

BASINGSTOKE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 4

June 1972

..... ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING...New date...Monday 14th August.....

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING has been postponed to Monday, 14th August 1972 (from 6th July). Still 7.30 pm at Chute House.

After a year's oligarchy by a self-elected committee, this is your chance for democracy. Nominations for office holders and committee members are invited now - they will be acceptable at the AGM itself but we would prefer to have notice beforehand of nominations. Please make sure that you have the nominee's consent before the meeting. We should also like to have notice of items to be raised under Any Other Business, if possible, so that we can estimate how long the AGM is likely to take and how much time will be left for the two items to follow that evening:

Refreshments

and

Interim report on the Spring season of excavations.

We would welcome volunteers to organise the refreshments.

.....EXCURSION, 29TH JULY

The date is now definitely Saturday, 29th July. The pick-up point is the Basingstoke Bus Station, not behind the Railway Station as was suggested in the last Newsletter. Time 9.30 am. We shall go through either Kingsclere or Tadley and can pick up passengers at one of these places if given sufficient notice beforehand.

We need to know how many people to expect - this is our first trip, have we booked a big enough coach? So please return the attached form if you intend to come, or give your name and the numbers of any friends or family coming with you, to Mary Oliver or Barbara Applin NOW.

Bring sandwiches for lunch, as we intend to stop for lunch at Uffington Camp. At tea-time we shall be in Cirencester so you will be able to choose between eating more sandwiches or finding somewhere there for tea.

Route: UFFINGTON CAMP (Iron Age hillfort with White Horse hillside figure in chalk)  
WAYLANDS SMITHY (Chambered tomb recently excavated, with Neolithic long barrow beneath it)

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BARNESLEY PARK (Roman villa being excavated in research programme of 30 years by Birmingham and Bristol Universities; particularly interesting for the detailed information on farm buildings associated with the villa  
CIRENCESTER Abbey, Museum

We plan to be back in Basingstoke about 8 to 8.30 pm.

.....EXCURSION, 17TH AUGUST

Remember too to keep free the evening of Thursday, 17th August for the visit to DANEbury (hillfort being excavated) mentioned in the previous Newsletter. Own transport arrangements; meet at Danbury (SU 324 377, 3 miles NW of Stockbridge) at 7.30 pm. Arrangements for car sharing or lifts for those without cars can be made at the AGM on the previous Monday.

.....NEW HOROLOGY GALLERIES, WILLIS MUSEUM

An important event at the Willis Museum took place this month when the new Horology Galleries were opened. This is the first stage in the planned renewal of the Willis Museum, for which a great deal of back-ground work has been going on and will continue at the Hampshire County Museum Service. The exhibition is modern and effective, at once easy to look at and inviting close study and further visits. It is a splendid foretaste of things to come when the further phases of reconstruction take place at the Museum.

John Korwood, Keeper of Folk Life at the Hampshire County Museum Service, contributes the following note:

It is probable that in few fields of technical endeavour over the last seven centuries has so much ingenuity been expended as in the development of timekeeping. The new Horology Galleries at the Willis Museum, Basingstoke, opened when a memorial plaque to the late G. W. Willis was unveiled on 8th June, have been arranged to illustrate the chief phases in this development; at the same time they show the wealth of the clock and watch collection which was largely assembled by Mr Willis himself.

Early timekeeping was very simple, and the passing of the hours was told by such means as the movement of shadows and the falling of measured quantities of sand or liquid; for most purposes sundials and sand glasses had to suffice. The earliest item on show is a mass dial from a Hampshire church, a simple scratched sundial which indicated the time of services. The cheapness and convenience of pocket sundials ensured their popularity well into the 18th century when clocks and watches were expensive. The first clocks, made by blacksmiths and sounding the hours on a bell, were made in the 13th century in response to the need to tell the hours of worship in religious houses. The turret clocks from Rotherwick Church and Kengshott House are 17th century descendants of this type and many are still in use.

Early clocks were weight driven, and it was not until the invention of the coiled spring in the mid-15th century that

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they became smaller and more convenient. Two ingenious devices, the stackfreed and the fusee, were introduced to equalise the declining power of the unwinding spring, and examples of their application are on show. Particularly noteworthy is the late 16th century Nuremberg clock-watch which shows craftsmanship of a high order. In about 1500 watches appeared, made to hang from the neck. In many respects their development is parallel to clocks, with emphasis on the problems of miniaturisation. A case devoted to watches shows how makers, engravers and artists combined to create articles of use, beauty and adornment. A group of 18th century painted Swiss dials is worth a close look.

A major deficiency of the earliest clocks was the lack of a means of controlling the escapement, the mechanism by which the drive power is regulated. The now-familiar pendulum was the answer, invented by Galileo and first applied by Huygens in 1657. It greatly improved timekeeping, and with the development of better escapements undreamed-of accuracy became possible. Several attractive pendulum clocks are to be seen including Black Forest wall clocks with painted wooden dials, brass lantern clocks, and long-case clocks by local makers which still go well after nearly two centuries.

What the pendulum achieved for clocks, the balance spring (invented c.1675) did for watches. The action of a light coiled spring can be very accurately adjusted and it takes little space. The spring and its associated balance wheel had to be protected, and the cover or cock in which it also pivoted was often highly decorated as examples show. A case of watchmaker's tools brings home the finesse required of the watchmaker, and an exhibit on the remarkable fusee chains which were formerly made at Christchurch is a memorial to the patience and eyesight demanded by an almost forgotten craft.

Many of the clocks on view can be enjoyed solely as decorative objects, while some show an appealing novelty such as the bracket clock with disc musical movement, and the American flip clock, forerunner of today's digital clock. A clock to which many local people will feel a sentimental attachment is the Town Hall clock, dismantled in 1961; only now is it possible to appreciate the skilful construction of the huge movement and to see the inscription that shows it was made by John Atkins of Lichfield in 1700. Watchpapers and billheads from Basingstoke workshops are other links with the past that may still awaken memories for older residents.

Not archaeological, but members may like to know that the current temporary exhibition at the Willis museum is:

David Hockney - etchings illustrating Grimms Fairy Tales  
17th June to 8th July.

followed by:

W H Allen a selection of paintings from the W H Allen Bequest  
(from the Allen Gallery, Alton) 22nd July to 31st August

#### ..... TOWN MAP REVIEW

In response to the Borough's request for the Society's reactions to the Town Map Review, the Chairman has sent the Town Clerk a list of sites

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which would be threatened in the new development, and urged that facilities and help be given for the investigation and excavation or recording of these sites.

#### .....FIELD NAMES SURVEY

Probably because the excavation took priority, no members have yet said if they are interested in taking part in the Survey, as suggested in the last Newsletter. Do let the Secretary know if you are interested.

#### .....REGISTER OF FINDS

From time to time members have mentioned occasional archaeological finds they have made, and we feel that information of this kind should be gathered together into a Register kept by the Society. Details needed:

description of object(s) and what they are made of;  
suggested dating;  
location (including parish name and Ordnance Survey site reference);  
when found and by whom;  
any other relevant information.

Please send any information on finds initially to the Secretary, and when we see what sort of information is coming in we can decide what form the register should take.

#### .....EMBLEM

We need a simple but eye-catching emblem for the Society - to use on notepaper and notices. Members are invited to send in suggested designs.

#### .....BOOK BOX

We have a Book Box on long loan to the Society, and Richard Searle has agreed to act as librarian, so do contact him if you would like to borrow from it (his address is 4 Tiverton Rd, Basingstoke: telephone 20488). The box contains:

Photography in Archaeology and Art	S K Matthews
Roman Farming	K D White
Excavations near Winchester	
Cathedral 1961-8	M Biddle
The Roman Villa in England	A L F Rivet
Physics in Archaeology	M J Aitken
Archaeological Photography	H C Simmons
Photography for Archaeologists	M B Cookson

#### .....RECOMMENDED BOOKS (first suggestions in response to requests):

Field Archaeology	R J C Atkinson, 1953
Archaeology from the Earth	R E M Wheeler, 1954
Practical Archaeology	Graham Webster, 1963
Approach to Archaeology (loan copy available)	Piggott 1959

#### .....RUCTSTALLS HILL EXCAVATION

Work on the Dig will be suspended during July to allow our Directors to have a well deserved rest and holiday ready for the next stage.  
Commencing Saturday 5th August, work will recommence most weekends