

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER 173
November 2005

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So, what is this mystery object?



<http://www.bahsoc.org.uk>

(Registered Charity No. 1000263)

*Items for Newsletter to Barbara Applin; e-mail 106441.3542@compuserve.com
(01256 465439)*

CHRISTMAS PARTY



£1.50
(includes first drink)

7.30 pm, Thursday, 8th December 2004
Church Cottage, Basingstoke

The usual relaxed get-together, with a glass of wine or soft drink and a finger buffet –but this year we are planning a pub-style quiz. So you can either form your own teams, of about 6, or wait for teams to be formed on the night.

If you're new to the Society, you'll be particularly welcome and 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 and Mary Oliver (ring 01256 324263). Hope to see you there!

SILCHESTER FIELD SCHOOL/RESEARCH EXCAVATION

The Committee have decided once again to sponsor two people to take part in the excavation at Silchester for one week during the summer. The field school runs from 3rd July to 13th August 2006 and is suitable for both beginners and those with some experience. There is supervision at all times, and training is given. You can find more details – and diaries of past participants – on 222.silchester.rdg.ac.uk

This is an excellent opportunity to receive training in archaeological techniques. Anyone wishing to be considered for sponsorship should contact our Chairman, Marjolein Mussellwhite (marjoleine_2000@hotmail.com or 01256 701192) and explain why they wish to be considered and what input they would then hope to make to the Society's own fieldwork.

STORES SUNDAYS

We are continuing to help Dave Allen and Kay Ainsworth in the Archaeology Stores at the Hampshire Museum Service's HQ at Chilcomb House, Winchester, on the second Sunday of the month. Anyone who hasn't been before and wants to join in, please ring Marjolein (01256 701192) or Kay (01962 826738). In any case remember to contact Kay in the week leading up to that Sunday to say if you intend to come.

It's here at last...!!!

And can be bought at a Society meeting, at Ottakar's, the Willis Museum, Milestones or the Gazette shop! If anyone's ordered a copy and not yet collected it, please do so at a meeting or ring 01256 465439.

Many, many thanks to all who helped with the organising, interviewing, transcribing, editing, illustrating, getting money for publication, and now promotion and selling! And particular thanks to the Committee for their support and to our Treasurer, Peter Good, for keeping a firm eye on the finances.

Here are a few "snapshots".

Paulline checking the index

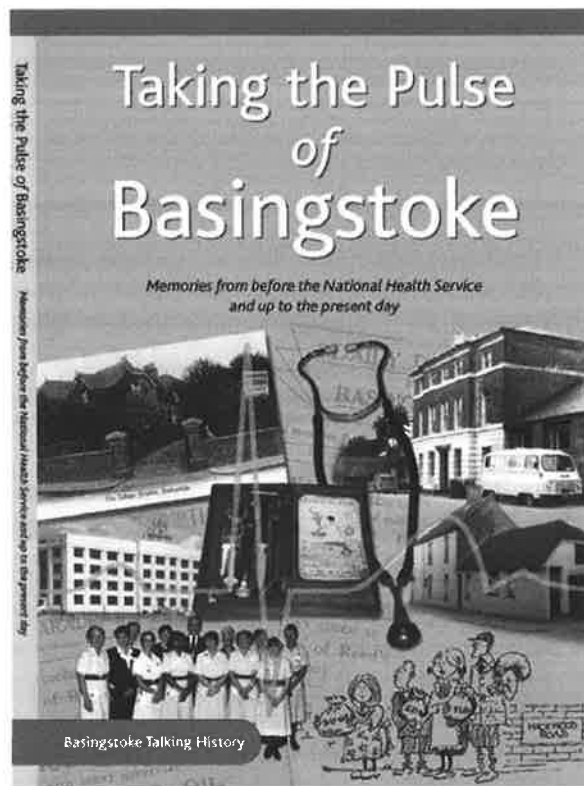


Gary (the designer) and Chris (the printer)



We printed 700 and we sold over 150 before publication.

Ottakar's say it's out-selling the Da Vinci Code. Not a bad start!



The book being printed



FIELDWORK REPORT

Mark Peryer (mperyer@f2s.com).

When I look back over the summer period, I am pleased to note that several of our members participated in various digs in the local area that were organised by the local Universities. The person who notched up most hours with his trowel was probably Peter Stone who seemed to be living outdoors for most of the summer (you can catch up with his adventures elsewhere in this newsletter).

The Reading University excavations at Silchester were one focus of participation. Several of our members made return visits and at least one individual paid to participate on the training side.

Southampton University have teamed up with Kingsclere Heritage Society and have been investigating various locations on the Tidgrove Warren Farm. I spent most weekends in August helping out with the investigation of a Bronze Age round barrow ditch. When I say helping out, I mean that I was one of around 50 community volunteers, whose enthusiasm for organised labour came as a bit of a shock to the University staff. The overall object of this exercise was to do environmental sampling from the different layers in the ditch fill.



Bronze Age Turf Pyramid from Tidgrove Warren

During the first weeks of September, the University returned for their main excavation, this time of a mediaeval hunting lodge. I was not able to join in with this one, but Martin Grant, Diana Medley and Tony Wiltshire told me that again volunteer numbers were such that a diversionary excavation of a Romano-British site was laid on. My understanding is that the hunting lodge site turned out to be difficult to understand.

At the same time as Southampton University were excavating at Tidgrove Warren, Oxford University were investigating a Roman Villa site at Dunkirt Barn, just outside Andover. Professor Barry Cunliffe led the work, which was a continuation of the long term Danebury environs project. Professor Cunliffe runs a tight ship and the pre-dig message had been that any prospective volunteers had to be able to work 8:30 - 5:00 for at least 3 consecutive days. In the end four of us decided that we could cope with this and reported for duty on the first day in weather that was described by the BBC as 'light rain' and by Professor Cunliffe as 'not raining' - I kept my opinion to myself but put my waterproofs on.

I could only spare a week for this excavation, and it was hard work, but I was surprised how quickly the various parts of the villa complex emerged. The villa had been excavated in the 1850s by the local vicar who had removed two mosaics, which featured in September's lecture on Mosaics. When I returned at the end of the dig for the last staff site tour it was amazing to see how much had emerged and how many different phases of building there were on the site. Peter Stone worked all the way through the Dunkirt Barn dig, and he worked on most areas of the site.

As I write this, I hope that we will be able to organise some field walking in the next few months. Behind the scenes various landowners and farmers have been recontacted. I have a list of volunteers; if you would like to participate, then please let me know by dropping me an e-mail.

Do you still want to dig?

Peter Stone

About a year ago I wrote in the BAHS Newsletter about my experience of a training course with Wessex Archaeology at Down Farm on Cranborne Chase, Dorset, which, you may recall, I found both instructive and stimulating. So much so that I have spent some seven weeks this past summer as a volunteer on several digs, to the bewilderment of my wife who has been surprised to discover how much energy and enthusiasm I have been able to muster for digging all day, and for day after day, miles from a garden where, for some mysterious reason, my presence is usually conspicuous by its absence. I did have some difficulty in explaining, although when I tell you any gardening programme on television will send me to sleep quicker than you can say 'Monty Don' I am sure that there are at least a few among you who will understand.

However, of the three digs that I worked on, I was especially pleased to obtain a place at Dunkirt Barn, Abbots Ann, where I would have the opportunity to work for Professor Barry Cunliffe.

Now, for those of you who have never worked on a dig I have to point out that there are hazards and benefits. Because the benefits far outweigh the hazards I will deal with the latter first.

Somehow, from the start I had a feeling that Abbots Ann was to be a unique experience. When my application was submitted by e-mail I received a return message welcoming *Mark Peryer* as a volunteer. A telephone call soon put matters to right – it appeared that the message had been prepared late in the evening when the originator was apparently 'less focussed' for undisclosed reasons.

The dig, I soon found out, was clearly going to be interesting in more ways than one. The first thing that slightly unnerved me was the prospect of having to get to Abbots Ann near Andover from Basingstoke by eight thirty. The alarm duly sounded at 6.45 on the day and, to my considerable surprise and relief, I arrived at Abbots Ann without difficulty. There, predictably, I missed an abrupt left turn in the centre of the village, while looking for a 'post office' sign which no longer exists, and had to perform a tricky about turn at a T-junction a few hundred yards further on.

However all was well after that because the track leading to the site was straight with no turnings and the threat of the appearance of a user-hostile gamekeeper, forewarned in the welcome e-mail, did not materialise.

Before work got under way, Professor Cunliffe outlined the aims of the dig and ended with the uplifting message to the effect that we would feel pretty exhausted at the end of day one, that we should not feel a lot different at the end of day two but by day three we would begin to feel just fine, which was comforting.

In fact that proved to be true but there were other challenges to be met in the form of weather and catering duties. The former, as always, was uncertain but I soon acquired a sense of foreboding (panic perhaps may be too strong a word) when I was told in commanding tones by a formidable-looking lady that I was expected to take my turn at preparing food at lunchtime as well as wash up.

Now my excursions into the kitchen at home to prepare food are strictly limited to finding the necessary package in the refrigerator and placing the contents in the microwave oven. Anything more sophisticated than that would be unknown territory. In vain did I mildly protest and equally in vain did I try to dodge the column by having a convenient memory lapse at the appointed time – someone else had a better memory and soon I found myself working alongside two ladies who decided, to my relief, that I was best left to prepare lettuce - a task which they clearly thought was unlikely to cause them too much difficulty.

Although the weather was generally kind throughout, I quickly discovered that outdoor working (which I had always longed for through many years of office-bound life) may perhaps have its occasional disadvantages. In particular there was one appalling day when it rained continuously. The hood of my waterproof jacket kept falling over my eyes as I was using the trowel but prevented me from hearing when fastened back. Work was abandoned for the day after an early coffee break, by which time we were all soaking wet and I for one felt that I had spent perhaps the most miserable two hours of my life - and that includes cookhouse fatigues and watching the deferred successes of the England football team.

Next came the conditions of work, which provided something of a culture shock as I had over-optimistically assumed that 'start at 8.30 am meant 'be on site at 8.30 am'. The reality was rather different. 'Start at 8.30 am meant 'start work at 8.30 am'. Likewise 'finish at 5.30 pm' meant 'finish work...' - you then had to clear up and put away all tools and other equipment. The casual arrival and preparation for action was out of the question and so was the quick glance at the watch at about 5 pm followed by the gentle slow down towards 5.30 by which time you were ready for a quick getaway. Conversations during working periods between workers were allowed but work should continue and standing outside the trench for a quick breather and socialising was definitely frowned upon. Furthermore the Professor had a right hand man known to us all as 'Graham'. His responsibilities included timing the tea breaks, for which purpose he used precise timings to the second. Should you be working, as I often was, some distance from the oasis, when the welcome shout, 'Clear up your loose' wafted across the site, then it did seem that you had drawn a rather short straw.

Professor Cunliffe had obviously learned a thing or two about slackers on site over the years and was quite properly concerned with his planned schedule, which could easily be disrupted for indefinite periods by the weather. But there were some good-natured mutterings that perhaps he had become a little too immersed in classical history, particularly that concerning the conditions of slave labour, but I am pleased to say there was never any sign of a revolt.

I found the physical demands of work pretty beneficial. As a regular distance walker I considered myself fairly fit but it was soon very clear that barrowing and using a mattock required the use of a few muscles I was not aware existed. Nevertheless, I completed the entire three weeks of the dig, apart from official days off, and felt more than a little smug on the occasions when members of the Society and the Hampshire Field Club, of which I am also a member, visited.

There was much good humour during the excavation, doubtless springing from the participants' extensive knowledge of pre-history and the classics. The work schedule included a weekly progress report by the Professor on Friday afternoons so that everyone got to learn about the overall picture that was emerging. The first of these briefings was enlivened by Graham, who appeared wearing a garment which had best be described as inspired by the Cerne Abbas giant - and if you do not know what the giant looks like I have no intention whatsoever of attempting to enlighten you. There was also photography and here the discovery of a bath house led to an unexpected event. On a warm afternoon Meg and Kerry - two supervisors - appeared in order to be photographed near it in classical pose, seemingly wearing nothing much more than bath towels.

My contribution to all the jollity came about while taking my turn at washing finds, when I rashly decided to tell without warning, and with a straight face, how further evidence of Roman occupation of Scotland could be found from the lines of an old Scottish music-hall song which began "I'm a'roamin' in the gloaming.....". When the penny dropped I was close to being in mortal danger because there was plenty of material handy for use as improvised weaponry.

All this apart, digs, are very good for socialising. Abbotts Ann was no exception to my experience at Down Farm, The Grange at Basing and Silchester. The age range of the thirty or so participants at

Abbotts Ann, so far as I could tell, was between about 17 and 80, with many different occupations and backgrounds represented among the volunteers, so conversation was always interesting.

The results of the excavation provided the greatest satisfaction. I describe them here briefly and stress that the observations are provisional and await full interpretation expected until early in 2006. An excavation site had been chosen to include part of the late Roman villa which had in 1854 yielded two mosaics now in the British Museum, and an area previously unexcavated but where a thorough geophysical survey, using resistivity, magnetometer and ground-penetrating radar techniques, showed distinctive features were present. Principally these proved to be an early Roman dwelling, built on the site of what preliminary interpretation indicates may be a temple. A bath-house was added to the dwelling at a later date. The entire complex, it appears, was then demolished, probably some time during the late 3rd and early 4th centuries and materials from it used in the later building which was erected on a different site some metres to the north. A deep boundary ditch dating from the Iron Age and associated with a known banjo enclosure to the north was found to run across the excavation site but was not in clear alignment with any later building.

The late villa proved to be remarkable because of the massive foundations below the wings and the buttressing found. The wings, Professor Cunliffe suggested, may well have been three stories in height and the whole structure was likely to have been visible for some considerable distance. The discovery of a grain dryer and a row of fence posts extending on a NW/SE line across the site and to the south of the late villa provided evidence of changes in use during the very late Roman period. Towards the end of the excavation period a well was found a little to the south of the line of fence posts. The close proximity of an Iron Age banjo enclosure, which may have had religious associations, followed by a temple built over by an early villa subsequently demolished and replaced by an impressive late villa with evidence of changes in use towards the close of the Roman period, indicates the importance of this site for a long period of time, perhaps at least 700 years.

As to be expected from a predominantly Roman site, a considerable amount of ceramic tiles, plaster, tesserae, small fragments of pottery, some animal bone and oyster shells were found, plus a few coins discovered on the spoil heaps. But the best of the finds were a small gold bracelet and ring set – possibly made for a child – a signet ring and a small ceramic lamp which seemed not to have been used. The last-named jumped from 19th century infill following a hearty thwack with a mattock, which might well have destroyed it.

Finally, my time spent over the past year or so has proved to be well worth-while because it has provided a significant extra dimension to the knowledge obtained from even the best of lecturers. That said, I have found it important to volunteer for a well-organised dig expertly managed. In that respect I recommend not only Abbotts Ann, which may be returned to next year, but Silchester and The Grange. If you decide to volunteer your services on future occasions you will not be disappointed. think you will agree from the Abbotts Ann group photograph, complete with reclining figures, none of us who attended there this year were.



*Photo:
Ian
Cartwright*

Memories of Manydown

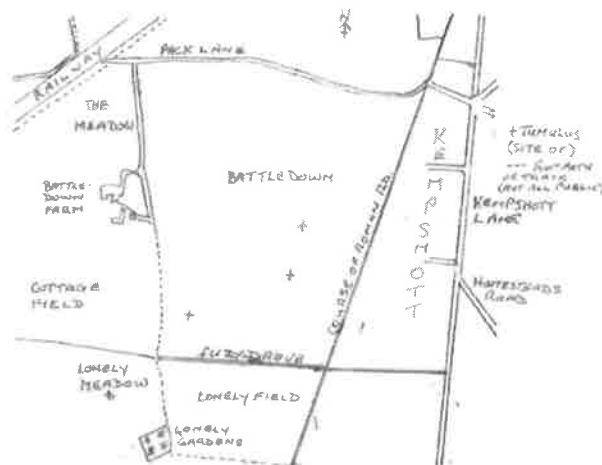
Scott Childs

Barbara said, 'Write something, any contribution is most welcome, especially if it creates a debate.' So, as I stared at my blank piece of paper on the computer screen, I thought, what did she mean by 'especially if it creates a debate'? I took it to mean controversial, and that is easily solved by one word - Manydown.

Picture the scene, if you will:



A young boy of 12 is working in Worting Wood Copse with his grandfather, Bert, tidying up the young saplings in the new part of the copse and clearing the brambles. The sun is shining through the treetops and is cascading down in ever-changing shafts of light. The warm day has got the sap rising in the fir trees across the ride and the resulting aroma can only be compared to treacle warming on the Raeburn. This is intermingled with the smell of a small bonfire that is gently burning the rubbish in a corner of the nearest field.



Then Bert shouts, 'Run!!'

With this order, man and boy cover 100 metres quicker than Linford Christie. And remember, this is down the tramline between the trees, with scythe and hook swaying frantically at all angles! The reason being, Bert has just scythed his way through a wasps' nest and the resulting swarm is not to be argued with.

With hearts pounding, they stop on the bridleway and then go through a familiar routine. Firstly count fingers, thumbs and other appendages to make sure they are all there. Next check for signs of bleeding and bruising. Then remove all the debris that was collected in the scramble to get clear, like the brambles, thistles, teasel and bindweed. Wasps' stings are treated with a dock leaf (with cuckoo spit on it if possible; if not, human is added!) from the plentiful supply nearby. Having checked that both parties are okay, it is decided that lunch might as well be taken in order for the wasps, and the woodmen, to calm down. So they wander around the corner of the copse and plonk themselves down into the hedgerow. They have their lunch gazing out across a field called 'Severalls', looking towards Roman Road and Winklebury. And Bert says, 'One day soon, Nipper, this whole field will be full of houses, just like the other side of Roman Road.'

Now that scene could have been last week – however, this happened 25 years ago! I was still just a little boy and Grandfather obviously had some foresight. It also shows how long the estate has been

fighting the encroachment of Basingstoke westwards - something that isn't often mentioned in the newspaper reports. But now the deed has been done we as a Society have to make sure that we make the most of the opportunity to investigate and record the history and the archaeology of this landscape before the builders move in.

Some of us have already started, as my poor computer will tell you. It is jam-packed with photos of various fields, at various times, from various angles but luckily most of my work isn't endangered just yet. That is because I have concentrated my studies on Manydown Park and Manydown House. That is one of the misconceptions about the building work; it is not actually Manydown that is being built on, the three areas are Battledown Farm, Scrapps Hill Farm and Worting Wood Farm. Okay, they are all owned by Manydown, which is where the term comes from. But to those of us with close connections to the estate, Basingstoke will still not be built over Manydown just yet, only the surrounding farms.

I know that already the dreaded words 'watching brief' have been bandied around the consultation projects involved, and, whilst it has its merits, I feel that certain areas along the Roman Road and the tumuli in 'Battledown Big Field' may benefit from a more extensive excavation. Several areas have been excavated in the past and have produced mixed results, but, as we all know, even the smallest sites produce no finds in one area but loads in another and in this case we are talking about a huge area. However, time, money, manpower and permission from the landowners will always limit what we can achieve before the Manydown Estate becomes a suburb of Basingstoke.

I hope this gives the Committee and you, the members, something to debate, as my grandfather and I did all those years ago. I daresay that people much more experienced and higher in the archaeology hierarchy than I am are already assessing what can and can't be achieved in this area. I only hope that what we achieve will be enough for those in the future to use further, as archaeological & historical techniques develop.

And by the way, when we returned from our lunch, which may have been a little longer than the hour, the wind had changed direction! Our little bonfire burning in the field had set fire to the hedge and several of the fir trees in the plantation! The afternoon was spent making sure that the flames had all been put out before we retired for the night.

Next time, a less controversial and much older subject from Manydown - *Ghosts, Ghouls and Swimming Pools!*

CALLEVA MUSEUM

Doreen Atton Hon Secretary to the Trustees of Calleva Museum

It is with regret that the Trustees of Calleva Museum in Silchester have decided to close the Charity and Museum Building, with effect from 23 December 2005. The Museum was opened in 1952 in a 'writing shed' donated by, a local Antiquarian, Colonel Karlake. The shed was, in fact, one of the wooden site huts from the early 20th Century excavations and so has lasted, with ongoing maintenance by the Trustees, remarkably well. However, with the opening of the Wall Lane car-park much closer to the Roman site, the excellent facilities at Reading Museum's Silchester Gallery, and plans for a new Information Centre in the car-park, Calleva Museum has now become redundant. The building is too fragile to be moved to another site. The Museum generates its income from the sale of the Silchester Guide and this is now insufficient to meet the day-to-day running costs. Keeping open the Museum until Christmas will enable schools to visit it during the Autumn Term. The Trustees also hope the building can remain in its present location and that it will be used for the benefit of the local community.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

Mark Peryer

I recently paid a visit to the Field museum in Chicago and unexpectedly solved a mystery. At our antiques evening in July, I sat at a table whose unidentified object was so baffling that even the experts from Drewett Neate did not know what it was. It seemed to be made from the top of a human skull, but that was about all we could say for certain. We had some fun coming up with a tale to try to explain it, but now I can reveal all.

I was wandering around the museum when I came to a section on Tibet, I was a bit jet-lagged and things were a bit fuzzy, but there in a display cabinet were two objects that were just like the one from the antiques evening

It was a sacred bowl, made from a human skull - to quote the label beside the bowl: 'Buddhists recognize that life is fleeting. So to remind themselves that human life passes quickly they create sacred objects - like these bowls - from human bone. Only after years of preparation and training can monks use these objects in ceremonies.'

I took a picture of the example in the Field museum, it is a macabre object but at least the mystery is solved.



PEACE DAY 1919

Bob Applin



One of my Milestones volunteer colleagues came across this photograph being offered on e-bay. It is a Terry Hunt photograph of the Mayor's reception in Market Square of the representative muster, about 200 strong, representing the armed forces and Mercantile Marine at the Peace Day celebrations on Saturday 19th July 1919.

Arthur Attwood in his *Around Basingstoke – Arthur Attwood's Look into the Past* has the two photos below. However, the book has details of the celebrations in the town at the Armistice in November 1918, but has no mention of the 1919 Peace Parade other than the photo caption. I was aware that there had been a national day (or days) of local celebrations of the peace in the summer of 1919, so these photos were obviously of the Basingstoke day. BAHS member George Plummer is an avid researcher in the back copies of the Hants and Berks Gazette and he soon came up with the following information.

On the previous Sunday there had been an interdenominational service of thanksgiving at May's Bounty

The Day was organised by a committee of the local great and the good; this was a national day for the celebrations. All the surrounding villages held their own Peace celebrations on this day. The *Hants & Berks Gazette* of 26th July 1919 gives a very full report.

The organising committee, chaired by the Mayor, had numerous sub-committees to organise the various elements of the celebrations, which were funded by voluntary contributions. At 11.30 am the Market Square was "lined by dense ranks of people assembled to witness the reception" by the Mayor at midday.



Part of the crowd celebrating the Peace celebrations in 1919 at West Ham park



One of the many floats in the procession celebrating the return of peace

The last photograph was taken in Worting Rd outside Thornycroft's factory. Whether this is part of the 1918 or 1919 celebrations is not certain, although the participants look lightly dressed for late November.

The men representing the armed forces and Mercantile Marine paraded outside the Penrith Road Drill Hall. Led by the Thornycroft Works Band, the procession marched by way of Essex Road, Brook Street and Wote Street to the Market Square to be addressed by the Mayor, Mr T.B Allnut, J.P, C.C, who told the assembled crowd that he had received a communication from the Lord Lieutenant containing a message from His Majesty the King (King George V). The Mayor then spoke about the Sacrifice of the men of Basingstoke, stating that over 1,300 went from this town, of whom about 180 gave their lives. 600 of the veterans were given a dinner in Thornycroft's canteen at 1pm. Immediately after dinner the whole of the men assembled in the Thornycroft Works yard for a photographic group before proceeding to the West Ham Ground where over 3000 people attended a sporting event, the ground being prepared by the Corporation steam roller. There were two bands in attendance; Thornycroft Works Band and the Borough Band. Then in the evening the veterans were treated to a *Smoking Concert* in the canteen, "*which was much appreciated*".

In parallel, a children's sports and tea had been organised in the Waterworks meadow for 2500 day and Sunday school pupils.

Also that evening "*Arrangements had been made for a series of instrumental and vocal concerts on various platforms during the evening. In the case of the singers it is to be regretted that they had failed to unite their forces with a view to a performance by massed choirs.*" It was obviously raining because the report refers to a "*forest of umbrellas*". The weather had not been good all day "*from the reception to the end of the day a fine drizzly rain threw, as it were, a wet blanket over the occasion.*"

At 11pm rockets were launched from "*Mr Rendall's meadow near the railway*" and the evening was rounded off by "*Dover flares such as were used by the Admiralty in lighting the Channel, lighted alternately at West Ham and Park Prewett; the whole neighbourhood for many miles around being illuminated.*"

In order that the musical programme that had had to be abandoned on the Saturday could be carried through, Thornycroft's opened West Ham park on the Wednesday evening. Again all was not well. "*Vast audiences assembled to listen to the music and those near enough to hear it evidently derived much pleasure from it, but what with the wind in the trees, the noise of the passing trains and the general hum of conversation, the effect on the whole must be described as inadequate.*" This was despite at the beginning of the report "*many thousands gathered in the park and spent a very enjoyable time.*"

Terry Hunt was a Basingstoke photographer active from before 1914 until the late 1930s; he was a familiar figure in the local area (in later years rather eccentric according to various recollections) and died in the late 1940s/early 1950s. Many of his photos still exist as postcards and in various local books. A number of his photos have been included in the Hampshire Records Office's on-line Hampshire Photographic Project (HPP), and the County Museum Service have his surviving archive (incomplete) of glass plates, although there are copyright problems in getting access to these. I would be interested to know of any of his Basingstoke photos (particularly the group photo) and any further details of the Peace Parade. The Society's May 2006 lecture by Bruce Howard who led the HPP will give a look at the collection.

On the same page of the Gazette is a letter from Frank Hobbs complaining that a photographer (Terry Hunt?) had posted a notice at the gate to West Ham park stating he had bought sole rights for photography in the park. Mr Hobbs was also a professional photographer.

St Edward the Martyr

Richard Dexter

An English king murdered by his half-brother, whose grave became the site of miracles, was disinterred and reburied in an abbey, after more miracles, canonised, was again moved at the Reformation and reburied in a secret place, rediscovered in the twentieth century, remains offered to and declined by both the Catholic and Anglican churches, deposited in a bank vault, again rediscovered, becoming the subject of two High Court Orders and finally placed in a shrine in a new monastery and in a public cemetery at the same time. Is this a sequel to the Da Vinci Code, a new historical novel by P D James or a plot for a film? In fact none of these but a series of serendipitous events in history.

The king to whom I am referring is Edward, who was born in 959 and was the eldest son of King Edgar (r.959-976). On the death of King Edgar, Edward inherited the throne of Wessex at the age of 17 but three years later in 979 he was murdered by the followers of his half-brother Ethelred (later called "the Unready") at Corfe in Dorset. After his body had been retrieved from a ditch and subsequently buried at Wareham, miracles started to happen, whereupon it was transferred and reburied at Shaftesbury Abbey where more miracles happened. In 1008, some twenty years later, he was canonised and his remains were again lovingly moved and placed in a shrine, but not before parts of his body were detached and sent to other abbeys at Leominster and Abingdon.

There he remained undisturbed for over 500 years until the dissolution of Shaftesbury Abbey. But before Thomas Cromwell was able to take action, the nuns had removed the bones and had reburied them in a secret place away from the high altar, where again they lay hidden and forgotten until the site of the Abbey was excavated in 1930 by John Wilson-Claridge.

When he came across the remains in a far corner of the site, he realised from the evidence that they had been intentionally hidden, thus he suspected their import. Having retrieved them sufficiently intact, he arranged for them to be examined forensically by an osteologist, T E A Stowell, who was able to verify from the evidence and extant documentary sources that they were indeed those of the young and saintly King Edward. This was backed up by a report from the eminent archaeologist Raleigh Radford on the authenticity of the casket in which the bones were found.

Now that the remains had been discovered in the twentieth century, the story should have been quite straightforward. But far from it. After they had been verified by the osteologist the excavator, who was a sensitive man, did not want them just to be stored in a cardboard box in a museum basement but would rather they be treated with reverence. So he initially offered them first to the Anglican Bishops of Winchester and Exeter and then to various Roman Catholic dignitaries, but none of them would give Wilson-Claridge the assurance that if their respective churches were to take them into their custody the relics would be enshrined and made available for prayer and reverence, this being a condition that both he and the osteologist had agreed should be the case. So he built a small chapel-kiosk in the grounds of Shaftesbury Abbey (which is still there) to house them. Later the property was sold but Mr Wilson-Claridge allowed the new owners to retain them. However, over the course of time the new owners of the property died, as did the osteologist, and Mr Wilson-Claridge himself emigrated to Malta. Thus in the absence of any suitable custodian he deposited the remains in the vault of his bank in Shaftesbury.

There they remained until quite by chance a member of the congregation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) made a visit to the site of the abbey ruins in Shaftesbury and later mentioned the account of the retrieval of St Edward's remains to their Orthodox priest, the Very Revd Archimandrite Alexis, who made some enquiries of the excavator as to what had become of them. On being told of their whereabouts, Fr Alexis expressed an interest and said that he would be prepared to look after them in accordance with the excavator's wishes provided he - Fr Alexis - was

able to receive the authority of the Synod of Orthodox bishops and that he himself could find a suitable place for them to be to revered.

At that time it so happened that members of ROCOR were keeping their eyes open for a suitable place to found for worship and to act as a centre for the Orthodox community in southern England. In the early 1980s there came an opportunity to acquire the old cemetery chapel and mortuary building in the former London Necropolis Company's cemetery at Brookwood, a huge area of woodland where there are war graves and the graves of other faiths just to the west of Woking, in Surrey. It was decided that if planning consent could be obtained ROCOR would refurbish the site and take over St Edward's remains. The project grew and ultimately became a small monastery and on 16 September 1984 St Edward's mortal remains were transferred to their new home at Brookwood.

However, shortly afterwards a High Court Order was issued directing that the remains should be returned to the safe keeping of a bank, this time Midland Bank in Woking, pending the completion of certain security measures.

It was not until 25 April 1988 that a subsequent High Court Order was issued allowing the remains to be returned to Brookwood on the condition that the necessary measures had been taken; these were duly fulfilled and in December of that year St Edward was returned to Brookwood and placed in a shrine where he remains to this day. The matter was brought to a final and satisfactory conclusion on 31 March 1995 (St Edward's day in the Old Calendar) when the High Court formally allowed the matter to rest. Today the St Edward's Brotherhood is a thriving community that provides for the pastoral needs of the local Orthodox Christians in the area. And just recently planning consent has been granted for further accommodation to be built to enable the community to expand.

For me, the fact that the remains have survived for so long notwithstanding war, civil strife, religious prejudice, neglect and legal directives and are now back in a shrine again is in itself another miracle.

Sources:- "The Recorded Miracles of St Edward the Martyr" by J. Wilson-Claridge (St Edward's Brotherhood 1995) and Fr Alexis himself

A visit to the Iceman

Paulline Williams

Since Oetzi, as he has now become known, was discovered in 1991 by a couple out walking in the Dolomites, I have wanted to make his acquaintance. It's a fascinating story.

This August my dream came true. Mary Oliver and I were visiting Verona under our own steam. Our hotel was beautifully and conveniently placed mid-way between the Arena di Verona and the local station, so what better than a train journey to Bolzano in the Trento foothills? The train journey to Bolzano was an interesting one as I soon discovered that Mary Oliver knew more about glacial valleys than I had heard since schooldays!

Bolzano is worth visiting even without the terrific museum. It is typical of the towns of the area, surrounded by distant mountains. We both felt like kids at Christmas as we enjoyed café mit schlag in the sunshine after the short walk from the station. Another walk brought us to the museum and our Oetzi pilgrimage began. You start on the first floor with the prehistory exhibits and work your way up to five and a half thousand years. This fact alone takes my breath away.

The minute details of life this far back are awe-inspiring. And all because this Copper Age man

strayed from his mountain path for whatever reason. Then he had, as we now know, been murdered.

Throughout the museum there are reconstructions along with some original (and well-preserved) artifacts. There are stone and metal tools, and a 'fire-box' made of birch bark, containing moss to carry the embers.

Oetzi wore leather clothing with a cloak of dried grass. His shoes were stuffed with dried grass as insulation, with a second pair worn over them.

He even carried a first-aid kit made of leather containing, amongst other things, an antibiotic fungus. Prof. Jim Dixon will undoubtedly tell us more about this in his lecture in February.

Oetzi's body was marked with 'tattoos' on his back and legs. Other marks are thought to be acupuncture points.

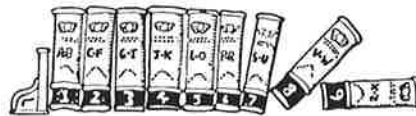
At the end of the day we found we had spent a total of five and a half hours in this fascinating museum.

I sped back for a last look at this dessicated, twisted body with its left arm flung across the front of his body. He is kept in a totally enclosed space below -20° C. There are two stand-by cryogenic generators to protect him in case of electrical failure.

Call me daft (you will!) but I had tears in my eyes as I wished him farewell and gave him the good wishes of the Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society. Rest in peace, Oetzi! We have already learned a great deal of your life and, with continued research, will learn a whole lot more.

BOOKSHELF

Andrew Hunt has sent this review of two books he has read recently, which he found extremely hard to put down.



The Eagles and the Wolves, by Simon Scarrow

This book is all centred around Calleva and involves various battles and inter-tribal conflict as the Romans struggle to get a foothold in South-east Britain. It is one of a series of books that follows the adventures of two centurions as they campaign through Britain. Warning – it does contain coarse soldier's language!

The Last Kingdom, by Bernard Cornwell

This book is the first in a new series and follows the life initially of a ten-year-old Saxon boy living in Northumbria who through events is captured by the Danes. It traces his life up to his twenties as he is raised by the Danes as one of their own and deals with his conflicting loyalties to his own people as he grows up. It includes many historical events as he gradually moves to southern Britain and comes into contact with Alfred. The events at Daneshill near Basing even get a brief mention!

Andrew adds that he is quite willing to lend these books to anyone who is interested. He adds that this idea may encourage people who do not know each other in the Society to make contact and search each other out at meetings, thus promoting friendship and discussion. So look out for Andrew!

CALENDAR

Thurs 17 Nov	Hampshire Magistrate: Procedures in the Local Courts	FWM
Sat 19 Nov	Bridging the Bronze Age – Europe to Wessex Archaeology Section Annual Conference, 10-5	HFC
Thurs 8 Dec	CHRISTMAS PARTY	BAHS
Sun 1 Jan	New Year's Day Tour; 2 pm at the Great Barn	FBH
Thurs 7 Jan	Staging Shakespeare: Christopher Scott	FBH
Thurs 12 Jan	FOREST FRONTIER; BASINGSTOKE, A TOWN ON THE EDGE David Hopkins	BAHS
Thurs 19 Jan	The Restoration of Ships' Figureheads Allan Mechen	FWM
Fri 20 Jan	Local History, challenges for the Future Kate Tiller 7.30 pm	HFC
Thurs 2 Feb	Update on the Grange Dig: Dave Allen	FBH
Wed 8 Feb	Ancient Glacier Mummies, the Life and Death of Oetzi HFC and Kwaday Dan Ts'Inchi Jim Dickson , Peter Symonds, Science Lecture Theatre, 7.30 pm	
Thurs 9 Feb	ANCIENT GLACIER MUMMIES; THE LIFE AND DEATH OF OETZI AND KWADAY DAN TS'INCHI: Jim Dickson	BAHS
Thurs 16 Feb	The Newbury Coat Mrs Jan Blight	FWM
Thurs 9 Mar	LIFE AND DEATH ABOARD THE MARY ROSE Julie Gardiner	BAHS
Thurs 16 Mar	The Work of the Lord Mayor Treloar Trust Jon Colville	FWM

BAHS Our Society; lectures 7.30 pm at Church Cottage
FBH Friends of Basing House, 7.30 pm, Basing House new tea room
FWM Friends of the Willis Museum, 7.30 at the museum
HFC Hampshire Field Club; Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds College,
 Winchester. We can send one representative; details from our Secretary

Secretary: Margaret Porter 01256 356012

Website <http://www.bahsoc.org.uk>

Would anyone who has e-mail and would like it to be used, please send an e-mail to Margaret Porter so that she can check she has the right address?

Hers is margaretporter333@yahoo.co.uk