



# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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## CALENDAR

Wednesday

28th November The Sutton Hoo Ship burial - the history  
of art: Prof. R. Bruce Mitford, Lecture  
Theatre A, Physics Building, Southampton  
University.

Thursday

29th November The Bronze Age in Southern Britain:  
Some new perspectives. Dr Ann Ellison  
Chute House. 7.30 p.m.

Saturday

1st December Hampshire Field Club: O.G.S. Crawford  
Memorial Lecture; "Cranborne Chase  
since Pitt Rivers": R. Bradley  
Meet Community Centre car park,  
Fordingbridge 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday

5th December Abu Salabikh and the cities of Sumer  
Dr N. Postgate, Lecture Theatre A,  
Southampton University, as above.

Thursday

13th December Social Evening, 7.30 p.m.  
St. Michael's Church Cottage

### The Bronze Age in Southern Britain: some new perspectives

Apart from a new book on the Bronze Age in Europe, no books likely to become anything approaching standard texts have been published very recently. Only the Bronze Age chapter in 'British Prehistory: a new outline' edited by Prof. Colin Renfrew (1974) provides us with anything like a modern, workable overview of the period and that is now five years old. Five years may not seem a long time, but in terms of our understanding of the Bronze Age in Britain it represents an enormous time of discovery, analysis, reassessment and re-appraisal. No other period of British prehistory has undergone so much serious discussion. The past ten years have caused the scholars to turn their understanding inside out and upside down.

Hitherto, with little evidence to support it, our understanding of the character of society which developed throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods has been largely a matter of guesswork. Some would say it still is. Where the Neolithic ends and the Bronze Age begins may never be anything but blurred, although we know that settlers from the Low Countries and the Rhine mouth began to arrive on our shores a little before 2,000 B.C. These sophisticated newcomers, well equipped and well armed, distinguished by their characteristic pottery - beakers - arrayed with gold trinkets and copper knives, gave fresh impetus to the late Neolithic way of life. We know also that they introduced a new and distinctive burial practice, replacing the communal tomb by single interment. They were essentially stone - using, ~~had~~ the ability to organise and had the power to dominate the Neolithic communities they encountered. From here on things become decidedly hazy. Do we still accept 'Early, Middle and Late Bronze age' as suitable cultural delineations even?

It would take someone braver and more confident than this writer to attempt to take readers beyond this point; which brings us very conveniently to Dr Ann Ellison, our November speaker. Brave and confident she undoubtedly is - young and glamorous too, for that matter!

Ann, recently appointed director of the Wessex Archaeological Committee's Unit, is an authority on the Bronze Age, although she has gained personal experience of research, excavation and field work among the Roman and post-Roman periods, as well as the prehistoric. She comes to Wessex from the Gloucestershire/Cotswold region by way of CRAAGS.

For my money she is this season's star turn. She knows her stuff and gives a brilliant lecture.

Thursday, 29th November, Chute House, Church Street, 7.30 p.m.

The British Museum is currently staging a small exhibition on the life and works of Richard Jefferies, the subject of our March lecture. It will run until 31st December.



### Local History Conference

This Conference was timed to coincide with the Opening on 20th October of the exhibition "The Hog's Progress", which was mounted in The Great Hall of Winchester Castle by the Hampshire Record Office and the Conference adjourned for the official opening by Lord Denning. This exhibition was very imaginatively displayed to show the "Hampshire Hog" through the centuries in various aspects of life, such as at school, at work and play and abroad.

A number of documents from Basingstoke were included, amongst them was a mid 19th century poster for an excursion by the Basingstoke British Schools to Bournemouth by train, the Attwood Diary and posters concerning the outbreak of enteric fever in 1905, warning people to boil all water and milk. Some of the most fascinating papers were in the section 'The Hog and Authority'. I liked the report from 1657 which recounted how a man in Basingstoke Gaol persuaded his sister to bring him "a cleaver for bread and cheese" - not surprisingly, he escaped the same night!

To return to the Conference, there were two talks, the first on The Victoria County Histories by Mr C. Elrington, M.A., the General Editor. I was surprised to find that the VCH was still being published. The project was started at the very end of the last century, where it was proposed to publish in about six years histories for all the counties; today there are still many counties not covered. Hampshire is lucky in that it was the first county to be completed, being published between 1900 and 1914. Originally the scheme was financed by subscription (8 guineas for the Hampshire Volumes) but the organisers continually got into difficulties and in 1934 London University took over. With so many counties not started it is unlikely that the Hampshire volumes will be revised.

Mr Barry Stapleton from Portsmouth Polytechnic presented the second talk on the history of Odiham. He gave some warnings to anyone proposing to carry out local history research, in that he had needed to extend his house as he now had 65 feet of shelving to store the results of his research. His interest was in population growth and movement and he had selected Odiham because of its complete set of parish registers from 1538. Odiham had been a place of some importance in the 16th Century, on two occasions the Privy Council was held in the town and Thomas Walsingham had a house there. Mr Stapleton gave numerous details of the history of the town but it was the details of the people which proved most interesting, for instance he had carefully researched two families, one poor and one prosperous. Surprisingly the rich family achieved an average age at death of 48½ and an infant mortality rate of 29% compared with an average age of 59 and infant mortality rate of 10% for the poor family.

Perhaps the most important part of the Conference was the concluding discussion when it was overwhelmingly agreed to set up a new section of The Hampshire Field Club to deal with Local History and no doubt we will hear more of this before long.

J. O.

### Hampshire Field Club: changes

In recent years there has been considerable concern about the future of the Hampshire Field Club, because of falling membership and consequent lack of funds. As the Field Club is a very long established society and the most important publishing body for archaeological material in the county it was felt that the situation must if possible be remedied. At an Extraordinary meeting - Winchester on September 8th, various constitutional changes were made which it is hoped will enable the Field Club to provide the kind of service which is required at the present time. The most important of the changes is that instead of offering one programme of activities, four will be available, based on local history, geology, archaeology and the New Forest - (with, it is hoped, a building section later). Some centralised activities would remain. Subscriptions have been reviewed with the amount for those members requiring "Proceedings" being raised.

Your committee felt it was important for this society to maintain full membership of the parent county body and indicated interest in the archaeology and local history sections. Items from these programmes will be passed on via the newsletter and the "Proceedings" will be available to all members in the Society's library.

NB Institutional membership only allows us to send one member to meetings so please check with the secretary if you wish to attend a function as our representative. If you find the programme of the Field Club attractive and wish to consider joining, the subscription for an Ordinary member is £5.

### Social Evening 13th December

Since no newsletter will go out in December, here is another reminder about the Society's social evening to be held at Church Cottage. It has been decided not to hold "Links with the Past" this year, but it is hoped there will be one or two talking points, activities and amusements, and primarily, the opportunity to meet and enjoy the company of fellow members of the Society in these pleasant surroundings with of course, excellent refreshments as previous years. Please come along and bring your family and friends and help to make this a good evening. Tickets, including food and wine £1.75, 75p available at the door.

## Notes and News

### Southampton's excavations

An item in the Southern Evening Echo recently described how SARC (Southampton Archaeological Research Committee) would be feeling the effects of government spending cuts. The Department of the Environment would no longer be able to provide all the funds for the important 3 acre Saxon site at Six Dials. Phil Holdsworth, SARC director said that real efforts would be made to secure the necessary funds from public and private sectors, and the work would continue.

### Fieldwalking continues

By the time this newsletter reaches members, the first training weekends in line walking will have taken place at Choseley Farm, North Warnborough. The weather was kind for the 10/11th November, and there was a good turnout of volunteers. Walking is planned for 17/18th and 24/25th - SU723-504 at 10.30a.m. Parking at the farm outside the barns. If you missed the first training weekends, it doesn't matter, the techniques are easily learnt, and as this is a long term project, it is hoped to involve as many members as possible.

### Story with a Happy ending

There was once a traditional archaeologist, who like many others was dismayed at the great increase in the use of metal detectors by untrained people on important sites. This lady had a friend, also keen on archaeology, who defended metal detectors, when used by responsible people in the right circumstances; many a lively discussion took place on this subject. One day, Mrs Traditional's husband came home in great despair having lost his wedding ring in the long grass and nettles of an orchard whilst picking apples. Doom and despondency over the entire household! Suddenly they thought of their friend with the metal detector - dare they ring and ask. Humbly, they requested help, which was promptly and generously given in spite of the wet afternoon. The metal detector was taken into the orchard, and within five minutes, a signal sounded, and the ring was found - a truly impressive display!