



# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

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September 1981

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### CALENDAR

- 17th September 'Rural buildings in northern Hampshire'  
Richard Warmington, 7.30pm. Willis Museum.
- 21st September 'Stourpaine Great Steam Working' Peter Hammond  
BIAG, 7.30pm. SEB Social Club, Bounty Road.
- 26th September WEA coach and boat outing to Hurst Castle.  
Contact Eric Stokes, Basingstoke 3798 by 18th Sept.
- 30th September 'Stonehenge and its environs', Julian Richards  
7.30pm. St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop.
- 4th October Friends of the Willis excursion to Weald and  
Downland Museum, Singleton. Contact Mrs Whatmore,  
Silchester 700784
- 15th October Friends of the Willis AGM, followed by 'The real  
unexpurgated truth of the history of Basing House'  
Tim Schadla Hall, 7.30pm. Willis Museum.
- 19th October 'Isle of Man Industrial Archaeology' Richard Stumpf  
BIAG, 7.30pm. SEB Social Club, Bounty Road.
- 23rd October Barn Dance, Kempshott Village Hall, 8.00 to 11.00pm.
- 28th October 'Civil War firearms and their predecessors'  
Nicholas Hall, 7.30pm. St. Mary's Hall Eastrop.
- 7th November CBA Group 12 Annual Meeting at Westgate School,  
Winchester. Details from the Secretary.

Our special anniversary AGM at our new meeting place in St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop was well attended by some 37 members of the Society.

The committee for the following year is:

Chairman	Barbara Applin
Secretary	Mary Oliver
Treasurer	Susan Headley
Committee	Peggy Drury, Peter Heath and Bob Mulla

(At the first Committee Meeting after the AGM, Andrew Duckworth, Graham Hall and Barbara Lovell were coopted as additional members to help with Committee work)

The Chairman, Richard Searle reported on a successful year, the first of the new joint society and the tenth of the original archaeological society, and thanked all who had contributed to Society activities. Bob Mulla presented the very healthy Society accounts (copy enclosed for those members not attending the AGM), due to the successful fund raising which more than covered the purchase of new projection equipment. He spoke of the committee's intention to commit some of these funds to launching the Society's first publication - written by Anne Hawker, in the next few months. There was some discussion about this project but as final costings were not yet available it could not be decided how much money was needed and it was decided to advise members when the figure was known.

The first task for the new Chairman, Barbara Applin, was to convey the Society's thanks and farewells to Richard Searle our outgoing Chairman and his wife Clare, who are moving away from Basingstoke. She proposed that in appreciation of all they had done for the Society, and in order that we should not lose touch with them Richard and Clare should be given Honorary Life Membership of the Society. This was enthusiastically ratified by the members present. They also were presented with an archaeological book, a small gift from the committee and a large, specially designed card signed by all the members present at the AGM. Our best wishes go with them to Croydon and we hope that we shall see them at some Society functions.

After the meeting coffee and a splendid birthday cake appropriately iced by Iris Gregory was enjoyed by all present. We were then treated to a lighthearted account of the origins of the Society by John Oliver our founder Chairman (a more factual explanation follows in this Newsletter). Barbara Applin then described briefly our first excavation at Ructstalls Hill and Mary Oliver recounted some of the activities and excursions of the past ten years, both with the aid of slides.

#### THE ORIGINS OF THE SOCIETY

Now that the Society has celebrated its tenth anniversary it seems the time to set down on paper the events and thoughts that lead to its foundation.

We have to go back to the heyday of the town redevelopment for the real origins as it was then that the Willis Museum realising that there would be archaeological and historical research to be done, firstly increased its full time staff and then set about interesting the people of Basingstoke to help. Our Secretary, then known as Mary Atkinson, was appointed to the post and in 1964 a meeting was called to suggest ways in which help could be given to record the town that was fast disappearing and it was agreed to form the Basingstoke Willis Museum Group.



The first working meeting was fairly typical of many that followed, it took place at Warren House, in Wote Street, a fine house lately used by a firm of solicitors and shortly to be demolished. Some people made measured drawings of certain features, others removed or tried to remove items of interest such as ironmongery and sections of plaster cornice, later the porch was removed for the Museum collection. On subsequent meetings - usually Thursday evening or Saturday many of the buildings were visited as they became empty prior to demolition and the members became adept at what was termed "wrecking" and could reckon to take out a cast-iron fireplace in four minutes. The number and variety of the collection increased rapidly, including such things as door knockers, chimney pots, patterned tiles, ornamental stonework, wallpaper, etc.

Collecting and recording buildings was not the only concern of the Group, because at the same time as the town centre was being redeveloped the new housing sites around the town were producing evidence of far earlier settlement. So over the Whitsun holiday of 1965 a training dig was organised on the site of a barrow at Buckskin, this involved a lot of hard work cutting a trench to define the barrow but with disappointingly poor result. This did not deter members and a great deal more work with much better results followed at the Iron Age site on the Oakridge Estate.

During the winter months when it was not possible to work out of doors, weekly meetings continued in the Museum Gallery, washing and marking the finds, conserving some of the items from the buildings and assisting with getting the Museum records up to date.

There came a time when the majority of demolition was complete and so the wrecking sessions came to an end. It was a matter of some concern at the time and in retrospect a disaster that the authorities erected an 8 foot high fence around the town centre and would not give any chance for archaeological investigation of the area. The whole area was excavated to a great depth and we shall never know how much of the history of Basingstoke went in the lorries, the only thing of note to come out from behind the fence was one Mediaeval jug! However, excavation continued at Oakridge under the direction of Mary and then under her successor Barbara Glover, who is now our Chairman but with a different name. Other sites excavated included another barrow at Buckskin, a Roman bathhouse at Oakridge and a settlement site at Common plantation.

A great change came when the Museum Service acquired new headquarters at Chilcomb House in Winchester and moved its staff, at the same time it decided that it could not be directly involved in archaeological excavation. The members of the Group were very concerned because although they still had the goodwill and help from the Museum, the Museum had ceased to provide the driving force. At this time another site, known from air photographs at Ructstalls Hill was about to be developed and it was hoped to investigate it more fully prior to development rather than, as had happened in the past, working amongst the building operations.

Discussion among the members took place and it was fairly soon agreed that a Society should be formed, although the form was not so easy to arrange as it was felt that the historical research aspect should be included. In the end it was decided that as the over-riding need was to dig Ructstall Hill, it was best to form an Archaeological Society with the hope that in later years the scope of interest could be widened.

An inaugural meeting was arranged at Chute House on 19th July 1971 and a committee elected consisting of John Oliver as Chairman, Barbara Applin, Secretary, Bob Applin, Treasurer, together with Anne Hawker, Mary Oliver and Richard Searle. One other name should be mentioned, - Tim Herrington, who, although he did not serve on the committee, was very influential in the formation of the Society.

The next ten years are another story; that of the dig at Ructstalls Hill can be read in the published report, although it is ironical that the site is still not built over. I am personally delighted that one of the early hopes has come to pass and that we now fully incorporate the historical interest. I hope that this broader scope will help the Society to attract a larger membership and maintain its research into the history of our town and district.

John Oliver.

### NEW LECTURE SEASON

You will be receiving with this newsletter your Programme of events for 1981-2 which includes all activities of the Society, practical and social as well as the lecture programme. The committee hope that this will act as an 'aide memoire' and encourage a good attendance at all functions.

Our lecture season starts with a prehistoric subject which should be of general interest - the fieldwork and excavation programme recently undertaken in the neighbourhood of Stonehenge. This is a WAC (Wessex Archaeological Committee) project under Julian Richards who will be coming to describe his work to us under the title 'Stonehenge and its environs'. Stonehenge and neighbouring Salisbury Plain are perhaps the prime archaeological area in the country, they are certainly the best known. Much work has been done there in the past, but there is still a great deal to be learned. We should have a most interesting evening hearing about the modern approach to this prolific and fascinating area.

'Stonehenge and its environs' by Julian Richards, 7.30 pm St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop, Wednesday, 30th September.

Our October lecture brings us forward in time to the Civil War period and to the specialist topic of firearms. This is a new subject for the Society, and we shall be pleased to welcome Nicholas Hall, Keeper of Decorative Metalwork, Hampshire County Museum Service. He is also Curator in charge of the museum at Havant, a relatively new arrival on the museum scene in Hampshire, and has a special interest in firearms. Firearms exert a fascination over those who collect and admire them, not only for their technical details but also for the workmanship involved in their decoration, some are veritable works of art. We look forward to Nicholas Hall's account of the development of firearms, and, as the county has a good collection of sporting guns, to some beautiful slides.

'Civil War Firearms and their predecessors' by Nicholas Hall, 7.30 pm, St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop, Wednesday, 28th October.

NB Our lecture meetings this year will all be on Wednesday not Thursday evenings, and will be held at St Mary's Hall Eastrop, not Chute House.

## ROYAL WEDDING 1863

It is interesting to compare the celebrations in Basingstoke to mark the recent wedding of the Prince of Wales with those that took place last time a Prince of Wales married. The following is the entry in the diary of Samuel Attwood for 10th March, 1863. The original diary is in the County Record Office, Winchester, and is a fascinating record of life in Basingstoke in the last century. The spelling and punctuation of the original have been retained.

" 1863 March 10 The Marriage of the The Prince of Wales & Princess Alexandra.

This day was ushered in by firing of Ordinance; Bells Ringing and Drum and Fife Band playing round about the town at 8, Oclock a.m. at half past nine The Rifle Band commenced playing, at 10 The 18th Hants. Basingstoke Rifle Volunteers fired a Feu De Joy in Winchester St and then Joined the Mayor Chas Webb, Esqr and town Council in the market Square, which was all covered in with a large tent, and proceeded to the London Road to join the burgesses their sons and Daughters, The Charity schools, Blue coat school, children, &c. The Clergy of all denominations in the town; The various Benefit Clubs, Odd Fellows, Forresters, &c with a band engaged for the occasion and a long procession paraded the town with banners, devices, and a great number of Floral decorations, and other manifestations of good feeling with much cheering closed at the Market Sq were a good dinner of Roast and boiled Beef, Mutton, Plumb puddings, Beer, Tobacco &c &c was provided by subscription, £210.10.0 for the poor of the town and Eastrop parishes numbering about 2400, not including many from the surrounding Villages, untill 4 O'clock, when the whole party walked in procession to the South Western and Great Western Stations, were a handsome parvillion was erected to contain 300 ladies to present an address to the Prince & Princess of Wales, by the Mayor and Corporation after which they returned to the Market sq to prepare for a dance in an enclosed space to the number of about 400, who kept it up till about 4 am.: a consert at 7 in the town hall until Ten P.M. when dancing commenced & continued untill a late hour, In addition to the above the Forresters club members roasted a fat sheep whole in the old cattle market and eat the whole of it for their dinner in a tent erected in the spot for that purpose, Nine Triumphant arches was erected in different parts of the town besides innumerable display of Flags, devices &c such demonstrations never took place in the old Loyal Town of Basingstoke in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. the whole closed without the slitest accident from begining to end. In addition to the above 72 of the corporation & trademen dined at the Angel 58 at the White Hart, 40 at the Feathers, 113 workmen and friends had a supper at the Angel; and all the poor in the Union poorhouse received a good dinner of Roast Beef, Plumb pudding, Ale Tobacco, Tea, and Plumb cake, &c. Mr Smith's takings in the dancing booth was about 20£ Balance left after all expences was paid 4.10.8 which was given to the charities of the Town"

## CRETE

Crete could almost be regarded as a compulsory holiday destination for those who are interested in history and/or archaeology. The island has undergone domination by Minoans, Romans, Venetians and Turks and all have left their mark. The outstanding Minoan sites at Knossos and Phaistos will be known to many and are impressive indeed. I saw them after a visit to the Archaeological Museum at Heraklion which has a superb collection of the best pieces from the major sites and, of course, the famous frescoes from Knossos. I think that this is the right way round to do it, although a second trip to the Museum after seeing the sites would be better still.

Whilst on the subject of museums, don't leave Heraklion without visiting the Historical Museum which picks up where the Archaeological Museum leaves off. In spite of the continuing controversy surrounding the "reconstruction" at Knossos, I thought that it was only at this site that one got a clear impression of the immense scale of the Minoan palaces. Try to visit, and here a car is invaluable, the lesser known but no less interesting sites such as Kato Zakros at the eastern end of the island, another palace but, unlike Knossos and Phaistos, this one is set by the sea amid a banana plantation. Excavations at this site began only in 1962 and much has yet to be uncovered. For the Roman fan, a visit to their capital Gortys (very near Phaistos) will disclose a fine amphitheatre and the Code of Laws - 17,000 letters of archaic Doric dialect carved on massive blocks of stone. Another Doric town not to be missed is Lato, somewhat inaccessible but superbly sited near the much-filmed village of Kritsa, a few kilometres from Agios Nikolaos (Ag.Nick. in tourist jargon). At the western end of the island the towns of Rethymnon and Chania have gone to seed somewhat from their Venetian and Turkish splendour but there is still much to be admired, including the massive fortress at Rethymnon, the minarets in both towns and the Venetian houses with their Turkish wooden balconies. Again the museums in Rethymnon and Chania, the former at the equivalent of a 15p admission fee, are well worth a visit.

You won't want to spend all of your holiday going round the sites and museums and Crete certainly has plenty to offer in the way of beaches, many very secluded if you take the trouble to look for them, spectacular mountain scenery (you should go in May for snow on the peaks), flora and fauna and religious art. Eating out is very cheap - a generous 2 course meal for 2, including retsina, for about £3 - and an enjoyable and leisurely experience into the bargain. A taverna meal at Kolimbari was enhanced by the gift of a bottle of retsina from the adjoining table and the disappointment of the local priest that we did not speak German, for he spoke no English. German, incidentally, is widely spoken - a legacy of the Occupation during the Second World War. Try to master the Greek alphabet before you go - the Cretans appreciate the attempt to pronounce the words, and although you can get by with English in the towns, hotels and tourist spots, you will have more difficulty in the country. If you can go on a bed and breakfast basis, as I did, you will probably have a lot more fun and also get to know the Cretans rather better than if you are tied to your hotel for meals. You need not worry about packing your picnic kit - it can be just as cheap to have a taverna meal, although if you like markets and shopping for food locally, you will probably want to picnic now and again anyway. Shopping can be tremendous fun - at a cheese shop in Rethymnon we were invited to sample the cheese and the raki (fiery ouzo) to the extent that when we left we went without the cheese and had to return for it amid much laughter and gestures indicating that an excess of raki damages the brain!

I should be happy to lend my maps, guide books etc. to members who are going to Crete or who are considering it as a possible holiday destination.

Susan Headley



## NOTES AND NEWS

### i) Newsletter

Owing to increasing postal costs, it has been decided to rationalise the number of editions of the newsletter. They will be issued at the following times, which should fit in well with the Society's programme

early November	.....copy date 30th October
mid January	.....copy date 23rd December
early March	.....copy date 13th February
mid May	.....copy date 29th April

Please let the Editor have your contributions by the copy dates given. You are again urged to contribute to the newsletter - your newsletter; places and sites you have visited, books you have read, anything which you feel would be of interest to other members - please write about them. Recent editions have been a little thin on contributions from members, so please send your copy and let us have four really fat newsletters to look forward to in 1981/2. Editor: Graham Hall, Apple Tree Cottage, Charter Alley, Basingstoke.

### ii) Fieldwalking and Potwashing

It is planned to continue last year's programme of activities in both these fields under the direction of Peter Heath. Details are still being arranged, but if you are interested in taking part please ring Peter on Basingstoke 27713.

### iii) Barn Dance

Another reminder about the Society's Barn Dance on Friday 23rd. October at Kempshott Village Hall. This will be held from 8 to 11p.m. and tickets are reasonably priced at £1.50, including supper. Last year's dance, organised as part of the fund raising programme was a great financial and social success. We hope that all those who enjoyed it last year will be pleased to come again and those who missed it will book the date now. Tickets are available at the first lecture or from any committee member.

### iv) Forthcoming events

Members are welcome to attend the lectures of other organisations listed in the calendar, though there may be a small nominal charge. Anyone (who is not a member of the Hampshire Field Club) interested in attending a function organised by them e.g. Local History Conference should contact our Secretary (Mary Oliver, Basingstoke 24263) as the Society has Corporate Membership. Some of you may be tempted to join as individual members to attend a conference organised by the Archaeological Section "Rural Archaeology in Hampshire" 21st. November from 10a.m. to 6.15p.m. at the Medical Science Building, Boldrewood, Southampton. This will provide an ideal opportunity to get up to the minute information on current research into rural archaeology in the county. Field Club membership costs £5 per annum (forms available at the Willis Museum) plus £4 for the receipt of the Proceedings. It should be remembered that the Society receives the Proceedings which are available to all members wishing to borrow them. Final details of speakers and conference fee have not yet been received, but anyone wishing to attend should contact the Secretary.

The Local History Section of the Field Club is Holding it's Annual Conference at King Alfred's College, Winchester, on Saturday, 26th. September when there will be three lectures on historical Documentation. Details again available from the Secretary.

For those who have not attended one before the CBA Group 12 annual open meeting is very much to be recommended. It consists of a

number of illustrated lecturettes, each 10 to 15 minutes, on various types of work in the area, with an opportunity in the tea-break to chat with friends from other societies, or look at the displays of finds brought along by member societies, or look at the books and pamphlets on the CBA bookstall. This year, the meeting is being held at Westgate School, Winchester, which is not far to travel, on Saturday 7th. November. Tickets will be available at Lecture Meetings or from the Secretary.

#### v) Evening Classes

As usual, the Basingstoke District of the WEA has a wide variety of subjects to tempt us away from our fireside this winter. Those on archaeological and historical subjects being held in the town are "Aspects of archaeology and early history" a series of ten meetings with different guest speakers to be held on Thursdays, starting 8th. October at 7.30 p.m. Cranbourne School, also "Documents for local history", ten meetings to be held on Wednesdays starting 13th January, 7.30pm. by Miss G. Rushton, venue to be decided later. There are also some classes to be held during the day, and also in the villages around the town, details available from Mrs. M.J. Stokes, 5, Richmond Road, Basingstoke 3798.

It is also hoped that the O Level course in Archaeology will run again at the Technical College. This is held on Monday nights from 7.00 to 9.00pm. Enrolment is on September 3rd, 4th and 7th (though late enrolment is possible). The course aims to give a grounding in British prehistory, particularly the palaeolithic, Iron Age and Roman periods, covers various archaeological methods of research and includes a special study of Old Kingdom Egypt. The examination is not compulsory!