

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BAHS

Newsletter 222 February 2018

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*Great Concentration During **Dig Basing!** 2017 (see pages 5 & 11)*

Things to Come...

Churches Visit Saturday 14 April

The Society is proposing another visit to local churches, this time to three with a Basingstoke connection in the Andover area. Furthest away is St Michael's Quarley, whose late 18th century vicar was the Reverend Thomas Sheppard, who was also vicar of Basingstoke. The Reverend Sheppard also had the living of St Mary's Amport and his tomb is there. This church was built by a member of the St John (later Paulet) family, which gives us another local connection.

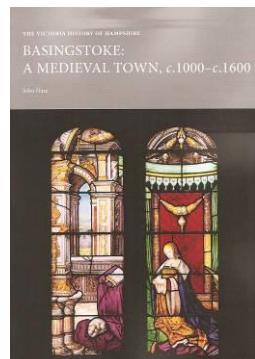
The third church will be St Mary's at Abbotts Ann, whose architect John James was the son of another Basingstoke vicar. Each church has different architectural styles, and contains much of interest, and the pub in Abbotts Ann has been recommended for lunch. If there is time and energy left, the wall paintings at Nether Wallop are a delight.

We do hope you will be tempted to join us – please send your name to Nicola Turton at 01256 321 193 or by email newsletter@bahsoc.org.uk or see Mary Oliver or Nicola at a lecture meeting. Exact details and timings will be confirmed closer to the date.

Basingstoke: A Medieval Town c. 1100- c.1600

Thanks to the vagaries of the publishing world, John Hare's book was not available when he spoke to the Society at the November meeting.

John now has copies (priced at £8), and plans to attend the meeting in February, should anyone wish to purchase one.





Basingstoke YAC Update

*Penny Martin & Nikki Read
Co-Leaders Basingstoke YAC*

The first three sessions of the Basingstoke YAC group have now taken place at the Willis Museum, in September and October and November. This new venture, which is supported by BAHS, has been well received by both the parents and the young people.

The first meeting for 2018 will take place on 20th January and will be on Alfred the Great and the Anglo Saxons.

Session 1 looked at the themes of ‘Archaeology is Rubbish’ and ‘What does an Archaeologist do?’ We established a history timeline which will be used at each session. The children thoroughly enjoyed going through bags of ‘rubbish’ and sorting it into organic and non-organic materials and discussing what the rubbish could tell us about the people to whom it belonged.

Session 2 (see photograph below) was about the Stone Ages. Its activities included identifying and discussing the way people lived in the Mesolithic period, monument building in the Neolithic, including of course Stonehenge. The young people also created their own henges out of Lego or by drawing - this session included a flint-knapping demonstration and the chance to handle both originals and replicas of flint tools. The members began to develop their archaeological skills by producing finds records for a variety of flint tools.



Basingstoke YAC members had the opportunity to attend the CBA Wessex Conference From Bones to Drones’ *Science in Archaeology* in Winchester on 4 November, where two of our young people worked with Nikki Read,

other Wessex YAC Groups and Julian Richards to produce a very entertaining presentation for the conference on burial through the ages.

The final session of 2017 also took place in November when the theme was the Romans, and activities included field-walking, a recap on our earlier theme of rubbish and what it can tell you, and a display of Roman armour.

Know Your Committee – An occasional series



Mary Oliver

After O Levels, I went on my first dig, which was a Roman fort, and have always enjoyed the fieldwork side of archaeology until the knees complained too much!

I came to Basingstoke to work in the museum in 1960s, and later at BCOT helped teach O Level Archaeology. I'm delighted that some of my old students still belong to BAHS.

I was a founder member of the Society way back in 1971, and it has always played a large part in my life. I have been Programme Secretary for several years now, so if you have a special request...

Hillforts Atlas

The new hillforts On-Line atlas has been launched, showing data on the 4,147 confirmed and possible hillforts of Britain and Ireland.

It may be accessed at <https://hillforts.arch.ox.ac.uk/> and there are plans for a paper version in 2018.

Dig Basing! Project – (some 16,500 artefacts later)

Ginny Pringle

Last September saw our final *Dig Basing!* weekend with five more test pits excavated across the village, bringing the grand total to 48. Originating in 2014, the project was initially a collaboration between BAHS and Chris Elmer from the University of Southampton. We were looking for a fieldwork project that would invite public engagement, whilst Chris (who had been excavating at Basing House) was undertaking a PhD in public archaeology - and so *Dig Basing!* was born. The venture was so successful that we continued independently in 2015 with two more weekends that year and the same again in both 2016 and 2017.

Our research aim was to discover more about the extent of settlement and indicators for early activity in the Basing area. To achieve this, we dug a series of test pits, mostly in residential gardens. Each pit measured one square metre, but with varying depths according to where we reached the bedrock.

Our 48 test pits produced a whopping 16,632 artefacts(!) of which pottery sherds accounted for 4,077; and all of which had to be painstakingly cleaned, sorted, bagged, counted, weighed and recorded on a spreadsheet. The total weight came in at 194kg so you can see from this that the average find weighed between 11g and 12g; and in fact the average pottery sherd weighed only 4.75g, which as you can imagine meant some very fiddly cleaning.

Most of the test pits produced copious quantities of artefacts – notably huge amounts of pottery from Mary Oliver's garden! Mary kindly donated part of her lovely garden for our finds HQ tent during each weekend session - thank you Mary. As might be expected in a village location, many pits contained disturbed or redeposited soil; and in the lower layers we frequently found Victorian pottery alongside much earlier Medieval pottery. This can often be attributed to manuring and cultivation practices within gardens, although the village has of course also been subjected to Civil War activity, together with canal construction (and filling) and railway development.

We recovered all manner of finds: such as microliths, clay pipes, bicycle chains, plastic toys, coins (including a Roman coin of Antoninus Pius), mother-of-pearl buttons, post-Medieval bottle glass, slag, oyster shell, animal

bone and pottery. The pottery has been the most useful tool for dating and we were fortunate enough to find sherds that spanned a huge date range; prehistoric (possibly Iron Age), Roman, late Saxon, Medieval, post-Medieval, early industrial, through to Victorian and later. The majority of the pottery is post-Medieval and later, but significant amounts of Medieval sandy ware and flint-tempered ware were also recovered. Also useful for dating were the clay pipe fragments, including some examples of patterned bowls and stem fragments with maker's marks.

As one would expect from cultivated gardens where the soil has been regularly worked, the vast majority of pottery sherds we found consisted of very small fragments. This has made it difficult to identify vessel types, especially for Medieval pottery where few diagnostic rim sherds were recovered; whereas the modern pottery has been easier to identify, such as the ubiquitous blue and white transfer patterned china used for 19th and 20th century tea sets.

Throughout the project we learned that you can never be sure what you might find, which at times we found challenging but also great fun. Much of the co-ordination and organisation for the project has been carried out by Ian Waite and without his bringing together volunteer teams, and persistently knocking on villagers' doors to gain entry to various gardens, this project would not have enjoyed the considerable success that it has (although the temptation of freshly-baked offerings from the village bakery considerably eased the process ☺). A huge thank you must go to all our volunteers - from both within our Society and the North-East Hampshire Historical & Archaeological Society-as well as our finds specialists, including Kay Ainsworth.

We will be presenting our results at 7.30pm on Friday 16 March at the Lychpit Community Hall (Great Binfields Rd, Lychpit, Basingstoke RG24 8TF) to which everyone is welcome. I hope to see you there!



2014 and the very first test pit under excavation with some 'Likely Lads' aka Ian Waite and Mark Peryer

Chariots and More

Mary Oliver

In November I returned briefly to my native Yorkshire for the annual Royal Archaeological Institute (RAI) conference commemorating the 200th anniversary of the excavations at Arras, the Middle Iron Age barrow cemetery with its famous chariot burials. It was a very concentrated look at every aspect of these discoveries, and I learned a lot of interesting details.

The first lecture on the Friday evening was given by Dr Fraser Hunter of the National Museums of Scotland, talking about their chariot burial from Newbridge, near Edinburgh, which at first sight would seem an odd choice, so distant from the concentration of Arras culture sites. However, this chance find revealed an earlier chariot than the Yorkshire group, with closer parallels to Central Europe than the Paris Basin. His main point was that there was prolonged contact with the continent but not necessarily migration of large groups – the British finds are adaptations of their continental cousins. The extraordinary burial tradition in Yorkshire – so rare amongst the general dearth of Iron Age burials – was the local people's way of marking their identity.

Saturday was full of facts, and here is a selection! Dr Peter Halkon set the Iron Age scene describing sites old and new, and stressed the importance of the rise in sea level post-Ice Age. This made the East Yorkshire area wetter than it is now, with flooded valleys almost as far as Arras affecting the area for settlement and the connecting routes, with the barrow cemeteries at important points. He also described experimental reconstruction of the manufacturing of the iron used for swords and wheel tyres – each tyre would have taken 288 days labour, from digging the bog iron, collecting wood for charcoal etc: a measure of how prized these things must have been. We were then treated to a description by Dr John Dent, the excavator of Wetwang Slack from 1975, of his work at this classic site. It was very extensive and occupied over a long period, from Neolithic through to Roman. The chariot burials were rare among hundreds of burials, among which were some with timber in the graves – were they coffins, part of a chariot or wooden cist burials? Prof. Ian Armit from Bradford continued with the current research on this site, which includes work on DNA, on dating – it seems most of the burials took place within 3 or 4 generations - and also on the mysterious sealed canister (called the bean tin!).

found with the rich female chariot burial. Radiography has revealed that the sealed lid is closed with a bayonet fitting like a light bulb, and that it does contain a lump of material; watch this space to discover what it was for, when they manage to open the lid.

The first lecture after lunch was almost the most interesting: Paula Ware describing her very recent excavations at a site at Pocklington containing 2 Bronze Age and 83 square Iron Age barrows. New information on chronology and the types of barrows has come out of this and (most excitingly, surviving because of a verge), a new vehicle burial, complete with 2 ponies, yoke, 4 terret rings and 12-spoke wheels. It was a very full afternoon; there followed 5 erudite ladies who had made special study of particular aspects – diet, bones, terret rings, weapons, the position of women, even the shapeless jars - and then an enjoyable look at reconstructing an Iron Age chariot.

The final lecture was given by the RAI President, Prof Tim Champion from Southampton who pulled the focus away from east Yorkshire to compare results with the rest of the country. As he said ‘we in the south have chariots and burials, but not together!’ The particular richness of those burials over 200 years remains special in our archaeological record.

I was very disappointed that the rail strike prevented me from going on the field trip on the Sunday to Arras and to Hull Museum, where they have more finds and a reconstructed chariot burial, but the quality of the lectures and the amount that was packed into the Saturday made the trip more than worthwhile.

Correction

Bob Clarke

In committing a vagrant to gaol last Friday, Mr Lodwidge, J.P. was reported to have told him that he was one of those merry merry men who preferred begging to hard work. Mr Lodwidge wishes us to say that the phrase he made use of was “very many men” not “merry merry men”.

Hants and Berks Gazette, March 12, 1887

A Novelist's Journey into the English Civil War

A J Lyndon

I am an Australian novelist and, as a friend of your editor Nicola Turton, thought that members might find it interesting to know how this writer researches her work. My passion for the English Civil War led me to travel to the UK in 2016 to research the battles and sieges of Edgehill, Roundway Down and Basing House among others. I realised that I could not write my *War without an Enemy* trilogy without visiting a single battlefield. Reading history books, I progressed from brief histories of the Civil War to *All the King's Armies* by Stuart Reid and *The Chief Strength of The Army* by Alan Turton.

Internet research uncovered the Battlefields Trust website, along with the BCW project [British Civil Wars Project <http://bcw-project.org/>], which has a useful timeline of the wars.

Turning to Edgehill, I discovered every historian has a different view of this first major battle. I eventually pieced together why it happened in that particular spot, but there were so many unanswered questions.

Impeded by incessant rain, I drove to Edgehill, Kineton Church and Radway to see where the war really began in 1642. The Castle Hotel overlooking the battlefield was the closest I could get but the steep drop gave me excellent perspective. “From his position high on Edgehill, ...Rafe could see...the forces of the enemy streaming onto the fields below the ridge.” The exhibition at Radway Church, where I discovered many officers who died in the battle were buried, elicited the fascinating information that a local baker had his morning’s batch of bread stolen by cavalry. Feeding troops was a constant problem and most went hungry into battle on that October day.

I also wanted to find out more about gallant Lord Willoughby, captured as he fought to protect his dying father the Earl of Lindsey. I knew he was taken away to Warwick Castle so I imprisoned several Royalist characters in Guy’s Tower and then followed in their footsteps courtesy of a private tour. Frustratingly, not even the Castle archivist could tell me when the first Royalist officer prisoners arrived from Edgehill or how, so I sent mine by horseback (captured unhurt) and farm cart (wounded) overnight. They arrived

by the morning of 24 October. Too early, but the ‘prisoners of quality’ would surely not have been left at Edgehill long or they would have escaped...?

At Roundway Down, scene of a Royalist cavalry victory in July 1643 against apparently insuperable odds, the weather was beautiful. I pictured Waller’s cavalry, blinded by the setting sun, galloping over the escarpment to their deaths. I walked the battlefield edge nearest Devizes and gained an impression of the climb as my hero brought news that Hopton’s Foot would not be bringing the expected support to the Royalist Horse. The archives of the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes produced unique information that skeletons had been found in chalk pits. “Men and horses lay, mainly with broken necks, where they had fallen the previous afternoon. Nearby chalk pits were easily transformed into burial sites.” My hero, in charge of the mass burials, prays he will never have such a task again.

In Worcester I was fortunate to be walked around the Commandery and Fort Royal Hill by Richard Shaw of the Battle of Worcester Society. But that’s another story.

Back home in Melbourne, I hastily wrote mud, rain and fog into the manuscript and rewrote major sections. The First Siege of Basing House (November 1643) was comprehensively rewritten with the *Siege Diary* propped against the computer and *Google maps UK* satellite view of the ruins on maximum magnification while my cavalry captain hero led sorties from the House and the women hurled missiles from the roof. Thank you to historian Alan Turton for his sketch map of the petard attack and his ongoing assistance, after I dropped my handwritten notes in the mud at Basing House.

The Welsh Linnet, Book 1 in AJ Lyndon’s *War Without an Enemy* trilogy was published in 2017 by Tretower Publishing. Available from Amazon UK and Kindle. Book 2, *The Tawny Sash*, is now underway. Cheriton battlefield with its narrow lanes, and Naseby will both feature.

Fieldwork report

Mark Peryer

If you were involved in any way with the *Dig Basing!* project over the years, you may be interested to know that we are holding a final *Dig Basing!* report-back session on 16 March at the Lychpit Community Hall. We will be inviting all of the Basing residents who took part in the project by hosting test pits, and I will be giving a presentation that pulls together everything we have learnt from this project. The evening is open to all, which means *you*, and the proceedings will start at 7:30 pm. If you are interested in coming along, it would be useful to know for catering reasons.

Planning is moving ahead for our Chilton Candover excavations. We shall be working on the Worsley Hall site from 2-16 June, and the Stanchester site for two weeks in August. As I write, we have a geophysical survey arranged for the end of January so that we have more insight into the lower part of the Stanchester site, adjacent to where we were working last summer.

More details will be available in the next edition of the Newsletter, but in the meantime Ian Waite and I would like to hear from you if you would like to volunteer for either or both of these excavations. markperyer@gmail.com (07770 832397) waite52@live.co.uk (07963 372989)



Nicola Turton with a find



Finds at Mary Oliver's HQ

2018 DIARY DATES

BAHS

**BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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MEETINGS *Church Cottage, Basingstoke at 7.30pm*

8 March STONEHENGE – NEW DISCOVERIES:
Professor Mike Parker-Pearson, UCL

12 April THE FORGOTTEN SPY;
ESPIONAGE IN THE 20s and 30s:
Dr Nick Barratt, National Archives

10 May PREHISTORIC ROADS:
Mike Pengelly, BAHS

FRIENDS OF THE WILLIS MUSEUM

At 7.30 pm Willis Museum, Basingstoke

1-24 February INSPIRED BY TURNER AND THE SUN: An exhibition
by Basingstoke College of Technology and Winchester
School of Art students, with work by James Aldridge

15 February SOCIAL HISTORY of THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR
SOLDIER: Alan Turton

15 March THE BASINGSTOKE WORKSHOUSE: Barbara Large

19 April THE RISE & FALL OF THE HACKWOOD ESTATE:
Brian Spicer