BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 178

February 2007

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Petersfield: courtesy of Hampshire Cam

Society Outings

GUIDED WALK OF PETERSFIELD MARKET TOWN

Saturday 21st April 2007 at 10.30 am

*** with the option of a Local Lunch and Archaeological

Tour of the Heath in the afternoon ***

'Petersfield..... a town eminent for little but it being full of good inns.' So wrote Daniel Defoe, in his account of a tour through Britain in 1726. This seems to be the general view of the town. Nobody famous was born, lived or died there. Nothing very special happened there. All the famous people just stopped there briefly on their way to somewhere else. However, history is not only about famous people, so Petersfield can claim to be a 'historic market town' and the evidence for this can still be seen today. The town proper began soon after the Norman Conquest, but there is evidence for people living in the location 6000 years ago, and burying their dead 3500 years ago, in mounds which can still be seen on the Heath, on the edge of the present town boundary.

In our visit we shall walk through the town's history;

- Mark Stand in an original burgage plot
- Walk along the first London to Portsmouth road and beside the first by-pass
- When is a "brick" not a brick?
- *Why is King Billy's statue in the Square? Why is King Billy's statue in the Square?*
- Mee where townsfolk defied the Lord of the Manor
- *▶ Did the ghost walk through the church wall?*
- What are those strange badges on some buildings?
- \gg Look on the grave of England's best batsman.

This walk takes under 2 hours, on the level, and is accessible to wheelchairs.

After lunch, possibly in one of the 16th century pubs, there is a tour of the Heath to discover:

- Barrows you can't push
- Saucers with no cups
- *Bells that don't ring*
- *▶* Discs that can't slip.

This tour takes about one and a half hours, and involves some walking across the rather rough part of the Heath. If you prefer, you could visit the Town Museum, the Flora Twort Gallery, or the Physic Garden which has been set out with plants, mostly herbs for medical use, but including fruit, vegetables, and flowers, that were grown in the 17th century.

We meet at the top of Rams Walk, facing the Square. There is a central car park at the bottom of Rams Walk (by Waitrose), plus other car parks near by. Please note that Saturday is market day, so allow plenty of time for parking. Our tour will be led by Eric Leaton, an experienced town guide and member of the Petersfield Area Historical Society. No charge for the tours, but donations to the Museum funds via Eric. If you wish to join in, please email Ginny at ginny@powntleycopse.co.uk or phone her on 01420 550028 so we have an idea of numbers and lunch requirements.



WINCHESTER, CHARLEMAGNE AND JERUSALEM Prof. Martin Biddle (June Lloyd Lecture for Winchester Archaeology & Local History) 7.30 pm at Winchester Guildhall: £12 (£8 students, unemployed and WARG members), send application form + s.a.e. to WARG (JLL 2007), 22 Clifton Rd, Winchester, SO22 5BP

MAKING TIME TEAM: 15 years of archaeology and television Mick Aston Tuesday 27 February, 18.00 for 18.30 The Stripe, University of Winchester, King Alfred Campus, West Hill, Winchester. Refreshments served before and after the lecture (The University of Winchester Enterprise Lecture series, Sponsored by Business Link Wessex .) To reserve seats, e-mail Myra.Wilkinson@winchester.ac.uk, or phone 01962 827207 / 827578

LOCAL ANDOVER ARCHAEOLOGY David Allen, Max Dacre Lecture, Andover Guildhall, 7.30 pm. Tickets (small charge) ring Andover Museum 01264 366283.

LOCAL SOCIETIES CONFERENCE at Greyfriars Community Centre, Christchurch Rd, Ringwood, 10 am, Saturday 28th April (Hampshire Archaeological Committee) Our Society is providing a speaker and an exhibition of our fieldwork and Woodland Archaeology.. Topics include flint-knapping, Roman and Manorial sites etc. No charge. For details or volunteers to man our stand, contact Margaret Porter (01256 356012)

LOCAL HISTORY FAIR at the Willis Museum, Basintstoke, on Saturday 28th April. Our Society will take a display of our work, including Basingstoke Talking History.

Your AGM needs you!

Mark Peryer Email: mperyer@f2s.com Tel: 01256 780502

Do you have a research project or something that you have been working on that you think would be of interest to other society members? Would you like to share it by giving a short talk with the rest of the members? You never know, another member might know something that helps you. We thought that after this year's AGM we would offer the opportunity for members to talk about their interests.

The talks should be about an archaeological or historical subject and could reflect either some original research that you have done, or perhaps a visit to somewhere that you think other members would be interested in. In order that we can have talks from several members I would suggest a length of 10-20 minutes.

The format of the talk would be your choice. If you would like to use Powerpoint for some slides, then that would be most convenient since the society has recently invested in a video projector. If you don't know how to use Powerpoint, then I am willing to work with you to prepare material and push the relevant buttons on the night. We can also cope with Carousel slides, or any other form of visual aid, given enough notice. If you would like to give a talk after the AGM, then please let me know.

FIELDWORK REPORT

Mark Peryer mperyer@f2s.com

I am pleased to report that the Woodland Archaeology project is progressing. Seven of us took part in the training on the audit process at Hampstead Norreys in November. Nine more of our members will attend the same training at the end of January. The training consisted of a Health and Safety briefing (Risk Assessment) and a run through of the audit approach, led by Dick Greenaway. We spent some time going through the woods at Hampstead Norreys, which is rich in different features such as banks, ditches and a mound.

We have identified some woods to the immediate west of Basingstoke that fall within the North Wessex Downs Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty and permission is being sought from landowners to carry out our first audits. Hopefully these will take place during March and April.

In October a group of us spent a Saturday in Lambs Field, Worting, using coat hangers to trace the ditches in the field. Once we had traced them out, they were plotted on our plan of the field. There may be some trial trenches coming to check our findings later in the year. One place where trenches have been in the news is the site at Old Kempshott Lane, and Peter Stone reports on our site visit.

SITE VISIT TO OLD KEMPSHOTT LANE

Peter Stone

At 10.30 am on Saturday 13th January, and in deteriorating weather conditions, about a dozen hardy members of the Society attended at the site being developed by Barrett Southern Counties at Old Kempshott Lane for a guided tour by Duncan Hawkins of C.g.M.s Consulting. Much of the information below comes from the handout prepared by Peter Moore of Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA).

Duncan began by saying that the area west of the Roman road at Basingstoke has long been recognised as being of archaeological importance. This particular site, which lies between Old Kempshott Lane and the railway, is part of the ancient landscape broadly situated within a semicircular area of one mile radius centred on Buckskin. It is approximately bounded by Worting Wood Farm to the north, Scrapp's Hill Farm to the west and Battledown Farm to the south. Until comparatively recently ancient monuments were still to be observed while aerial photography and finds from field walking provided further evidence of Romano-British settlements along the line of the Silchester-Winchester Roman road now represented by Old Kempshott Lane.

In September/October 2006 an archaeological field evaluation was undertaken by PCA in advance of site development work for a new housing estate. The digging of 105 test trenches to reveal ditches and pits, mostly in the centre and south of the site, proved sufficient to persuade the Basingstoke and Deane authorities to authorise full-scale excavation in three large selected areas. Now after many weeks' work in difficult weather conditions the excavators have been able to identify two Bronze Age barrows, with a third one possible,

A surprise had come at the south end of the site, where a number of prehistoric pits, were discovered and identified as such by pottery finds. They were, of considerable width (about 2

metres or $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet) and depth (about 1.8 metres or 6 feet). The pits are being provisionally interpreted as grain stores but for unknown reasons they went out of use as such and burnt material with animal bone, including Red Deer, was deposited within them, possibly in accordance with ritual, before backfilling took place.

A Romano-British settlement was found to extend within the south-western boundary of the site, where its perimeter ditch was discovered along with many features, mostly pits and post holes, external to it. Investigations are continuing to find out what former activities these features might represent. Two parallel ditches on the shoulder of the dry valley are probably the funnel entrance to a "banjo" enclosure.

Excavation will be continued until at least the end of January when 'off-site' work will begin in order to assess and record all finds, analyse the ancient environment and to finalise interpretation of how the site has evolved down to the end of the Roman period. When these tasks are complete publication will take place.

The presentation took place as members were guided, with warnings to take great care, around the various excavated features on a decidedly hazardous site. On their behalf Marjoleine Musselwhite expressed thanks to Duncan Hawkins for his description of this interesting 'rescue' dig, to Stephen Appleby of Hampshire County Archaeology for arranging the visit and to both for undertaking journeys of some distance to Basingstoke in their own time.



REPORT

Barbara Applin

Baskets, Bags and Boxes

Shopping at the Co-op in the 20th century



By the time this Newsletter is out, this exhibition will have left the Willis Museum for Aldershot, but I hope you will have seen it.

The Family Pack and the Oral History folder available at the exhibition contain memories

gathered by Basingstoke Talking History as well as articles by Richard Garfield (*Gazette:* Memories on Monday) – we are doing follow-up interviews too.

Two of the memories are of fancy dress worn at Co-op Treats: a Lyons Corner House "nippy" advertising tea, and a milk bottle. So the exhibition included a little girl mannequin (borrowed from Milestones) dressed as a milk bottle, while Alan and Nicola Turton drew these cartoons and others for the Family Pack and the folder.





TALKS and MEMORIES

Margaret Harris and I gave a talk on **Basingstoke Talking History** to the U3A at Alton – and found Powerpoint much easier to use than slides! One suggestion from the audience was that we should look out for significant events as they happen and record people's reactions and feelings at the time. A good idea, I thought. So if you have something you want to have recorded for the future about a present-day event, let me know!

And, as always, we would welcome more help with interviews, transcriptions and research. Ring 01256 465439 or e-mail me at 106441.3542@compuserve.com)

DOES ANYONE VISIT NORFOLK?

We have been sent photos of Cowdery Down House taken by Albert Davis, aged 94, who lives in Great Ellingham, Norfolk. He worked there when it was the Workhouse. His nephew is going to let us have any information he can give us, but a real interview would be wonderful! Coincidentally we had an enquiry from someone whose mother was born in Cowdery Down House in 1930, her grandmother being listed there as general servant, domestic).

WESSEX HISTORICAL DATABASES

Barbara Applin

THE 1871 WINCHESTER CENSUS

WHD02 ISBN 0-9553778-1-1

Edited by Mark Allen and Tom Beaumont James. The comprehensive document records the names, addresses occupations and birthplaces of Winchester's 17,500 people in 1871. The CD provides a fully edited database. Resulting from the work of the Winchester Project, this publication includes a full editorial commentary and introduction. Using Winchester in 1871 as a case-study, this work reveals the processes, strengths and weaknesses of censuses as sources for family historians as well as for academics. Searchable indexes in original and enriched forms, and PDF and database-friendly versions of tables are included at the click of a mouse. Dr Allen and Professor James are directors of the Winchester Project, based at the University of Winchester.

I have just received this CD published by the University of Winchester and with just a short dip into it I can see that it will be a fascinating source of information, and very easily searchable. I was able to find out very quickly how many people in 1871 Winchester had been born in Basingstoke, and a quick look at the Barracks showed just how far-flung the recruitment must have been.

Similar CDs are:

Southampton Brokage Book 1447-8 (WHD01 ISBN 0-9553778-0-3)

Sparsholt 1841-1901: A Hampshire Village Microhistory (WHD03 ISBN 0-9553778-1-X.

Scott Childs has sent in this vivid picture of Basingstoke in the past.

It is an extract from "A Bull in Winter" by his grandmother, Christabel Bull, which he is in the process of editing.

The Brook Street Fain

Every Michaelmas it was a custom of the country people to gather in Basingstoke, in Brook Street, for the Michaelmas Fair. The primary reason for the Fair was to enable farmers and farm workers to get together. If a farm worker wished to change his job, he would wear a flower in his button-hole, a favour denoting his special branch of agriculture. The farmer would then approach the man and terms would be negotiated. Around this time of year, Father would show signs of restlessness, and the children would be sent outside while Mother persuaded Father that they were better off where they were.

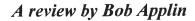
Apart from the uncertainty of what Father intended to do, the Fair was the greatest event of the year. Everybody from miles around went, they poured into Basingstoke in carts, wagons and on foot. The whole of Brook Street was taken over along its entire length. There were stalls selling all sorts of things: hot chestnuts, toffee apples, home-made humbugs, baked potatoes and what is now called jumble. In those days people were very thrifty, saving all usable items of clothes and furniture for barter in exchange for something they needed. Not much money was exchanged between the workers, there being not much to spare. But no matter how hard up people were, they saved some money for the Fair at night. It was located in a yard by the Co-op. It would be nightfall before visiting the Fair, the earlier hours being taken up by the grown-ups meeting friends they hadn't seen since the previous Michaelmas, catching up on all the news, tut-tutting over goings-on, and commiserating over the death of acquaintances.

It was a slow business to travel the short distance to the source of the music. The Fair was the climax, the be all and end all of the day. In Chrissie's eyes it was fairy land. Glittering lights spun round in the air above her head, music played loudly, barkers shouted hoarsely, and round and round went the roundabouts. The air was redolent of steam smoke, fish and chips, and the smell of human bodies, pushing, shoving, laughing, crying all in one glorious medley of fantasy.

The enormous steam engines stood in the shadows, their shining brass glinting in the fitful light. They supplied the power to run the roundabouts as well as the electricity to light the ground. The roundabout was the heart of the fair,

drawing all eyes to it. It was large and brightly coloured in red, gold and blue. Magnificently painted horses suspended on twirled brass poles rode the night sky, up and down, faster and faster they whirled. Adults and children rode the garish steeds, even modest little Mother hitched her skirt and clambered astride; the speed and motion made her neat hair come unpinned, giving her a girlish look. Certainly Father must have thought so, because he put his arms around her waist, laughing at her half-hearted protests. He rolled up his sleeves and proceeded to win coconuts and had a go at nine-pins. One year he won Arthur a toy gun, by winning at darts. He was in his element, showing off to all and sundry. No-one could be more dashing than Dick, his blue eyes shone and although he was short in stature, he was a natural crowd puller. He could play music by ear, he played the mouth organ, the Jew's Harp and the piano accordion. After the Fair life would settle back down into its natural rhythm.

BOOKSHELF





What connects the Benefactions Board in Basingstoke's St Michael's Church and the Maidenwell estate in Lincolnshire? Sir James Lancaster (1554 –1618), one of the most famous sons of Basingstoke (arguably the most famous). Some of the bequests listed on the board, as well as the Maidenwell estate, were left to the town in his will. A new biography of Sir James Lancaster has been published recently (**The Basingstoke Admiral – A life of Sir James Lancaster**) by Michael Franks, author of the biography of Walter de Merton (**The Clerk of Basingstoke**), the other contender for the title of "most famous son" – "What about John Arlott?" some might argue!)

The book charts the life from obscure (in the sense that little is known about them) origins of a yeoman's son to his final years as one of the senior figures of the East India Company (EIC) at the beginning of its existence, and of the City of London (Skinner's Company). Michael Franks records and reviews Lancaster's exploits as a mercenary and trainee merchant on the Iberian peninsula, as a privateer in the West Indies, as Vice Admiral (second in command) of EIC's First Fleet, and as Admiral of the Second Fleet; also as advisor to those attempting to find the Northwest Passage. Lancaster Sound in Canada is named after him, although he did not take part in the explorations.

This is a well-researched and well-written book, giving a vivid account of the hardships of life at sea for the early explorers of the Indian Ocean and beyond. Presumably because the information does not exist, it does not go into much detail of Lancaster's relationship with his family in Basingstoke and the surrounding area, but he obviously kept in touch with them and provided for them in his will. He had bought an estate at Pamber, possibly to provide a farming tenancy for one of his Basingstoke/Kingsclere kinsmen; this too was bequeathed to the town, and he also left charitable bequests to Kingsclere. Michael Franks acknowledges Anne Hawker's assistance in providing information on the Basingstoke Lancasters and identifying the sites of their property. Another Basingstoke benefactor, Sir James Deane (Deane's Almshouses) was Lancaster's cousin.

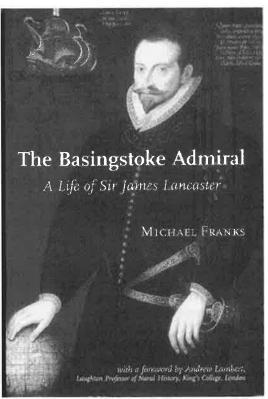
Lancaster (and his brother) never married, although the widow of one of his compatriots in the EIC, Mrs Owlfield, lived in his London house and was left a life interest in it and other substantial bequests for her to administer for charitable purposes. Lancaster comes across in this biography as a very able all-rounder with an eye to the main chance (at his death his estate was worth around £2 million in to-day's money), but one who was a good leader of men and inspired confidence.

His two voyages to the Far East, for the EIC, are treated as fully as possible, with verbatim quotes from the extant records. One wishes that more information was available, as Lancaster's logs are sometimes short on detail.

This book gives fascinating insights into aspects of commercial life at the beginning of England's (before the Union with Scotland) expansion as a trading nation, when men were fully prepared to spend months and years (literally) in small ships at the mercy of the tides and weather, with the ever-present risk of disease and illnesses, in order to seek new trading opportunities.

Although the Basingstoke part of the biography forms only a relatively small part of the whole, it is a valuable addition to the notes on Lancaster in Baigent & Millard's **History of Basingstoke**. The additional information that Mr Franks and Anne Hawker have retrieved from documents in the Hampshire Record Office and other sources help to flesh out the otherwise sparse information on the Basingstoke Lancasters.

The book has been published with assistance from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. For anyone interested in Basingstoke's (and wider) history, it is a worthwhile addition for one's library. It is on sale at the Willis Museum.



The Basingstoke Admiral

A Life of Sir James Lancaster

Michael Franks

The Hobnob Press, PO Box 1838, East

Knoyle,

Salisbury SP3 6FA
£14.95

ISBN 13- 978-0-946418-59-6

CLASSICISTS' CORNER

Peter Stone

The following verse was not translated from the Latin so therefore neither Virgil nor I can be held responsible:

Caesar entered on his head A helmet on each foot A sandal in his hand he had His trusty sword to boot

The society offers prizes for the first and second correctly punctuated version of this gem received by the Editor before Thursday 1st March:

First prize: Five minutes listening to my funny stories as told at digs during 2006. *Second prize:* Ten minutes of the same.

With acknowledgement to 'Verse & Worse' by Arnold Silcock – Faber & Faber 1982.

VISIT TO THE NMR

Augustus Gloop

In December, our trip to Swindon to visit the National Monuments & Records Office provided an excellent opportunity to discover what the NMR has to offer and how to access its resources. The NMR, which is maintained by English Heritage, is one of the largest publicly accessible archives in the UK and the biggest dedicated to the historic environment.

Despite the close proximity of the retail outlet and other attractions such as the Steam Railway Museum, the dozen or so boys and girls who attended managed to focus well on the visit in hand. Having been made very welcome with coffee and biscuits by Elaine Davis, the Outreach Officer for the NMR, we were treated to an hour's presentation, followed by a tour of the offices and public search rooms. We were then given the opportunity to spend a short while on our own individual research needs, which was an unexpected bonus, given that this is not normally granted during guided tours. This led to many happy moments of discovery by those in our group, with many of us determined to visit again, to undertake further research in our individual interests.

We were shown what types of records and photographs the NMR stores at Swindon. For example there are 2.7 million aerial photographs, including nearly complete coverage taken by the RAF in 1946-48 (these being housed in a special temperature and humidity controlled environment to preserve the plates and negatives).

We were also given a demonstration of the online research facilities, which allows the public to view data from the comfort of their own homes. For example, *PastScape* is an online resource providing an easy-to-use way to find information about many of England's ancient and historic sites, buildings and monuments. It is accessible from http://www.pastscape.org/homepage/. *ViewFinder* is another major online resource for

England's history. Its *Picture Gallery* contains illustrations of the industrial age, social history, architecture and archaeology, dating from the 1840s to the present day. Even photos of modern day life are being stored so that in years to come they can provide images of what life was like in the early 21st century.

We also learnt about the plans to cross reference records held at County level, such as those on Hampshire's Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record, with those at the NMR, which would ultimately provide an even greater research facility.

If you wish to visit the NMR, then it is normally open Tuesdays to Fridays, 0930 - 1700 hours.

HOW BASINGSTOKE MYTHS ARE BORN

Barbara Applin

Another Basingstoke calendar has been published, this time using some of the Frith collection of photographs. But, this photograph, which is used for January 2007, has a most misleading caption, "Boarding School, 1898". It describes the boarding school as a

"great British institution" and then continues, "those building an empire overseas built boarding schools for their children at home. This Basingstoke school was a veritable palace of education, fit for a young elite who had, it seemed, been born to rule."

The photograph is, of course, of the Fairfields **Board** Schools, and you can just hear the snorts of derision and howls of rage all round Basingstoke at this description!



I'm prepared to bet that Basingstoke's Boarding School will be quoted by someone some time in the future as an established fact – "It was on that calendar, so it must be true"! Another myth about our town!

I'd like to collect more "Basingstoke myths", so please send them in (01256 465439: e-mail 106441.3542@compuserve.com)

CALENDAR

| Tues 13 Feb | EXCAVATIONS IN THE GRANGE FIELD David Allen | FBH |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| Thurs 15 Feb | SPEED TRAPS TO SEAT BELTS: THE STORY OF | FWM |
| | THE AA Jane Harris | |
| Wed 21 Feb | LANDS END TO JOHN O'GROATS BY BICYCLE | TADS |
| | Bryan and Christine Watson | |
| Fri 23 Feb | June Lloyd Lecture WINCHESTER, CHARLEMAGNE | |
| | AND JERUSALEM Prof. Martin Biddle (see page 3) | |
| Tues 27 Feb | MAKING TIME TEAM Mick Aston (page 3) | |
| Thurs 8 March | WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HUMAN BONES? | BAHS |
| | Simon Mays | |
| Tues 13 March | WITH LOVE FROM THE TRENCHES – Cards of | |
| | the First World War: Geoff Salter | FBH |
| Thurs 14 March | THE STORY OF LETTER BOXES Brian Locock | FWM |
| Wed 21 March | DECLINE AND FALL? CASTLES AT THE END | HFC |
| | OF THE MIDDLE AGES Prof. Mathew Johnson | |
| | BASINGSTOKE HERITAGE SOCIETY Debbie | TADS |
| | Reavell | |
| Fri 23 March | LOCAL ANDOVER ARCHAEOLOGY David Allen | |
| | (Max Dacre Lecture, see page 3) | |
| Sun 1 April | Basing House opens | |
| Thurs 12 April | KIPLIN HALL: A JACOBEAN HOUSE AND | |
| - | ITS FAMILIES Dawn Webster | BAHS |
| Wed 18 April | THE GURKAS Major Davies | TADS |
| Thurs 19 April | SALE OF THE CENTURY: HACKWOOD PARK | FWM |
| _ | Brian Spicer | |
| Sat 21 April | Landscape Section Conference CELEBRATION OF | HFC |
| | PROGRESS N LANDSCAPE STUDIES | |
| Sat 28 April | LOCAL HISTORY FAIR Willis Museum (see page 3) | |
| - | LOCAL SOCIETIES CONFERENCE, Ringwood (page 3) | |
| | Spring Symposium LATE MEDIEVAL HAMPSHIRE | HFC |
| Thurs 10 May | THE COUNTY'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIO | N |
| • | BEHIND THE SCENES Kay Ainsworth | BAHS |
| Thurs 17 May | THE MAN WHO MADE MECCANO, FRANK | FWM |
| · | HORNBY John Hollands | |
| Sat 19 May | THE HOSPITAL OF ST CROSS, WINCHESTER | HFC |
| • | Day visit | |
| Wed 23 May | AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY Sam Moorhead (OGS Crawfor | d HFC |
| wed 23 May | | |

| 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 pm at the museum |
| HFC | Hampshire Field Club; Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds College, |
| | Winchester. We can send one representative; details from our Secretary |
| TADS | Tadley & District History Soc, 8 pm St Paul's Church Hall, The Green, Tadley |