

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BAHS

Newsletter 206
February 2014

CONTENTS

- Page 2* **CHRISTMAS 2013**
- Page 3* **2014 BAHS FENLAND TRIP**
- Page 4* **SAVE THE CROMWELL MUSEUM!!**
- Page 5* **CYPRUS HOLIDAY**
FIELDWORK REPORT
- Page 6* **HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT ARCHIVES**
DAVID LEE
WINCHESTER: ARCHAEOLOGY & MEMORY
THE BASINGSTOKE HERITAGE SOCIETY
- Page 7* **FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIES FROM BTH**
- Page 9* **THE HAMPSHIRE GARDENS TRUST RESEARCH GROUP**
Bookshelf **THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ANDOVER**
- Page 10* **BREAKFAST AT STONEHENGE**
- Page 11* **ROMAN GERMANY - A DREAM FULFILLED**
- Page 13* **TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN THE PAST**
- Page 15* **STONEHENGE *PHOTO PAGE***
- Page 16* **2014 DIARY DATES**



Where is this going? See page 10

Christmas 2013



BAHS party goers turned out in droves to enliven our Christmas party at Church Cottage in December. The theme was Jane Austen and we did her proud.

With an ever so simple quiz which somehow amazingly didn't provide a score of 100 percent for anyone (maybe just a teensy-weensy bit because of the mulled wine or maybe because I might have got one or two of the Q&A's wrong – oops), our festive party-goers seized the opportunity to don their gowns, bonnets and breeches and to parade in Regency style.

Excellent supporting acts were provided by Nicola who read out a curious extract from a Jane Austen letter about Lord Bolton and his pigs and Mary and Barbara who co-read a short piece from Jane Austen's *History of England*, - entertainment at its very best.

Of course many thanks must go to all who contributed towards such a lovely evening, particularly all the unsung heroes and heroines who provided tasty dishes on the night. The parties just keep getting better and better – so well done to everyone brave enough to dress up, especially Mr Darcy – pity the water was so cold...and of course, suggestions for 2014's party theme will be most welcome.

Ginny

2014 BAHS Fenland Trip

This year we have decided to organise a long weekend to what could loosely be described as the Fenland area. In the days of the wool trade, East Anglia used to be one of the most prosperous parts of the country and Norwich was its hub. Nowadays the area is a bit of a back-water but not without its attractions. Nearby, Cambridge is full of historical buildings and connections, as well as having several museums with world class collections. Venturing into Fenland, the city Isle of Ely boasts one of the finest Cathedrals in the country. A visit to Flag Fen will round off the weekend.

Day	Location
Thursday 26 th June	Make your way to Barton Mills Travelodge
Friday 27 th June	Norwich
AM	Grimes graves, Norwich Cathedral
PM	Castle Acre, Castle Rising
Saturday 28 th June	Cambridge
AM	Guided tour of Cambridge, including a visit to one or more of the colleges
PM	At leisure to visit the various Cambridge museums (Fitzwilliam, Archaeology & Anthropology, Classical Archaeology, Polar, etc)
Sunday 29 th June	Ely
AM	Cromwell's House
PM	A tour of Ely Cathedral, including a tower tour (will require a reasonable level of fitness)
Monday 30 th June	Peterborough
AM	A tour of Flag Fen
PM	Drive Home

If you have not been on a BAHS trip before, our approach is to organise a programme of visits and tours and to leave you to make your own arrangements for travel and accommodation. Once we know who is coming we usually find that people organise themselves with car sharing. One of the benefits of coming is that sometimes we see get to things not generally seen by the public, and if nothing else you'll be sure of some good company.

Accommodation:

There no real recommendations, other than to mention that the Cambridge area tends to be expensive. Ely seems to be central to most places we are going to visit, apart from Norwich. However, there are some Travel Lodges within striking distance of the places in the programme: **Barton Mills Travel Lodge** – Close to Grimes Graves and on the A11 to Norwich (Otherwise in the middle of nowhere). **Ely Travel Lodge** – Suitable for Friday, Saturday and Sunday – There should be places to eat in Ely

Likely Costs:

Admission and Tour fees are likely to come to about £40-50 per person. Accommodation costs around £40 a night for Travel Lodges which would come to £160 (but rooms can be shared). Plus fuel, food and drinks. The overall costs are likely to be of the order of £350 for the weekend.

Mark Peryer: mperyer@f2s.com

SAVE THE CROMWELL MUSEUM!!

The Cromwell Museum in Huntington (on our Fenland itinerary) is under threat, with Cambridgeshire County Council proposing to close it in 2015 to save just £20,000. If the museum is closed its unique collection will almost certainly be split up, with some exhibits being returned to their owners and a threat to the future of the historic building where Oliver Cromwell and Samuel Pepys went to school.

Grant funding from Arts Council England's Renaissance programme will be used to search for someone else to run the Museum There will be a full Council meeting on 18th February and a crucial meeting in April.

Information on: savethecromwellmuseum.org.

Petition: [surveymonkey.com/s/CromwellMuseum](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CromwellMuseum)

CYPRUS HOLIDAY

Penny Martin

Joyce Cook is arranging a group visit to CYPRUS. Likely dates are going on 24th September and returning on 4th October, flying probably with BA. It should be possible to come for just one week either starting on the Wednesday or Saturday.

The accommodation will be the Corallia Hotel Apartments, Coral Bay, Paphos. On half board the cost for 10 nights will be approx. £700. This is for 2 people per apartment. I am sorry to say that single rooms are about £900, but by sharing a 1 bed apartment you get 2 rooms and just share the bathroom so I hope this will work for most people.

Coral Bay at the Northern end of the bay is one of the best beaches and the hotel gardens lead on to the beach. There is also a pool for those not wishing to swim in the sea – but at the end of September the sea should be nice and warm. The hotel also has a bowling green and a few matches will be arranged for those wishing to take part. Various interest groups are included so whether you fancy visiting some local wineries, old Churches, archaeological sites, bowling or just sitting in the sun you needn't be on your own unless you wish to be.

As usual, various excursions will be offered to get to the mountains and further away. Local bus route starts right outside the hotel so exploring Paphos is very easy indeed.

Please let Joyce know as soon as possible if you think you may be interested in joining the group. (joycecook@live.co.uk)

FIELDWORK REPORT

Mark Peryer mperyer@f2s.com

There has been some FOAM activity at Danebury but not much opportunity for anything else. I can tell you that when I've not been working it's been raining ... If you want to take part in any fieldwork, make sure I have your email address or phone number.

*No space for details but check out this website for interesting visits:
museumoflondon@museumoflondon.pmailuk.com*

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT ARCHIVES

marjoleine_2000@hotmail.com, or 01256 701192.

We are considering arranging a trip to the Archives of the Houses of Parliament some time this year. The maximum number on a group visit is 16 and the average length of a visit is approximately one and a half hours. This includes a presentation in the lecture room in the repository, together with a display of documents, a visit to the room where the Acts of Parliament are stored and an introduction to the public Search Room. We could also arrange a free guided tour of the Houses of Parliament (more places available on that). Please let me know if you want to join one visit or both . Because of the limited number of places, this will be treated on a “first come first served basis”.

David Lee

David Lee has told us he is about to retire from the Wessex Film & Sound Archive at Hampshire Record Office. Our Basingstoke Talking History group will miss his expertise, as he got us off to a good start with practical advice, topped up by several workshops, and he has taken a great interest in our project. Indeed, he says he always mentions us in his reports to the Oral History Society and regards BTH as a beacon in the county!

*Happy retirement, David!
You'll be a hard act to follow!*

WINCHESTER: ARCHAEOLOGY & MEMORY Conference

Sat 26/Sun 27 April at University of Winchester

<http://winchesterstudies.org.uk/winchester-archaeology-archaeology-and-memory-conference>

***THE BASINGSTOKE HERITAGE SOCIETY** will celebrate their 25th birthday on 28th June with an anniversary open day in the Discovery Centre from 11-3. There will be a display of the many projects undertaken over the years, like the Bluecoat Boy and the Blue Plaques. Our Societies have interests (and some members) in common and we often toss queries back and forth.*

25 Happy Birthday! 25

FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIES

from Basingstoke Talking History

Hilda Applin

We had soldiers billeted on us. There were soldiers in a camp in the field at the back of us and the horses being taken down for watering and being brought back, and I was scared stiff of them [laughter].

And then of course there was the disruption with our education. St John's School was taken over for the soldiers and we had to be educated where they could find places. We went in various places round the town and a lot of the time we had to stay home for a while, our education was quite interfered with, but still we, we managed it.

One time we went to Church Cottage, another time we were in the Salvation Army place when it was in Reading Road. Another time in St Andrew's Church which was a small church opposite the Salvation Army. I think that was the only three places we went to, the other times we couldn't go to school. I don't think they split the classes up but of course all school wasn't together at a time.

There were shortages of food and everything. I can remember my mother out all day queuing to try and get something to eat, until they actually rationed the stuff in 1917.

Beryl Northcott

Well, of course, as a child I didn't really understand the seriousness of it, and in those days there was no radio to get the news through. Half way down Wote Street, on the left was the Post Office in those days and they used to post up the latest bulletins in the window there and I can always remember my father saying, 'I think I will take a stroll down the town to see what the latest news is.' So different from nowadays, people just switch on the radio or television and hear it. I often used to go down with him and very often there would be someone else looking at as well and we would talk about it.

They took over Fairfields School and billeted a lot of soldiers there. We couldn't go to school then, we didn't mind that. (laughter). But it was just crammed full of soldiers, I think they just slept on the floor there.

Then a little bit later on they did it again, they took over Fairfields School and so we Fairfields children had to share our schooling with the Brook Street children. I think one of us, I can't think which, went Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning and then the other school had it the other half of the week. We had to take sandwiches and we sat on the floor in the hall down there, eating our sandwiches. I can remember that it was bitterly cold weather – oh was it cold! The ground was covered with snow and all frozen. I can remember getting home and crying because my hands were so cold and my father saying “come on, come and sit before the fire” and warming his hands and rubbing mine to get them warm.

Well then we had soldiers billeted with us. We had two Scots with their kilts. They stayed with us for quite a time. I don't think my mother had to feed them, she would have got paid something. After that, we had two Welsh men.

The Common was actually covered with soldiers, tents, horses and mules. They had a lot of mules. Of course, in those days they used horses a lot in fighting. I always thought it was odd because horses are such nervous creatures and I thought to have to go and end up fighting must be terrible for them. Another thing that stands out in my mind, this must have been the beginning of the war. Coming up here and all along this road was horses from here right along up to where the Cricket Ground is, lovely horses, and I suppose the farmers that had horses had been told to bring their horses in and then some officers, men and were walking up and down looking at them all and the army commandeered whichever ones they wanted. I suppose they paid them compensation but that's not the same because if you had a horse you were very fond of it and had it taken from you and it had to go out into the battlefield it must have been dreadful, mustn't it. I always remember seeing those horses there and the owners standing there holding them and these two officers going along and looking and examining them.

People said that there would never be any grass on that Common again - instead of grass, where the mules had kicked it all up it was just a sea of mud, but of course it did. Grass soon grows again, doesn't it?

We were rationed. My mother used to have her butter from someone who lived out in the country - Sherborne St John way, a farm. We must have given up coupons or something for it but this lady used to come in every week with the butter so we had nice fresh farm butter and most people seemed to be very short of sugar like they were in the last war but I think we managed alright. It was a case of having to when you've got to.

The Hampshire Gardens Trust Research Group

On **19 February** this group will launch a project to identify the impact the First World War had on Hampshire's parks and gardens. They want to find out about gardeners from the big estates who left for the front (and the women who replaced them); the therapeutic rôle of gardens and gardening at the country houses used as hospitals and convalescence homes; the use of public parks for food production, temporary camps and the legacy of the designed landscapes around memorials, cemeteries and shrines. The aim is to publish the research and stories in the Hampshire Gardens Trust magazine.

See their catalogue at <http://calm.hants.gov.uk/default.aspx> and if you would like to get involved or attend the launch contact Sally Miller at admin@hgt.org.uk, putting 'Research WW1' in the subject box, or phone **01794 637752** to leave a message.

BOOKSHELF



THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ANDOVER

**The excavations of Andover Archaeological Society
1964-89**

Compiled and edited by Nick Stoodley

"A real labour of love ... It's a great tribute to Max and everyone who worked with him" Sir Barry Cunliffe

Paperback, 128pp, 246 x 189mm.

Price £20 (+ £2.50 p/p but post-free for orders of 2 to one address)

Orders to Andover History & Archaeology Society, c/o Mill Pound Cottage, Monxton, Andover, SP11 8AW (Tel 01264 710330)

BREAKFAST AT STONEHENGE

Nicola Turton



How lucky we were: there were 1,400 applicants for 200 places at the English Heritage Members' Breakfast for the opening of the new Stonehenge Visitors' Centre on 17th December. Alan and I were initially at the top of the reserve list, and then when someone couldn't attend we received our invitation to arrive for breakfast at 0830 hrs. Great excitement!

My first impression was the smell from the local pig farm (Wiltshire Ham-on-the-hoof), then my second was 'It'll be nice when it's finished'. The irregular uprights have an unfortunate look of scaffolding, and the over-hanging portico has pixel-like holes round the edge, which are presumably to help it blend into the landscape, but actually make it look a bit mothly. And when it rains, the picnic tables underneath will be dripped upon.

Anyway, to the café, for croissants and fruit and, surprisingly, hot mini pork pies (presumably an old Wiltshire breakfast tradition). Simon Thurley gave a speech welcoming us, and saying how pleased he was that the A344 had been closed, and that his sights were now set on the A303. After some words from Julian Richards, who rashly offered to sign everyone's souvenir guidebook, we were taken to the Stones.

Transport was in little carriages towed by Landrovers, and we were amused to see that the turning circle was in fact a square space that was just large enough. I would have liked to walk to the Stones, a mile and a half away, but once the site is open to the public you will be able to walk the whole way, or alight half way and walk the rest, as you wish.

The most astonishing thing is the absence of the road. This hasn't pleased the locals, some of whom were protesting by driving past the centre with coffins on their roofs, but it has made such a difference to the Stones. Even though the A303 can be heard, there is a great improvement in something as simple as not having cars racing past only a few feet away. The site seems as though it can at last breathe out, where before it had been diminished by the road. The route can still be seen, as it hasn't yet grassed over, and it's somehow even more appalling to see how close the road *used* to be than when it was actually there.

The light was wonderful on this rare day when it didn't rain; towering clouds and bright light gave strong shadows and it was a delight to be there. It was the last day of the old bunker facilities, so I took a photo of Alan against the underpass murals.

Whilst chatting to a member of staff, I wondered how the removal of traffic will affect the lichen on the Stones, and he told me that a study has been done of the lichens and oddly there are several rare *marine* varieties.

On our return to the centre, we enjoyed the immersion theatre where one may stand as if in the centre of the Stones, and see day, night and the ages whiz past. There are permanent and temporary display areas with artefacts from the site and a Neolithic skull next to his reconstructed face.

The loos were surprising, being flushed by vacuum, and I heard several startled squeaks from the cubicles! The shop has lots of the usual trish trash, including very expensive chips of bluestone, but I guess that's where money is made. I was initially charged £27 for six postcards, but doubtless the tills will soon be mastered.

One very nice thing is the peaceful garden area surrounding the relocated Airman's Corner monument.

It was a great honour to be there for the opening, and overall we were very impressed by the new centre.

About time too!

ROMAN GERMANY – A dream fulfilled

Mary Oliver

I had always wanted to see the Porta Nigra, the amazingly well-preserved town gateway in Trier, and as Kay was also keen to see all that Roman Germany had to offer, we decided to join the Andante tour last autumn under the guidance of Tony Wilmott. Those of you who attended his January lecture on Hadrian's Wall will realise we were in the best possible hands, an eminent Romanist, a wonderful communicator and a thoroughly nice guy. We saw and experienced too much for a short article – but I must mention that reconstructions, a feature of many of the sites such as the fort at Saalburg and the villa Borg, were particularly impressive, and the museums were world class with a wealth of fabulous finds, many familiar from textbooks on the Roman world. Other periods were not ignored – medieval cathedrals and

town centres, a short Rhine cruise and the superb wine and food of that region were also enjoyed as part of the Andante mix.

But to return to Trier – which I hope to do one day – of all the places we visited, my favourite! It is perhaps the most important Roman city in Germany, being a flourishing *colonia* and religious and economic centre before Postumus made it the capital of his Gallic Empire. Under Diocletian's reorganisation it became a capital of the western empire under Constantius Chlorus, father of Constantine the Great and site of a mint.

Our hotel was right next door to the Porta Nigra, which has survived because it was made into a hermit's cell and then a double church. This iconic structure lived up to expectations, being a much bigger building than expected and on the 'top floor' especially there were later architectural features made by carving away the original Roman features.

A short walk down the main Roman road to the forum area, and to the east, is the marvellous Romanesque cathedral with its stunning west front. But what makes this building so special is that the main part of the nave is a huge 4th C Roman basilica, still visible as such amidst the later Romanesque additions. Even more remarkable, this Roman cathedral was built over the ruins of the palace, (possibly house church) of Helena, wife of Constantius Chlorus. The plaster ceiling of this building has been brilliantly excavated and restored and is now on display in the Diocesan Museum next door. It is a beautiful ceiling and the colours are still vibrant – and possibly includes a portrait of Helena herself, regarded as the patron saint of archaeologists for her finds in the Holy Land.

Not content with being in one Roman space, just round the corner is the Roman aula, a truly impressive structure. It was the basilica of the later palace, but a building without columns, which makes the roof span breathtaking. A recent find has revealed that it was built by Gratian, not the great man Constantine himself – so they will have to alter the guide books! The vaults beneath the aula tell the story of a long history on the site. It was incorporated into the bishop's palace – hence its survival – but sits awkwardly with the pink and white confection which is that pretty palace, set in its formal gardens.

There is also a well-preserved amphitheatre, some enormous baths, and a Roman bridge, all within a charming town which it is possible to walk around to see everything. Have I said enough to demonstrate why it is my favourite?

Technological Innovation in the Past

Hampshire Field Club Conference 2013

David Whiter

This year's Conference theme brought out a formidable group of experts.

Laura Bassell traced innovation in lithics from 1.4 million years ago (mya) to 12,000 BCE, a period of constantly fluctuating ice sheets, sea levels and flora and fauna. After the spread of hominins out of Africa, homo erectus had simple tools including choppers and flakes - but not handaxes, which first appear in France, and in Britain around 800 thousand years ago (kya.) By 500kya tools at Boxgrove, Clacton and Swanscombe are more differentiated and sophisticated, and preserved wooden spears from Germany shaped with wood shavers have fire-hardened points. Concentrations of finds occur at sites like Warsash at the junction of floodplains and tidal reaches where nutrients were plentiful. The development of birch pitch meant lithic flakes could be inset into wooden tools. Neanderthals too had a wide range of tools, and modern humans from around 45kya show further technical advances such as harpoons, long lithic flakes and ochre. Two key trends are visible. The first is an accelerating pace of change as the variety of artefacts increases, and secondly, greater innovation occurs among larger groups of humans. Small groups tend to retain similar tools for tasks.

Jody Joy examined Iron Age metal technology. The unprecedented find at Chiselden of 17 copper alloy cauldrons, each of about 40 litre capacity and 50 cm across the rim, permitted detailed examination of manufacture and use. The cauldrons had been well used, and the rim suggests connections with beef (the decoration of the hanging points might be taken to resemble cattle horns when seen in the glow from the fire beneath the cauldron). These cauldrons show the use of a variety of hammers, shears, and the riveting of alloy sheets and iron rims. These are stunning objects produced by Iron Age farmers.

Snettisham, an ancient coastal site, has produced hoards of 175 complete or partial torcs from the late second and first century BC. These large necklets take the form of ropes of a variety of copper alloys with outer strands rich in gold to exaggerate the gold appearance. The Snettisham Great Torc comprises 8 ropes of 8 wires, with terminals cast on to the wires. The Snettisham torcs represent a high point of metallurgical technology, particularly in the blending and use of copper alloys.

Sir Barry Cunliffe spoke of developments in milling, an essential but tedious and time-consuming task, which starts with hand querns, then two-man and animal powered mills. It was the Romans who mastered water management, using double mill races to drive a series of vertical wheels with millstones set above them. The villa at Fullerton enables us to trace mill development in Britain, where only four other mills have been found. Initially the owners of a modest first century AD villa constructed a dam to control water flows driving an undershot wheel. In the second century the mill leat is widened to facilitate the use of larger mill stones. By the fourth century the villa has become a far grander establishment rich with mosaics. Coastal sites in Brittany and Ireland suggest that tidal flows were also harnessed for milling, a technique unknown in the Mediterranean with its lack of tides.

Gustav Milne examined the development of timber buildings, and related that to change in woodland management. Earth-fast buildings, like roundhouses, use mostly small wood members from coppice with a few larger timbers from 20 year old trees. Earth-fast buildings are only single storey, with a short life, and make demands on valuable woodland resources. In contrast, box-frame buildings of squared timber can be jointed to form long terraces and multi-storey buildings sufficiently long-lived to be heritable. Rising rents in expanding mediaeval towns gave impulsion to the introduction of box-framing.

Timber buildings can be dated to the 13C, but can we ascertain when box-framing began? The London waterfront from Roman to later mediaeval times was constantly pushed forward into the Thames, where preserved timbers now provide a series of datable structures. Squared timbers, bases and jointing come into use between 1150 and 1230. This change is reflected in managed woodland. From 700 to 1300 coppicing is prominent with fewer 100 year old trees, but after 1300 the number of timber trees increases as coppicing decreases.

Luke Winter discussed the role of experimental archaeology in testing ideas to evaluate past behaviours and the tasks of ancient peoples. It helps form new hypotheses, test typologies and understand the complexity of techniques and human cognition. A reconstruction of a building at Durrington Walls illustrated how quickly varied coppice materials could be gathered. It suggested that Neolithic peoples had a very different appreciation of materials, with walls like laid hedging and smaller curved rafters suited to rush thatching. Chalk daub proved very thermally efficient. Though they had a life span of only twenty years or so, such buildings were strong, stable and quick to construct.

STONEHENGE PHOTO PAGE



*Photos:
Nicola Turton*

2014 DIARY DATES

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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www.bahsoc.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 11000263

MEETINGS on Thursdays at 7.30 pm Church Cottage, Basingstoke

- 13 Mar **Britain Begins** Sir Barry Cunliffe
10 April **A place of refuge? Basingstoke Union Workhouse**
Barbara Large
8 May **Archaeology and Folklore** Alex Godden
12 June **AGM and New light on the Bayeux Tapestry** Matthew
Bennett
26-30 June **BAHS FENLAND TRIP** *see page 5*

Items for Newsletter to barbara.applin@btinternet.com

BASINGSTOKE DISCOVERY CENTRE EDUCATING BASINGSTOKE

Barbara Applin 2 pm, 21 March, £3 - booking recommended

24 Sept - 4 Oct **CYPRUS HOLIDAY** - See page 5

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

- 20 Feb **The False Messiah of Overton** Bob Clarke
20 Mar **John Arlott - His Centenary** Tim Arlott
17 April **Winning WW1 - The story of the Hejaz Railway and
Lawrence of Arabia** Richard Tanner
15 May **Confessions of a Professional Genealogist** Ken Smallbone

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

- 11 Mar **William Walker, the Diver who Saved Winchester Cathedral**
Margaret Braddock

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB www.fieldclub.hants.org

- 7 Mar **Hampshire's Almshouses from Medieval Times to the Present
Day** Derek Spruce *HRO, Sussex St, Winchester, 7.30 for 8, booking
needed*

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