

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BAHS

Newsletter 204

August 2013

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*Whose skull
was this?*



PICTURE PAGE

Basing House dig
(see page 9)



Silchester visit
(see page 16)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 13th June 2013

All existing Committee members were re-elected and continue in post, the only slight change being that Mary Oliver was elected as a full member and Marjoleine Butler stood down as a full member of the Committee, due to other commitments, and became a co-opted member.

The current Committee is made up of Ginny Pringle (Chair), Mark Peryer (Treasurer), Barry Hedger (Membership Secretary), Penny Martin (Secretary), Barbara Applin, Ian Waite, Ian Williams, Alan Turton, Mary Oliver, Marjoleine Butler (co-opted).

The Committee thanked all members who work with events all year round and David Buckland in particular, who has for the last 10 years organised the books for sale at monthly meetings. He is prepared to carry on for a short while but would be glad if a member would volunteer to help him and then take over. Why not chat to him at the next meeting to find out what's involved? Or ring him on 01256 357513. Our thanks and appreciation were also expressed to Briony Laylor, in her absence, for her stalwart efforts in writing up the Excavation Report for our dig at Worting 1992-2008, which is now complete.

The Membership also approved proposed changes to membership subscriptions, taking effect from September 2013. Please take advantage of the standing order scheme when renewing your membership, as this helps to keep membership administration to a minimum (see Barry's report on the next page). Members who pay Income Tax are also requested to complete a Gift Aid Form, if they have not already done so, as this enables the Society to claim money back from the Inland Revenue. In order to keep costs down we are continuing our drive to increase the number of members taking the Newsletter electronically via email, if you do not already receive an electronic Newsletter and would like to, then please email Bob Applin on bandbapplin@btinternet.com.

After the AGM a presentation was given by Debz Charlton on 'The Steventon Rectory Project'.

Eating Cake for RadCan

A big thank you to all who at the AGM ate cake and donated a marvellous £48.91.

Jo Kelly



Revised Membership Subscriptions 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014

Barry Hedger membership@bahsoc.org.uk

At the Annual General Meeting it was agreed to revise the membership subscriptions for 2013-14 as follows, until further notice:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Individual membership | £12.00 |
| Family/Joint membership (same household) | £18.00 |
| Student in full-time education | £10.00 |
| + <i>Newsletter supplement (to receive a paper copy)</i> | £5.00 |

Standing Orders:

Members who have Standing Orders already set up, please instruct your bank/building society to amend the amount payable in accordance with the new subscriptions before the next payment date you have selected (1st September 2013 preferably).

Payment by cheque or cash

Please complete the Membership Application/Renewal Form. Please send it and payment to the Membership Secretary, or pay at the September Meeting.

Membership Details

Please keep the Membership Secretary informed by email, or completed Membership Application/Renewal Form, of any changes to your membership details (e.g. home and email addresses etc.) Also please inform us of any change in circumstances that might affect gift aid.

**The new Membership form and a Standing
Order form are included with this Newsletter.**



*Christmas Party - look out your
bonnets!*

This year we are proposing to have a Jane Austen theme and will be delighted if anyone will dress accordingly (no compulsion, though!)

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2013-14

NOTES by Mary Oliver

2013

12 September New Technologies for Archaeological Investigation Gareth Beale

Gareth is a PhD student at Southampton University. I heard him, with two colleagues give an impressive presentation to the Royal Archaeological Institute on some new techniques which precede or supplement excavation. By September many of you will have already met Gareth, his wife Nicole, and other members of the Department, fronting the dig at Basing House in July, which our members were invited to help with. They promise an update on the results of the dig too, so it will be a very full evening.

**10 October Operation Nightingale at Barrow Clump
Richard Osgood**

One of the last 'Time Team' programmes featured this team and the excavation of a Bronze Age barrow on Salisbury Plain. The archaeological results were interesting, a Saxon cemetery as well as prehistoric evidence, but what gave this particular dig extra appeal was the human story – the diggers were ex-servicemen who had been wounded in Afghanistan. We all know that archaeology is good for us!!

14 November Winchester uncovered Ben Ford

Over the years, since the major work by Martin Biddle, Winchester has seen a number of rescue digs prior to development, and, given the importance of the city, something interesting always turns up. Ben Ford has pulled together the results of all this work to give an overview of what we currently know about our near neighbour.

12 December Christmas Party

2014

9 January **The ‘end’ of Hadrian’s Wall** Tony Wilmott
This year, quite coincidentally, we seem to be concentrating on ends and beginnings! Tony is well known for his excavations on sites such as Birdoswald and Maryport, - at the latter site, he uncovered the story of the buried altars. In this lecture, he will concentrate on the later history of our most famous Roman structure – did it really ‘end’?

13 February **Dating the end of furnished pagan Anglo-Saxon burials** Alex Bayliss
This rather formal title disguises a fascinating research project by one of the foremost scientists in the field of refining radio-carbon dating. Some of you will already know her work on dating the Neolithic, especially the building of long barrows. Anglo-Saxon graves which contain grave goods are some of our best means of dating for this period, which saw very great changes in lifestyle; come along for cutting-edge information.

13 March **Britain Begins** Sir Barry Cunliffe
We have once again been fortunate to book Sir Barry for a lecture. I can only think that he enjoys coming to visit us, a tribute to all the questions you ask!! This time he will be covering the theme of his latest book on the origins of the people of Britain, an enormous subject and one which has also been referred to in previous books; glancing at this latest book, it is a very full and well-illustrated volume with all the latest evidence and Barry’s most recent thinking on the subject. If you have this book, do bring it to be signed.

10 April **A place of refuge? Basingstoke Union Workhouse** Barbara Large
It is always nice to welcome one of our members as a speaker. Barbara has been researching the history of the Union Workhouse for the Victoria County History project, looking at records no-one has studied before. She has a very interesting story to tell, involving some fascinating local worthies - it seems that Basingstoke had a system to be proud of.

8 May

New light on the Bayeux Tapestry

Matthew Bennett

This subject will be of particular interest to those members who took part in the Society trip to Brittany last year, which concluded with a visit to the tapestry. Those who didn't see it then may like to take a look at the excellent copy that was embroidered a century ago and is now housed in Reading Museum. Matthew, who is also one of our members, lectures on military history and has made a special study of what can be learned from this famous survival from the Conquest period

12 June

AGM Speaker to be arranged

CLAIMING DATES SOUTHAMPTON

Julian Porter is offering us a guided walk round Southampton **on Saturday 26th October**. Please let him know if you are interested and then he will let you have details.

02380 230649 jcmporter@gmail.com

From time to time we are asked to provide displays or give talks. For instance, we put on a display at a Bank Holiday event at The Vyne and recently we had a stand at the Rooksdown Fayre and they would like us to help to organise an event in the autumn. Also we will have a stand **at the Local/Family History Open Day in the Discovery Centre on Sunday 13th October, 10 am to 3 pm**. Do come and support us! I

If you would like to help in any way with such events, please contact Barbara Applin and say what you would like to do:

01256 465439 barbara.applin@btinternet.com

HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2013

Saturday 14th September, 10 am to 4 pm, free event

St Michael's church and Church Cottage will be taking part in Heritage Open Day this year on Saturday 14th September. This is a good opportunity to see these splendid buildings 'on show' and to enjoy their history and treasures.

In Church Cottage, there will again be the historical 'Time-line' and other displays; there will be games and activities for children, guided tours (by Bill Fergie) and a café with a coronation theme.

In church, the 500th anniversary display boards will be mounted in the north aisle, this time supplemented by a new 'walk-round' guide; vestments and church silver and records will also be on show.

HAMPSHIRE FORTIFIED

Early Medieval to the Tudors

Annual Conference & AGM

Hampshire Field Club Landscape Section

Peter Symonds College, Owens Rd, Winchester

Saturday 9th November 10 am - 4.45 pm

Members £12 (we can send one); non-members £15; Students £6

***News of other HFC events just in! Contact Penny
secretary@bahsoc.org.uk***

or <http://www.fieldclub.hants.org.uk>

STOP PRESS! The Holybourne dig has to be postponed till next year because of crop problems.

NEWS FROM BASING HOUSE

Alan Turton

2013 Basing House Dig

New archaeological excavations in July on the still partially open boxes of the Aldermaston Archaeological Society dig of the early 1960s. The new dig is a joint effort between Southampton University and Hampshire County Museum Service and has involved a number of our members. At the time of writing, the old boxes have been cleared and fresh sections cut in the bulks. From the evidence that has come to light so far, it would suggest that the report from the early dig saying that the remains of two possible Iron Age roundhouses cannot now be confirmed, although there is a definite Iron Age presence in the form of pottery remains.

A small amount of Roman pottery fragments have also been found along with a single red tessera which suggests a substantial building in the vicinity.

Of later material, there has been very little apart from empty drinks cans. The students did get excited about the discovery of a near complete 17th century Metropolitan ware mug, but unfortunately, I had to confirm to them that it was a piece of 1980s re-enactment pottery, and I actually know the potter.

Winter Damage Reveals New Find

Last winter's frost caused considerable damage to the standing brickwork remains of the Old House at Basing, including a section of the late 17th century 'garden phase' wall that lines the inner part of the bank.



Recently repair work has discovered, sealed behind this fragile structure, a previously unknown fireplace of Tudor date, set in a plastered wall, parts of which have been visible due to earlier collapses for years. The fireplace surround is of stone with weathered decoration in the spandrels but is unfortunately missing its arch, whilst the brick hearth back and part of the chimney are in good condition. Soot still clings to the chimney, and ash was found lying in the hearth where two slots show where fire dogs were once mounted.

It is yet to be decided whether the fireplace will be conserved and left open for view, or sealed once more behind a new wall. If any members are interested in seeing this interesting feature, I suggest they visit the site in the next few weeks or so.



Alan is doing a Basing House walk and tour on Sunday 6th October 2013. Meet in the Basing House car park at 11am; from there Alan will take us up Swing Swang Lane and tell us about the actions there, noting the surviving hedge.

Lunch at a local pub or own arrangements, then post lunch he will take us round the House to complete the story of the Siege and the Fall of the House in 1645. The English Civil War Society will also be at the House that weekend.

*Alan is chairman of the Wessex Region of the Battlefields Trust and this is a fund raising event for the Trust, though it is open to everyone by donations on the day. There is an admission fee to Basing House. The numbers attending are limited to 40. Please **ring 01256 321193 or email theturtoncollection@gmail.com***

WINDOVER STREET

It was Ripe for Conversion

Bob Clarke



I was delighted that the developer decided to call the conversion of 12 Cross Street, Windover Mews. It is the right decision, not only because part of the development stretches up what used to be Windover Street, but also because it is a way of remembering one of the most vibrant streets in Basingstoke and those who lived there.

Even though it was little more than an alley and contained only six cottages, it (often, literally) punched above its weight, and it deserved to be commemorated. Some of the characters who lived in the street appear in my book, *The Basingstoke Riots: Massagainians v The Salvation Army 1880 – 1883* (BAHSOC, 2010).

In the census of 1881, the six cottages were occupied as follows:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|----|------------|---------------|
| Number 1 | Elizabeth Cowdery | 29 | Head | Farm labourer |
| | Her three children, her sister-in-law and a lodger. | | | |
| Number 2 | Edward Smith | 23 | Head | Labourer |
| | Sarah Smith | 23 | Wife | |
| | George Smith | 1 | Son | |
| | Edward Rogers | 44 | Lodger | Sawyer |
| | Ann Rogers | 43 | Lodger | |
| Number 3 | James Hazel | 60 | Head | Bill Poster |
| | Mary Hazel | 55 | Wife | |
| | Elizabeth Richards | 24 | Daughter | |
| | George Richards | 25 | Son-in-law | Rag Sorter |
| | Harry Richards | 7 | Grandson | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|----|--------|-----------|
| Number 4 | Job Rawlings | 44 | Head | Ash |
| | Esther Rawlings | 36 | Wife | Collector |
| | Henry Rawlings | 18 | Son | Ash |
| | | | | Collector |
| | Four other sons and daughters. They named one of their daughters, Freedom. They probably regretted this once she reached puberty. | | | |
| Number 5 | Charles Stocker | 26 | Head | Labourer |
| | Sarah Stocker | 29 | Wife | |
| | Robert Stocker | 8 | Son | |
| | William Phillips | 21 | Lodger | Labourer |
| Number 6 | Charles Hardy | 32 | Head | Labourer |
| | Wife, three children, and two lodgers. | | | |

Number One

Elizabeth was married to Thomas Cowdery, who doesn't appear to have been at home on the night of the census, and doesn't appear to have been anywhere else either. Thomas was a Massagainian, disrupting the Salvation Army, and was one of the 'Massagainian Martyrs' who were jailed in September 1881 for 'violent behaviour' towards the Salvation Army.

It is likely that Elizabeth was the Eliza Cowdery who was fined 5s for being drunk and incapable in charge of a perambulator in Chapel Street in 1884, as there is no one with a similar name and Elizabeth had given birth that year. Sergeant Trodd told the court that she had been convicted of similar offences six times before, but the last was in 1879.

Number Two

In 1880 Edward Rogers was charged with non-payment of maintenance towards the upkeep of his daughter, Elizabeth, in the Surrey Girls' Reformatory School at Clapham. On 22 March 1881 Ann Rogers and her son and daughter, William and Sarah, were arrested for being drunk and disorderly. In connection with a temperance meeting hosted in Basingstoke that week, a teetotal band was playing music in the Market Place. Or they were until the Rogers family turned up at started swearing at them. When William started "brandishing a stick in a threatening manner", the bandsmen picked up their instruments and ran, taking refuge in the Corn Exchange. In November 1882, Ann Rogers was fined 10s for stealing swedes.

Number Three

Despite stiff opposition from other contenders, George Richards can claim the title of Town Drunk. His career appears to have started in August 1875, when he appeared before the town magistrates on two separate occasions that month for being drunk and disorderly, and he was still at it in 1885, and possibly for many years thereafter. In July 1880 he was charged with being drunk and riotous in Church Street, assaulting Superintendent Hibberd, and damaging the windows of the police cells. On another occasion, it appears that some misguided soul had given George a ticket for a temperance meeting held in the Corn Exchange on 24 April 1882 in the hope that he might benefit by attending. He arrived drunk, and after being refused admission, he insisted on being let into the room. The police were called, and had great difficulty taking him to the Police Station. He bit the Superintendent's arm, and kicked PC Hurst severely. He was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

Number Four

Henry Rawlings took an active part in the Massagainian disturbances, and was involved in the fracas in the *Royal Exchange* on 28 May 1881 that was said to have been caused by Frances Jones and culminated in Henry and some others pushing P.C. Simpson round the bar. Readers of *The Basingstoke Riots* may remember that Frances Jones was the bearer of Ernest Fitzgerald's illegitimate daughter, and that she and Ernest entertained the Magistrates Court by exchanging insults when Ernest was summoned for non-payment of maintenance.

In July 1881 Henry was fined five shillings for driving a cart full of ashes whilst fast asleep. On the night of Tuesday, 6 December 1881, P C Hurst was called to the *Rose* in Brook Street where he found Henry and his mother, both of whom were drunk. Esther was using 'the most indecent language'. She refused to leave the pub and 'threatened to smash my bloody head. After some time I got them up Church Street into Windover Street and into their house.'"

On the night of Saturday 22 December 1883 Superintendent Hibberd went to the *Anchor*:

'... and found it in a most disorderly state. There were several men in the tap-room, among them Henry Rawlings, who was very drunk and stripped. His face was covered in blood, and the rooms and tables were strewn with beer and broken glass. The door leading into the passage had its glass panel smashed, and the broken glass lay on the floor. Mrs Thorne said Rawlings had broken the glass door.'

When her husband died in 1882, Emily Thorne took over from him the licence of the *Anchor* in London Street. This was a mistake as she was often drunk and incapable of controlling the customers. Superintendent Hibberd said that she took in the very worst of characters, people who were refused admittance at the lodging-house, and allowed them to get drunk.

The elusive Frances Jones (*Newsletter* 203) also gave her address as Windover Street in 1881, although she does not appear in the census (or, indeed any other census until she is recorded as living in a tent in Farleigh Wallop in 1901). As Frances had an illegitimate child in Baughurst in 1875, and Esther and Henry Rawlings were born in Baughurst (Job Rawlings was born in Tadley), it is likely from the Baughurst connection that she was living at number four.

Number Five

Charles Stocker was Ernest Fitzgerald's poaching companion on at least two occasions, in 1878 and 1882. His lodger, William Phillips, was one of the group that threatened to throw Captain Jordan of the Salvation Army into the River Loddon. He was also involved in the fracas in the *Royal Exchange* (see Number Four above). In 1885 he was imprisoned for two months with hard labour for poaching at Carpenter's Down and returning the next day to beat up the gamekeeper.

Number Six

This lot let the side down. I can find no reference that any of them did anything interesting. It could be that they didn't get caught.

As can be seen, with the exception of the people who lived at number six, the denizens of Windover Street in 1881 were a colourful crowd who helped to keep the Magistrates' Court in business. It is a tribute to their memory that the name of their street should live on.

A comment

Did you know there was a little street called Windover Street? I'm glad the name is kept but I don't think the term. 'Mews' is quite appropriate.

The houses in Cross Street that form part of this new development have lost their separate identity, but I hope in the next Newsletter to give something of their history.

Barbara Applin

Hampshire Field Club Buildings Section – Whitchurch Study Day

David Whiter

We met on a glorious day, too good, one might think, for a morning indoors to hear about the town's development. But not so, for Whitchurch invites many questions about how it evolved, though it stayed a rather modest town. Alison Deveson and Martin Smith explained.

Settlement began around 900 AD at the junction of five roads on major routes. By 1244 the Dean and Chapter of St Swithun's, Winchester was promoting development of burgage plots and fields as a centre of wool production. From 1586 the burgesses elected a Member of Parliament, but both the wool trade and through traffic were declining. Only near the end of the seventeenth century was a charter for a fair granted, a very late date.

A map of 1733 defines the burgage plots and thus the voting rights of those who elected the MP. These burgage properties (and their voting rights) were bought up by landowners like Viscount Middleton to control the election. It was a classic rotten borough, with voting rights more valuable than the rents paid. After 1600 even land difficult to farm was developed with small houses by burgesses who paid low ground rents but let these properties out at (higher) market rents. Most of these small houses were rented by weavers, and small handwork factories were springing up. Viscount Middleton built the town hall for the borough but it never belonged to the town or the burgesses - in fact the mayor's only duty was to collect the rents for the Dean and Chapter of St Swithun's. Only the Reform Act of 1832 saw the end of the rotten borough.

The Buildings of Whitchurch

Edward Roberts illustrated the evidence of development. Church Cottage is a cruck building of about 1400, close to the church and the early settlement. At 4, Bell Street we have a hall house with a cross wing from 1441. In 5 to 9, Newbury Street and the Bell Inn are buildings of the early sixteenth century; 31, Newbury Street is from 1582. All these buildings are modest and reflect clearly the decline of the wool trade and the town's prosperity. Around 1700 brick began to supplant timber as the preferred material, and many buildings received a brick casing and sash windows as modest make-overs. All Hallows church began as a Saxon foundation with arcades added

in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The tower was rebuilt in 1716 after collapsing, but most of what we now see is Victorian. The church has a late Saxon grave stone, and an enclosed timber staircase in the tower.

The Silk Mill

Geoff Hide recounted his family's involvement with the silk mill. The 1733 map shows no mill, but in 1815 refurbishment of the mill (as the date on the clock suggests) bankrupted the owner, a Mr Hayter. From then it was held by Mr Maddick, a silk weaver, until 1844; in 1886 the mill was bought by the Hide family, nonconformists and drapers with connections to Burberry. Eventually the mill housed fourteen handlooms driven by water power and operated by women and children, but the removal of duty on imported silk meant decline for silk weaving.

In the afternoon, Geoff Hide led a tour of the machines and described the intricate processes of producing and winding silk thread, and the production of the delicate and beautiful material, and then Edward Roberts took us to see buildings typical of the town's development.

In all, the speakers' diligent study gave us an instructive and fascinating account of the town's history.

A NOTE ON SILCHESTER 2013

Peter Stone

Here is some of the news we heard from Mike Fulford on our recent visit. The 2012 season had established that the north-west to south-east V-shaped ditch, about 50 metres long, was probably an important internal boundary first defined in the latter part of the 1st century BC. The footprint of the 'Great Hall' which cuts the ditch is later in the same period. This remarkable structure, which doubled its size in 2012, has increased yet again and is now reckoned to enclose an area of 44 metres by 8 metres and would appear to be the largest Iron Age building found in Britain.

A trench has been opened in Insula III close to the Forum and to the south of the Drove. A fragment of Purbeck stone with the letters 'BA' inscribed on it has been found, now illustrated on diggers' T-shirts as part of the word ATREBATES. A single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery and a burnt feature identified by the Victorians as a hypocaust are now more likely 6th century AD.



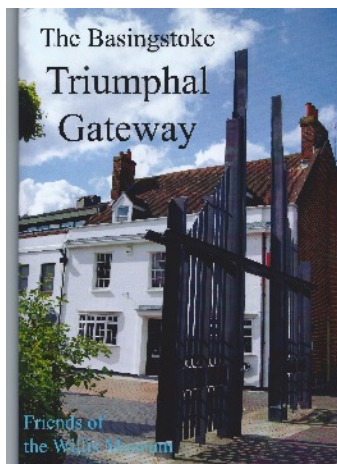
THE BASINGSTOKE TRIUMPHAL GATEWAY

John Hollands

Photography: Howard Ray

Review by Michael Whitty

Friends of the Willis Museum £7.50



Having lived in Basingstoke for just over eighteen years, I have on numerous occasions walked past or through the Basingstoke Triumphal Gateway which divides the town centre (London Street) from the area outside the centre (London Road). There have been several occasions when I have stared in puzzled admiration at the sixteen bronze panels fixed to the uncompromisingly vertical girders. While a few of these seemed self explanatory – for example, the narrow boat entering a tunnel was presumably an allusion to the old Basingstoke Canal – others were

bewildering and surreal. What, for example, was the meaning of what looked like a pie with door handles projecting from it?

But now I've read **The Basingstoke Triumphal Gateway** by John Hollands (and richly enhanced with photographs by Howard Ray and illustrations from a wide range of other sources). And it was reassuring to learn that one of the artists, Peter Parkinson, actually wanted the viewer to be puzzled by some of the images. This imposing monument was created by Parkinson and the 'art blacksmith' Richard Quinnell to make a bold statement. It is, as the book explains, a *gateway* not just a gate – that is, a monumental entrance to the town centre and part of the tradition of constructing triumphal arches which goes back to Roman times.

Chapter 1 of the book explains the technical and aesthetic issues behind the construction of the Gateway with a wealth of interesting detail, including some of the negative (as well as the mainly positive) responses to it when it was opened as an innovative and controversial piece of public art in 1992.

There is an interesting section on how the bronze plaques were cast at the Morris Singer Factory (then in Daneshill) using the famous ‘lost wax’ process.

Then Chapters 2 and 3 consider in detail each of the sixteen panels adorning the Gateway. Each tells its own story rich in the character and history of Basingstoke. Consequently, the book is also full of fascinating details about the town as well as the monument. Panel 15, for instance, depicts a cannon firing at a distant grand building. The scene is depicted as if the viewer were standing behind the cannon itself. This refers, of course, to the famous protracted siege of the royalist Basing House during the English Civil War and in the section devoted to the panel John Hollands offers a densely packed summary of that war as it impacted on Basingstoke and the Paulet family of the House itself.

Other panels are more generalised in their significance. Panel 8, for instance, depicts a somewhat crumpled shopping bag bulging at the bottom with some unidentified object or objects. This leads John Hollands to outline the importance of retail marketing in the town going back to the Domesday Book of 1086. One of the many factual nuggets I gleaned from this section of the book was that the famous Burberry brand goes back to Thomas Burberry who opened his first shop in Basingstoke in 1856.

Other panels allude to specific incidents (or perhaps in one or two cases ‘urban myths’) in the story of the town, such as the strange buried figure with outstretched arms beneath a depiction of the Holy Ghost chapel (Panel 11) or the tumbling clock tower (Panel 5). I will not spoil the stories by summarising them here, but rather refer you to the book itself.

However, I will deconstruct that odd image of the pie and handles mentioned above. The ‘handles’ are actually door knockers, and Panel 1 refers to an event in 1881 when the door knockers of several unpopular gentlemen were stolen one November night. Shortly afterwards a large pie in a hamper labelled ‘Season’s greetings’ was left at the police station for the Superintendent. When it was opened it was found to contain the missing knockers – hence the Basingstoke joke of asking for ‘knocker pie’ wherever food is being served!

So if you live in or near Basingstoke you must read this well-written and informative book. The town will never look the same again.



THE CINQUE PORTS TRIP

Nicola Turton

*Dedicated to Brian the Skull,
Patron of BAHS Trips*

Photos Nicola Turton

15 June 13

The start of a trip is always lovely; with that brilliant feeling of all those days in front of you. Our trip started at Bignor Roman Villa, a large site with listed early nineteenth century shelters over the very impressive mosaics, including a stretch of the longest mosaic in Roman Britain.

Moving on to Bodiam, we passed the Long Man of Wilmington, and I got quite excited to see him for the first time. It was odd though, for the image is so familiar, that it seemed slightly unreal to see him for real!

At Bodiam we shared a bun with some very insistent ducks and some winsome sparrows before visiting the castle. It was refreshing to see a gardener climbing into the very high windows and removing the weeds, and we joked with her that it looked as if she was cleaning the glass, which of course wasn't there, so she obligingly pretended to polish the glass and made appropriate squeaking noises.

Saturday 16 June

To Battle in the slight rain. The battlefield was partly closed due to the recent bad weather, so we did the abbey ruins, museum, exhibition and tea room. Alan wouldn't let me buy the Bayeux Tapestry (it's an embroidery) handbag, but there's always e-bay.

At Hastings, we took the little funicular railway up to Hastings castle, and Alan pointed out that the mound is the one from the Bayeux Tapestry (it's an embroidery), though not striped as it is on the embroidery. Hastings air-show was running, and Vulcanites were assembling, so we decided to wait and see the display. We were seated on the mound and the wind was something fierce, so that it made us rock with the force of it, and that somehow felt as if the mound itself was rocking.

At 3.40 pm, the Vulcan arrived and zoomed past, screaming and howling in a most magnificent fashion. I was rather excited to see it, and waved in a barmy way, and narrowly stopped myself from jumping up and down.

Then to the shipwreck museum, which I highly recommend. It's free and full of the most exciting items from shipwrecks (obviously), but also things like a piece of wood from the Roman London Bridge, and the tremendously long rudder from a mediaeval ship.

The next morning we tried to see the wreck of the *Amsterdam*. The lady at the museum consulted tide times, and thought we should see some of it at least, but the powerful wind had stopped the tide from going out as far as we hoped, so we made do with the 2000 BC submerged forest and a possible sighting of *Amsterdam* timbers amidst the waves.

Then onto the very impressive Pevensey Castle, which was in its time a Saxon shore fort, and sadly, the landing place for William the Bastard's fleet in 1066. It then became the great Norman castle we see today.

Being a church bagger, I shot off to visit Westham church, which is on the other side of the castle. Their sign proudly said 'Visit Our Church. The First the Normans Built'. It was locked. Obviously I tried to kick down the door, but it resisted my sandals. The site manager at Pevensey told me what I was missing, but said I'd like Pevensey Church.

Pevensey Church was ok, but sadly had admitted the Victorians. In the gaol, however, we reclaimed the good old days. The tiny courthouse, barely big enough for six of us, was run by the best of old fashioned curators, who had plenty to tell us of every item in the building. Postcards were a memorable Ten Pence EACH!

The last stop of the day was Eastbourne Redoubt, which is tremendously impressive. Fairly recently restored, it is a wonderful military museum with lots of early uniforms and interesting displays. Now trust me, I've been to a lot of military and regimental museums, and this was one of the best.

17 June

Our first stop was Rye, and some of us went to the Rye model sound and light presentation. It was brilliant. Sometimes a touch of the old fashioned is far more charming and winning than hi-tech dazzle. The model of Rye was built from polystyrene sheets by one couple. It's to scale and each house and garden is accurately depicted. It's hard to convey quite how impressive it is, but if you go to Rye, make sure you visit the Heritage Centre and see the model.

At 12.30, Julian had brilliantly arranged for us to visit the Town Hall and the attics. It's very interesting and has a nice range of impressive chairs, all of which were tested by Barry and me before our half of the group climbed to the attic.

In the attic may be seen the Rye Gibbet, which rather strikingly contains the skull of John Breads, who killed Allen Grebell in 1742. It's all rather unfortunate, as Breads thought he was killing the mayor, but in fact his victim was the mayor's brother-in-law, who'd taken his place at a function. Apparently Mr Grebell was so drunk that he didn't realise he'd been badly hurt. On his arrival home he asked for a drink and said he'd sit by the fire. The next morning, he was found dead, having bled to death overnight. Breads' bones were removed over the years as a local belief said that drinking an infusion of the bones in water was a cure for rheumatism. And that was on the NHS.



At the enchanting town of Winchelsea we delighted in the five late medieval tomb effigies in the glorious church. We were also surprised to find the grave of Spike Milligan and his wife, but it is such a beautiful site that I was quite envious.

The loos were locked. The village shop sells local beers. The ravishing Court House and museum was closed. The town gates are as pretty as any you'll find.

18 June

On the way to Smallhythe, I persuaded Alan to visit Playden Church. Simon Jenkins recommends it as wonderfully unrestored, and it is. But its greatest treasure is the ladder. Some 60' tall, it is propped in the chancel as if the decorators have just stepped out. Despite the date of 1086 carved into it, it is believed to be seventeenth century. The vicar told me that she will *Never* go up it. I would have done, but was glad not to be offered the chance, as it is terrifyingly vertiginous. The guide book says that in the late nineteenth century, the harmonium went mad and had to be carried into the church yard, where it continued to knock out a further 120 verses of 'The Church's One Foundation'. Not sure if that's possible, but fun anyway.

At Smallhythe I experienced house envy; I really should be living in a sixteenth century house full of interesting items and beams and uneven floors. I was delighted when one of the room stewards was talking about Ellen Terry's friends, and said of Oscar Wilde, '...some people reckon he was homosexual.' I think we're reasonably certain that he was.

I found a church bagging ally in Julian and so we arranged a tour of Farefield Church (in the middle of a marsh with nothing else nearby). We also stopped by the military canal to check maps, and I was tickled to find that it was all women bending over the maps whilst the chaps looked at the canal. Then to Snarsgate church and the large wall painting of the sixteenth century ship. En route to Hythe, we stopped at the very interesting church of New Romney (*fabulous* Romanesque blind arcading round the inside of the tower).

At Hythe we hoped to visit the Ossuary, but Kay was also delighted to find traces of Saxon building in the current church. The vicar's wife kindly took us to the ossuary, which is a most peculiar thing. Much nicer, cleaner and somehow more decent than those I've seen abroad, there are the remains of some 2000 individuals, dating back about 700 years. They are largely stacked in a great wall, but at either end are great shelves of skulls. One is painted gold and was returned by a man whose friend had had the skull in his study for decades, having pinched it from the church. Why you'd do that, and why you'd paint it gold, I don't know. Another was recently returned and she said, 'It's probably one of ours'. *Probably*. Alan spotted one who had 'Brian' pencilled on his forehead, which made us giggle.



To Richborough. Site of the Claudian Invasion of AD 43, this is a stunning Saxon Shore and Roman fort, with the cross-shaped base of the triumphal gateway still remaining. I was interested to see some unusual snails, and wondered if they are edible snails, and perhaps descendants of the Roman originals.

Walmer Castle was a pleasant surprise, being Not Ruined. It is the official and quite lovely residence of the Warden of the Cinque Ports, though we were surprised to find that Winston Churchill, Warden from 1942-1965 had never stayed there. I'm not sure why; it says he was worried about being in range of enemy guns, but surely that was only a risk until 1945.

To Dover and the museum, where the real highlight is the Dover boat. Dated to c1550 BC, it is part of the oldest sea-going boat in the world. The rest is sadly under the foundations of a building, and presumably not recoverable. What is on show is so impressive. Kept in a strangely dim case, it's much bigger than one expects. I especially liked seeing the construction of marks made by the tools.

Another pleasant surprise is the Roman Painted House. Just round the corner are the highest standing ruins of any Roman House in Britain. Painted, as one might expect, and narrowly saved from recent destruction when the council wanted to build shops and a car park.



← *The ladder in Playden Church*

↓ *Farefield Church*



And next year...

POSSIBLE TRIP TO CYPRUS

The committee have had an offer of help in arranging a trip to Greek Cyprus next year, most likely in early October when the temperatures are comfortable for site visiting and the sea warm for swimming. There is lots to see – world famous mosaics at Paphos (where we would stay), a Roman town along the coast, prehistoric sites, lots of Byzantine churches etc.... trips can be arranged to suit. The cost would be c£600 for flights and a week's half board, with modest additional costs for excursions. If you would like to know more about this idea, please contact our Secretary – (secretary@bahsoc.org.uk) - we need to know there is enough interest before taking this further.

2013-14 DIARY DATES

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

secretary@bahsoc.org.uk

Penny Martin Tel: 01256 321423

www.bahsoc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 11000263

MEETINGS on Thursdays at 7.30 pm Church Cottage, Basingstoke **2013**

- 12 Sept **New Technologies for Archaeological Investigation** Gareth Beale
- 10 Oct **Operation Nightingale at Barrow Clump** Richard Osgood
- 26 Oct ***Walk Round Southampton*** *see page 7*
- 14 Nov **Winchester Uncovered** Ben Ford
- 12 Dec **Christmas Party**

2014

- 9 Jan **The 'End' of Hadrian's Wall** Tony Wilmott
- 13 Feb **Dating the End of Furnished pagan Anglo-Saxon burials'**
Alex Bayliss
- 13 Mar **Britain Begins** Sir Barry Cunliffe
- 10 April **A place of refuge? Basingstoke Union Workhouse**
Barbara Large
- 8 May **New light on the Bayeux Tapestry** Matthew Bennett

FRIENDS OF WILLIS MUSEUM *Thursdays at 7.30 pm Willis Museum*

- 19 Sept **A History of Church Cottage** Bill Fergie
- 17 Oct **AGM + My Family & Other Setbacks** Mel Rees
- 21 Nov **A Widow on Eighteenth Century Country Houses** Sarah Farley
- 19 Dec **Christmas quizzes and plate party for members**

FRIENDS OF BASING HOUSE *Tuesdays, 7.30 pm, Visitors' Centre*

- 8 Oct **Remember the Alamo** Paul Vickers
- 14 Jan **Britons, Romans and the English** David Whiter
- 11 Feb **All These New Works ... What the Ruins tell us about Basing House** Alan Turton
- 11 Mar **William Walker, the Diver who Saved Winchester Cathedral**
Margaret Braddock

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB www.fieldclub.hants.org *see page 8*