

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Number 69

October 1981

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CALENDAR

14th November Evening of Folkmusic. Viables Centre
Friends of the Willis Museum. Tickets £1.50
from the Museum.

21st November Conference on Rural Archaeology in Hampshire,
organised by the Archaeological Section of the
Hampshire Field Club. To be held in the Adult
Education Department, Medical and Biological
Sciences Building, University of Southampton
am - pm

25th November November lecture: 'The Bronze Age Urnfield at
Kimpton'. Max Dacre. 7.30pm. St. Mary's Hall
Eastrop.

17th December Joint meeting with the Archaeological Section of
H.F.C. 'The Roman Cemetary at Alton'.
Martin Millett. 7.30pm. Willis Museum, New Street.

14th January Winter Social Function (Details enclosed)
1982 7.30 - 11.00pm. St. Michael's Church Cottage,
Church Street, Basingstoke.

27th January 'Present Archaeological Work in Egypt and British
Museum Expeditions'
Dr. A. J. Spencer, Assistant Keeper of Egyptology,
British Museum. 7.30pm. St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop.

Conference on Rural Archaeology in Hampshire.

As was mentioned in the last Newsletter this important conference organised by the Archaeological Section of the Field Club and the Adult Education Department of Southampton University is taking place on Saturday 21st November at the Medical and Biological Sciences Building of the University. The programme is a very full and wide ranging one, starting with the environmental evidence of mans impact on the landscape, farming and settlement patterns to end with the Saxon picture. There is also a session on 'This world and the next' dealing with Bevis Grave (a long barrow), and Hayling Island and other temples. The full programme is available from the Secretary, and the conference fee is £3.00. This conference is strongly recommended for all those who like to keep up to date with both professional and amateur research. As those who have been to previous conferences at the University will testify, they are friendly and stimulating occasions. Anyone wanting further details should contact me on B'stoke 24263.
M. Oliver.

November Lecture.

The Bronze Age Urnfield at Kimpton.

Some of our members will remember Mr. Max Dacre coming to lecture on his excavation at Kimpton, Near Andover, a long time ago. It was indeed one of the first lectures which we organised for the Society. Now, the many years of digging are over, and the equally many years of post excavation work completed. This very important site is about to appear in print in the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society. We are privileged that Max is to come and tell us the final interpretation of Kimpton, which has a significant contribution to make to the current revision of the Bronze Age. Archaeology is far from being a static subject, new evidence and more sophisticated methods of dealing with it mean that the story is constantly being updated. This is nowhere more true than of the Bronze Age. Burial sites are much more common in that period than settlement sites and Kimpton has a complex variety of funerary rituals drawn from several traditions. Those of you who visited the site will remember what a meticulous and thorough job was done in raising the notoriously crumbly urns, and in recording the overlying flint platform. I strongly recommend this lecture to you, I think we are promised a most interesting evening. It would be especially nice to have a good crowd of members to welcome back Max and Peggy Dacre.

7.30. Wed. 25th November.

Mary Oliver

The Roman Cemetery at Alton.

17th December.

As you will see from your programmes, this is an additional item to those already planned, it is in fact a joint meeting with the Archaeological Section of the H.F.C. and will be held at the Willis Museum. Martin Millett - who needs no introduction to this Society, is to lecture on his excavation of the Roman Cemetery at Alton, discovered during redevelopment of Kemp's builders yard in the High Street. Although he has been pre-occupied with the Saxon site at Cowdery's Down in recent years, Martin is primarily a Romanist (sic!) and he excavated for several years at Neatham, the Roman small town outside Alton and at the cemetery at Cuckoo's Corner, as well as this year's rescue dig. Martin is now lecturing in Roman Studies at Durham University, and it will be very nice to welcome him back to Hampshire on 17th December.

7.30pm. Thursday 17th December. Willis Museum, New Street, Basingstoke.

Winter Social Function.

Once again we have been lucky enough to be able to make use of the time machine for the Christmas party. There will be room for all the members and friends to come aboard, the take off is planned for 7.30pm. on Thursday 14th January, 1982, from Church Cottage at the rear of St. Michael's Church.

It is planned to set the controls to go back to Tudor times, about 1520, but as this machine is notoriously fickle, it may not be possible to make the journey for all the evening.

We can promise you an enjoyable evening, the chance to chat to friends, some slight stimulation for the brain, food and drink and to conclude, the chance, not only to see how the Basingstoke Court Leet was conducted, but the chance to actually be there and to participate. It will not be at all necessary to be dressed in the clothes of the period but if some of the time travellers can make the effort it will add to the atmosphere. Remember, the people of Basingstoke were unlikely to be attired in the latest court style.

The fare for this treat will be unchanged from last year at £1.75 for adults and 75p for children. In order to make catering arrangements, please inform Jean Heath, telephone Basingstoke 27713, with numbers by the end of the year. People not having booked will be welcome on the night, but should bring some contribution to the food

Report on the Society's Barn Dance, 23rd October, 1981.

I am pleased to record that our October Barn Dance was yet another successful social venture by the Society. Monetary profit will probably be small but as an advertisement and as a vehicle for members to meet each other informally it was invaluable.

'Corn Pigs' who provided the music were first class and succeeded in coaxing the most reluctant dancers on to the floor.

My thanks go to everyone who sold tickets, to the ladies who helped with refreshments and to those who manned the doors.

A Barn Dance is an ideal way of meeting and making friends and this may well become a permanent fixture on our calendar.

Alan Roach.

May I on behalf of the Committee and all members of the Society thank Alan and Doris Roach for organising once again, a very successful and enjoyable evening. I am sure that all will endorse Alan's own thoughts that this function should become a regular feature of the Society's year. Since Alan contributed the above, the Treasurer has informed me that proceeds will probably amount to £50. - Editor

The following two articles are each the fruit of first hand research which two of our members have done arising from Derek Spruce's W.E.A. evening class on 18th and 19th century Basingstoke. It is always encouraging to receive contributions from members who are motivated in this way - especially when the subject matter is local or topical (or better still, both!). This helps to enliven these pages and will, we trust, stimulate others to write for us. In this as in all else, one volunteer is worth ten pressed men! We are very happy to print these contributions by Barbara Applin and John Oliver and do thank them for their interest and for taking the trouble to put pen to paper (or fingers to typewriter!) in this way.

Editor.

Basingstoke Lesser Market.

In view of the recent decision to demolish Basingstoke's Lesser Market, in conjunction with the alteration of the Town Hall into offices and the formation of an improved entrance for the Haymarket Theatre, it is interesting to see some of the early developments on the site.

The Lesser Market was originally set up as a result of the 1829 Act of Parliament "for enlarging the Market Place in the Town of Basingstoke" when the area of ground was purchased and set aside for market purposes. One of the first definite references that I have found to the Lesser Market is an agreement between the Town Council and George Etheridge, Carpenter and Builder to erect an Engine House. This was in 1840 for a cost of £72. 3s. 0d. From the description it appears to have been an openfronted lean-to with iron columns and slate roof. It can be assumed that the engine in question was some form of hand pump to raise water from a well for use in the market. No doubt this was for watering the horses of the market traders and customers, washing down the area and even drinking water! At this time the only livestock on sale were poultry, as the main trade in animals was held in the Cattle Market, which was situated at Fairfields.

In 1851 the Town Council seems to have had a policy of improvement and regularising the Market which resulted in quite an upset in the area. As a result of the Council deciding to levy the tolls in Market, as laid down in the Act, the whole market was boycotted and a rival market set up in Old Basing at the Bolton Arms. This situation lasted for about a month then the Council capitulated and decided not to collect the tolls but to charge for the standings.

As a result of the improvements the following notice appeared in the 'Reading Mercury' of 9th August 1851

Lesser Market.

"The Town Council, with a view to the improvement of this market have lately incurred considerable expense in the erection of standing and stallage, and making it otherwise suitable to the convenience both of buyers and sellers; and, sensible of the pernicious influence on the market of the practice of hawking provisions about the town, have circulated notices that persons found hawking or exposing for sale in the streets of the town, on any day of the week, articles ordered to be exposed for sale in the Lesser Market, will subject themselves to the penalties of the Act for its regulation; and that the Police have strict orders to lay informations against all persons so offending. This is a step in the right direction, and it is earnestly hoped the inhabitants generally, who are so materially interested, will see the propriety and importance of furthering the object of the Corporation by steadfastly refusing to purchase poultry, vegetables and similar articles, except in the lesser market. Some slight inconvenience may at first be felt, from the absence of the customary supplies at the door, but ample compensation will be found in the abundant choice and supply furnished in the market, and the fair prices necessarily induced by competition. Situated in a populous locality, and itself containing 5,000 inhabitants, there is no reason why Basingstoke Lesser Market should, as heretofore, exist in the imagination only, and afford subject of merriment to casual visitors from other towns where the minor market is a fact and not a name only. The Town Council have only to follow up vigorously what has been so well begun, and (now that there are no leases to neutralize their efforts) aided by the good sense and firmness of the inhabitants generally, an efficient market

agreeable to the wishes and interest both of vendors and consumers, cannot fail to be the result"

In 1853 there is another contract in connection with the water supply in the Lesser Market, when the Council contracted with William Pistell, a plumber, to install a new double barrel engine pump, to clean out the well and reline it with brickwork to a depth of 7 feet. The pump was specified to be connected to 2" pipes one to Church Street and the other to Oat Street. This work cost £69. 6. 0d.

It is to be hoped that the new uses of the Lesser Market area will continue to be for the benefit of the people of Basingstoke.

John Oliver.

The Hazards and rewards of culture and entertainment in nineteenth century Basingstoke.

The 'Basingstoke Gazette' today carries notices of meetings of various societies, including our own, but they are never as revealing as the notices carried by the 'Reading Mercury' before the 'Gazette' began. In 1851 notices in the 'Mercury' of forthcoming events in Basingstoke were usually followed by reports of their success or failure, and the writers expressed themselves freely in praise or condemnation.

Praise could be very fulsome. The Ladies Patronesses Ball at the Town Hall on 14th January 1851 was "numerously and fashionably attended" with Lawson's celebrated quadrille band lending "its accustomed charm", and the main organiser received the kind of appreciation we should extend to Alan and Doris Roach, the organisers of our recent Barn Dance:

"the general arrangements under the superintendence of Mr Klitz were admirable and complete. On former similar occasions the Ladies Patronesses have entrusted the supply of the requisite refreshments to a gentleman of Southampton but in the present instance Mr. Klitz was selected for the first time for that duty. The effect was prominent and striking, and his exertions were rewarded by the entire approval of the distinguished company".

(By the way, what were the Ladies the Patronesses of? Does anyone know?)

Basingstoke had a rather serious-sounding Mutual Improvement Society, with apparently an offspring, the Youths' Mutual Improvement Society. Their speakers seemed to be fairly local, and often their own members. The 'Mercury' carried this notice on 18th January 1851:

"A most instructive and important lecture was delivered before a very large audience on Tuesday evening by the Rev. William Thorn, of Winchester, on "The Best Way of thriving in the World". Such a sound exposition of admirable principles and rules for the guidance of youth in the attainment of what all feel to be desirable - a satisfactory position in the world - cannot fail to be productive of good results, and the lecturer was eminently entitled to the cordial thanks of the meeting, which, at the close of the address, was presented to him. A paper will be read on Tuesday next, prepared by a young member of the Society, on 'Insect Transformation', and on the following Monday evening, Mr. T. Browne of Flexfield House

will deliver a lecture on 'The Poetry of Cowper', with illustrations'.

Other lectures were on 'Electricity' by a young member; 'A comparison of Ancient and Modern Genius' by a young working man of 17; 'The Harmony of Science with Revelation' by the Rev. Mr. Leog of Reading; 'Natural History of Creation' by Mr. Tabb; 'A Comparison between the wonders of the ancient and modern world' by Charles Ayliffe, junior, and 'The Nineteenth Century' By an unnamed speaker. At least one lecture was given in "The schoolroom of the Independent Meeting (Congregational Church)? London Street". Flexfield House was a local academy; the Ayliffes were painters, plumbers and decorators in the Market Place and Mr. Tabb was a compositor in the printing works of Robert Cottle in Winchester Street.

Basingstoke also had a flourishing Mechanic's Institute, whose building is now the Willis Museum. Their speakers appear to have come from farther away and they were not always given the reception they expected. The lectures on 'Natural Magic' by Charles Partington and on 'Hydropathy' by an unnamed speaker seem to have been received without any fuss, but Mrs. Balfour, who came from Bath, was less fortunate. Her "two well known lectures on English Female Poets" were reported very unfavourably on 13th February. The reviewer wondered if the thin attendance was because people had heard her before (and were not encouraged to repeat the experience) or because the committee had, unusually, decided to charge for attendance. The President and members of the Mechanics' Institute instantly wrote to the 'Mercury' to complain of the unfairness of this notice, but another letter was printed, from Samuel Chandler, junior, admitting that he had written the review. And he still held to his opinion, though perhaps the second lecture had been better than the first. The following week Mrs. Balfour herself wrote to the 'Mercury' to thank the President and members for so gallantly leaping to her defence.

I wonder what kind of reception the Youths Mutual Improvement Society gave to the two lectures they received on Basing House, by Samuel Chandler. I am not absolutely certain whether it was this Samuel Chandler, junior, who gave the lectures, or his father, Samuel Chandler Senior - both were printers, stationers and booksellers in Winchester Street; the father died in 1863 and the son became Mayor in 1869.

The unfortunate Mrs. Balfour decided to return to Basingstoke in November of the same year, but she met with another disaster of the kind that speakers (and organisers of lectures) dread:

"Mrs. Balfour was announced to deliver a lecture on Thursday evening to the members of the Mechanics' Institute, on 'The Study of Biography'. The audience assembled at the usual hour, but the lecturer did not appear. We have since ascertained that Mrs. Balfour had made her arrangements to leave Bath by the Great Western Railway, in a train which would have reached Reading in time for the branchtrain, but a serious accident occurred to a locomotive on the Great Western, which delayed the train two hours and occasioned the above disappointment".

However, Mrs. Balfour would not be beaten by Basingstoke, and on 22nd November the 'Mercury' announced:

"Two lectures have been delivered to the members (of the Mechanics' Institute) and others.. the first 'on the Study of Biography as an aid to self-culture' and the second 'On Eras in Literature and their effects in promoting moral and social advancement' by Mrs.

L.I. Balfour, in which she fully sustained her now established reputation, of which the best proof is that the sum collected from visitors nearly covered her charge of five guineas for the two lectures; which, therefore, as far as the funds of the Institution are concerned, may be considered almost gratuitous. We may here observe that we do not know which was most worthy of admiration - the matter, the manner or the moral of Mrs. Balfour's lectures".

I suspect that the President made sure that Mr. Chandler did not write this review. However, he had to defend yet another speaker on 13th December, when he wrote to the 'Mercury' to complain that the report of the lecture by Mr. Richards on 'The History of the House of Commons' had not been sufficiently approving. Basingstoke must have had a bad reputation on the public speaking circuit. Should we warn our future speakers?

Barbara Applin.

Visit to Littlecote and Afterthoughts.

One sunny Saturday afternoon back in August, my family and I paid a visit to Littlecote House, just the other side of Hungerford. The prime objective of the visit had been to see the live display of Roman military drill and assault weapons put on by a visiting group.

This was entertaining and instructive (although one was left wishing for some indication of the source or sources on which the spectacle was based as a guide to its historical accuracy). However, as a result of the visit we reaped a double bonus in that we 'discovered' both Littlecote House and the excavation of the Roman villa with its magnificent mosaic floor in Littlecote Park. Curiously, (as it now seems to us) we were unaware of the existence of either until we planned the visit. True enough, Littlecote House is listed in the Historic Houses Handbook, published in both hardback and paperback by Macmillan, so we did not arrive totally unprepared for what we found.

Littlecote is a charming late fifteenth century Tudor manorhouse, which deserves to be better known. It is full of traditional English oak furniture and panelling - including much linen-fold and some of the rare flute-motif. Like many houses dating from the same original period, it has been extended and modified down the years, noticeably in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - with even a heated indoor swimming pool being added by the father of the present owner as recently as 1935! However, do not be put off by this concession to the twentieth century which has been added with taste and due concern for the character of the house. It is quite unobtrusive and in any case, is in a part of the house not open to the public.

There is a very fine Great Hall and the house is worth a visit for this alone - there is so much of interest in it. There is space here to mention but one feature (which is topical in view of last month's lecture) and that is the very fine collection of Civil War firearms, and battle-dress alluded to by our speaker at one point in his talk. Indeed, the collection has the reputation of being the finest collection anywhere in the country outside London.

For those who relish the subject of hauntings there is a haunted landing and bedroom with a story concerning the foul misdeeds of a

notable black sheep of a family who owned the house in the sixteenth century, one William Darrel. But I am not going to spill the beans and if you want to know more, you must visit the house for yourself!

After we had been round the house led by a very helpful (although not especially knowledgeable) guide we made our way past the south front of the house towards the west where we watched the Roman Military display. We then moved over to the Roman Villa excavation in a clearing in a slightly wooded area close by a stream. Those who are familiar with the much more famous Roman mosaic floor at Fishbourne Palace will know how colourful and fascinating these floors are. This one relates to the mystery cult of Orpheus.

The entire area has been divided into two sites and is being excavated by Bryn Walters and Bernard Phillips. Their most recent (second) interim report relates to work on Site 2, the river side site during 1979 and 1980. On this site, which was occupied intermittently from the middle of the first century A.D. to the late eighteenth century, no fewer than fourteen periods of construction or re-building have been distinguished.

The villa (site 1) has been temporarily covered after a period of excavation which would presumably be the subject of the first interim report (and which I have not seen). However, the mosaic floor of the Orphic hall, mentioned above, has been meticulously restored and is open to view (although perhaps not at this time of the year). The latest report helpfully adds a lengthy description of the import of the mosaic which there is not room to recount here. What is perhaps particularly interesting and noteworthy though, is that Orpheus is basically a Greek rather than a Roman god and that as far as can be discerned at present in this mosaic he seems to act as a catalyst absorbing into a single god-head all the powers and identities of the classical pantheon. The Authors of the report say that 'This syncretic neoplatonic mythology was a form adopted by some latter day pagan cults in direct opposition to the Christian church. It failed inasmuch as it was ultimately to form a bridge between pagans and Christians'.

Now this is interesting because much of the description of the Orphic cult beliefs (as far as they can be determined at this stage) which follows in the report seems at variance with, or at best, a complex and ill matched elaboration of the classical myth of Orpheus as the son of Apollo (or of Oeagrus, King of Thrace - authorities differ on this point, anyway) and husband of Eurydice, who died from the bite of a snake. The classical story tells of how Orpheus went down into the underworld and, by virtue of his musical skills, struck a bargain with the nether powers of darkness by which he might retrieve his loved Eurydice provided he preceded her out of hell and did not look back. Almost at the border, he forgot his bargain and looked back at her and saw her for an instant before she was lost forever.

It seems therefore probable that the classical story was elaborated in classical times and on into the world of the early centuries of the present era as part of the mystic cult of Orpheus - just as Christianity itself was troubled in its early development by gnostic heresy. The authors of the report state that Julian II (a relation of Constantine I) became Emperor in Gaul in A.D. 360 (i.e. about the same time as the villa) and was known as 'The Apostate' because of 'his attempt to supplant Christianity with a revival of Classical paganism'. It seems that he richly rewarded those who complied with his desire to restore pagan worship and it is not hard to imagine that there would have been those prepared to assist this process by elaborating on the classical stories with a good helping of ~~syncretism~~ from

competing sources! A challenging thought then, and perhaps a fruitful field for further study, is the extent to which Christianity (often charged with borrowing much from other religions) may also and simultaneously have been the spur which prompted new, reactionary developments in those same pre-existent cults? Ah well, another time perhaps

Graham Hall

News, notes and notices.

Membership Subscriptions 1981 - 82.

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the current season are now well overdue. If you have not yet paid please respond promptly to this friendly "nudge" and send your remittance of £3. 00 (or £4. 00 joint subscription) to Mrs. Susan Headley our treasurer (address: 31 Winchester Street, Overton, Basingstoke). Your co-operation will be very much appreciated and will help us to keep our expenses under control by not having to send out individual reminders.

Brittany Trip.

All members interested in taking part in the holiday to Brittany planned for next year are invited to come to coffee at 3, Milkingpen Lane, Old Basing, at 11.0am on Saturday 12th December, to decide which is the most convenient date for all members of the party, and to begin to work out some of the details of the trip with the organiser, Katie Smith. If 12th December is not convenient, please ring the Secretary (B'stoke 24263) with your preferential dates, so that firm plans can be made on that morning.

Field Walking.

It is hoped that this year's field walking programme will shortly get underway. Details of times and venues will be available from Peter Heath, who has kindly agreed to organise this activity for the Society. Anyone who has not been fieldwalking before but would like to join the team would be very welcome - no prior knowledge necessary! Please ring Peter on Basingstoke 27713:
*Stop press!! Fieldwalking arranged for 22nd & 29th November
10.0am Worthingwood Farm*

Friends of the Willis Museum.

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Willis Museum, Councillor Dudley Keep was elected as the first President of the Society in recognition of the valuable work he has done in supporting the development of the Friends Association. At the meeting, Chairman Bill Dutton outlined three aims for the coming year. Firstly, to encourage recruitment of new Friends of the Museum, and secondly, to offer them a varied and interesting programme of monthly meetings and extra events - field days, archaeological site visits and the like. The third aim is to encourage fund-raising activities to improve the Museum facilities to meet the Curator's aim to make the Willis Museum the best in the Country.

Membership application forms are available either from the Museum or from the Friends Secretary, Shirley Whatmore, telephone Silchester 700784, or office Basingstoke 29141.

Contributed by Bill Dutton, Chairman, Friends of
the Willis Museum

The Archaeology of Hampshire

Some many issues ago, this Newsletter ran a review of a conference called The Archaeology of Hampshire held at Southampton University in November 1978 which was attended and enjoyed by several members of this Society. It was intended that the conference papers should be published as soon as possible; there are always understandable delays, but the volume has at last appeared, edited by Tim Schadla-Hall and Steve Shennan and published by the Hampshire Field Club. As the papers have been revised since the conference, it provides the most accurate and up to date survey of the archaeology of the county, - in fact

nothing approaching its scope has been published since J.P. Williams Freeman's 'Field Archaeology as illustrated by Hampshire' in 1915 ! It consists of chapters on the main chronological periods, three chapters on environmental evidence, and one on the intensive survey of a particular area. The editors point out in their introduction that the book is aimed particularly at amateur archaeologists, who did much of the groundwork on which the papers were based. It is available from the Willis Museum, price £6.50 (£5 for Field Club members) and is recommended as a valuable addition to the library of all members interested in Hampshire Archaeology.

N.B. Plenty of time to drop hints about Christmas presents !

The new Archaeology Gallery, Willis Museum

This is an advance notice to members to watch the press for notice of the opening to the public of the new archaeology gallery at the museum. There is to be an Official Opening of all the work recently done at the museum to mark its 50th anniversary, but the gallery should be open to view before then. Some of us who are also 'Friends' had a preview at the AGM and it is certainly a most attractively laid out gallery. The Curator describes the plan behind the display as being a guide to the artifacts of the different periods; there are certainly some very fine examples on show, many of which have not been on display before, the results of recent archaeological activity in the area. The objects are backed up by clear illustrative and descriptive panels and together they tell the story from Stone Age to Saxon times, when the Town gallery takes over. Basingstoke has been too long without an archaeological display, which makes this new gallery especially welcome and well worth a trip to the Willis to see.

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