



BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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CALENDAR

Thursday 27th March	'Richard Jefferies - Viewer and Visionary' by Mark Daniel. 7.30 p.m. at Chute House. Joint meeting with the Basingstoke Industrial Archaeology Group and the Willis Historical Society.
Friday to Monday 4th - 8th April	Training Dig at Viables
Friday 11th April	Food, Forum and Fun Kempshott Village Hall, 7.30 p.m.
Thursday 24th April	Excavations at Basing House 1978-9 Tim Schadia-Hall, 7.30 p.m. at Chute House Joint meeting with the Hampshire Field Club

RICHARD JEFFERIES, VIEWER AND VISIONARY

For a little over a century Richard Jefferies has been known as an authority on rural life. Although he is widely quoted by other and perhaps more successful writers, people who read Jefferies at first hand are often amazed at the scope of his work, and the tremendous enthusiasm and sense of involvement he brings with it.

Born in 1848, he grew up on a small farm near Swindon in Wiltshire during a time of profound rural change. As a youth he had spells of bad health and for some years, apart from odd jobs as reporter on the local newspaper, did little except potter about with a gun or hob nob with the local folk. He became lonely, and friction at home led to his spending longer and longer outdoors - or shut in his attic room trying to write novels. Recognition came suddenly, and from an unexpected quarter, with the publication by The Times of an article on the Agricultural Labourer.

There followed a stream of articles and books on every aspect of rural life, and having found his style, it was as if the flood gates had been opened. He wrote about all the things which had absorbed him during the lonely years, the labourers, their families, the squire, poaching, the workhouse, farm machines, the flowers, birds, the weather, the stars - about everything in his experience.

But he didn't stop there; he went on to try and write about the beauty and wonder of the natural scene, and of life itself and perhaps - for some people - he attempted too much. Opening Jefferies' books for the first time, many people are embarrassed at the unrestrained fervour and are put off for life. Others might find a catharsis in seeing put into words what they'd always thought inexpressible. For a few, this is the great appeal of Jefferies, but for the majority Jefferies' greatest legacy must be his chronicles of a society and ways of life which were soon to be extinct. There is interest, and comfort too, in seeking one's 'roots' and, remote though these labourers and squires may seem to our generation, they were known by people living today.

It is impossible in an hour's talk to do justice to Jefferies, but a few of his comments and observations on a variety of subjects e.g. the local scene, the people, customs, occupations, recreation and departures can be quoted.

Mark Daniel

Mark Daniel's lecture will be given in Chute House on Thursday 27th March at 7.30pm. On this occasion we will be joined by members of the Willis Historical Society and the Basingstoke Industrial Archaeology Group.

FOOD, FORUM AND FUN

11th April, 1980

A last reminder to order your tickets please from Alan Roach at 1 Thrush Close, Kempshott. Do come along and bring your friends, the more the merrier. It would be a great help if the money and ticket stubs from sold draw tickets could be handed in before the event to facilitate the folding of tickets. We would also be grateful to receive small additional prizes for the prize draw to prolong the excitement of this item of the evening's programme. We would also be glad to receive your written questions for the forum, beforehand.

HOUSE HISTORY IN HAMPSHIRE

A one day symposium, organised by the Hampshire Field Club Local History Section, is being held at the Adult Education Centre, Southampton University, on Saturday 26th April, on the study of house history. Two members of the Hampshire Record Office will discuss the kind of documentary sources available, and this will be followed by three researchers describing their work in Alton, Breamore and Rockbourne. Anyone wanting to attend this conference, please contact the Secretary so that we can make a block booking and organise transport sharing.

Alice Holt Pottery Washing

Malcolm Lyne will be returning to the Willis Museum annexe on Saturday mornings to resume washing the pottery he has excavated from the Roman pottery kiln in Alice Holt Forest. He will be there every Saturday until further notice (except 29th March, 19th April and 10th May) and will welcome any help which can be given him. This is an ideal way to learn about Roman greywares, as the material from each layer is washed, marked and sorted, and the sequence of closely dated pottery goes back almost without a break to the mid first century A.D. Malcolm's corpus of Alice Holt pottery is now published by the C.B.A., Research Report No. 30, priced £8.50p. Another experimental kiln firing is planned for the second weekend in July. The kiln to be reproduced is of an earlier type than the last firing, and is different in several ways. The firing should provide a most interesting excursion and a graphic illustration of industrial practice in Roman times.

EXCAVATIONS AT COWDERY'S DOWN

Martin Millett has published the following note about his forth coming excavations at Cowdery's Down. Help at weekends will be needed to augment the full time team. All inexperienced diggers in the society, please remember the training dig organised at Easter for you so that you can join Martin and his team with confidence and provide some really useful help. If you wish to join the training dig at Viables, telephone Peter Heath on Basingstoke 27713.

"SAXON SETTLEMENT AT COWDERY'S DOWN, BASINGSTOKE

"Excavations on behalf of the Hampshire County Museum Service will continue on the site from 14th June to 6th July 1980 under the direction of Martin Millett. Work will concentrate on the completion of the excavation of Saxon halls and associated boundaries, with additional work on field boundaries and features of other periods.

"Volunteers are required for the whole of the period. Subsistence will be paid, and accommodation provided. Preference will be given to those who can stay for the whole excavation, and those with experience on this type of site.

"Further details, and application forms, can be obtained from Martin Millett,
Merton College,
Oxford OX1 4JD

Please send a stamped addressed foolscap envelope. Applications will not be considered after 5th May 1980."

Any member of this Society who has neither the time nor the inclination to work full time may go along for occasional days and half days as the fancy takes them.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

More details of these events to follow in subsequent newsletters

Thursday 29th May : Evening Excursion to Odiham

Saturday 14th June to

Sunday 6th July : Excavations at Cowdery's Down, Basing

Saturday 28th June : A coach trip to St. Albans

Thursday 3rd July : The Society's Annual General meeting, 7.30p.m. Chute House.

Saturday 5th July

Saturday 19th July : Excavations at Basing House, Basing.