



# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

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### CALENDAR

Thursday 25th November. 'The Dressmaker's Craft' Lecture by Janet Arnold, Historical Costume Advisor, BBC. Church Cottage, Basingstoke, 7.30 p.m. Admission: Members 25p, Non-members 50p, including refreshments.

Saturday 27th November. 'Recent Studies on Vernacular Building' One-day Symposium, University of Southampton. Details on page 4.

Wednesday 1st December. 'From Stonehenge to Easter Island' Lecture by Professor Colin Renfrew, University of Southampton, Dept. of Archaeology. 7.30 p.m. University, Physics Lecture Theatre A. (Aspects of Antiquity Series).

Saturday 4th December. 'The Architecture of Railway Stations' Lecture by David Lloyd, Hampshire Field Club and Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group, Room 31, Building 14, The University, 3.00 p.m. (O.G.S. Crawford Lecture).

Thursday 9th December. Members' Social Evening and Links with the Past

## THE DRESSMAKER'S CRAFT

For many people, Janet Arnold, our November speaker, needs no introduction. Her reputation as an authority on historical costumes and their construction is unchallengeable. She is a regular lecturer to students of dress design and is a familiar figure in the universities and colleges of art throughout the country. Her two major books on costume: 'Patterns of Fashion' and 'Handbook of Costume', both published by Macmillan, are standard works for the student and enthusiast alike. She is also well-known in her capacity as historical costume advisor to the BBC.

Her talk to this Society on the 25th November on the design and construction of costume through the ages will be well illustrated with many colour slides and it is hoped that she will bring with her some examples of the early dressmakers' tools.

Once more we will be holding our meeting in the Barn (the large hall) at Church Cottage when we expect a large audience. Because Janet Arnold is so well-known we have decided to make the meeting more 'public', in that other organisations have been sent invitations and we have advertised quite widely in and around the town.

To help cover the costs of hiring the hall and paying the speaker's fees and expenses there will be an admission charge of 25p to members and 50p to non-members, payable at the door. Refreshments will be free. As always your friends are very welcome. To make sure of a seat please arrive in good time or let a member of the Committee know of your intention to attend.

25th November, Church Cottage, 7.30 p.m.

## CHINEHAM DEVELOPMENT: FIELDWALKING

The following note on the fieldwalking off Swing Swang Lane, Old Basing and at Great Binfield's Copse is contributed by Peter Heath.

Earlier this year, over a number of weekends, members of the Society and their dogs (!) carried out a field walk over ploughland on the edge of the Daneshill Industrial Estate. For those of you who have not enjoyed this activity, it consists of a systematic search of the ploughed fields by as many persons as possible, each walking a narrow strip of ground. A surprising amount of human 'debris' can be found lying on the surface. Everything that is discovered is plotted onto large-scale maps showing as precisely as possible the place at which it was found.

Although a field may have been ploughed annually for centuries, over the years small sherds of pottery, glass, metal or flint may work their way to the surface. Most of the items found in the field by Swing Swang Lane were pottery of the 17th and 18th Century wares and were spread across the field parallel to an old path or track although extending some distance from it. A very small quantity of sherds were found belonging to the Romano British period and may have found their way into this field from a nearby site in Wade Road.

Another survey was made of Great Binfield's Copse, Chineham, which involved struggling through tangled undergrowth which at times was sufficiently dense to make keeping the other members of the survey party in sight extremely difficult. However, there was some compensation in the beauty of the masses of bluebells there.

Unlike the ploughfield where the object was to discover and record finds, surveying in woodland requires looking for bumps and depressions which may indicate ditches, artificial mounds or other man-made disturbances of the natural



contours, hopefully of ancient date. On the ploughland these are not so easily distinguishable because the action of ploughing tends to flatten and level all but the very large features.

As it turned out, there was very little evidence of human activity in the copse area except for slight indications of 'ridge and furrow' (ancient plough marks) towards the top of the wooded hill. There was also the possibility of a 'headland' extending from the modern ploughland at the hilltop into the copse; a build-up of soil caused by heavy medieval ploughs as they were turned at the edge of the field.

While little of real archaeological interest has been discovered at these two locations, we have at least eliminated them from the total area which has to be surveyed which allows us to move on to other fields at Chineham.

Fieldwalking is needed across many fields including those which contain the newly discovered sites at Cowdrey's Down and the more recent one at Petty's Brook, north of Four Lanes Farm.

It is hoped that we can begin this work later this winter and during the spring next year, once the programme for walking and the dates have been agreed. Details will be announced at lectures and in later issues of the Newsletter.

#### COWDREY'S DOWN

Among ancient ditch-like features which were revealed as crop marks during the dry summer this year at Cowdrey's Down just northeast of Swing Swang Lane there was a rectangular earthwork which is believed to be a Parliamentary site dating from the Civil War Siege of Basing House. Next summer it is hoped that the Hampshire County Museum Service will excavate prior to development.

John Potter, a member of The Sealed Knot, an organisation passionately involved in the study of the Civil War, and an ardent enthusiast of the period, has written a few brief notes on the Siege of Basing House from Cowdrey's Down during the 1640s.

July 31st 1643 saw the first action of Roundheads trying to take Basing House. Col. Richard Norton and Col. Harvey tried to storm the House but a handful of men from the House kept them at bay. At the eleventh hour Sir Marmaduke Rawdon arrived from Oxford and surprised his enemy with musket fire from the woods. Rawdon's men must have skirmished with the Parliamentarians near if not on Cowdrey's Down itself. Rawdon became military governor of Basing House.

On the 7th November 1643 Sir William Waller arrived with ten heavy cannons and six drakes (small cannons firing 51 lb. shot). Waller stationed around 2,000 men on Cowdrey's Down and made platforms for his cannons. It is possible that excavation could reveal the exact sites of these sixteen cannon placements.

Waller is known to have made continued charges on the House, including a diversionary attack by 500 musketeers probably all from Cowdrey's Down.

On 15th November 1643, Waller was driven off by Sir Ralph Hopton. Col. Richard Norton once again took up the Siege in July 1644, but on the 11th September was driven off by Sir Henry Gage. Later, on the 23rd September, Norton returned but was again seen off when Gage relieved the House on the 20th November 1644.

After many months and events, on the 8th October 1645, Oliver Cromwell arrived and took the House on the 14th October. On the 15th October 1645 Basing House was destroyed by fire.

Cowdrey's Down was the main stay area for the Parliamentary forces throughout the three year siege, and was used as a camp site on a number of occasions. It must also be a vital area where many a fight was fought by relieving Royalists attempting to save the House.

## POMPEII AD79

Pompeii AD79 is the main Winter Exhibition this year in the Royal Academy of Arts. It is the most comprehensive exhibition of the relics of Pompeii ever seen outside Italy, and it is the first time that they have ever been seen in this country. Most of the treasures come from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples, but there are also important loan items from the Louvre in Paris, from the British Museum and from other sources throughout Europe.

The visitor will see something of the history of Pompeii and of the volcano that ended its life. There are sections on the people of Pompeii, highlighting the extraordinary portrait bronzes, so prominent throughout the town; the Pompeian house, with its wonderful wall paintings and mosaics; trades and professions and leisure activities; religions and cults; and scenes from the villa at Oplontis, now being excavated, which is said to have belonged to Poppea, the wife of Nero.

There are exhibits from Herculaneum and Stabia; silver from the villa of Boscoreale; the intricate gladiatorial equipment, so much part of Roman life; decorative garden sculpture, and many more features, interpreting the life style of Pompeii and its people - and of course, examples of the petrified figures of those who died in the holocaust.

The Exhibition 'Pompeii AD79' tells the story of a provincial Roman township of some 20,000 inhabitants, which was buried by an eruption of the volcano Vesuvius in the year AD79 and was preserved for evermore. It is a story which, in archaeological and artistic terms, has made a unique contribution to history in so far as it gives us our first direct contact with one of the truly great civilisations of the past.

Nearly 1700 years elapsed before Pompeii was rediscovered, but the monumental influence of what was found during the excavations is still apparent today. Many of the original treasures, such as the actual wall paintings and mosaics and the beautiful marble sculpture and bronzes, brought together in London, and placed in a specially designed setting, explain and emphasise their particular significance at the time.

The life of Pompeii is not only representative of the art and artifacts of the period, but also demonstrates an unique environment in which the people, who created and surrounded themselves with these treasures, existed - and they were an ordinary people in an ordinary small town. It is their story, which is so fascinating, and which is the basis of the exhibition.

## RECENT STUDIES ON VERNACULAR BUILDING

A one-day symposium with the above title sponsored jointly by the Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments will be held at the University on Saturday 27th November.

Speakers will contribute on recent work in four counties: Dorset (R. Machin), Hampshire (E. Lewis, D. Hinton), Sussex (Mrs. M. Hallam) and Wiltshire (N. Moore). Professor M.W. Barley will lecture on late vernacular house types, and Mr. E. Mercer (whose 'English Vernacular Houses' has just been published) will speak on recording schemes.

Fee for the day, which will start at 10 a.m., £1.50 to include coffee and tea, but not lunch. The programme, details of venue, etc., will be sent after



November 1st to those attending. Applications to attend to: D.A. Hinton, Department of Archaeology, The University, Southampton.

### JEWELLERY THROUGH 7,000 YEARS

The British Museum's current exhibition, open until 1st February, brings together for the first time many of the finest and most significant items of jewellery in their diverse collections. The selection has been drawn from eight Departments and spans about 7,000 years, from the earliest items (c.5,000 BC) found in Western Asia, through the ancient civilisations of the world, up to the 19th century. The scope of the exhibition extends beyond Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean to India and the Far East, to include examples from Africa and the pre-Columbian civilisations of Central and South America.

Jewellery for personal adornment is the main theme of the exhibition, but in addition it illustrates its amuletic (protective) function, the role of the finger ring, particularly the signet ring through the ages, and many of the techniques employed in the creation of jewellery.

A well-illustrated and finely produced catalogue to the exhibition on sale at £2.50 is excellent value for money.

### THE ROMAN PAINTED HOUSE AT DOVER

It was not until 1970 that it was realised that Dover contained just about the richest ten acres of buried archaeology anywhere in Britain. In that and each successive year the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit carried out major rescue excavations ahead of development and revealed 4,000 years of unwritten history, dozens of major structures and thousands of individual finds. The most spectacular discovery came in 1971 when the now famous Roman Painted House was found off Market Street. This very fine masonry building had stood just outside the great naval headquarters of the Roman fleet in the second century AD. About AD300 the building was requisitioned by the Roman army and partly incorporated into their new shore-fort defences. This resulted in the unique survival of parts of two of the rooms of the Painted House, the walls of which were covered in brilliantly painted plaster.

A total of more than 400 sq.ft. of paintings survived in situ in the two rooms and another 8,000 fragments were found on the floor and carefully lifted. These represent the finest Roman wall-paintings anywhere in Britain and indeed for extent, design and colour these are unsurpassed anywhere north of the Alps. Over a lower dado of imitation marble is a main design of large rectangular panels sitting on a boldly painted stage. The panels are separated by fluted columns finely painted in perspective. Each panel contains a motif, such as a frond, a torch, trees and other devices and parts of human figures have recently been reconstructed from the fragments. These are the oldest and best preserved paintings in Britain. In addition the architectural details of the Roman house are spectacular. The walls survive nine feet high in places and there is a complete underfloor heating system provided with large arched flues and vertical ducts in the walls. The floors are of hard pink mortar, with mouldings on all sides and there are two wide doorways. On the west side of the house is part of the great defensive wall and later bastion of the Roman army fort.

The site was quickly reburied in 1971 against weathering and vandals. Ambitious schemes to open the Painted House as a permanent museum were aired, but foundered. Finally, in the summer of 1975 the Unit decided to re-excavate to give the public a final chance to see the famous paintings. Nearly 20,000 people flooded to the

site in just four weeks and as a direct result an appeal was launched and more than £4,000 contributed by Friends. A charitable trust, consisting of those agreeing to make substantial contributions to the appeal, was soon set up. The architect was appointed in December, planning permission obtained in January and tenders sent out in March. Work began on the site on 4th April 1976. An attractive scheme costing £90,000 (not £400,000 as originally suggested) included the construction of a two-storey protective building complete with viewing gallery, extensive displays of drawings, photographs and plans and treatment of the plaster. If the target can be reached then the Roman Painted House should be open to the public in 1977!

Anyone wishing to make a donation towards the completion of the protective building and the displays should send it to The Treasurer, Dover Roman Painted House Trust, National Westminster Bank Ltd., Market Square, Dover, Kent.

#### PROGRAMME

Please note on your programme cards and in your diaries the following details of our January 1977 lecture:

THURSDAY 27th JANUARY    'Britain's Earliest Farmers'  
Mr. Arthur ApSimon, Dept. Archaeology,  
University of Southampton.

#### ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Committee member, Edward Besly, is anxious to find accommodation, preferably self-catering, in or close to Basingstoke. His present landlady is forced to turn him out because the imminent increase to her family will require the living space Edward now occupies. His name is down on all possible local accommodation registers but he has little hope of finding somewhere to live quickly. Any offers? Please ring Tadley 3022 (daytime) or Tadley 2012 (evenings).