



# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

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### CALENDAR

Thursday 24th January	'Excavations at Cowdery's Down' by Martin Millet, 7.30 p.m. Willis Museum
Thursday 31st January	'The Later Roman Empire - a personal view' by Mark Hassall, 7.30 p.m. Chute House
Thursday 21st February	'The Wealth of the Iron Age' by Prof. Barry Cunliffe, 7.30 p.m. Willis Museum
Thursday 28th February	'Chalton, the Middle Saxon Village', by Dr Tim Champion, 7.30 p.m. Chute House
Wednesday 5th March	'Hillforts: current problems and future prospects' Prof. Dennis Harding, Lecture Theatre A, Physics Building, Southampton University, 7.30 p.m.

## THE END OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE: A PERSONAL VIEW

If lecturers could be rated by their entertainment value then Mark Hassell would surely come well up in the ranking. Past and present students of his at the Institute of Archaeology in London are unanimous that his lectures are far from dull with remarks ranging from 'great fun' to 'hilarious' to describe them.

His own particular specialities are Roman inscriptions, the Roman army and Roman Britain. He chose the 'end of the Roman Empire' as his subject for his lecture to us because he felt it was the easiest way of ensuring that he could talk about whatever he liked! He is particularly fond of a mad Roman who was incensed with the idea of 'mechanising' the Roman army. He also delights in the ridiculous aspects of 'Purple Parchment' - the particular brand of administrative nonsense we all fondly call 'red tape'.

For those who like their archaeology not too serious, then Mark Hassell's lecture on Thursday 31st January is just for you.

Chute House 7.30 p.m.

## COWDERY'S DOWN EXCAVATION 1979

Excavations continued on the site in advance of the second stage of road building. The area examined was to the north of that excavated in 1978, and was chosen to answer a series of questions raised by the 1978 season. In particular we were concerned to investigate the date and function of a series of fence lines uncovered in 1978 just below the ridge.

These fences were found to enclose a substantial settlement which is probably of middle saxon date (C14 determinations are awaited at the moment). The settlement consisted of three major phases, with two major halls in Phase A, five in Phase B and five in Phase C. In all these phases the settlement showed a great deal of planning, and was always enclosed by a substantial fence.

The halls varied in size and construction, with the earlier structures post-built, and the later ones being exclusively trench built. The largest were c.15.5 m by 7 m, which is comparable with the secondary halls at the Royal site of Yeavering, and is larger than those at Chalton. The most valuable evidence is that of the construction of the halls themselves, owing to the exceptional preservation of their structural features. The analysis of these features is still in progress, but it is certain that they will be of great value in advancing our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon architecture.

The limits of the site seem to have been found in three directions, and we envisage defining the other limit in the 1980 season.

The spectacular discovery of the Anglo-Saxon site has meant that some of the other important finds have received little attention. These include the excavation of a late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age Round House (c. 9 m in diameter), and a pair of burials which are probably of Civil War date. One of these had what appears to be a musket ball hole in its leg. We also spent some effort on examining the field boundaries on the site, most of which can be shown to be medieval or post-medieval in date, and have had an unexpectedly complex structural history.

Plans are in hand for further extensive excavations in 1980 with the aim of trying to define the limits of the site and establish more about its chronology and economy.

MARTIN MILLETT



## The Victorian Society - Report of a meeting in Portsmouth

The Victorian Society held a one-day symposium at the Portsmouth Central Library on December 8th as a preliminary to the establishment of a regional group covering Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and parts of West Sussex.

The symposium was introduced by Michael Robbins, the Chairman of the Victorian Society, who also chaired the morning session. The first speaker, David Lloyd, writer and architectural historian, led us at a fast gallop for three-quarters of an hour through Victorian Hampshire. He enthused over slides of public buildings, public houses, churches, villas and railways, inspiring us with his enthusiasm and knowledge. At a slightly more leisurely pace we followed Michael Morris, Directing Architect from Hampshire County Council, on a 'walk' around Winchester. The city gradually came alive as he described first one visual aspect then another, from terraced houses with fine views over the original city walls and the cathedral, to the inside of the College Chapel and Botley Mill. What a beautiful city it is, with such a variety of character, always with the clear waters of the Itchen not far away.

Keeping up the high quality of the lectures, Dr Ray Riley, Principal Lecturer from the Portsmouth Polytechnic's Department of Geography, proceeded to give his highly individual picture of Portsmouth Docks, their history and influence on the economics of the city, strongly flavoured with his dry humour. (Perhaps an excellent future lecturer for our joint meeting with the Industrial Archaeology Group?)

After a break for lunch, the afternoon session began, chaired by Hermione Hobhouse, Secretary of the Victorian Society. We were given an idea of the historical context of the Victorian Church by Nigel Yates, Archivist for the City and Diocese of Portsmouth, as he described the orders of service. It was made clear that church architecture was influenced by the functional requirements of the services as, for example, some early Victorian churches were given large and elaborate pulpits, completely hiding the altar, at a time when the sermon was the most important part of the service. Rodney Hubbeck gave a brief and interesting summary of Victorian stained glass Windows. After tea there was a final wallow - a talk by David Ottewill with slides showing Hampshire's Victorian country houses, including Highclere Castle; Tylney Hall, Rotherwick; Daneshill, Old Basing; Elvetham Park, Hartley Wintney; Minley Hall, Fleet; and what is now Farnborough Hill girls' school.

Hermione Hobhouse closed the meeting with a resumé of the growth of the Society. It started as a national society based in London, but members gradually came together to form regional groups, the first in the 'high Victorian' cities of the North, then the second wave in what had until then been regarded as solely Georgian areas, for example the Avon Group in Bath, and now possibly in the Portsmouth area. Twenty years ago there was thought to be little of interest to the student of Victoriana in Hampshire. However, the day's proceedings showed the rich and varied Victorian heritage in our county. Frontiers are shifting all the time; there is more interest recently in later Victoriana, the so called arts and crafts movement.

Although there is interest in all aspects of the age, only furniture, furnishings and personal effects are well collected and preserved. It is the architecture which is not being saved. Interiors of Victorian churches and church furnishings are particularly at risk now. The Victorian Society works in three ways. It aims to promote interest and awareness of the need to conserve the best and most interesting buildings. It also aims to get more important Victorian buildings listed - it is still considered better by some to remove Victorian renovations to expose or return to the Georgian or earlier original building and decoration underneath. The Society organises walks, visits and conferences.

It was pointed out that the DoE now allow authorities to compile their own lists of buildings worthy of conservation. Hampshire County Council is well aware of this responsibility and has an investigator working two days a week. A plea was made for any information to be channelled to him, particularly concerning buildings in danger in the rural parts of the north of the county.

The symposium closed after carrying the motion that a new regional group should be formed and it was suggested that the inaugural meeting would be held early in 1980. In all it was a most stimulating and satisfying day.

CLARE SEARLE



'Popular Archaeology' - pros and cons: Editor's note

The new archaeological magazine 'Popular Archaeology' has aroused a lot of interest among society members. To follow up informal discussions, we have invited two readers of the magazine, Bob Applin and Steven Kirby, to give us their views. Anyone else wishing to join the debate - we shall be pleased to hear from you.

Comments on 'Popular Archaeology'

Rescue Archaeology in London, Darien, The Princes in the Tower, World War II Pill Boxes, Mycenae Revisited, Digging in Afghanistan; Graham Webster, Barry Marsden, the Richies and Peter Reynolds. These are titles of articles and authors selected from recent issues of Magnus Magnusson's new magazine 'Popular Archaeology'. I missed issues 1 and 2 but have bought issues 3 - 6 (No. 6 dated December 1979 in the middle of November! Each issue has been published halfway through the month before which it is dated. Why do publishers do this?) Fifty pages, black and white except for the cover, including  $9\frac{1}{2}$  pages of advertisements in No. 6, between ten and twelve articles per issue plus letters, an editorial section and a junior section all for 65p. This all sounds good value for money and yet I have felt dissatisfied after reading each copy.

To me it seems as though a good idea has gone wrong and I think the reason is in the statistics given above. Ten articles in less than forty pages including many photographs (not always particularly relevant and sometimes apparently used to fill space) means that most of the topics are very superficially covered. One wishes to know more but there are no suggestions for further reading.

A letter in No. 6 perhaps sums up my feeling about the magazine and I hope I haven't taken the following extract from it out of context:-

"----the average reader has wider interests than the academic minisculae, but is not quite so thick as your contributors seem to believe. --- they (the readers) 'want to know'. However, they want to know how people lived, what they believed, what they ate and how they kept warm and dry in a pre-historic settlement or Dark Age Fleet Street, not just that they lived there, I would like to see a great deal more detail about finds and their purpose and a lot less potted travel brochures - the archaeology of Crete or Thera in a couple of pages is something close to an insult."

There is a definite need for a "popular" archaeological magazine covering world archaeology for those of us who find 'Antiquity' heavy going and to supplement 'Current Archaeology's' coverage of British Archaeology. But unless the standard of article that one requires is that of the more trivial Sunday supplements, then 'Popular Archaeology' as it is presently published is not a satisfactory product.

However, there is hope that things may change. In issue 5 Magnus Magnusson states that they are taking stock and in issue 6 some of the articles are less trivial (maybe I'm being influenced by an amusing two page historical piece on the first meeting of the British Archaeological Association in Canterbury, by Barry Marsden).

I have written to the editor along the lines of this note and shall continue to buy 'Popular Archaeology' for a few more months, but if it continues in its present form they will lose my support.

I would be interested to hear of other people's reaction to the magazine.

Bob Applin

### 'Popular Archaeology'. Another View.

At last, a magazine about archaeology and archaeological matters at a reasonable price (65p) for the general reader.

With its average ten articles, Junior Archaeology section, book reviews and readers' letters it forms light and informative reading for all ages.

The articles are written clearly and simply without too many archaeological terms, by professionals, with plenty of illustrations and photographs. The focus is on world archaeology and a variety of subjects is covered, as can be seen by the latest edition with articles on the effects of earthquakes on the ruins in Rome, the dry stone fortresses in the highlands of Scotland, the jewels from an Armadian ship (as highlighted by a recent BBC TV 'Chronicle' programme), Roman Roads, the stone circles and stones at Avebury and excavations in Afghanistan. There is also an article on how to take your first steps into archaeology as a career and the facilities that extra mural departments can provide.

This magazine is aimed at a non-scientific audience and is well done. I can see that this magazine will have a much wider appeal than some other archaeological magazines and hopefully will carry on serving this audience for a long time to come.

Steven Kirby

### Notes and News

Social Evening Our thanks to all members who supported this function and to all those involved in making it such a successful and enjoyable evening; particularly Richard and Claire Searle for the ingenious and entertaining quiz they provided and Angela Harvey for organising the delicious refreshments.

I would like to remind all those who contributed food that money is available to reimburse them - the price of the tickets is fixed with that in mind - so please don't hesitate to ask if you would like a reimbursement.

Fieldwalking Tim Schadla-Hall is planning to organise fieldwalking at weekends until further notice. For details of time and venue please ring the museum (Basingstoke 65902) or Mary Oliver (Basingstoke 24263) late in the week as arrangements sometimes have to be changed at the last minute.

Friends of the Museum lectures The next two lectures of the Museum Friends are both on archaeological subjects. On 24th January, Martin Millet will speak on 'Excavations at Cowdery's Down', which will be of special interest to those members who helped on the dig. On 21st February, Prof. Barry Cunliffe will lecture on "The Wealth of the Iron Age" - a rare chance to hear this well known figure in archaeology speak in our own town. Both meetings will take place at the Willis Museum, at 7.30 p.m. and there is a small charge for non-members of the Friends.

Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain A new (4th) edition of this useful map has recently been published. A great deal has been learnt about Roman Britain since the third edition appeared in 1956 and this is now incorporated into the map, which is presented in two sheets on a larger scale than previously (approximately 1 inch to 10 miles). The North and South map sheets are available as single flat sheets, price £1.00 each, or as two folded maps, with an explanatory text, a chronological table, a topographical index of sites and index of Roman place names, in a hard cover, price £5.00.