



# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

Number 25

March 1975

### CONTENTS :

Excavation at Pamber Priory.  
Industrial Archaeology in Hampshire.  
Alteration to programme, 24th April.

Ale-Beer.  
Vindolanda Appeal

### CALENDAR

Saturday 22nd March/  
Sunday 23rd March

Excavation at Pamber Priory, directed  
by Mike Hughes. 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Wednesday 26th March

Basingstoke Field Society lecture by  
S.R. Davey on the 'Basingstoke Canal',  
at Trinity Church, Sarum Hill, Basingstoke,  
at 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 27th March

Lecture by Dr. Edwin Course (Extra-Mural  
Department, University of Southampton)  
on 'Industrial Archaeology in Hampshire',  
Chute House, 7.30 p.m.

Friday 28th March/  
Wednesday 2nd April

Excavation at Pamber Priory continued.  
9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

## EXCAVATION AT PAMBER PRIORY

As mentioned in Newsletter 24, a rescue operation has become necessary because of impending drainage water-pipe laying on and around the site of Pamber Priory: also known as Monk Sherborne Priory (Grid Reference SU 609582 - behind the College Arms off the Basingstoke-Aldermaston road). Digging will take place next weekend Saturday/Sunday 22nd/23rd March and again over Easter beginning on Good Friday 28th March through till the following Wednesday, 2nd April. This excavation is not a Society dig, but is being directed by Mike Hughes (Archaeological Survey Officer, Hampshire Archaeological Committee) who has asked us to assist him and is relying on us to provide volunteers.

No authentic plan of the site exists but it is believed to have been the largest priory in Hampshire. The one remaining part, the original Crossing, is still used as a church today. The areas to be excavated will be to the north and south of the present church when it is expected to uncover the remains of the cloister and some of the monks' living quarters. It is expected that there will be walls (how often have we longed for walls on our prehistoric sites?), possibly floor tiles and medieval pottery.

Mike Hughes is providing the heavy tools and is hopeful of a supply of coffee and tea to volunteers. Members should provide themselves with the usual hand tools, pointing trowels, hand shovel, plastic bucket and something to kneel on. Warm clothing should not be forgotten! Digging will start at 9.30 a.m. and, with breaks for lunch etc., will continue till 5.30 p.m. each day.

We should make every effort to support this dig, particularly as it is on 'our patch' and because it will enable members to gain wider experience on a different period site. Let us hope we can provide Mike Hughes with a keen and willing band of diggers.

## INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN HAMPSHIRE

The March lecture is to be given by Dr. Edwin Course of the Extra-Mural Department, University of Southampton, a well-known authority on industrial archaeology, particularly in this County. This is our annual joint meeting between ourselves and the Industrial Archaeology Group. Members may be interested to visit Hamick's bookshop who are again mounting a small book display to coincide with our meeting which is on Thursday 27th March at Chute House, at 7.30 p.m. as usual.

## PROGRAMME ALTERATION

Unfortunately Mr. David Graham, booked to speak to the Society about his exciting excavation of the Roman settlement at Neatham on April 24th has had to cancel the engagement because of an important business commitment. Instead, we have happily arranged for Mr. Peter Fasham (M3 Archaeological Rescue Committee) to talk about a site (or sites) excavated along the route of the next stage of the M3 Motorway. Further details will be given in our next Newsletter.

## ALE - BEER

At the Christmas get-together, "Links with the Past" I touched on the subject of ale and beer.

I have since had a talk with one of our members who assures me that he has very little knowledge of the refreshing liquids, but had always thought them to be one and the same. I hope the following will help to explain the difference.

Our national beverage since earliest times, certainly long before the Roman occupation, was called ale and it differed from beer in that it did not contain hops. When hops were incorporated into the brewing process, the new drink was known as beer and the two were distinctly different products. Beer was first introduced to England by Flemish merchants around 1470. At first it did not find much favour here and many orders were made over the country against the drink with the "pernicious weed" hop in it. The great Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare was appointed a Borough Ale-Taster in 1556.

So we see that from 1470 - 1556 beer had gained very little ground. Not long after 1560 the imports of beer increased to a large and thriving trade and it would seem at this point that the attitude was, "if they can export it so can we". From around 1600 hops began to be grown here on more than just a small scale. It is almost certainly true to say that beer became an essential part of the national diet, containing what was for many the most readily available source of Vitamin B.

Most of the beer brewed for sale in 1600 was produced by brewing victuallers. The victuallers brewed and sold on the same premises. It was a long time before more than a handful of common brewers appeared. Around 1680-1700 the great beer boom started, slowly at first, but like a wave it spread all over the country.

Here I feel we must bring our own local Brewery into the story. The Brewery, as most of us can recall, was built in 1750, but I feel sure the Mays must have had ample brewing experience before this. The common brewer as he was called, sold his brew near and far, just as we have come to recognise the trade as it is today. A Mays house sold good beer, this I am assured by a Mr. Randall who worked at the Brewery in its later years. He recalls being given a hot pint of Mays beer by his father, who also worked at the Brewery. This would cure coughs, colds, infections and yes, constipation. Truly a wonderful brew. He also recalls that fuel was at times a problem to obtain in great quantity. Wood was the best thing to use for boiling the brewing water, but coal was mostly used. If a brew was wood boiled it was very readily sampled by all who could get a drop. It just had that something different about it.

A note from Courage's of Alton, who kindly gave some of the information - ale and beer at first were different but today the names have come to mean the same. After that last statement I hope you have a clear mind on ale and beer, or is it beer and ale?

RICHARD RUSHENT-ORAM

## VINDOLANDA APPEAL

The Society has received notification of an appeal for funds by the Vindolanda Trust. Vindolanda is the name given to an important site on Hadrian's Wall where a Roman fort and civilian settlements are currently being excavated. Already the site has yielded a wealth of evidence about this outpost on the northern frontier of the Roman Empire, where, due to freak soil conditions numerous finds of organic material, cloth, leather, wood, including writing tablets, have been excavated and preserved. Such material usually has decomposed long before the archaeologist gets to the scene.

Total excavation over several years is planned, and educational courses for students of archaeology are being held regularly each year. It is hoped to conserve and display the excavated finds in a good museum on or near the site. All this of course needs money: hence the appeal.

If any members feel they would like to send a donation the address is:-

The Joint Appeal Secretary,  
David J.W. Mawson,  
"Calees",  
The Banks,  
Brampton, Cumbria CA8 2JJ.