

**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**Newsletter 214**

**February 2016**

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*Bob Clarke's Book Launch – see p2*

# A Message from Our Chair

*Ginny Pringle MRes*

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2016. Although our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary seems like only yesterday, time flies, and this year marks the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BAHS. To celebrate, we have a very special outing planned for Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> May, when we will be cruising on a narrow boat along the Basingstoke Canal to Odiham Castle with an opportunity for a tour of the castle ruins with Alan Turton. We also hope to have Derek Spruce on board the boat giving a talk about the canal. We could not even begin to contemplate such a trip without a cream tea being involved, and I very much look forward to joining you over a homemade scone and cuppa on board the Pinkerton narrow boat.

Looking back to 2015, our Christmas social was a great success and I would like to thank everyone who contributed food and those who provided the quiz, raffle, gave presentations, and all the other bits and bobs that go on behind the scenes. As always, it was a joint effort, which is what our Society is very much about. I am also delighted to report that sales of Bob Clarke's new book, *Drunkards, Thieves & Rioters and the Basingstoke Borough Police 1836 – 1889*, launched in November, are going well. A huge thank you is due to all, both present and past, on the Publications Committee and those involved in the launch at the Willis Museum.

We also thank Barry Hedger for his contribution to BAHS over the last few years. Barry has recently stood down as Membership Secretary due to other commitments and I welcome William King, who has offered to take over the role. Thanks are also due to Bob Applin for continuing to distribute our newsletter. Please continue to send in your articles to Nicola Turton either by email [newsletter@bahsoc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@bahsoc.org.uk) or by post to The Keep, 28 Badger's Bank, Lychpit, RG24 8RT (01256 321193).

In the meantime, a reminder that next month we have our Barbara Applin memorial lecture, to which we will be welcoming Professor Mike Fulford as our guest speaker.

*Front cover picture: L-R Dr Clifford Williams of the Police History Society, The Mayor of Basingstoke, Councillor Anne Court, Ginny Pringle, Bob Clarke and Inspector Ben Taylor of Hampshire Police.*

# A Local Connection to the Mary Rose

*Ann Broad*

I recently caught the *Timewatch* programme made in 2014 presented by Dan Snow and charting the progress of the Mary Rose from its discovery to the latest information gathered by modern technology about the artefacts.

Around 1980 when I was working as a teacher at Tadley County Primary School, I heard on the radio a most enthusiastic young woman talking about diving on the emerging wreck of the Mary Rose in the Solent. It was fascinating and I immediately wrote to the Mary Rose Trust asking if someone could come and talk to the children about this exciting project.

The outcome was a visit from archaeologist Alex Hildred (then known as Alexandra). There wasn't a lot she could show the children as it was the very early stages, but she brought all her diving gear and the visit went very well. She told us that she had dived on the Mary Rose until she was 6 months pregnant.

The following year the teacher of our parallel class and I decided to use the Mary Rose as a project for our history of the Tudors. We contacted Alex Hildred and she arranged for our two classes to visit Southsea Castle where some of the artefacts were displayed, especially the gold coins, 'angels', which fascinated the children.

Alex met us complete with baby in pushchair. She also took us to the 'bond store', a very large warehouse where dozens of other artefacts were stored, but warned us not to tell Margaret Rule as Alex was not sure she would approve. Here we saw the barber-surgeon's cap, beautifully laid out on a board, many of the longbows in their conservation tank and, best of all according to the boys, piles of cannon balls of all sizes.

Back at school the work continued and a window display of the raising of the Mary Rose was put together.

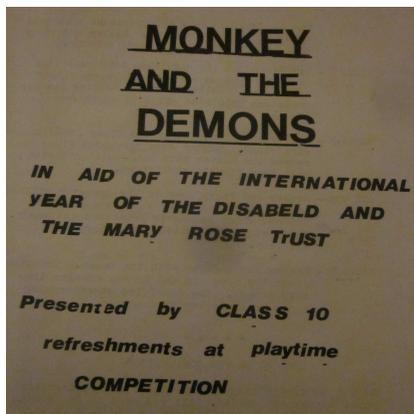


*Summer Term window display – 1981*

Later one of the children wrote a play, 'Monkey and the Demons', and members of the class learnt their lines and sorted the costumes. The head teacher agreed that the children could perform the play to other children from the school one lunchtime and charge for entry. Programmes were provided and cakes made to be sold.

The money made was to be divided between *The International Year of the Disabled* (via *Blue Peter* I think) and The Mary Rose Trust.

It is pleasing to think that we contributed 'a little something' towards the Mary Rose Trust and hopefully encouraged an interest in archaeology/history in some of the children.



*Editor's note: the Mary Rose Museum is closed until early summer 2016, in order to remove the glass between the visitors and the ship. The Committee is planning a Society Trip to the Mary Museum later this year.*

# Must Farm Boats at the RAI Conference

*Nicola Turton*

Along with Paulline Williams and Mary Oliver, Alan and I attended the Royal Archaeological Institute conference on Maritime Archaeology. It was a brilliant weekend of brain stretching, and the talks ran from pre-history to M33 (the dazzle-painted gun boat next to HMS Victory). As there was so much, I thought I'd concentrate on the Must Farm log boats, as we saw them on the Society trip to the Fens.



*The boats at Flag Fen in 2014*

The speaker was Iona Robinson of the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, and she gave a resume of the boats and how exciting it was to find one, let alone nine. From 2009-12, the Unit investigated the freshwater paleochannel at Must Farm, which is located SSE of the Flag Fen basin, and runs through extensive reed marsh. It is bounded by sandy levees, and was a significant conduit to other areas. Despite being an important watery highway, it was a slow moving body of water, thus preserving both the boats and the stratigraphy. Additionally ten static fish weirs have been found in the area and many wicker eel traps. In England and Wales 180 log boats have been found, and 120 have been recorded in Northern Ireland, but the Must Farm group is considered extra special for several reasons: their excellent preservation, the depth of the intact archaeological context, and their place in the larger landscape.

Iona was also able to reveal the dendrochronological dates of the boats. Members who have seen the boats may recall that they were all named after their finder, thus one was even called Alan. But sadly we weren't able to find out how old "Alan" is, as they are now rather prosaically called Boat 1, Boat 2 etc.

I mention nine Must Farm log boats, yet a tenth one is listed in my table below. This final piece, a transom board, does not fit any of the boats, and suggests a tenth one which is yet to be found, or is perhaps lost forever.

Boat no	Dendro dates	Type of wood	Remarks
1	775-515 BC	Oak	Bearing many diagonal and vertical grooves, both on inner & outer faces. ?for decoration or to improve grip?
2	1645-1495 BC	Oak	
3	1755-1645 BC	Oak	Smooth outer faces; no adze marks. Has rear transom groove, but board is missing
4	1050-920 BC	Oak	The only boat to contain artefacts: some oak boards and possibly a cleat
5	1735-1540 BC	Alder	Very compressed and warped; was difficult to recognise as a boat.
6	1390-1215 BC	Oak	
7	1440-1320 BC	Oak	
8	1735-1540 BC	Lime	
9	1755-1635 BC	Maple	Very fragmentary
10	Late Bronze Age	-	Transom board

So, why are they there? The wide range of dates and small number of boats suggest that they are not necessarily deliberately deposited. This is also supported by the fact that, with the exception of Boat 3, they are worn and old at the time of deposition. It may be as simple as a dumping ground for old boats. However it must also be considered that this is an area where many Middle Bronze Age swords, rapiers and spears have been found, along with Iron Age swords, and the deposition of these items is frequent and regular. The site is also close to a platform site with plenty of material culture, showing that this is an occupation site. In fact this may not even be a special place in the Bronze Age, and its survival is the only thing which makes it exceptional.

Work continues, and we look forward to hearing about it.

## Lotsa Books

*Ginny Pringle*

We have been taking stock of the huge number of reference books held by the Society, quite a few of which have been kindly donated by members of the years.

We have looked at ways in which we can make them available to all. This is difficult to achieve without a central library facility that members can easily visit. We have also thought about issuing a catalogue and library loan system but want to avoid placing a heavy administrative burden on the Society.

One proposal is to bring the books to each meeting over the course of several months and offer them for sale at very reasonable price, or as a donation to a local charity. This way, those members who find a book of particular interest would benefit more permanently. Before we make any decisions though, we seek your feedback, so please feel free to offer your suggestions to any of our committee.

## See Basingstoke and Die

*Bob Clarke*

On the evening of Wednesday, 11th November 1863, a respectably-dressed sixty year-old gentleman arrived in Basingstoke by the mail train. He wore a dark overcoat, a black cloth dress coat, a black hat with a mourning band and side-spring boots. His name was Edward Dimes. He was a solicitor from London. He booked into the Red Lion Hotel where he slept on the Wednesday and Thursday nights. On the Thursday he went into town and visited Lodwidge's ironmonger's shop in the Market Place where he purchased a lancet.<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of Friday the 13th of November he stayed in his room until about twelve o'clock when he came downstairs to order his breakfast, toast

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<sup>1</sup> Lancet: a cutting instrument with a double-edged blade.

and tea, and lemonade and sherry. While breakfast was preparing he said he had to dash up to his room and would be back shortly. As he did not return, a chambermaid was sent upstairs at about half-past one to tell him that his breakfast was ready. Not being able to make him hear, and finding the door locked, she looked through the keyhole and saw that something was wrong.

The chambermaid alerted the proprietor of the hotel, Miss Daniels, who summoned assistance to break open the chamber door. When the door was burst open they found Mr Dimes's half-naked body lying on the floor weltering in its own blood. He had made a severe incision in each arm about 16 inches long from the larger muscle to the wrist. He had severely cut and stabbed himself in the groin, and:

“inflicted upwards of one hundred stabs and cuts on his chest and neck, apparently with the object of reaching the heart and the jugular vein. Some severe wounds had also been inflicted on the temples.”

As well as the lancet, by his side there was a large fork covered with blood and an empty bottle that had contained laudanum. He had evidently taken an overdose and vomited the same all over the room.<sup>2</sup>

In the births, marriages and deaths column of the *Hampshire Advertiser* for November 21, 1863 there was the following notice:

“On the 13<sup>th</sup> instant, suddenly, at the Red Lion Inn, Basingstoke, Mr Edward Dimes, solicitor of London, aged 60.”

However, judging from the empty bottle and the number of injuries, his death wasn't all that sudden.

Frederick Norman Molle, a gentleman of independent means from Boscombe, had been staying as a patient for some three months with Dr Meyrick at Winton House, Winchester Street, where he was being treated for problems with his eyes.

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<sup>2</sup> *Hampshire Chronicle*, November 14, 1863; *Bedfordshire Mercury*, November 16, 1863.

On 4 May 1903, Mr Molle went for a walk along Winchester Road accompanied by Frederick Harding, who was employed as his valet and attendant. During the walk they passed two cars. When they reached the foot of Kempshott Hill, about two miles from the town, they saw a third car coming down the hill. When the car drew near, Mr Molle suddenly ran into the road right in front of the car. He was knocked down and run over, causing such injuries that he died almost immediately.

The car belonged to the Earl of Portsmouth who was being driven with his secretary from Winchester to Basingstoke. Harry King, the Earl of Portsmouth's driver, told the inquest that the car was running down the hill with the brakes on at about eight miles an hour. He saw the two men at the side of the road walking towards them. One of the two men suddenly sprang right in front of the car. The man was so close that the car struck him before he fell under it, "breaking the front board of the car and disorganising the engines and machinery, so that witness could not pull up at once".<sup>3</sup> Probably one of the earliest cases of suicide by motor car.

On Wednesday 14 April 1915, Alexander Bowman, a building contractor from Bournemouth, and his wife and daughter visited Basingstoke. That evening, Mrs and Miss Bowman booked two bedrooms in the Great Western Hotel: one for them and one for Mr Bowman. They afterwards went out and returned with Mr Bowman. Sometime in the night Mr Bowman climbed into the bath, squeezed himself through the narrow bathroom window (2ft 4½ins x 2ft 1½ins) and flung himself into the yard, where he was discovered the following morning lying in a pool of blood. He never regained consciousness and died early that afternoon.<sup>4</sup>

Mr Bowman had spent less than a day in Basingstoke before killing himself. Mr Dimes spent two nights in the town before deciding to end it all, and Mr Molle managed to last three months in Basingstoke before throwing himself under a car.

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<sup>3</sup> *Reading Mercury*, May 9, 1903.

<sup>4</sup> *Western Gazette*, April 23, 1915; *Reading Mercury*, April 24, 1915.

# **Turning the Tide: the Coming of Cnut - Hampshire Field Club Conference 21 November 2015**

*Mary Oliver*

The Archaeology Section are to be congratulated on staging this excellent and well attended conference on a period given little prominence – possibly set to change as we approach the millenary commemoration of Cnut's accession to the throne. All of us who attended are now better prepared to appreciate this very fluid period in the making of the kingdom of England.

The excellent line up of speakers began with Dr Ryan Lavelle on Aethelred the Unready who was not ill-prepared but ill-advised. He described the limitations on Aethelred's kingship, imposed by the church and the devolvement of power to ealdormen such as Aethelweard. His main problem was the constant Viking invasions and his policy of paying them off. One of his Viking adversaries was Olaf, king of Norway whom he called to neighbouring Andover in 994. On payment of another considerable sum, Olaf agreed to withdraw from Wessex and not return. The meeting also included his confirmation with Aethelred as sponsor, echoing Alfred's arrangement with Guthrum. As at Wedmore, there was hunting and feasting – and no translators necessary between Saxons and Vikings as their languages were sufficiently similar, which must have helped. However, other Viking hordes under Swein of Denmark continued to harry the kingdom, eventually ousting Aethelred as king, who took refuge in Normandy.

Dr Tim Bolton followed with a lively presentation on the great Cnut, eventually king of England, Denmark and Norway, which was not a bad achievement for a second son. He must have been a charismatic and able young man.

After his father Swein died, just months after wresting the crown from Aethelred, Cnut led the Viking cause from Gainsborough. Aethelred was reinstated, but remained a weak king, with his son Edmund Ironside taking an active role in the fighting. When Aethelred died in 1014, Cnut and Edmund met in at Alney in Gloucestershire and made peace, dividing the

realm between them, with Cnut retaining the north of the country. It was his good fortune that Edmund died just six months later and Cnut became ruler of the whole exhausted country. After paying off the armies, he tried to conciliate the English; he married Aethelred's queen Emma, supported the church with gifts, beautifully recorded in the Hyde Liber Vitae and was a peaceful and able ruler. In Denmark, he fought and defeated the Norwegians, resulting in control of a wider empire.

Dr Gareth Williams described the coin hoards of the period; the late Anglo-Saxon period had a well regulated coinage, in contrast to the Viking tradition of a bullion economy based on silver value. Cnut issued coins throughout his reign, changing the bust to stress his achievements and re-coining at regular intervals. This, and the detail of mints and moneyers on the reverse, make them very useful archaeological evidence. The containers in which the hoards have been found are interesting, particularly three in the north found in beautiful silver Carolingian church vessels.

After lunch, Dr Louise Loe gave an update on the Dorset Ridgeway Vikings, the mass burial of over 50 men discovered during the building of a new road into Weymouth in 2009 and excavated by Oxford Archaeology. The work of Louise and her colleagues has filled in much gruesome detail about the fate of these executed men, all decapitated. The bodies were tumbled into the pit where they were killed, with the skulls piled separately. Sorting the bones required great skill – 52 skeletons but only 47 skulls, perhaps indicating that some skulls were displayed on stakes as was then the custom. Examination of the cervical vertebrae indicates more than one executioner using swords, but with no great skill – 188 blade wounds were identified. The men were almost all young and not native to this country; it is likely they were the crew of a raiding ship.

Professor David Hinton rounded off the day with an overview of the archaeology of these turbulent times. The two periods of Viking invasion, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and a century later, are not easy to distinguish archaeologically, but David described what evidence there is, such as swords from the rivers, which are so similar but occasionally have an inscription. Metalwork with Viking style ornament is rare – a strap end from Winchester – and a runic inscription, and some Danish names on grave markers, and the famous Sigmund stone found in the Biddle

excavation of the Old Minster which indicates Cnut's patronage in the decoration of the building, also the presence of an inner circle of Danish supporters. Some evidence can be implied – although the Viking horde over-wintered in Wareham, which was an Alfredian burh, the Saxon church was unharmed, as also was Breamore. As for Cnut himself, he is portrayed on the Liber Vitae as an ideal Anglo Saxon king and he was certainly one of the more effective rulers of those turbulent times, as wise as the famous legend implies.



## The Sarsen Trail – An opportunity to support a good cause

*Mark Peryer*

On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May, the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust will be running their annual fund raising event, the *Sarsen Trail*, which offers a choice of walks between Avebury and Bulford Camp across parts of Salisbury plain that are normally closed to the public. If you're interested in landscape archaeology, then this is a unique opportunity to see an area unspoilt by modern agriculture.

You can choose to walk either 7, 11, 15 or 26 miles and in order to take part you have to pay an entrance fee. You can also choose to raise sponsorship money on behalf of the trust. The day is extremely well organised and includes return transport to the place where you started.

One or two of us on the committee are contemplating giving it a go this year and you would be welcome to join us. Further details are available on the WWT website:

<http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/Pages/Events/Category/sarsen-trail-and-neolithic-marathon>

(There is also the Neolithic marathon event over the same course on the day, but I don't know of any marathon runners in the society).

# Agincourt 600

*Nicola Turton*

Being a great one for entering ballots (the opening of the Stonehenge Visitors' Centre, Magna Carta Unification Day...), I put our names into the hat for tickets to the Agincourt 600 Commemoration Service. And we got them, as did Paulline Williams, also from the Society.

So on 29 October, which is the day in 1415 when the news of the victory was received in London, we presented ourselves at Westminster Abbey. We queued for ages, but were glad to have arrived early when we saw the queue disappearing round the corner. On entering, we were seated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> row of the south transept, which was a pretty good place, considering we were second class passengers. I could just see the edge of the Cosmati Pavement, and we also had a view of the TV screen, so we could see what else was going on. The organist played a pleasing selection, including an arrangement of Walton's music for Henry V as the dignitaries trailed in; representatives of all the Liveryed Companies, over 100 of them, and the Knights Bachelor (who are the lowest rank of knights, yet the oldest, as the order has existed from the 13<sup>th</sup> century). The Royal guests were Prince and Princess Michael of Kent. However, still chafing under the yoke of the Norman Oppressors (aka the current Royal family), I wasn't too interested, but I was utterly thrilled to see Henry V's sword being carried in. His jousting helm was already on the altar, and the sword was handed over to the Dean, John Hall who placed it on a waiting stand. I could feel the agony of the conservators, as he handled the blade with bare hands, and I looked at Alan with a pained face and mouthed "*fingers*", as he looked at me and did the same.

The choir sang the Agincourt carol, and then the service began. There were readings, such as Robert Hardy performing the speech from the night before the battle, and hymns (all really difficult ones), and then a rather odd moment when, from the Chantry Chapel of Henry V, stepped a man in period costume, faintly grubby and blood-stained as if fresh from battle, and a slightly shocked murmur ran round the Abbey. The words 'behold the man' popped into my mind. Of course we all knew he was an actor, but the unassuming manner in which he appeared from Henry's tomb, and the smallness of him in the vastness of the abbey was so very striking, if not

ghostly. He walked through the body of the church and declaimed Shakespeare's St. Crispin's Day speech from *Henry V*.

Throughout the service I had been enjoying the sight of the Bishop of London, Richard Chartres who was sitting in golden splendour, and looking like a living mediaeval illumination, before he rose to give the sermon. Then Professor Anne Curry joined a small group to lay flowers on Henry's tomb. Incense was wafted and gradually the scent and haze crept into the main body of the church, adding to the slightly unearthly and timeless feel.

I was so pleased to be there on such an historic occasion, although as Alan said, why a cathedral service? Why is Agincourt so revered amongst many important yet forgotten battles? I can only think it's because Shakespeare wound his magic round silent bones and placed immortal words into the otherwise empty mouths.



*Alan Turton and Paulline Williams  
proudly representing the Society at  
Westminster Abbey*

## Visit to Compton Church & the Watts Memorial Chapel Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 10.00am at Compton Church

It is some years since the Society visited this very lovely church, and it has been suggested that we have another visit. The church of St Nicholas began in the Saxon period, and a substantial amount remains of this early building; it has Norman and later additions, including an upper floor to the sanctuary, and anchorite cells. These latter features make it a most unusual and interesting church. There is a car park for the church, signposted, on the left hand side of the road down a track as you drive through the village, post code GU3 1EG.

This Surrey village has other attractions! Visible as you approach from the direction of the Hog's Back is a round red roof nestling in the hillside. This is the Watts Memorial Chapel, designed by Mary Watts and built from terra cotta by the villagers. It is highly decorative and well worth visiting. There is no charge for either of these buildings, though we always take a collection for any church we visit.



*St Nicholas, Compton*

Further along the road past the chapel is the Watts Gallery, an Arts and Crafts purpose-built gallery recently restored. It houses some of the work of George Watts, and has an excellent tea room for those needing refreshment. There is also a Thai restaurant at what used to be the Harrow Inn, and a well-known pub, the Withies, further along the road.

The Gallery has an entrance charge of £7.50. There are usually temporary exhibitions and the work of William and Evelyn de Morgan - tiles, pottery and paintings – is currently on show. It is also possible to see the house where the Watts lived, as part of a guided tour at 12.00, for £5, which must be pre-booked. For those who are interested, the web-site for the Watts Gallery has more information [www.wattsgallery.org.uk](http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk)

If you would like to join this excursion, please contact Mary Oliver on 01256 324263. It may be possible to arrange some car sharing.



*The Watts Memorial Chapel*

## **The Atlas of Hampshire's Archaeology**

Dave Hopkins, the County Archaeologist, has asked that this be printed in the newsletter; it is a website which readers might find of interest and use.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) contains around 50,000 entries that describe the known archaeology of Hampshire. Analysing the distributions of this complex data by using GIS allows fascinating insights into the evolution of the Hampshire landscape. The Atlas of Hampshire's Archaeology presents HER data in a graphic and understandable way and provides the opportunity to enjoy and understand the archaeological story of Hampshire. Displaying the HER data alongside other information, such as topography, rivers, geology and landscape, allows new insights and the patterns of data to be readily appreciated.

The Atlas of Hampshire's Archaeology was developed to support an understanding of the archaeological potential of different landscapes. The maps are equally interesting to a wider audience including those seeking to know what has been found in their area, students and academics undertaking research, and consultants preparing advice for developers. The pages offer an opportunity to share the emerging story of Hampshire.

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/landscape-and-heritage/historic-environment/historic-buildings-register/historic-atlas.htm>

## Fieldwork Report

Mark Peryer (Tel: 07770 832397 email: mperyer@f2s.com)

We concluded the 2015 season of the *Dig Basing!* project with a feedback meeting at the beginning of December in Basing Village Hall, which was well attended with a good proportion of Basing residents who were able to hear an overview of our findings based on our work in 2014 and 2015. Ginny had processed the finds from all the pits and we were able to hand those back to their owners together with a guide to what had been found.

Looking forward, we shall be continuing the *Dig Basing!* project, and the dates for this year's test pitting will be the weekends of the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> June and the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> September. If you live in Basing or know anyone that does, then please let us know, especially if they would be willing to have a test pit in their garden. The *Dig Basing!* project is an excellent opportunity to get involved with archaeology but starting on a small scale.

We are looking into running a small scale excavation at Odiham in early June and we are planning a return to Stanchester for the last three weeks in July. More details will be made available once we firm up plans.

### CBA Wessex

**CBA Wessex** is one of several regional groups affiliated to the Council for British Archaeology. It brings together people with enthusiasm for archaeology in Berkshire, the Channel Islands, Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, and Wiltshire, an area intensely rich in archaeological landscapes, sites and historic buildings. Our interests embrace all periods – from prehistory to the present day and industrial and maritime archaeology.

**CBA Wessex** arranges lectures, field visits, guided walks, study days and conferences and takes an active role in preserving and enhancing our heritage under the banner of Friends of Ancient Monuments (FOAM). We update our members on what is going on in the region in our twice yearly newsletter, our monthly e-newsletters and via our website. If you would like to join **CBA Wessex** please speak to Ginny Pringle or see <http://cba-wessex.org.uk/>

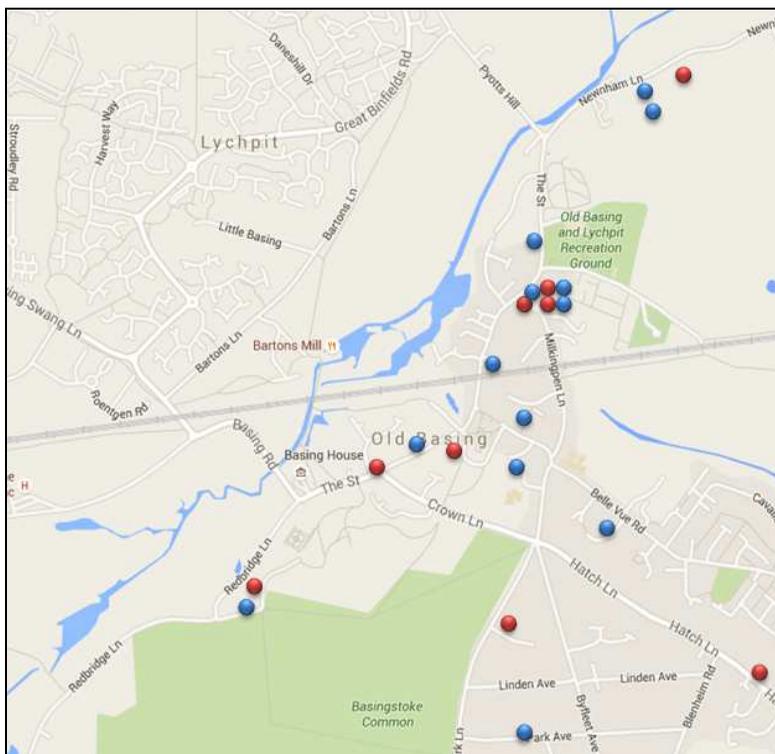
# **An Update on the Dig Basing! Community Archaeology Project**

*Ginny Pringle*

Originating from an idea by Chris Elmer as part of his PhD project involving public archaeology, 2014 saw the successful start of a new community archaeology project by the Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society. This involved a series of test pits excavated in the village of Basing and laid the foundations for what has become a research project on the origins and development of settlement at Basing. In 2014 nine test pits were excavated, some of which yielded copious amounts of finds, particularly a wide range of pottery from Medieval through to Modern, and a small quantity of lithics offered a hint of prehistoric occupation. So, following on from our initial excavations at Basing we decided to hold a one-day training session and two more full excavation weekends in the village during 2015.

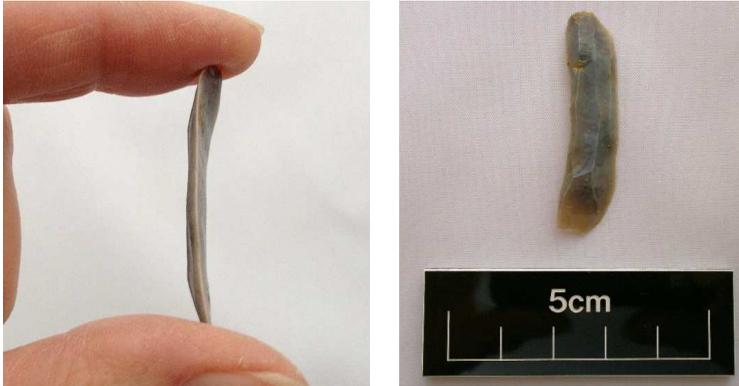
The efforts of 2015 did not disappoint. April saw us revisiting Mary Oliver's delightful garden where, during 2014, a test pit had yielded a significant amount of pottery that ranged from Medieval through to Modern. The pottery from the 2015 test pit in Mary's garden was equally prolific and it was indeed fortunate that Mary had agreed to let us set up our finds-processing tent in her garden - even more so since Mary makes excellent tea and cake.

Then during the two full excavation weekends, one held in June and the other in September, we excavated a further 13 test pits of which the majority was located in the old part of the village. We twice revisited one of the 2014 sites, just to the north of Oliver's Battery, giving a total of three test pits in that area. We also revisited two other locations, one being at the extreme south-west end of the village beneath the walls of Basing House, close to the one-time route of the Basingstoke canal, and the other a neighbour of Mary's in Milkingpen Lane. Two of the remaining test pits were outliers on the peripheries of the modern settlement, one being in Park Avenue and the other across the A30 on the recent Crabtree development.



*Figure 1: Location of all test pits (map by Mark Peryer)*

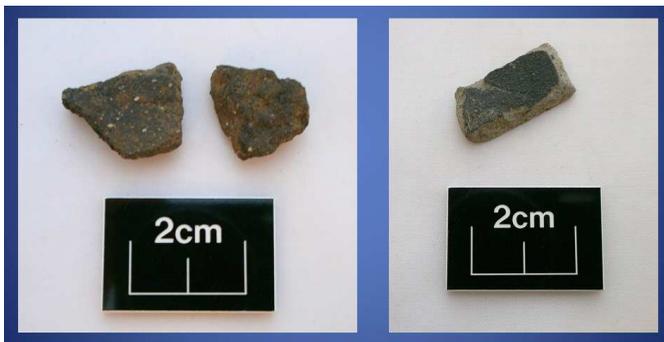
2015 has been an interesting season as far as prehistoric finds are concerned. A small quantity of Iron Age pottery was recovered from the northern end of the village from unploughed pasture (see Figure 3), but perhaps more exciting is the pattern beginning to emerge of what might be late Mesolithic or early Neolithic occupation in the area. Flint and lithics from a number of test pits along the river terrace on the south side of the Loddon show evidence for human occupation from an early date and a very fine example recovered from this part of Basing is shown in Figure 2. Caution is the watchword, since no settlement sites or hearths have yet to be discovered (nor are likely to be by a reliance on test pitting), but in any case, the Loddon as a source of fish, water fowl and drinking water for game would have been an attractive resource, particularly for hunter gatherers.



*Figure 2: Blade - possibly Late Mesolithic*

Struck and burnt flint recovered from test pits to the south side of the village, on the slopes of what was downland before modern development, demonstrate that these areas had also been occupied at some point in prehistory. Here, prehistoric pottery is unlikely to have survived the plough and so the archaeological evidence from test pits will largely remain dependent on the recovery of lithics.

More Romano-British pottery is beginning to emerge, unsurprisingly at the north end of the village close to the route of the Roman road near its crossing point at the Loddon, but also near the centre of the village close to the church. So far, the quantities of Romano-British pottery have not been substantial, nor high status (see Figure 3), but this might change.



*Figure 3: Iron Age sherds (left) and Roman sherd (right)*

Current research (Cole & King, forthcoming) - using radio carbon dating on a selection of human skeletal remains found over the years at various sites in Basing - promises to contribute data to the Anglo Saxon record, currently something of an archaeological vacuum as regards Basing, despite our recent test pitting. The later Anglo-Saxon period might be represented by the appearance of Kennet Valley wares, many of which have been recovered not only from the north end of the village in the vicinity of Oliver's Battery, but also elsewhere in the village. However dates for the Kennet Valley wares are difficult to pin down exactly and may well be of post-Conquest date, tying in with the Norman motte.

Some test pits in the heart of the old part of the village have yielded significant amounts of material that spans a long chronological period, most of which date from around the time of the Norman Conquest through to Modern (see Figure 4 for an example of small finds of modern period that have been discovered). Density data from this part of the village should help plot the pattern of settlement development. At the same time the importance of a wider geographical spread of test pits should not be overlooked, as the density and distribution of finds recovered from test pits away from the older part of the village will help identify the limits of early settlement.



*Figure 4: A selection of small finds recovered during 2015*

To conclude, 2015 saw the total number of excavated test pits rise to 23, no mean feat for a project just two years old. We are fortunate to have been invited back to conduct further fieldwork, including perhaps geophysical survey at one of the more fascinating locations in the village and at which future work may well create a spin-off project.

With two more weekends planned for 2016 set to provide additional data; future analyses and interpretation of the overall results should begin to become more statistically robust. In the meantime an interim report embracing all data from the 2014 and 2015 seasons is in the pipeline.

*For more details of the pottery recovered from Dig Basing! please see 'Interim notes on the pottery from Dig Basing 2014', BAHS Newsletter February 2015, by Ginny Pringle.*



**Free** early evening lectures held in Winchester, generally at Medecroft (University of Winchester) or the Hampshire Records Office.

For further information, contact [ryan.lavelle@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:ryan.lavelle@winchester.ac.uk)

18 February, 6pm: *Anglo-Saxon 'Small Shires' – Two perspectives*: BRUCE EAGLES, 'Small Shires of Eastern Wessex'; SCOTT CHAUSSÉE, 'Small Shires of Western Wessex? Understanding the Territorial Organization in the South Saxon Kingdom.'

Medecroft Rm 16, University of Winchester

3 March, 6pm: JOHN WALTER (Emeritus Professor, Univ. of Essex), on Tichbornes and the Tichborne Dole (Title TBA).  
Hampshire Record Office.

17 March, 6pm: PAUL STORE (Univ. of Winchester), 'Twelfth-Century views of Vikings in England'.

Medecroft Rm 16, University of Winchester.

# The Civil War in Wessex

*Bob Applin*

In early January, Alan Turton launched his second book in the Wessex Books series, *The English Civil War in Wessex*, at a well attended event at the Willis Museum during which he gave one of his inimitable talks on the dress and social history of the soldiers of the period.

*The Civil War in Wessex* is a fully illustrated 32 page book which succinctly describes the eight major battles and the sieges that occurred in the Wessex area during the wars. The final two chapters briefly cover the second Civil War and the Cromwellian period that followed.

The text is a well-written distillation of Alan's comprehensive knowledge of the military and political events of the time accompanied by his drawings of the common soldiers, Nicola's modern photos of the battle sites and Alan's portraits of the commanders.

Published by Wessex Books at £6.99 and available at the Willis Museum, *The Civil War in Wessex* puts some detail onto the more general accounts of one of the most important periods in British history.



*Alan during his talk at the launch of  
The Civil War in Wessex*

## 2016 DIARY DATES



### **BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

[www.bahsoc.org.uk](http://www.bahsoc.org.uk)

**Penny Martin Tel: 01256 321 423**

[secretary@bahsoc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@bahsoc.org.uk)

**Registered Charity no. 11000263**

**MEETINGS**    *Church Cottage, Basingstoke at 7.30pm*

**10<sup>th</sup> March**    **THE BARBARA APPLIN MEMORIAL LECTURE –  
PROF. MIKE FULFORD – SILCHESTER IRON AGE  
& ROMAN – 500 YEARS OF URBAN LIFE**

**14<sup>th</sup> April**    **ALMANACS, ASTROLOGY &  
POPULAR MEDICINE IN EARLY MODERN  
ENGLAND – DR LOUISE CURTH**

**12<sup>th</sup> May**    **REBUILDING THE PAST – LUKE WINTER -  
CENTRE FOR ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY**

### **FRIENDS OF WILLIS MUSEUM**

*At 7.30 pm Willis Museum, Basingstoke*

**18<sup>th</sup> February**    **THE SEARCH FOR ALFRED – DR KATIE TUCKER**

**17<sup>th</sup> March**    **CORBETT NATIONAL PARK IN NORTHERN  
INDIA – THEN AND NOW – BILL FERGIE**

**21<sup>st</sup> April**    **SECRET GARDENS OF HAMPSHIRE –  
PATRICIA ELKINGTON**

**19<sup>th</sup> May**    **THE VENERABLE BEDE – DR CHRIS GROCOCK**