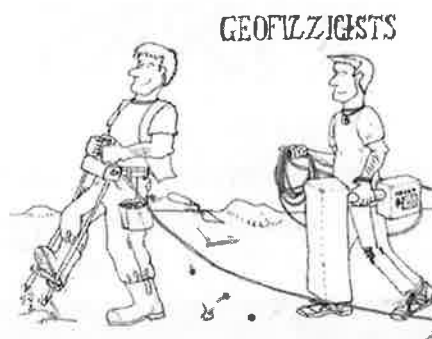
Mary knew many local people and had a wealth of memories of old Basingstoke. Her uncle, Charles Paice, was borough mayor between 1954 and 1955 and became closely involved in the new town development.

Mary will always be remembered as a friendly and cheerful person, who will be sadly missed by her family and many friends.



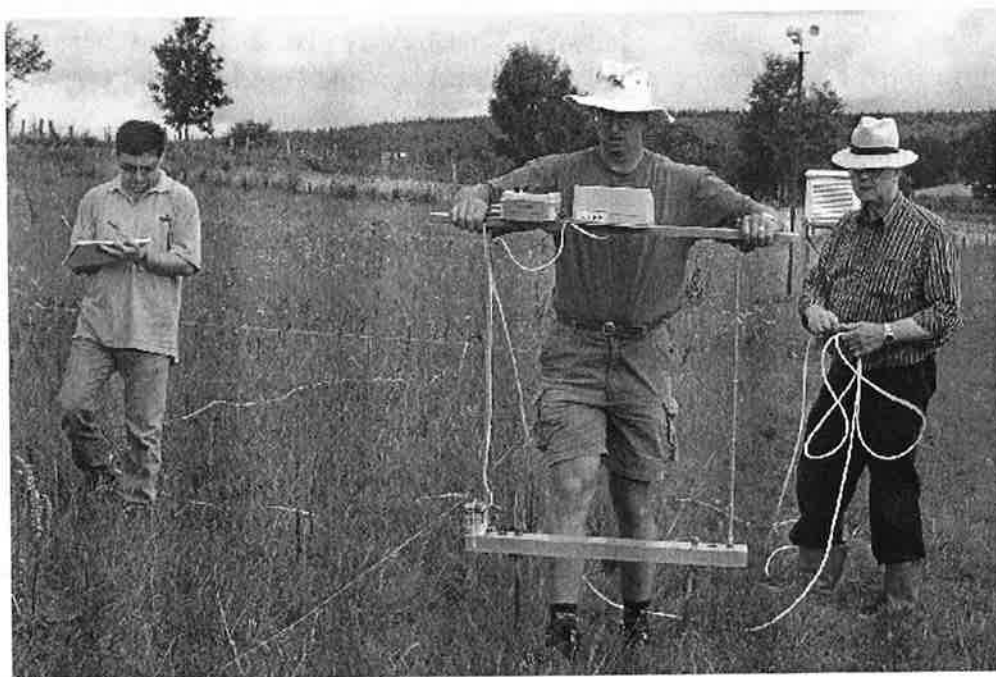
## **BAHS FIELDWORK**

*Mark Peryer tel: 780502.*



### **Resistivity Meters**

The resistivity meters were given a field test at the test site at Butser Ancient Farm late in August. When we visited the site we learnt that the test site is being used to research into how different features show up with resistivity surveys over time and under different soil conditions. The site itself contains many different sorts of features of varying shapes and sizes (walls, ditches, postholes etc) that have been artificially created. We set up and collected results from the same area from one meter before lunch and the other after lunch. (See picture). The results were entered into a spreadsheet and Steve Govas gets the prize for coming up with the best post-survey analysis. We can now say that the two meters agree with each other – which is a good starting point, but we need to interpret the results and decide what we think we have found.



**Three men and a meter in action at Butser**

Since the site is used by several universities to train students in conducting and interpreting survey results, we can't publish the results but we can take them back to the expert at Butser who will compare them against his map.

## Training Dig

This year's training dig at Worting concentrated on locating the lower ditch and planning it into the overall site datum. We cut a slot through the ditch on the Saturday and recorded the plan, section and levels on the Sunday. The crack BAHS team produced some very professional records under Dave Score's watching brief.

Dave is very keen to consolidate the current records, cataloguing the finds, and to start work on getting everything written up. This is another area where we can help out and improve our knowledge.



On the day of the dig Margaret wore a Pearl bracelet as a sign of her social standing.

## Field walking

Several people have asked what is happening about the field walking. We have contacted a number of landowners and farmers and we have agreement to walk a number of fields but pinning down a date is proving difficult. Anyone who has registered interested will be contacted with details as soon as we get the go ahead to walk a field. The walks are most likely to occur in the February - March timeframe, in order to fit in with the spring crop cycle.

# BASINGSTOKE

## TALKING HISTORY

*Barbara Applin*

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

I am delighted to be able to announce that the Hampshire County Council have kindly awarded us a grant of £500 towards the cost of publication of this book. We are still in the process of applying for funding from other sources, as we still need quite a bit more. Meanwhile, we are tidying up loose ends, getting together illustrations etc. An interview with Rita Phillips has produced some memories that simply must go in as not only is she now the Matron of the Hampshire Clinic, so can speak on behalf of private hospitals, but she was a nurse at the Cowdery Down Hospital in Basing Road when the elderly patients had to be rapidly transferred ahead of schedule to the new Basingstoke Hospital when the heating broke down in winter.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Several other interviews are being recorded and transcribed by our team. One particularly unusual interview was with the Rev. Pat Taylor on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as a Permanent Deacon at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Basingstoke. It may surprise some people that one of the main features of Pat's ordination was that he was married and continued in his – high level – legal job. I feel that this marks a pivotal point in Church history – and Pat was a fluent and fascinating speaker.

### **DATABASE**

George Plummer is working hard on making a database from the synopses of interviews, so that we can search for particular places, people and themes covered. Quite a task, as the original Museum (M) cassettes reached 100 and our own (BAHS) have now reached 125.

### **MILESTONES CHRISTMAS GALA EVENINGS**

10 and 17 December

Mulled wine, mince pies, carol singing, hand bell ringers and a magic lantern show in the streets of Milestones!

# THE CHURCH EMBROIDERIES EXHIBITION

*Barbara Applin*

Previous Newsletters have announced the exhibition of Church Embroideries designed by Atherton Harrison. It was opened by the Bishop of Basingstoke in the Willis Museum on 10<sup>th</sup> October and was on display for a fortnight, attracting over 350 visitors who greatly admired the skill and creativity of Atherton and the embroiderers. Chasubles, kneelers, hassocks, "falls for lecterns" and a wonderful altar frontal were borrowed from churches in North Waltham, Ashe, Deane, Steventon, Lower Bullington and the Salisbury Diocese.

Explanatory labels gave some indication of the delicate work involved, and of the relationship of the designs to the specific character of each church. For instance, hassocks from Lower Bullington, close to the River Dever, had a wonderful collection of trout, frogs, dragonflies, a swan and a moorhen. Those from All Saints' Church, Deane, reflected the design to be found on the beautiful plasterwork in that church. And of course Jane Austen appeared on a hassock from St Nicholas's Church, Steventon, where her father was Rector.

Atherton was persuaded to allow a panel to be devoted to her own "three careers": theatrical design, lecturing on costume and setting up the Costume collection at the National Trust property, Killerton – and now designing ecclesiastical vestments etc.



The centerpiece of the whole exhibition was, of course, the Bishop of Basingstoke's Cope, and the accompanying Mitre (see Newsletter 165). It was very generous of the Bishop to allow it to be borrowed for a fortnight. As it was on open display, a rota of "stewards" was organized to make sure it was not touched – one keen photographer wanted to turn it round to suit her photograph! Atherton is most grateful to those who took their turns, including several of our own members.

The Basingstoke Camcorder Club videoed the opening of the exhibition, and then Atherton's explanation of the exhibits – so for anyone who missed the exhibition, look out for the video!



## **A VISIT FROM HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB LOCAL HISTORY SECTION**

*Nina Koch*

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October BAHS were hosts to the Local History Section of the Hampshire Field Club. We were prepared for rather more of their members than arrived, only 18, but quality proved better than quantity.

The day started at 10.30 am in Church Cottage, with a talk from Derek Spruce about Basingstoke's change from a small market town to the present redevelopment. This was followed by an equally interesting one by Bill Fergie, who told us what buildings were lost in the redevelopment and what survived.

A break for tea and biscuits set the right mood for us to get to know each other a little, before a very humorous account by Jo Kelly of her own and other people's recollections of life in Basingstoke.

Lunch only lasted an hour, spent by most of us chatting to our new friends over sandwiches. At 2 o'clock the HFC held their delightfully brief Section AGM, with no dissenting voices anywhere.

This was followed by the highlight of the day, a gentle sprint around the town – up the ramp to the Anvil and off to the ruins of the Holy Ghost Chapel – down to the station and into the courtyard of the “custard flats” (Crown Heights). Across the thin bridge and then a quick dash through the crowds in Festival Place. In and out of Debenhams without distraction and up Wote Street to the Willis Museum, where I, for one, was happy to relax. Finally, down again into Church Street and back to our starting point – Phew!

It was a great day, with lovely weather and plenty of laughs, one which I hope has convinced a few people that Basingstoke is worth a second and perhaps more leisurely visit.

### **MILESTONES VOUCHERS**

MILESTONES have sent us some vouchers which admit one adult free, with another paying adult. They are valid for daytime events up until 30 January 2005. Anyone who wants one or more vouchers should contact Margaret Porter on 01256 356012.



## **FRIENDS OF BASING HOUSE – OUR FRIENDS!**

As Basing House is the major historic and archaeological site of our area, it is very fitting that so many of our members have helped on digs etc there, and that we and the Friends of Basing House have so many members in common. The two committees have agreed to publicise each other's activities, and you will find some excellent ones in our CALENDAR. You can always ask Alan and Nicola Turton if you want more details! Look out particularly for 3<sup>rd</sup> February when Carol White will be talking about excavations at Yateley – where several of our members, who took her GCSE, AS or A2 Archaeology courses, got digging experience. See her article on *The Mesolithic Hunters of Yateley Common* in *Newsletter 42* of the Hampshire Field Club (Autumn 2004).

### **WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY Practical Archaeology Training Course at Down Farm, Sixpenny Handley**

*Peter Stone*

This 5-day course, which was advertised in the August 2004 Newsletter, duly took place in mainly dry, windy and often distinctly chilly conditions over two working weeks 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> September and 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September. It consisted of a programme of training and guidance in site work and documentation, workshops and an extended guided walk around the farm for amateur archaeologists, students and those considering archaeology as a career and adult learners. Representatives of all these groups attended.

**Down Farm**, although situated only a short distance off the main Salisbury – Blandford road on Cranborne Chase in Dorset, is set within a beautiful landscape where the visitor soon gets a sense of remoteness in time and space. From 1988 intensive farming using agro-chemicals ceased when the owner, Martin Green, who had for many years been interested in conservation, wildlife and archaeology, subscribed to the 5-year set-aside scheme. Some ten years later he joined the Country Stewardship scheme, whereby sheep grazing now maintains grasslands and other areas are cultivated to encourage wild flora and ground-nesting birds. The result is a chalk-land conservation area of some 200 acres, rich in archaeological remains, that includes discoveries of the past twenty-five years which have yet to be fully explored.

For archaeologists it is a location of outstanding interest with many features, some of which are of national importance, dating from the Palaeolithic/Mesolithic through to the Iron Age and Roman times. Perhaps best known are part of the Dorset Cursus (c.3300 BC), a 10 km earthwork which is believed to be aligned with the Winter Solstice and so likely to be of prehistoric religious/cosmological significance, and the Ackling Dyke Roman road.

Wessex Archaeology had selected for excavation a site first identified by Martin Green from crop marks which appeared to delineate the existence of a settlement enclosed by a ditch and bank and containing a large roundhouse structure with a number of smaller post built structures, including a possible grain storage structure. The complexity of the Down Farm area is such that no site can be reckoned to be exclusively relevant to any one period and that chosen for the dig proved to be no exception. It yielded finds ranging from early (700 – 400 BC) and middle (400 – 100 BC) Iron Age pottery, worked and burnt flint, animal bone to Beaker period pottery (2400 – 1800 BC).

**Site Tasks** were rotated so that all participants obtained experience of site surveying, excavation and recording plans and sections of archaeological features as well as finds recognition and processing.

During the first week our predecessors had done a lot of hard work preparing two trenches for excavation. Their finds included flint nodules and worked flint used as packing materials in post holes and quarried chalk which may have been used for soil improvement or for building construction. Evidence of Early Iron Age occupation in the form of burnt flint, worked flint, animal bones and pottery sherds was recovered from the ditch in Trench 2. Soil sampling indicated significant changes to the environment and land usage over the millennia.

In the second week a different group of a dozen or so people, including me, continued with excavation in both trenches and recovered further evidence of Iron Age (700BC – AD43) settlement in the form of burnt and worked flint, small pieces of animal bone and pottery sherds. Among the pottery sherds were items dating from the earlier Beaker period, which is the time of the 'Amesbury Archer'. Perhaps the most interesting discovery was that of a headless, fully articulated skeleton of a domesticated cow found in a shallow pit close to what might have been an entrance way to the enclosure. Work which continued over the weekend after our departure led to the discovery of an ox cranium and a large Beaker sherd from the basal fill of the settlement ditch. In the north-east corner of Trench 2 a large quarry hollow (for chalk) was excavated. This feature actually included a number of small, inter-cutting chalk quarry pits. The fills of this large feature contained worked and burnt flint, animal bone (including two complete domesticated cow jaw bones) and later Middle Iron Age pottery (3<sup>rd</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC). This would indicate settlement activity in this location for at least 400 – 500 years.

The finds have yet to be fully interpreted and in due course Wessex Archaeology hopes to place a full report on their website [www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk).

**The workshops** covered a number of topics such as stratigraphy (the study of soil layers and cut features) animal bone analysis (what is looked for and why, methods of analysis and interpretation) and environmental archaeology (the study of pollen in soil layers to determine the period and type of vegetation and, on occupied sites, evidence of threshing and storage processes) all of which added interest to our excavation tasks. However, the most astonishing workshop, in which course members actively participated, was a

successful demonstration of iron smelting by the experimental archaeologist Jake Keen, who had included in his researches visits to remote places on the Indian sub-continent where iron is still produced by village smiths using ancient methods, before building a replica of a furnace likely to have been used in the Iron Age.

*The guided walk*, which passed close to the Dorset Cursus and along part of the Ackling Dyke Roman road, was led by Martin Green and gave participants an opportunity to appreciate the variety, scale and antiquity of the many features to be found in an extensive and complex archaeological landscape.

*Was it all good value?* Unreservedly the answer to that question must be 'yes'. Chris Ellis and his team from Wessex Archaeology, and those who held the workshops, throughout exercised patience and gave encouragement with a necessary sense of humour while conducting an outstandingly informative and enjoyable course to which the cheery expressions on the group photograph below attest. I would have liked to have continued for another couple of weeks and hope that Wessex Archaeology will provide similar courses in future.



*The second week course participants are pictured in this group photograph with Chris Ellis and members of the Wessex Archaeology team.*

# CALENDAR

<b>Thurs 11 Nov</b>	<b>LIVING ON THE FLOODPLAIN: THE NEOLITHIC &amp; BRONZE AGE LANDSCAPE AT YARNTON</b> Dr Gill Hey	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Thurs 18 Nov</b>	<b>40 YEARS OF CHANGE IN BASINGSTOKE</b> Derek Wren	<b>FWM</b>
<b>Thurs 25 Nov</b>	<b>LOVE AND HATE: A Selection of Documents from Hampshire</b> Record Office: David Rymill	<b>HRO</b>
<b>Sat/Sun 4/5 Dec</b>	<b>THE MULBERRY DYER</b> – Tassels and Christmas Workshops	<b>FBH</b>
<b>Thurs 9 Dec</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS PARTY (see page 2)</b>	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Sat 1 Jan</b>	<b>New Year's Day Tour Round Basing House: 2 pm at the Great Barn.</b>	<b>FBH</b>
<b>Tues 6 Jan</b>	<b>HEIRLOOM SEWING</b>	<b>FBH</b>
<b>Thurs 13 Jan</b>	<b>THE VIKINGS</b> Julian Richards	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Thurs 20 Jan</b>	<b>AIR ACCIDENT INVESTIGATOR – THE DISASTROUS PARIS CONCORDE CRASH</b> Alan Simmons	<b>FWM</b>
<b>Fri 28 Jan</b>	<b>Annual Local History Lecture, Dr John Chapman, Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds College, Winchester, 8 pm (refreshments from 7.30)</b>	<b>HFC</b>
<b>Tues 3 Feb</b>	<b>YATELEY COMMON</b> Carol White	<b>FBH</b>
<b>Thurs 10 Feb</b>	<b>ROMSEY ABBEY, ITS ARCHAEOLOGY, RESTORATION &amp; REPAIR</b> Frank Green	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Thurs 17 Feb</b>	<b>PADDLE STEAMERS ON THE SWISS LAKES</b> Ashley Gill	<b>FWM</b>
<b>Tues 1 March</b>	<b>ANNUAL DINNER (see page 2)</b>	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Thurs 3 March</b>	<b>WILLIAM COBBETT</b> Chris Hillier	<b>FBH</b>
<b>Thurs 10 March</b>	<b>RECONSTRUCTING THE FERRIBY BOAT</b> Dr Edwin Gifford	<b>BAHS</b>
<b>Thurs 17 March</b>	<b>LOOKING AT OUR COUNTRYSIDE FROM ABOVE</b> David Graham	<b>FWM</b>
<b>Thurs 14 April</b>	<b>INDIANA JONES AND THE DIPOLE OF DOOM: GEO-PHYSICAL PROSPECTION FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS</b> Dr Neil Linford	<b>BAHS</b>

**BAHS** Our Society; lectures 7.30 pm at Church Cottage

**FBH** Friends of Basing House, 7.30 pm, Basing House Tea Room

**FWM** Friends of the Willis Museum, 7.30 at the museum

**HFC** Hampshire Field Club; we can send one representative - Ring Marjolein for details

**HRO** Hampshire Record Office Last Thursday Lecture, 1.15-1.45 pm, in HRO cinema (Sussex Street, Winchester)

**Secretary: Margaret Porter**

**01256 356012**