

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BAHSOC

Newsletter 194

February 2011

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*Photos
Bickerstaffe
Bows*



40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th 40th

40th

40th  **It's closer than you'd think!**  40th

40th **BAHS 40th Anniversary Conference and Celebration – From 2pm Sat 17th Sept** 40th


40th Plans are progressing for our 40th Anniversary celebrations. They will take 40th
 the form of a half-day conference, with four speakers who have had a 40th
 long-standing connection with us – archaeologists Dave Allen, Mike 40th
 Fulford and Tim Schadla-Hall and local historian Derek Spruce, who will 40th
 share some part of their research with us. Interspersed will be very short 40th
 contributions from four ex-chairmen about various of our activities. There 40th
 will be birthday cake and, in the evening, a hog roast, all in the splendid 40th
 surroundings of the Great Barn, Basing House. Tickets will cost £15:00 (for 40th
 BAHS members) and will be available at meetings soon. To avoid 40th
 disappointment, put this date in your diaries now and come along to 40th
 meet old friends, enjoy the celebrations and toast the Society's next 40
 40th years! 40th

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NOTICE BOARD

Stories of Basingstoke



10:00am Saturday 02 Apr 2011 to Saturday 23 Apr 2011 in the **Community Gallery at the Willis Museum** Basingstoke Heritage Society presents an exhibition, which tells the stories of some of the famous people who link Basingstoke's stories to our nation's history.



Dacre Memorial Lecture

Early Travellers to Hampshire
 Dr John Chandler

7.30 pm 15th April, The Upper Guildhall, Andover, £6

WARG Winchester Archaeology & Local History
June Lloyd Lecture
SYMBOLIC LANDSCAPES IN MEDIEVAL WINCHESTER
Professor Derek Keene

7.30 pm on Friday 25th February in Winchester Guildhall. £12.50, discounted to £9 for WARG members, unemployed & students if paid in advance. From Julia Sandison, 22 Clifton Rd, Winchester, SO22 5BP.

Archaeology Report

Mark Peryer (mperyer@f2s.com) phone (01256 780502)

Fieldwork

The F.O.A.M. volunteers tackled the environs of Odiham Castle on Saturday 13th November. Again, we were joined by the Worting St Thomas scouts plus a couple who had seen us in action at Basing Fish ponds and decided to join in. The day was successful with most of the undergrowth back under control. One thing we noticed as we were working was that there was a steady stream of visitors to the site, suggesting that the HCC's restoration work has paid off.

Unfortunately, the F.O.A.M. weekend at Silchester in January had to be cancelled because of unforeseen circumstances. However, we are trying to reschedule the work for later in the year.

There will be a dig at Basing House this year. As usual, it will be led by Dave Allen and will take place towards the end of May. This year's dig will focus on the 'Roman' site since we expect the new bridge to have landed over the site of the Western Gate House. More details will be available nearer the time.

We also hope to offer the opportunity to get involved in another local excavation in September-October. If all goes well, we shall be able to give more information in the next newsletter.

If you would like to get involved with our fieldwork, please contact me by email (mperyer@f2s.com) or by phone (01256 780502).

BAHS Pottery Study Day

Following on from our study day survey, I am pleased to announce that we have arranged a Pottery Study for Saturday March 19th. Our tutor for the day will be Lorraine Mepham of Wessex Archaeology, and the day will start at 10:00 and finish at 16:00. Lorraine will cover some introductory topics and then take us through the different pottery typologies from the Neolithic to the end of the Roman period. The day will be held at Wessex Archaeology's headquarters, just outside Salisbury, since that will allow us to have access to their collections.



The cost of the day will be £15.00 for BAHS members, £25.00 for non-members. Lunch is not included in the price, but there is a café nearby.

There are limited places for the study day and they are going fast! Please contact Mark Peryer to register. We shall organise lift-shares once we have finalised the list of attendees.

Silchester Sponsorship

Every year the society offers sponsorship for up to two people to attend Reading University's Archaeology field school at Silchester for a week. During the week you will have a chance to take part in the excavations, learn how to record your work and take part in a number of tutorials concerning different aspects of the Archaeology at the site, including finds processing and environmental archaeology. A number of members have taken advantage of this opportunity and have brought their learning back to the society's fieldwork. If you would be interested, please write a letter to the chairman, Mark Peryer, outlining why you think you would benefit from attending the school. Alternatively, if you know of someone who would value taking part, please encourage them to apply. The closing date for applications is March 4th.

See the website <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/acadepts/1a/silchester/publish/field/inded.php> and the latest update on Silchester in **Current Archaeology 250 (January 2011)**. Also reports by Margaret Porter in our *Newsletter 193*, Bryony Lalor *188*, Louise Sheldon *185*, Nicola Turton and Jim Oram *181* and Jon Harrow *157*.

..... 2011 BAHS Field Trip To Pembrokeshire

This year's field trip will be an exploration of Pembrokeshire and will feature visits to sites which will span the time from the Neolithic through to the modern day. The trip will take place over an extended weekend, from Thursday 30th June to Tuesday 5th July 2011. There will be an organised program with guided tours and this year the programme will split at various times since some sites are in areas that involve walking over rough ground. As always, the arrangements are flexible, if you want to join late or leave early, or opt out of the organised programme from time to time, then that is fine.

We plan to stay near Fishguard, at the Fishguard Bay Hotel. This is one of the few hotels in the area that could take a large group and has a history in its own right. There are other options should you wish to stay elsewhere.

The provisional programme is as follows:

Day	Place	Guided Tour
Thursday 30 th June (Travel day)		
	Caerwent	No
	Carleon	Yes
Friday 1 st July		
Morning	Pentre Ifan – Neolithic Chamber	No
Afternoon	Castell Henlys – Iron Age Hill fort	Yes
	Careg Coetan – Neolithic Chamber	No
Saturday 2 nd July		
Morning	St Davids Cathedral	Yes
	Bishops Palace	Yes
Afternoon – Walking required	St Davids Head (Neolithic Tombs & Coastal walk)	No
Afternoon – Easier access	St Non's Chapel & Well	No
Sunday 3 rd July		
Morning	Carew (Castle & Tidal mill, WWII control tower, Carew Cross)	No
Afternoon	Pembroke Castle	Yes
	St Govers Chapel	No
Monday		
Morning	Nevern – Motte & Bailey Castle	TBD
Afternoon – Walking required	Carn Menyn (Bluestone quarry)	No
	Gors Fawr stone circle	No
Afternoon – Easier access	St Dogmaels Abbey (Founded 1115)	No
	Y Felin (C12 Water mill, in working order)	No
Tuesday 5 th July (Travel day)		
	St Fagins (Near Cardiff) – Welsh life museum	TBD

The cost of the trip is estimated to be in the region of £250 to £350 each, depending on whether you would be sharing a twin room or not. This covers 5 nights bed and breakfast, plus admission charges. Other meals, petrol etc would be on top. **If you would like to take part in the trip, please contact Mark Peryer on 01256 780502 or email mperyer@f2s.com.**

- **Happy Christmas, Basingstoke!** We have sold 383 copies out of the 450 printed.
- **Co-op Book** Work continues - watch this space!
- **Education** We have yet more interviews on this theme: by Michael Whitty (former headmaster of Bishop Challoner School), Terry Ayres (former headmaster of Cranbourne School) and Stephen Sheedy (Queen Mary College).
- **Kempshott** We are beginning to do interviews in association with a newly formed Kempshott History Group.
- **Database** Cathy and Ian Williams and Barbara Large are working on a database of our interviews so that we can search for particular topics and items.

BAHS and THE HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB

For many years our members Mary Oliver and Paulline Williams have been active members of the Committee of the Archaeology Section of the Hampshire Field Club - particularly notable for their effort at cheese and wine "dos". Now they have both decided it is time to retire from that Committee, and another of our members, Briony Lalor, has been elected. So Basingstoke continues to be represented.

Don't forget that BAHS is a member of the Field Club so if you are not an individual member you can contact Ginny Pringle and arrange to go to lectures, visits etc. as our Society's representative.

DO YOU KNOW ... ?

... BAHS regularly receives numerous enquiries from members, other organisations and the general public about the history of Basingstoke and families originating from this area.

Thanks are due to both Bob and Barbara Applin who handle a good number of these enquiries and indeed all the other members who have helped or are helping out, as this frequently involves considerable amounts of time spent on research..

The many topics in the past few months include

- The Park Prewett railway
- The Basingstoke steam laundry
- Maps of Basingstoke 1930-1945
- The 1310 Worting Customal
- Historic Basingstoke shopkeepers
- The Saxon cross shaft in Steventon Church
- Anti-tank blocks at Viabes

We often liaise with the Basingstoke Heritage Society and the Friends of the Willis as a great deal of local knowledge also resides within these organisations and we are now keeping a log in an attempt to record the variety and number of enquiries that come our way.

Although most enquiries are history related we also get the odd archaeological one, such as one resident of Basingstoke who discovered a quantity of worked flint in his garden and this has now been recorded together with the find spot...

. . . which goes to show just how valuable a resource BAHS is for those researching Basingstoke's history and how fortunate we are to have such an able team of volunteers within the Society!

A PS from Bob

Two of the queries we have answered in the past year are for publications and are of particular interest. One was from an Austrian Jewish refugee who spent a short time at North Oakley and later became a member of the SOE forces. He has recently sent the Society a copy of his book in appreciation of the help we were able to give him (see BOOKSHELF, page 14). By a strange coincidence Basingstoke Talking History have recently recorded an interview with the widow of another Austrian Jewish refugee, and it is interesting - and moving - to compare their experiences. The other query was from Australia from someone gathering information about his grandfather who was an active member of the Basingstoke Choral Society at the turn of the 20th century and later had an interesting period of war service with the Royal Flying Corps. His grandfather's diary is being turned into a novel. One question that nearly stumped us was "Where was St Paul's in Basingstoke?" which his grandfather had mentioned. Well, of course, there was never a St Paul's Church in Basingstoke. The reference was in fact to a performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio St Paul, when he sang in the choir at Old Basing!

We've recently had a request for information about the Isolation Hospital in Basingstoke (see TAKING THE PULSE OF BASINGSTOKE, and we're looking out more information. Also anything about interesting Basingstoke women - we'll let you know what we come up with. Any ideas? Any Basingstoke suffragettes? [See page 11]

This leads on nicely to a handwritten letter found in Hampshire Record Office (11M94/41)

Beecroft – Odiham – Basingstoke

Feb 24/26

Dear Mr Willis

With reference to what we were talking about last Wednesday \what I wrote out was done rather hurriedly if you remember The Basingstoke Chamber of Commerce wanted to insert something in their shopping week booklet so I hurried up and maybe there are many omissions that rope walk in Brook Street just west of May's Brewery if I mentioned it all[sic] all perhaps I put it under Basing Road [inserted squashed in, different ink: This was kept by Mr Eastwood and it was called Northbrook Street] What [I] had really planned in my own mind was to run through the 64 years of my diary and making notes of what happened in Basingstoke [inserted "as I went through indexing"] & write it all out and hand it over to someone to keep. That I have not done yet perhaps never shall. If only I had thought to put down in writing what my mother told me and what Mr Rd Wallis said I could have been more exact he had a wonderful knowledge of what had happened in the

town it was he who told Mr Arkas Sapp (I hear him say it) that Oat Street had been raised a yard by simply putting down a layer of flint stone every winter letting the traffic work in the stones there were no steam rollers in those days. I think that in an article describing B'stk 70 to 100 years ago the origin of the North Hants Foundry ought to be more fully described I distinctly remember it up Castons Road and it was moved to its present position soon after the Crimean War but was it originally Mr Caston's - of course the Wallises could (or ought to be able to) tell us all about it but Mr Wallis (the present one) would not know me so I could not well approach him. I began talking to Mr Kingdon about it one night when he was over here but he was not very clear about it and time would not permit a gossip. Did Caston have a shop in the Market Place where the present Town Hall stands and a forge or foundry up the "Entry" (or more properly "Twittern") and afterwards carried on by Wallis, and Lodwidge took to Caston's Shop? All these matters Wallis would know Castons Entry (or Alley) was originally called Bear Alley because somewhere up here they kept a bear and once a week for public amusement this bear was brought down into the Market Place to be bated [sic] by dogs. What a miserable life that poor beast must have had. If what I have written ever does get into print others ought to be invited to contribute what they remember of the town before 1850 [inserted "something"] like this ----

* *

*

"It is usual to put at the foot of invoices and bills "E & O. E." (errors and omissions excepted) so "X.K.Q." invites any one who has read through the above to contribute anything he or she remembers before 1850 that has been omitted.

or something of that sort

The Wallis family ought to be able to confirm or deny what my mother told me that the present Rose Inn was the old Friends Meeting House.

I have just turned up an old Directory 1839 giving the names of all the tradesmen in Basingstoke & Odiham 87 years ago very interesting to you & me I now send it by Mr Monger for you to look at

Yours faithfully

Geo. Woodman

George Woodman was the chemist who worked for Arkas Sapp in the Market Square. He kept an extensive diary - and recorded many of the events of the Massagainian Riots (see Bob Clarke's book). It seems that his mother's memory might have been mistaken, as the Friends' Meeting House before the one in Wote Street was on the north side of the Reading Road (see Baigent & Millard, page 537, which says it was used at least from 1672 and a house next to it was bought in 1696). During Basingstoke's upheaval in the 1960s the Friends' burial ground was emptied and the bodies reburied elsewhere.

Websites

The Solent-Thames Initiative and EXPLORE *Mary Oliver*

Those of you who know me and my lack of computer skills will be surprised to see a piece from me recommending web-sites! But this form of communication is definitely the way forward, an excellent way of disseminating information cheaply and fast. Two of the projects with which I have been associated have recently put a great deal of material into the public sphere, so please go on-line and give them a try.

You may remember a previous note from me about the Solent-Thames Initiative, to come up with a Research Agenda for future archaeological work. The overview on which this will be based has now been completed and put on-line and represents a very useful summary of the state of current knowledge drawn up by leading practitioners in the various periods. The web-site is straightforward to navigate and you can find the Hampshire information easily. I think it should prove a useful tool for research, especially as it is so up-to-date.

http://thehumanjourney.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=553&Itemid=277

As you will already be aware, several members of the Society are working on bringing the Basingstoke VCH volume up to date. In addition to the main VCH website, there is now a new web-site just made available which has short items of information as a taster of the work to follow. The address is: <http://explore.englishpastforeveryone.org.uk> This is a national web-site, so to get the local entries when it brings up a map of the UK click on the flag over Basingstoke and then other flags on the map of our area, to find what items have been put on so far (including St Michael's Church, Basingstoke Enclosures, Fairfield's Schools, Minute Books of the Basing Workhouse, and the 1851 Census of Basingstoke).

Old Weather *Debz Charlton*

If you are interested in naval history, the First World War or climate change, then you might like to have a look at <http://www.oldweather.org> the 'Old Weather' online 'citizen science' collaboration project.

"The idea is that log books from 298 WW1 ships of all sorts have been scanned and made available online. Anyone with an interest can sign in, and extract the position, date and weather data from the logs - the handwriting makes it impossible for a computer to read them. Data contributed then goes towards building up a model of the climate in the early C20, complementing land-based weather station data. That in turn improves our understanding of climate change. If you stick with one particular ship you can rise through the ranks to be captain..." For a BBC News article about it see also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11532534>

“Two thousand of feathers ...”

Barbara Applin

Some of us working on the revision of the Victoria County History for Basingstoke and surrounding parishes have been spending a lot of time transcribing wills and inventories, which give many details of everyday life, some quite ordinary and others really unexpected. The 16th century wills and inventories can be quite difficult, as many of the words are unfamiliar and the handwriting can be idiosyncratic. Usually we work together on the difficult ones, each taking it in turns to work out a sentence from a photocopy supplied by Hampshire Record Office. Usually if one gets stuck someone else can work it out, but sometimes we just have to use square brackets to show that we are guessing or defeated!

Christopher Taylor of Up Nately was particularly interesting (HRO finding number 1591 B78/1 and 2). He made his will on 9th March 1590 and must have died within a few days as the inventory was taken on 15th March the same year. He left one feather bed and one coverlet “after the decease of my wife” to his son, another Christopher, and the same to his daughter Margery Carnell, who also got half an acre of wheat. His brother got 20s, his grandson “the lesser of my playing bows” and the residue went to his wife, Agnes. But what was most interesting was this item, “I give unto Christopher my son my best cloak and my buff leather jerkin and all my working tools in my shop and half my bow timber and half my arrow timber. And the other half of my bow timber and arrow timber I give and bequeath unto Thomas Greene my son in law with my best hose and my sackcloth doublet.”

The men taking the inventory (Christopher Saxe, Thomas Willmot and Thomas Carnell - Margery's husband, presumably) had to go round his house, noting every item and assessing its value. At Up Nately he had basic household equipment, his apparel (2 pairs of hose, 2 pairs of stockings, 2 coats, one cloak, one buff jerkin, 2 doublets, 2 hats, one pair of shoes and 2 shirts) as well as 3 bedsteads, one feather bed, one flockbed, one bolster, 2 pillows, one coverlet, 2 painted cloths and 6 chests. He had 10 bushels of barley, 2 quarters of oats and 3 bushels of wheat; in the fields he had 5 and a half acres of wheat, one and a half of vetches and one mare, and (presumably in the yard) one goose, 4 ducks, 1 mallard and 4 hens.

But, more interestingly, he also had a stocklock (a lock for an outer door, fitted in a wooden case), a sword, “certain timber”, 23 bows, two thousand feathers and one bow case as well as one quiver and arrows and 3 bows. Now we are beginning to understand what was in his shop and why he left bow timber and arrow timber, and there is a wonderful list of his tools and raw material:

I consulted Pip Bickerstaffe of Bickerstaffe Bows, after he gave his talk connected to the Mary Rose exhibition at the Willis Museum, and these are his comments on Christopher Taylor's tools:

<i>18 shaves</i>	Basically spokeshaves, though these could be small planes like moulding planes with shaped blades.
<i>3 groovers</i>	Not sure quite what a groover might be like as I have not seen one, it could be quite a simple tool with a projecting spike in a hole in a block of wood. My grandfather used such a tool for putting a groove in dowels to allow excess glue to be squeezed out.
<i>1 nock saw</i>	For cutting string nocks in arrows.
<i>2 floats</i>	A bowyer's float is a wooden block with a series of parallel blades set in it, each blade scraping a fine shaving as the tool is moved over the surface of the wood.
<i>1 plane</i>	no comment
<i>1 chisel</i>	no comment
<i>1 turn saw</i>	A type of saw, no idea what.
<i>1 turning lathe</i>	Presumably as today.
<i>12 dressers</i>	Maybe for dressing whet stones.

2 glue pots (he didn't say what type of glue)
 2 brass basins no comment
 1 brass laver Brass water pot.
 200 bow staves This we recognise as unworked
 and half a thousand bow staves and bare shafts.
 arrow timbers
 1 slit shave Slitting saw, a fine-toothed light
 saw.
 2 paring knives no comment
 2 whet stones no comment
 pales Buckets.
 3 knee knives Probably a slightly larger type of
 paring knife.
 3 piercers Like a bradawl, maybe.
 3 pointing knives A type of knife, but not sure what
 design.
 3 files no comment



Pip says "I am sorry that I have not been able to identify some of these tools but maybe a knife specialist in Sheffield might be able to throw light on the types of knives in use and it is possible that carpenter/joinery tools might mirror some of the more specialist tools here. It is certain that there are regional and common names for tools, these could be used in quite small areas where one craftsman has given a tool a name in his own workshop and this name might only be recognised by someone who knew the man. The tool itself might not be all that special, just adapted to suit one operation by the man himself. We have tools that we use every day that are basically quite simple tools, adapted to our needs and we could give them a name that would identify them to us, but not necessarily anyone else.'

This is the only bowyer/fletcher we have identified so far from the wills and inventories that have been studied (mostly from Up Nately, Mapledurwell and Steventon). It will be interesting to see if we find more as the study goes on. over a wider area, including Basingstoke itself.

PANTOS at PARK CLINIC

Shelagh Le Maréchal



*This adds to memories
 of pantos in the
 Society's books
 TAKING THE
 PULSE OF
 BASINGSTOKE and
 HAPPY
 CHRISTMAS,
 BASINGSTOKE!*



During the early 1970s the opening of the new Basingstoke District Hospital (as it was, then) caused the closure of the Cottage Hospital - Hackwood Road Hospital - as a general hospital. The ground floor remained as a Day Case Unit for Day surgery, using the ward and theatre. Other areas remained as outpatient clinics and X-ray and pathology clinics. The upstairs of Hackwood Road Hospital was taken over by the Community Psychiatric Service which included a Psychiatric Day Hospital, opened

in November 1973 and was named Park Clinic by the staff as it was an off-shoot of Park Prewett Hospital and was near the War Memorial Park.

It was difficult to start with as the concept of a Day Hospital was new, but gradually it took shape. I was a staff nurse and we had a sister called Amzel Colegate, who had previously worked for many years at Park Prewett Hospital. Other members of staff were another staff nurse, an occupational therapist and two assistants, plus a secretary and a cook/tea lady who really ran the show! Dr John Lyons was our consultant and he had a registrar who attended the clinic frequently.

The treatment consisted of group and individual therapy with a great deal of occupational therapy. This took the form of doing everyday tasks - shopping, visiting the library, taking part in group activities, organising outings, making things, cooking and so on.

Amzel immediately set in process the organisation of a pantomime. She had, I think, been involved in the Park Prewett Pantomimes before moving to Park Clinic. All the staff and most of the patients were involved in the pantomimes and, long after I left, myself and my family and friends were still taking part and helping. If patients did not want to be on the stage they were encouraged to help with the scenery and making all the costumes.

All the pantomimes were written by Amzel's mother Jackeydawra Colegate (All the women in the Colegate family had names of birds - I think Amzel means blackbird and her sister's name was Myrtle, which I think means thrush.) Jackeydawra was over ninety years old and had been a suffragette and at the age of 17 had spent a month in prison because of her suffragette activities. We were all in awe of her and when she sat in the front row of every performance of the pantomime she frightened us to death! Both Amzel and her mother insisted that the costumes be absolutely the right period for the pantomime so it was quite an exacting time.

That said, it was always a lot of fun, with a great feeling of camaraderie. Amzel was very strict and knew exactly what she wanted and you always knew where you were with her. She usually had a part as well as producing, and was very often the Dame (although she was a lady!) as she was very tall. She had a wonderful pair of shoes for the part - they had large flat flaps at the end of the shoes (rather like a clown's shoes). It must have been very difficult to walk in them!

I was always given the part of principal girl (I was a lot younger then!) despite the fact that I can't really sing. The principal girl part was always rather a "drip", unfortunately! The principal boy was always a girl in those days so duets were the order of the day. We performed the pantos in the old ward at Hackwood Road. Amzel used to encourage local children to perform as well - we had lots of children from local ballet classes and my own children and friends' children took part too. It was all very much a family and friendship affair. We also had a local pianist.

Amzel's last panto was 8 years after I had left but I was still involved! On that occasion my husband, both children and several friends and their children were in "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". My husband played the baddie - an evil "Grindmarsh" - and my son was Baby Bear. The most awful and funny thing that happened to me during the pantomime was when I came on the stage with a very nice flat hat on to find that the audience started to laugh. My lovely principal boy, Jean, whispered, "Why are they laughing?" I replied, "I think it's my hat" and we both started to laugh! Jean managed to get some words of "If you were the only girl in the world" out but I could sing nothing and Amzel was furious! I kept right out of her way for the rest of that evening! Apart from laughing, it was very difficult to sing with a hat on. You tend to throw your head back to sing and the hat shoots forward onto your nose! Years later I heard Kiri te Kanawa saying how difficult it was to sing with a hat on and felt quite justified in my feelings!

Amzel and her mother were larger than life characters who made the pantomimes the great fun they were. They were marvellous for the patients, giving them confidence, improving their self-esteem and giving them a life-long interest in drama, singing and stage-management.

NEW THOUGHTS ABOUT LATE ROMAN BRITAIN

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB CONFERENCE REPORT

Peter Stone

For many years an understanding of the transitional period between Roman and 'Anglo-Saxon' Britain, created by 18th and 19th century historians, was passed down the generations. Firmly established in all texts covering the period of the late 4th to the 6th centuries, it used ancient written sources to show how a flood of vigorous, if somewhat primitive, Anglo-Saxon and other Germanic peoples took over that part of Britain which was to become England when the last legions of a dying Roman empire left. These dynamic barbarians swept an unprotected Romano-British population into Wales, Cornwall and overseas to Brittany before they settled to become the ancestors of the people of England. Perhaps scepticism is built into my nature but from an early age this whole scenario has always seemed unsatisfactory, not least because of the confusing legend of King Arthur whose re-constructed appearance in illustrated books did not look as though it owed much to Ancient Rome. So, returning again to history and the 'Late Antiquity' period in particular after very many years, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the period was now the subject of vigorous debate. The received view based on surviving ancient writings was no longer accepted as modern archaeological evidence showed that an altogether more complex pattern of events prevailed during the late 4th to 6th centuries.

The Hampshire Field Club Archaeology Section annual conference held at Winchester on 27th November was therefore of special interest to me and, judging by the level of attendance, to many others as well.

The first speaker was John Casey, former Reader in Roman Archaeology at the University of Durham, whose entertaining lecture - which included a threat to throw out anyone who mentioned King Arthur - highlighted the fragility of written sources such as the 6th century historians Zosimus, and Salvian and those of the late 5th century commentator Gildas. Zosimus, an easterner writing in Byzantium almost a century after the events described, relied extensively on other sources for his material, while the concluding part of his narrative has not survived. He was a pagan, and his work contains what some have construed as anti-Christian bias.

There are also good reasons for suspecting the objectivity of the commentaries of Gildas and Salvian, which may well be biased for political or religious reasons (this time pro-Christian) and so quite probably contain exaggerated claims as to the savagery of the barbarians among whom were Arians or 'the wrong sort of Christian'. In fact there is little if any evidence of widespread burning and destruction in late Roman Britain. In particular, Gildas may well have had an interest in identifying the horrors he describes with failures of religious and secular leaders in his own time.

The lack of any barbarian sources makes it more difficult to dismiss the suspicion that spin and distortion, accompanied by the usual failings of human recollection over time, are by no means modern phenomena.

Next to speak was David Allen of the Hampshire County Museum Service. He described events of the late Roman Empire surrounding the secession of Britain and northern Gaul from 286 to 296 AD under Carausius, who first came into prominence as a successful military and naval commander against barbarian raids and whose domain at one stage controlled both sides of the Channel. Following the loss of Gaul in 293 AD Carausius was murdered and succeeded by Allectus (his finance minister), who continued to defy the central authority for a further three years until Britain was re-taken by the western Caesar Constantius. The attempt by Carausius to legitimise his revolt and his apparent support by the administration and army in Britain is evidenced by his efforts to identify with the second century philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius, whose names he adopted, and by images on high quality coinage issued during the secession period. Some of these were displayed at the

Winchester Discovery Centre exhibition organised by the Hampshire County Museum Service in January 2010. Contrary to the traditional view, the images strongly suggest that Carausius was seeking not absolute power for himself but recognition as an equal of the *Augusti* Diocletian and Maximian.

The morning session concluded with a fascinating lecture by Stephen Cosh, who used research undertaken with David Neal for their superb four volume publication *Roman Mosaics of Britain* to show clearly how the quantity and quality of mosaics could be correlated with fluctuations in prosperity in Roman Britain. Beginning with illustrations of the high standard of mosaic work dated to the late first century post-Conquest period and the generally good quality of that of the second century, he went on to show how declining prosperity in Roman Britain was evidenced by a much reduced number of mosaics of markedly inferior quality throughout the third. High quality mosaic work returned with the widespread building of 'rich' villas in the south and west and the economic revival of the region in the fourth century, only to disappear along with the end of Roman rule.

The afternoon session began with Hella Eckardt of Reading University, who gave a lucid presentation of results obtained from analysing strontium and oxygen isotope samples from Romano-British skeletal remains. These showed that the population included persons who had not lived the early part of their lives in the region of Britain where their remains were found or indeed anywhere in Britain. Although the results therefore indicated a cosmopolitan element in the population, Dr Eckardt pointed out that some caution should be exercised before reaching any definitive conclusions because the sample analysed was quite small and was drawn from urban areas and military establishments. It was therefore quite probably not representative of the population as a whole. Nonetheless the results do show that there are reasonable grounds for accepting that incomers to Britain during the Roman period may well have had descendants who merged with the indigenous population.

The presentation by Ellen Swift of the University of Kent consisted of a case study on artefacts. She explained how decorative items such as bracelets of the Roman period came to be adapted from the 5th century onwards for personal adornment, often in the form of small finger rings. The content of this presentation, although narrow in focus, in fact provided a very good example of how manufacture and trade in small luxury items collapsed soon after the Roman army and administration left Britain and the re-cycling of such items well into the Anglo-Saxon period.

The final lecture was given by Ken Dark of Reading University, whose theme was the uncertainty that attaches to everything known about the late 4th and early 5th centuries. He argued that there is no simple explanation for the sequence of events that followed the end of Roman administration in Britain. For example, although archaeology makes it clear that town life declined before the end of the 4th century and the villa economy collapsed completely at around the turn of the fifth, sea trade along the coast of Gaul to the Mediterranean and hence to Byzantium continued after 410 AD. His conclusion was that the fate of individuals and whole districts depended entirely on time and place and status.

He also threw interesting light on the influence of Christianity in Roman Britain by pointing out that it may well have been superficial and confined to a limited number among the Roman and Romano-British elite, whose demise in south eastern Britain for whatever reason resulted in its disappearance. The difficulty in finding anything in Romano-British archaeology that might be interpreted with any degree of certainty as a church, let alone a cathedral, also pointed to the superficiality of Roman influence in a province that perhaps had always been culturally marginal.

In summary, this conference, the last of a series held nationally in 2010 to mark the 1600th anniversary of the of the famous letter from the Western Emperor Honorius advising Britons to look to their own defence against the barbarians, succeeded in providing an excellent opportunity for those attending to understand something of the complexities of Late Roman Britain and to finally consign the former standard interpretation of this difficult period to the dustbin of history.

BOOKSHELF



Secret Operations From Music to Morse and Beyond

Eric Sanders

Historyweb Ltd 2010 978-0-956183-1-0

Review by Bob Applin

Eric Sanders, originally Ignaz Erich Shwartz, was a Viennese Jew who was an up and coming young composer at the time of Hitler's annexation of Austria. This book is his memoirs of escape to England, eventually being joined by his mother and father, and his subsequent wartime experiences. The family were sent to North Oakley to do farm work. When Austrian and German Jewish refugees were considered not to be a threat to the country, they were allowed to join the army in a non-combatant construction corps which became the Pioneer Corp. Eric joined it.

As the war progressed and the probability of the Allies winning increased, a Section of the Special Operations Executive was formed to train operatives for operations in Austria and Slovenia. Eric volunteered for this duty and after months of training, when he was given the new identity of Eric Sanders, was posted to Southern Italy to await deployment with the partisans. The war ended before that happened. He worked as an interpreter in the interrogation of POWs but was later recruited to work in Austria for the British-Austrian Legal Unit. He was naturalised British in February 1947 and after demob he trained as a teacher and spent the rest of his working life in various London schools, finally becoming First Master at Elliott School.

The book quotes extensively from his diaries of the time. It gives a vivid account of the trauma leading up to his decision to leave Austria and the hardships endured whilst working at North Oakley. Throughout the whole period he put his musical talents to good use. What stands out to me, in this account, is how Eric managed to stay positive even when things were not going well.

It is a well written and at times very moving account of an early life full of unwanted excitement and worry.

Mr Sanders has donated a copy of his book to the Society as a thank you for the information we were able to give about Basingstoke at the time of his stay in North Oakley. It will be available for loan at Society meetings.

Basingstoke and its contribution to world culture

Rupert Willoughby

Published by the author 2010 . 978-0-9534428-6-7

Review by David Stelling

Rupert Willoughby has written an entertaining and sometimes thought-provoking book which follows his previous attempt to promote the place of Reading in world culture. It isn't a long book and not, at only 16cm square, a big one but it is very well written and is attractively produced with a front cover in the familiar Burberry Check. The book has six chapters, some of which tell familiar stories from an unfamiliar slant.

The chapters do not all address Basingstoke's wider cultural significance. The first chapter, The Raincoat Revolution, is one of the most faithful to the promise of the book's title. It begins with an account of Thomas Burberry's character and the development of his business in Basingstoke. The various versions of the Burberry gabardine are chronicled in sufficient detail. Burberry's nonconformity and the contrast this presented to the laxer lifestyle of some other town worthies are

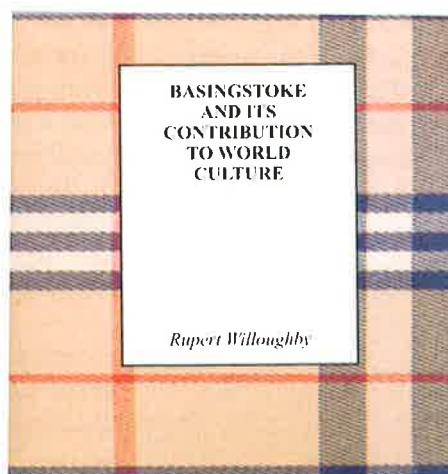
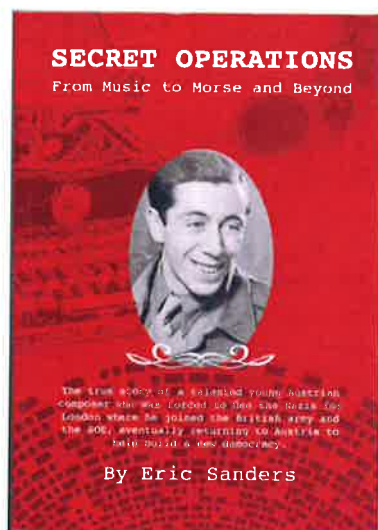
well described. There is also an entertaining description of the chic brand image of the first half of the twentieth century, later to be superseded by chav associations at the beginning of the twenty-first.

Chapter V "London SW50" also looks at our history in a social or cultural context. The post-war redevelopment of the town is examined from the starting point of the George Formby film "He snoops to conquer" which was filmed in Basingstoke in 1944. [Bob Applin has a DVD copy which he is willing to loan out. Do not expect to identify much of Basingstoke!] The film contrasts entrenched small town attitudes with town planning and progress. Mr Willoughby judges the theme of the film "one of remarkable topicality." In retelling the familiar story of the town's subsequent development it is fair to say the author is not in sympathy with the town planners.

Some other chapters tell a straightforward story of various worthies and their legacies. Walter de Merton's career is described, as are the lives of various descendants of his relations. Jane Austen's Basingstoke is one of balls and unsatisfactory retail therapy, although that was doubtless the life of women of her class. It is familiar ground but very deftly described.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter which dealt with mid nineteenth century Basingstoke. It is a vivid imaginative reconstruction of a modest market town not long after the arrival of the railway. The author links this section to an account of early emigrants to Western Australia and the naming of the Margaret River in honour of Peggy Chandler, who married two Basingstoke worthies but who never set foot in Australia.

This is a book worth reading. It is wistful about the past, justifiably scathing about some planning decisions that resulted in some needless demolitions of fine buildings and of the construction of the Great Wall of Basingstoke. I feel some more successful projects are too harshly judged. Festival Place is "an unabashed shrine to capitalism", which is taken to reinforce the view that the town is "rampantly philistine". I think that the Anvil or the Haymarket might be mentioned as a counter argument. Nevertheless this book is to be enjoyed, light in tone, well researched and occasionally contentious.



THE BASINGSTOKE RIOTS UPDATE ...

Our new book by Bob Clarke has been well reviewed in the Newsletter of the Odiham Society, FRONTLINE (the Newsletter of the Hampshire Constabulary History Society) and on the website of the Basingstoke Heritage Society. Sales are good - as Bob gives talks about the Riots to different groups they buy copies. And we have just sent a copy to Australia, to a descendant of Frank Barkham!

2011 DIARY DATES

BAHSOC

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEETINGS on Thursdays at 7.30 pm Church Cottage, Basingstoke

- 10th March** **The archaeological evidence for the Saxons in Hampshire** Nick Stoodley
- 19th March** **BAHS Pottery Study Day - see page 3**
- 14th April** **A traitor's death? The mystery of the hanged, drawn and quartered man from Hulton Abbey, Staffordshire** Mary Lewis
- 12th May** **Edward Jenner and the smallpox virus** Ian Mason
- 9th June** **AGM**
- 30th June to 5th July** **Trip to Pembrokeshire - see page 2**

Secretary: Ginny Pringle Tel: 01420 550028
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www.bahsoc.org.uk
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FRIENDS OF BASING HOUSE at 7.30 pm, Basing House Education Centre, The Street (for parking arrangements contact Andrew Howard, 01256 327014)

8th March **Food** Anne Jones (with samples)

FRIENDS OF WILLIS MUSEUM at 7.30 pm Willis Museum, Basingstoke

- 17th February** **Tales of the unexpected - from the Willis archives** John Hollands
- 17th March** **Fab finds - Treasure in Hampshire** Robert Webley
- 21st April** **Basingstoke Canal - the last 6 miles** Roger Cansdale
- 19th May** **Inside/outside at Heckfield Place** Robert Louth
- 16th June** **"Living on the Breadline" - the workhouse system** Rosemary Rawcliffe

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB further details www.fieldclub.hants.org

- 16th February** **Knowlton Henge Project** John Gale, 7.30 pm Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds College, Winchester £2 members; £3 non-members; pay on the night
- 16th March** **The Transformation of St Cross Hospital, Winchester in the later Middle Ages** Dr John Crook & Dr John Hare, 7.30 - 9.15 in the Brethrens' Hall at St Cross. £9 (Historic Buildings Section)
- 9th April** **'Entertaining Hampshire' Local History Section Spring Symposium** £10 HFC members, £12 non-members.

Other events, see page 2

Articles for the Newsletter to
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