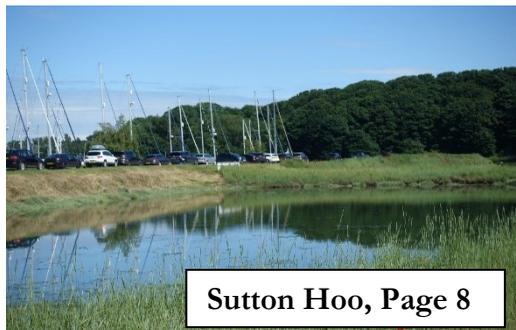
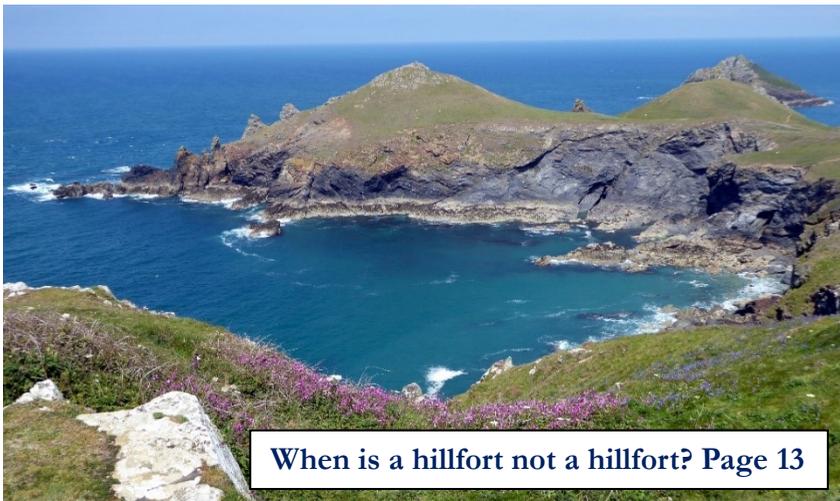


BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter Number 236

August 2021

BAHS



STANCHESTER OPENING EVENING

Friday 6th August at 5:30 pm



The fieldwork team recently carried out a resistivity survey at Stanchester with Audrey and David Graham of the Surrey Archaeological Society, in advance of the BAHS excavation which runs from the 30th July – 9th August. The results look promising.

If you would like to learn more about the excavation, there will be an open evening on Friday 6th August when the site team will be available to give you a guided tour and tell you about this year's discoveries.

The team will meet you in the car park for the Yard Cafe at Chilton Candover Manor Farm at 5:30 pm and then lead you to the site. Chilton Candover Manor Farm is on the right if you are driving down the B3046 towards Alresford. (Chilton Candover is the Candover after Preston Candover.)

If you would like to come along, please let Mark Peryer know (07770 832397 or markperyer@gmail.com) and provide him with a contact number in case circumstances change. (You are welcome to turn up on spec, but given that the site is some distance from the farm, we won't be able to wait for you if we don't know you're coming.)

BAHS AUTUMN 2021 PROGRAMME

Thursday 9th September 2021

Reconstructing the Sutton Hoo Ship

Dr Julian Whitewright, RCAHMW and Director of the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company.

In 1939, Edith Pretty employed local archaeologist, Basil Brown, to excavate a mysterious mound on her estate on the River Deben in Suffolk. What was revealed turned out to be a major find of the 20th century; a richly furnished Anglian ship burial dating from the early 7th century, quite likely that of King Raedwald who is documented to have died c.624. Dr Julian Whitewright is an experienced maritime archaeologist, recently of the University of Southampton but now working for the Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. He is also a director of the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company, formed in 2016 with the sole purpose of creating a permanent and authentic replica of the Anglo-Saxon ship. Recently popularised by the Netflix film 'The Dig', Julian will talk a little about the site itself, the history of the archaeology, the ship, the digital reconstruction of the ship and the physical reconstruction itself – and as he says, the last bit is ongoing and so keeps changing. Julian recently moved to Wales and so we will continue to use Zoom for this first talk of our 2021-22 season.

Thursday 14th October 2021

The Writing on the Wall - looking at the work and findings of the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project

Karen Wardley, Coordinator for the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project

With a fair wind behind us we intend to reconvene at Church Cottage in October and thereafter. The Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project is one of a number of county surveys, all run by volunteers, locating and recording graffiti within historic buildings. These surveys follow the pioneering work carried out in East Anglia by the Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey, whose Director, Matthew Champion, launched the Hampshire group with a lecture and training session in 2016. Although graffiti nowadays receive a bad press, in the past they seem to have been much more acceptable, and reflect

the beliefs and mind-sets of ordinary people whose voices are otherwise missing from the contemporary record. Postponed from last season, Karen will explain more, focussing in particular on medieval graffiti in Hampshire, where many of the early graffiti found are symbols used to ward off the Devil and evil spirits.

Thursday 11th November 2021

Stanford in the Vale: a hidden past revealed

David Ashby, Researcher, University of Winchester

Stanford in the Vale is a village and civil parish in the Vale of White Horse. Although once part of the historic county of Berkshire, since 1974 it has been administered as part of Oxfordshire. David has used a variety of archaeological techniques to research the past of this village and his project, the Stanford in the Vale Archaeological Research Project, has many similarities to the work BAHS carried out in Old Basing, particularly the use of test pit research. The project has revealed a good deal about the past occupation, settlement and economy of the area with evidence from the Mesolithic through to Modern. Of particular interest is the evidence that indicates the size of the medieval settlement was almost twice the size of the current village. David will enlighten us with some of the hypotheses that might explain the change in fortune of this historic village.

Thursday 9th December 2021

The Cup that Cheers: tea before Victoria

Joy Pibworth, Historian and guide

Nations have defined themselves by the tea trade and culturally by their tea ceremonies. Tea is that powerful. However, tea, the most quintessential of English drinks, is a relative latecomer to British shores. Although the custom of drinking tea dates back to the third millennium BC in China, it was not until the mid-17th century that tea was first introduced to England. Our final talk of 2021 will be presented by Joy Pibworth, volunteer guide at Reading Abbey. Joy has a special interest in the history of tea and will enlighten us about tea in Britain from the 1660s until the 1830s when things changed.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY AT BASINGSTOKE YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' CLUB

The Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) is the only UK-wide club where 8-16 year olds can participate in real archaeology and discover why it matters. YAC members take part in a range of hands-on activities, such as excavation, working with artefacts, visiting historical sites and undertaking experimental archaeology. Penny Martin and Nikki Read run Basingstoke YAC, and they are looking for volunteers to help with their hugely popular (and over-subscribed) sessions, held on third Saturday of each month at the Willis Museum, Basingstoke.

If you might be interested in helping out, please contact: basingstokeyac@hotmail.com for more information.

Lady Montague at Overton (and Basingstoke)

Sometime in early 1843, a respectably dressed woman applied for lodgings at the home of William and Elizabeth Tolfree in West Street, Overton. She said she wanted to stay for a few weeks and gave her name as Lady Montague or Lady Montague Mount.



West Street (now High Street), Overton

She gave William and Elizabeth some explanation as to why she needed to remain incognito. She stayed with them for about a month during which time they lent her various sums of money. Then she suddenly vanished leaving them to bewail their loss. They informed the police, including Superintendent Franklin at Basingstoke. But no trace of her ladyship could be found. According to the newspapers while she was in Overton she made quite an impression:

“During her stay at Overton, such was the peculiar fascination of her manners, she was actually led to the hymeneal altar by a luckless wight of a respectable family, who, for a brief space plumed himself not a little on the splendid connection he had formed.”

In January 1844, using the name Mary Ann Watts, she stayed at The Dog and Gun public house in Coventry run by Thomas and Sarah Hales. She told Mrs Hales that she didn't have any ready money to pay for her board and lodging but was due to receive £600 from the National Provincial Bank in Birmingham. On 25th January she was driven to Birmingham in the Hales' gig and managed to persuade the bank manager, a Mr Rotten, to give her a cheque for £600 made payable to Thomas Hales or bearer on the basis that she had £3,000 in a Bristol bank that was being transferred to his bank. Miss Watts told Mrs Hales that she needed some ready money and proposed to give her the cheque as security if she would lend her £60 and accept £40 for the accommodation. Mrs Hales swallowed the bait and gave her 55 sovereigns and a five pound note.

On 5th February Miss Watts asked to borrow the horse and gig to take her to Market Harborough as she had learnt that her aunt who lived there was not likely to live. At Market Harborough she asked the coachman to remain at the Swan Inn while she went to enquire after her aunt. She returned to the inn a couple of hours later with the news that her aunt was very ill and needed her to stay at Market Harborough for a few days. She told the coachman to return to Coventry and bring the gig to collect her on the 13th. When he got back to Coventry without her, Mr and Mrs Hales began to be concerned. The next day the Hales sent the coachman and a policeman back to Market Harborough to look for her, where they discovered that she had left on a south-bound coach the previous evening. The police's enquiries led them to believe that Miss Watts was the same person who had perpetrated a number of similar frauds elsewhere in the

country. So they placed a wanted notice in the Police Gazette for Miss Watts, otherwise known as Lady Montague or Miss Prince.

Some weeks later, as Lady Montague, she took lodgings with a Mrs Pendry near Uxbridge whom she induced to supply her with board, clothing and money. She told Mrs Pendry that she would be able to repay her as she was due to receive £500 at the Basingstoke and Odiham Bank. After a few weeks she asked Mrs Pendry to hire a horse and chaise and to accompany her to Basingstoke to receive the money. A few days before their visit to Basingstoke, Lady Montague reappeared in Overton and gave Mrs Tolfree a small sum, promising to call again in a few days and pay the rest of the money she owed. The Tolfrees told Superintendent Franklin that Lady Montague had visited them and he realised the description they gave matched that of the woman who was advertised in the Police Gazette.

On 30th March Lady Montague and Mrs Pendry travelled to Basingstoke. Her ladyship left Mrs Pendry in the chaise outside the bank in Winchester Street. When she emerged from the bank she told Mrs Pendry that she had got an order to receive the money at Simonds' Bank in Reading. She tried to persuade Mrs Pendry to remain in Basingstoke while she went to Reading to collect the money, but by now Mrs Pendry was getting suspicious and insisted on going with her.

Later that day, Superintendent Franklin got word that two well dressed women, one answering Lady Montague's description, had called at the bank and were seen heading towards Reading. He went off in pursuit and found them at the Sun at Swallowfield where they had put up for the night. He returned to Basingstoke with Lady Montague and kept her in the cell at New Street Police Station pending the arrival of the Police Superintendent from Coventry, who at once recognised her as the woman who had defrauded Mrs Hales.

On 10th April 1844 at the Coventry Quarter Sessions Mary Ann Montague, aged 35, was found guilty of larceny and fraud and was sentenced to be transported for seven years. She was transferred from Coventry Gaol to Millbank Penitentiary to await transportation. On 3rd September 1844 she set sail with 191 other female convicts in the prison ship Tasmania, and landed at Hobart, Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) on 20th December. She was due to be released on 10th April 1851 but her term of transportation was extended for misrepresenting her abilities at the time of

hiring and for regularly absconding. She did not receive her certificate of freedom until April 1852. I don't know what happened to her after that.

I had assumed that the story of her marrying a "luckless wight" was a piece of journalistic fiction as I could find no trace of a female called Montague or Mount getting married at Overton in 1843. However, the very full account of her trial in a Coventry paper said that she was a married woman, her husband's name was Beale, and that she was married on 2nd February 1843. I then found that a Richard Beale had married Mary Ann Montague Mont in the Winchester registration district in the first quarter of 1843. He was the son of a tanner living in West Street, Overton and would have been aged 24 when he married. The luckless wight returned to Overton where he died in 1845, not long after his 27th birthday.

Bob Clarke

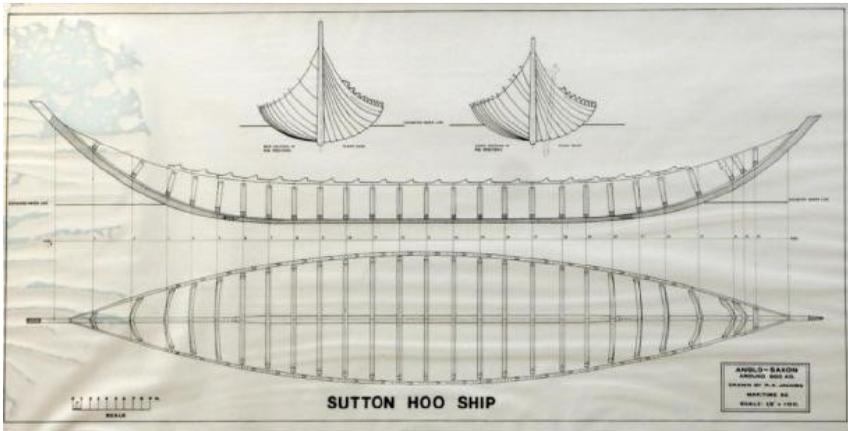
Recreating Raedwald's Ship A visit to Sutton Hoo Ship's Company

David Whiter

Living for forty-five years in East Anglia with an interest in archaeology has given me a strong nudge towards the years of Late Roman and Early Saxon Britain. The scarcity of historical sources presents unprecedented opportunity for archaeologists, and what a breadth of change occurs between 300 and 650! In eastern Britain we see the decline of urban living, the collapse of luxury industries such as glass, fine metalwork and pottery, stone and mortar building techniques, the end of villa life, collapse of the money economy, the replacement of Brythonic and Latin by the new English language, Christianity supplanted by paganism, and changing placenames. How are we to explain and track such change?

Early burial sites like Spong Hill and Edix Hill Cambridge indicate people's lives were arduous and short, with little social differentiation and luxury items mostly limited to alloy brooches, glass beads, spears and

shields. The Sutton Hoo ship burial of about 625 shows a very different picture. This is the burial of a man of elevated social standing and wealth, amid his finery, a warrior of renown with wide connections – probably Raedwald. Ship burials are known nearby at Aldeburgh, dated around 550, and at Uppsala on the Continent indicating connections with the Anglo-Saxon homelands.



Basil Brown's 1939 excavation revealed a vessel nearly 100 feet in length, the layout of planks fixed with metal roves, and the ribs. Some details remain unclear - the prow and stern which remained exposed at burial, a hut inserted to form the burial chamber and the decking and rowing positions. The uneven settlement of the soil fill in the ship and the void in which it was placed created distortions.

Nevertheless, Brown's records are sufficient basis to attempt a reconstruction of the ship itself by The Sutton Hoo Ship's Company in Woodbridge, within sight of Sutton Hoo (Figure 1). This is experimental archaeology on the grand scale. Rowers, archaeologists, naval architects, shipwrights and specialists are all contributing to a full research project. A 'best fit' understanding has allowed computer drawings to be produced. Small models have been built to ascertain detail at stem and stern (Figure 2), and a midships section (Figure 3).



Figure 1: The Longshed

The recreation intends to use traditional methods and tools in part, with modern equipment to eliminate pure donkey work elements. For example chainsaws can rough out the larger members from tree baulks which are then refined by handwork using adze or axe.



Left, Figure 2: A small scale model used to ascertain detail.



Right, Figure 3: The Midships Section. The 'wave' shapes are the oar positions.



Producing one plank with wedges from a tree trunk is in itself a major task. Detailed drawings have been produced, trees have been procured and the keel produced. (Figure 4, left: baulks of timber. In the background rough shaping has begun.)

The keel is some 80 feet long, an inverted T shape. The keel is about to be placed and then the prow will be scarf jointed to it in two pieces about 18 cm square. (Figure 5, below: one of the two sections making up the prow.)

The stern post will follow and then the ribs and planking. The ribs are fixed to

the keel and the planks to the ribs with trenails, wooden pegs about 30 cm long set in holes augured through plank and rib (Figure 6, next page). The excess length of trenail is cut off flush with the plank and secured with a wooden wedge driven into the exposed end. Planks are lapped and cleated with bolts which are secured into metal roves to form something like a rivet (Figure 6).

The builders are opting for copper bolts in place of the original iron components which would be attacked by the acidity of the oak. Planks will be caulked but whether with a traditional mix of wool and animal fat or a modern compound I am unsure. Bending the planks will be done using shapers like stools.

The gunwales are topped with 20 tholes (oar rests) on each side. The helmsman's place was at the stern, but it is uncertain where the ship's commander stood to control the oarsmen and manoeuvre the ship.





Figure 6: Fixing the ribs and planking. On the left are two planks lapped together with the copper rivets, in the centre a section of a trenail joining plank to rib, and on the right in the box, two finished trenails on the rib and a rivet on the planks.

Such a ship would represent a very substantial investment for a community whether intended for trading, raiding, cargo or diplomacy. The obvious modern parallel is the Britannia replacement at £200 million.

Construction is taking place on Woodbridge waterfront opposite Sutton Hoo, and Launch Date is projected as 2023. I didn't ask if an exact date had been set but a very high tide will be needed.

There is a wealth of detail about the project at: saxonship.org and from Sutton Hoo Ship's Company with updates, open day dates, and above all, opportunities to donate. I hope you will enjoy all of that!



*Just across the River Deben,
Sutton Hoo awaits....*

Editor's note: Dr Julian Whitewright, RCAHMW and Director of the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company, will be giving a Zoom talk to BAHS on Thursday 9 September 2021, entitled "Reconstructing the Sutton Hoo Ship" (see Autumn Programme, page 3).

WHEN IS A HILLFORT NOT A HILLFORT?

In the medieval period, the more fanciful bards attributed the construction of Britain's hillforts to giants. According to legend, Maes Knoll hillfort near Clifton in Somerset was built by Goram – the same giant who created Wandsdyke, presumably by dragging his pickaxe along behind him. Later, it was believed the Romans were responsible for our hillforts: hence Ceasar's Camp, a ten hectare, multivallate hillfort near Aldershot.

Julius Ceasar was not the only iconic military figure credited with their construction. In 1542 the antiquarian John Leland wrote of Cadbury Castle in Somerset: 'At South-Cadbyri standeth Camallate, sometime a famous town or castle. The people can tell nothing there but that they have heard [King] Arthur much resorted to Camalat.'

The trend for linking hillforts to military leaders continued well into the nineteenth century. Hence Alfred's Castle, near Ashbury in Oxfordshire. Without any corroborating evidence, Victorian antiquarians claimed King Alfred the Great gathered his army there before the Battle of Ashdown in 871AD.

Fast forward to the present, and we now know that whilst some hillforts have their origins in the causewayed enclosures of the Neolithic, the majority were constructed in the Iron Age. But fathoming *why* they were built is more complex, not least because they come in a dizzying array of shapes and sizes, locations and elevations. For a start, not all hillforts sit atop hills. Take low-lying Warham Camp, near Wells-next-the-sea in Norfolk; or Bulls Down Camp, a multivallate four-hectare plateau-fort near Bramley Green in Hampshire.

And whilst some appear to have been intensively occupied all year round, others seem to have been used on a temporary basis for large scale gatherings – perhaps something akin to an Iron Age Glastonbury Festival, with religion, politics, trade and marriage alliances thrown into the mix.

So, despite the preponderance of 'camps' and 'castles', can we now confidently assume that not all hillforts were forts? Encompassing a whopping seventeen hectares, Maiden Castle's massive multivallate defences and elevated position certainly suggest 'defence'. Indeed, Sir Mortimer Wheeler asserted that its inhabitants had valiantly defended their home against a Roman artillery barrage, and this was the accepted narrative

for many years. However, more recent studies have shed doubt on this. The famous 'Roman ballista bolt' found embedded in a skeleton's spine is in fact a simple projectile weapon such as a spear or javelin, possibly of native manufacture.

Moreover, the preponderance of weaponry in the archaeological record, alongside population density particularly in the agricultural south, suggests that Iron Age tribal groups were likely to have been at war with each other regardless of the threat from Rome.

So, whilst the impressive ramparts of Maiden Castle and Danebury in Hampshire (to name but two) are probably essentially defensive, they may also have been a means of displaying wealth, status and power.

The UK's coastal promontory forts may also have partially fulfilled this role, with their spectacular locations against a backdrop of the pounding Atlantic Ocean. They are particularly prolific in Cornwall, with Tintagel being a rare example of continuity of settlement from the Iron Age through to the Roman period and beyond.

These strongholds can perhaps be seen as Iron Age prime real estate - the equivalent of today's gated, multi-million-pound seaside home.



*Arrow points towards the stone ramparts of Maen Castle, Cornwall.
Land's End is in the background.*



The entrance to Maen Castle promontory fort

Pottery found at Maen Castle near Land's End suggests a construction date of early Iron Age, around 500BC (although local legends credit Maen the Giant). The defences include a surviving stone rampart, a ditch and a counterscarp bank built across the headland, with almost sheer cliffs on two sides and a steep slope on the third.

Today, 'The Rumps' near Padstow in Cornwall is a beautiful, peaceful spot where you can watch seals in the waves far below, and puffins diving off The Moules, a tiny island just beyond the headland. The promontory fort survives as an irregularly-shaped enclosure defined by three banks and partially rock cut ditches across the neck of the headland (see photo, right).



I wonder if the ruler of Pentire Fort (as it is also known) chose to host gatherings of rival leaders there, not only to discuss trade etc, but also to make a statement by show-casing its impressive defences and setting.

More than two thousand years later, the UK chose to host the G7 summit in Carbis Bay, against a stunning backdrop of blue sea and sky.

It seems Cornwall is still a place to be proud of!

Penny Ingham

The Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland is an online database, compiled by researchers from the University of Edinburgh, the University of Oxford and the University College of Cork, assisted by hundreds of volunteers described as citizen scientists. The database captures the locations and key details of over 4,000 hillforts in Britain and Ireland and can be accessed at:

[Atlas of Hillforts \(ox.ac.uk\)](http://Atlas of Hillforts (ox.ac.uk))

April 5th, 1916

LSWR Inspector White apprehends a ticketless arrival

by Colin Williams (as recounted by Liz Shields)

From the Hants & Berks Gazette, April 8th, 1916:

BABY ABANDONED ON A TRAIN

Last Wednesday, on the arrival of the 4.20pm train from Portsmouth, due here at 6.38pm Inspector White of the London and South Western Railway, found in the lavatory of a first-class compartment, a female infant apparently about two months old.

Enquiries were made which led to the conclusion that the baby had been abandoned. The little creature was therefore removed to the Union House, and meanwhile the police have been busy in circulating information with a view to the discovery of the person who so heartlessly abandoned it.

The baby is well developed, has fair hair and blue eyes. She was rather poorly dressed to belong to that station of life which usually travels first class. Her vestments included a white calico night gown, two flannelette back wraps, a grey woollen vest, a flannel binder and a white knitted shawl. Of two white cotton napkins one was marked "B.T.". By her side was a boat shaped feeding bottle.

105 years later

In June 2021 Liz Shields, today of Donegal, was researching her family history. Her mother, Ruth, was known to the family to have been the baby in the newspaper story and so, seeking more information, Liz, logically, made enquiries with local railway enthusiasts, the Basingstoke & District Railway Society. A resulting search in the archives of the Hampshire &



Berkshire Gazette, produced the newspaper report above.

Note the comment about the disparity between the quality of the baby's clothing and class of carriage!

The baby's clothes: possibly, and romantically, these could be those worn on her arrival in Basingstoke, although more prosaically, their sizing suggests a little later. (Photo courtesy of Liz Shields.)

From the station the baby was taken to the infirmary at the Workhouse. There she was named 'Elsie Weston' (reason not known) and was cared for until early 1917 when her life would take a dramatic turn. The matron responded to an advertisement placed in a Quaker newspaper by a Birmingham couple, Mr & Mrs Harry Jones, seeking to adopt; discussion followed and a medical examination was arranged.

Dr Alexander M Moore reported on 24 January 1917:

"This infant is free from any skin disease, and is robust, she certainly appears very intelligent. From personal observation I have no reason to suspect tuberculosis, etc." (Liz has the original hand-written letter.)

And so Elsie Weston moved on to a secure family home where she was to become 'Ruth Elizabeth'.



*Baby Ruth with new mother Elizabeth (who by coincidence, was always known as Elsie).
(Photo courtesy of Liz Shields.)*

And after

Ruth's daughter, Liz, has described her mother's life as one of fulfilment and service. Ruth was a professional musician, both teaching and playing. She married Robert

Sutcliffe and they had two children.

The coming of the war was to bring separation. In 1939 Bob joined the Royal Artillery. He was posted to Singapore as a 2nd lieutenant, and with the loss of Malaysia he suffered imprisonment working on the Burma railway. At home Ruth added to her professional and family commitments by serving as an ARP Warden and ambulance driver. (How poignant that her desperate birth mother was never to know of her daughter's achievements.)

Sadly, Bob died in 1962; and later Ruth moved with daughter Liz and family to Ireland where she died in 1994.

Liz is continuing with her research: now knowing from the Hampshire and Berkshire Gazette report that the train originated in Portsmouth, she has a possible further line of enquiry to be explored. As Liz kindly commented: 'We owe a debt of gratitude to Basingstoke, Inspector White and the infirmary.'

The ‘Non’ Election of 1876

Roger Ottewill

This is the second of four articles about historic municipal elections in Basingstoke. The first, about the election upset of 1890, was published in the May 2021 Newsletter.

Basingstoke’s annual municipal election of 1876 was of particular note because for the first and only time it was declared ‘null and void’ and had to be re-run. Why this should have happened and what were the consequences are the principal questions informing this short article.

As usual, there were four seats to be filled and on this occasion there were six candidates. Three were sitting councillors – John Curtis of Chineham and a councillor since 1873; Thomas Moore of Viabes Farm and a councillor since 1870; and Henry Powell, a musician who had successfully contested a by-election in November 1874. The other sitting councillor, John Lodwidge, an ironmonger who was first elected in 1873, withdrew ‘in consequence of some informality in ... [his] nomination’.¹ What this meant in practice is that ‘the friends of Mr Lodwidge were either indifferent to his claims, or too lukewarm in their support, that they failed to nominate him before the hour appointed (5 o’clock) for receiving nominations had expired ... therefore he was disqualified as a candidate.’² The two challengers were George Painter, a farmer, and John Burgess Soper. Painter, along with the three sitting councillors, all ‘received the support of the Ratepayers’ Protection Association’, a significant force on the municipal election scene at this time.

On this occasion, the outsider was John Soper. By occupation he was a retail and wholesale ironmonger and he had been a councillor from February 1866 to 1870, when he was defeated, finishing at the bottom of the poll. He was also a controversial character.³ Consequently, it was unsurprising perhaps that there was an objection to his nomination, ‘his

¹ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 28 October 1876.

² *Hampshire Chronicle*, 28 October 1876.

³ For more information about Soper’s life and the controversies in which he was involved, see Debbie Reavell’s account, available at https://www.bas-herit-soc.org/A_short_History_of_South_View.pdf (accessed, 23 April 2021).

second, Mr J. Owen having described the property on which he claimed his right to a vote differently to the description on the burgess roll, where he appear[ed] as “J. Owen, Winton-street.” However, he had signed the nomination paper as “J. Owen, High-street.”⁴ Since the Mayor, as the Returning Officer, held the objection to be valid, there were now just four candidates for the four seats and consequently no contest. However, this decision was to be challenged by Soper in the courts. It was the *Reading Mercury*'s understanding that if the Court ‘set the election aside ... there would not be a new election, but that the old members would be re-seated for another term of three years, which would displace Mr. Painter and reinstate Mr. Lodwidge’.⁵ As will be seen, however, this proved to be an inaccurate assessment of the situation.

Between the Mayor's decision and the court hearing in the following April there were a number of changes to the composition of the borough council. In November a vacancy arose on the aldermanic bench, ‘occasioned by Mr Alderman Pistell having left the town.’⁶ He was replaced by the Mayor, Richard Knight who received nine votes. John Follett, a coachmaker and nominee of the Ratepayers' Protection Association, who was to have stood at the annual election in 1875, was the only candidate to replace him.

In March 1877 Alderman Charles Webb died, and in the election to choose his successor Councillor Moore received nine votes and John Dew two votes. At the same time Councillor Tyrrell died. Thus there were two vacancies to be filled. Initially, three candidates came forward, namely James Moody, who had been a councillor from December 1868 to 1872, but had not been nominated for re-election; Jas. H. Moore, late borough surveyor, and W.H. Blatch, of the well-known firm of May and Co., brewers.⁷ However, no evidence of a contest has been found and it would seem that James Moody filled the vacancy resulting from the death of Cllr Tyrrell, with it being decided that the replacement for Thomas Moore should be determined at the re-run election.

⁴ *Hampshire Chronicle*, 28 October 1876.

⁵ *Reading Mercury*, 4 November 1876.

⁶ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 18 November 1876.

⁷ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 10 March 1877

As indicated above, John Soper challenged the decision of the Mayor, which had resulted in him not being able to stand at the previous November election. The ensuing court case, *Soper v the Mayor of Basingstoke and Others* was heard before the Common Pleas Division of the Queen’s Bench on 23 April 1877. In giving his judgment: ‘Mr Justice Denman said he was very clearly of [the] opinion that the address given on the nomination paper was the true one, and there was nothing requiring that it should be identical with the Burgess Roll.’⁸ Thus, Soper won the day and with the election being ‘quashed’ those ‘elected’ in November 1876 were ‘unseated’.

The re-run contest was held on 11 May 1877, when there were five candidates. Three of these were John Curtis and Henry Powell, who had been ‘re-elected’, and George Painter, ‘elected’ for the first time, in November 1876. The other two were John Soper and William Blatch. According to the *Hampshire Advertiser* and the *Berkshire Chronicle*: ‘The merits or demerits of the candidates ... [were] freely discussed, but Mr. Soper ... [was] the only one whose cause ... [had] been taken up in print.’⁹ The outcome of the contest is shown in the table below.

Name	Votes	Outcome
John Burgess Soper	296	Elected
William H. Blatch	144	Elected
George Painter	123	Elected
John C.P. Curtis	114	Elected
Henry Powell	100	Not elected

In view of the circumstances in which the contest was held, it is surprising that it did not generate greater interest. Of the 949 eligible to vote, only 396 or 41.7 percent did so¹⁰ and the election was characterised by ‘unusual quietness’. It was also reported that ‘the result was a surprise to many’.¹¹

⁸ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 28 April 1877.

⁹ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 12 May 1877. See also *Berkshire Chronicle*, 12 May 1877.

¹⁰ *Hampshire Telegraph*, 16 May 1877.

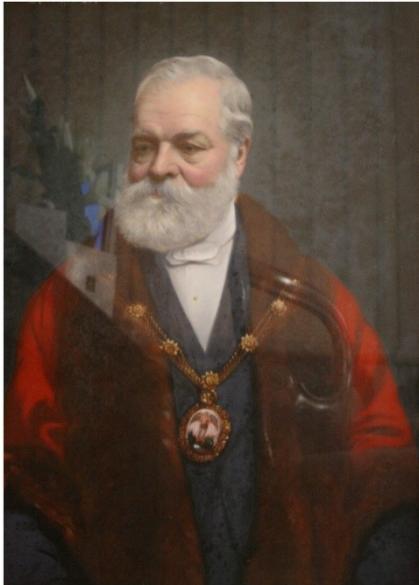
¹¹ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 19 May 1877.

However, by topping the poll, and by a substantial margin, it would seem that John Soper's actions in challenging the Mayor's decision in court had undoubtedly been vindicated.

Although John Soper won the court case and came top in the subsequent poll he was still, at this stage, a 'maverick' as far as Basingstoke's municipal elite was concerned. Gradually, however, over the next few years attitudes mellowed and he 'came in from the cold'. Although defeated in 1879 he regained his seat in 1880. In 1881 he was appointed a magistrate and he gained sympathy when, as a result of being a supporter of the Salvation Army, the mob 'broke every sheet of plate glass in the front of [his] house', Hillside, during the riots that followed the annual election of that year.¹² Retiring from the council in 1883, he successfully stood again in 1887 and was appointed Mayor for the municipal year 1888/9 (see Fig 1). Elected an

alderman in 1889 he died in post in March 1895, aged 75.

In his obituary, published in the *Hants and Berks Gazette*, he was described as 'our highly esteemed townsman.' Later, mention was made of the fact that 'in the front of a determined opposition [he] carried all his undertakings to a successful issue.'¹³ The election petition of 1876/7 was just one example of him doing so.



JOHN BURGESS SOPER.
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.
MAYOR 1888-1889.
ALDERMAN 1880 TO 1883.
PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR.
BY ORDER AND APPOINTMENT OF
HIS MAJESTY THE KING.
APRIL, 1888.

Fig 1: John Burgess Soper in his mayoral robes (reproduced courtesy of Debbie Reavell)

¹² *Reading Mercury*, 5 November 1881.

¹³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 30 March 1895.

Basingstoke YAC Update

As we wrap up our latest season, we have been able to draw upon our waiting list to welcome new members to our YAC, as a couple of our current members need to concentrate on their studies in their exam years. We would also like to wish one of our young lads well and hope he has a speedy recovery.

In April, our YACsters presented some brilliant research, as they explored their local burial grounds and used the information from the March monument recording session to learn about their local history. The children made some very insightful observations about the styles of monuments, and the popularity and possible links of family names, as well as the iconography used over the years. It was interesting to hear their reports and two sisters even recorded their information in the form of a news report. It was Fab!



‘Worst jobs in Tudor history’ was the theme for May. The YACsters were delighted to find out about jobs such as Pinders and Tenders to the Royal Roast – however nothing could quite compete with the job of the Gong Farmer and Privy to the Royal Stool. In true YAC tradition, we had to get hands-on and over Zoom we managed to make some beautiful dress pins and also some rather impressive pool!

The children then discovered how to find out about diet, lifestyle and disease from the contents of a cesspit.

Finally in June we replaced our Mary Rose visit, with a ‘This is Me!’

session, and asked the YACsters to present, in the form of a photo, approximately six key items that would represent them, either as grave goods or by way of a memorial. Basically, we were trying to find out if we

could tell what sort of person had left these items ‘behind’, and whether or not the same conclusions could be drawn once all the organic items had rotted away. The children, once again, participated brilliantly and offered lots of ideas and suggestions about each other’s photos. Great work everyone!

Our fifth season will now kick off with the long-awaited Historic Dockyards trip, so thank you once again to NEHHAS for their kind donation of funds. The rest of the year is still in the planning stages. We do, however, hope to offer the children a chance for a one day dig at Chilton Candover, for which they are all very excited.

We have sadly lost quite a few volunteers for various reasons, so if you are at a loose end on the third Saturday of the month and like working with children, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you as always to Carla and Paul, for helping us to keep going through the Zoom meetings. Hopefully we will be face to face from September. Again, a massive thanks to Paul for keeping our finances ship shape - you are amazing. And obviously – thanks to the fab parents and YACsters who make it so worthwhile...roll on another season!

Nikki Read and Penny Martin

Postscript to the report on ‘The First Brexit’

There are a couple of questions that were not covered in the report in the last Newsletter on the Association for Roman Archaeology’s presentation ‘Carausius, Allectus and the First Brexit’ by Sam Moorhead, which I will try, very cautiously, to answer.

Firstly, why was there a shortage of gold in Britain in the third century?

We know that from the time of Augustus there was a fixed rate of exchange between the gold *aureus* and silver *denarius* coins. We also know that Rome acquired gold and silver from annexed territory and that when the policy of expansion ceased, as it did in the early first century, the ‘money supply’ available to an over-extended state became more or less frozen. The

empire, like the republic, never borrowed – there was no Roman equivalent to the National Debt. Over time emperors debased the silver *denarius*, sometimes quite sharply, to meet financial obligations not least of which was to a professional army that was paid in *sesterces* (face value: one quarter of a *denarius*).

But the imperial administration retained the Augustan exchange rate and pretended that the *denarius* had not been devalued. No-one was convinced. Across the empire under-valued gold coinage, which retained almost all its fineness, disappeared from circulation: merchants had soon found that foreign suppliers demanded it rather than the *denarius* and private individuals hoarded or converted it.



*Porchester Castle lies at the north end of Portsmouth harbour.
It was built in the late third century AD, possibly by Carausius.*

As for the ‘barbarians’, they may not have known much about Virgil but they were not so ignorant that they would accept a subsidy in ‘silver’ coinage that came to contain 97.5% base metal. The archaeological evidence indicates that they preferred payment in gold bullion. Consequently, the government seized as much of that metal as it could whenever the opportunity arose.

It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the effects of continuous debasement of the *denarius* and heavy taxation during the third century

brought about the decision of Carausius and Allectus, with the support of the provincial elite of Britain and the Channel region of Gaul, to throw off central government. The establishment of an independent monetary system would then have allowed estate-owners to obtain payment for supplies to the breakaway authority in gold and pay an acceptable level of taxation. Perhaps this explains the significance of quotations from Virgil, who lived during the reign of Augustus, on the coins: 'RSR' - identified as the first letters of *redeunt saturnia regnia* (the Golden Age returns) and *expectate veni* (welcome long awaited one).

The circulation of a stable *denarius*, to which the pay of the army and navy was linked, would have been just as important to ensure loyalty even after Carausius' murder, and the *denarii* of Carausius were of notably high quality.

So why then was Carausius murdered? Among historians there is not much doubt of a palace conspiracy but his replacement with Allectus, his 'finance minister' and not another soldier, does suggest a dispute about money and taxation and not simply the removal of a failed military leader. Allectus minted gold coins but no *denarii* although a small coin called a *quinarius*, with an exchange value of half a *denarius*, was issued and is believed to be a possible replacement for the base metal 'radiates' of the Central Empire.

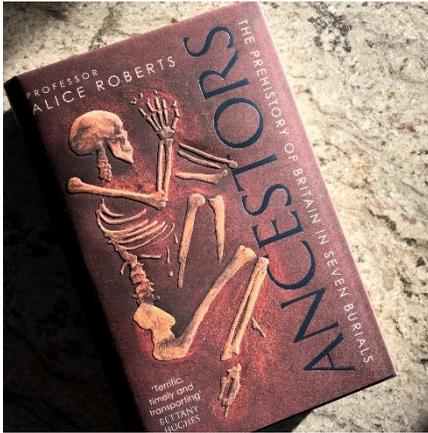
Peter Stone

BOOK REVIEWS

ANCESTORS, The Prehistory of Britain in Seven Burials

By Professor Alice Roberts, published by Simon & Schuster, hb£20

Don't be deceived by Alice Robert's choice of burials. Some may seem very familiar to you and you may think you have read and seen all there is on the subjects. For instance, I would consider the Red Lady of Paviland, Cheddar Man and the Amesbury Archer to be the most famous of the seven, and the most well-studied in the press and in documentaries. Alice Roberts has chosen these burials in particular to help tell a story of British prehistory, from the Palaeolithic to the Iron Age.

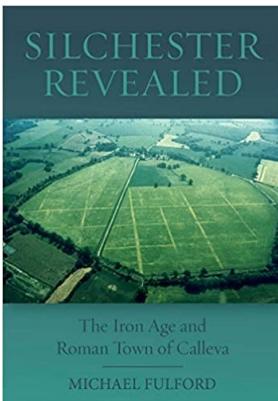


She delves into the history of each one to discover how new archaeological scientific techniques and the new science of genomics are revolutionising our perception and understanding of our deep past.

The other burials in the book are the Neanderthals of Pontnewydd, the Gough's Cave Skull Cup, the Tomb of the Otters and the Pocklington Charioteer.

Alice Robert's most recent book, out now in hardback and eBook is, in my opinion, a wonderful read. Dan Snow summed it up: 'She writes as a scholar with the intensity and flair of a novelist'.

Wendy Williams



As many of you will know, Professor Mike Fulford CBE has led Reading University's excavations at Silchester for many years.

His latest book, **Silchester Revealed** explores the site's transformation from a Late Iron Age oppidum into a planned Roman town.

The book includes themes which demonstrate change over time, notably the built and natural environments of the town, the diet, dress, health, leisure activities, living conditions, occupations and ritual behaviour of the inhabitants, and the role of the town as communications centre,

economic hub and administrative centre of the Atrebates.

Silchester Revealed is published by Oxbow Books and is available now, paperback price £15.



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AUGUST – DECEMBER 2021 DIARY DATES

- 30th July -** **Fieldwork at Stanchester**
9th August
- Friday 6th Aug** **Open Evening at Stanchester (5.30pm)**
- Thursday** **Reconstructing the Sutton Hoo Ship**
9th September *Dr Julian Whitewright,*
 RCAHMW and Director of the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company.
(Via Zoom, 7.30pm)
- Thursday** **The Writing on the Wall - looking at the work and**
14th October **findings of the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project**
Karen Wardley, Coordinator, Hampshire Medieval Graffiti
Project
(Church Cottage, 7.30pm)
- Thursday** **Stanford in the Vale: a hidden past revealed**
11th November *David Ashby, Researcher, University of Winchester*
(Church Cottage, 7.30pm)
- Thursday** **The Cup that Cheers: tea before Victoria**
9th December *Joy Pibworth, Historian and guide*
(Church Cottage, 7.30pm)