

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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## CALENDAR

Wednesday 26th May	The Romans in North Africa by D. Johnston 7.30 p.m. St Mary's Hall, Eastrop.
Saturday and Sunday 12th/13th June	Open Days at Chilcomb headquarters of the Hampshire County Museum Service, Winchester.
Thursday 17th June	A History of the Basingstoke Canal by Robin Higgs. Friends of the Museum, Willis Museum, New Street, Basingstoke.
Saturday 19th June	Excursion to Littlecote and Avebury
Saturday 26th June to Saturday 17th July	Excavations at Basing House
Saturday 3rd July	Trip to Botley Manor Farm and Eling Tide Mill, Friends of the Museum, for details contact Dr Gavin Bowie, Willis Museum, Basingstoke tel: 65902.
Wednesday 7th July	The Society's Annual General Meeting 7.30 p.m. St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop.

The Romans in North Africa by Mr David Johnston.

The last lecture this season will be on Wednesday 26th May on a very popular subject - the Romans. I don't think a year has passed without at least one lecture or visit on some aspect of Roman studies. Usually however our look at the Romans is local, or at least in our own province of Britannia, but this year we are going to the opposite end of the empire to North Africa, where the climate and, in some cases, lack of subsequent buildings, have resulted in a remarkable degree of preservation. It should be most interesting to put fabric on the foundation as it were, to see the familiar building plans in another dimension, and to see what differences there were between the most northerly and the most southerly provinces of the empire.

David Johnston will be known to many members: he has lectured in Basingstoke (some years ago) on the Romans, has excavated widely in Hampshire - perhaps his best known site was the villa at Sparsholt near Winchester, and is at the Department of Adult Education at Southampton University. David has led study tours to North Africa, obviously with great enjoyment. We can expect a well illustrated and enthusiastic closing lecture on 26th May, which will perhaps inspire us to look farther afield than Brittany for our next Society holiday! Ah well, we can all dream!

26th May, St. Mary's Hall, Eastrop, 7.30 p.m.

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Society Excursion to Littlecote and Avebury

Saturday 19th June

We have again tried to organise a full day field excursion by coach for members, after receiving vocal support for the idea at last year's AGM, in spite of having to cancel last year's proposed trip. The plan has been changed a little from last year, but is similar in its intent to cover a wide time span. This year the itinerary is as follows: a drive across the downs to Hungerford, with a view of the Wilton windmill: stop for coffee and a quick glimpse at the antique shops and other delights of Hungerford before going on to Littlecote House where we will be given a guided tour of the house at 11.30 a.m. I'm sure members will recall Graham Hall's fascinating article on his visit to Littlecote, and his description of the Tudor Manor House, with its splendid great hall housing a collection of Cromwellian armour, and even a haunted bedroom! As is usual on these occasions we hope members will bring a picnic lunch which many will then have the opportunity to eat at the tables on the terrace. After lunch we shall be shown round Littlecote's other attraction - the Roman villa - by its excavator, Bryn Walters. Littlecote villa is of the splendid 4th century type. Its chief treasure is a remarkable mosaic depicting Orpheus. As Graham explained, this mosaic is being interpreted as evidence for the Orphic cult - a mystery religion which may have emulated Christianity in its early years and which possibly contributed something to the development of the church - this I think is Bryn Walters theory which I'm sure he will expound as he describes the dig.

After Littlecote we go on to Avebury, where there is a wide choice of things to do. The stone circle and henge monument is a must for all (it can scarcely be ignored) and the prehistoric theme can be followed up by a visit to the Alexander Keiller Museum which has a very fine collection of prehistoric material from the famous sites of Salisbury Plain. For those whose interests are rather later, there is a recently opened museum of rural life: also Avebury Manor is worth a visit. It is also possible to get tea at Avebury. We should be back in Basingstoke by 7.00 p.m. at the latest. The cost for this excursion has been kept at a reasonable level, but naturally has to assume that the majority of available seats will be filled. The cost has been fixed at £4.00 per adult, and £2.50 per child. This includes the entrance fees at Littlecote House. Please telephone Mary Oliver on Basingstoke 24263 if you wish to go. Do please come if you can and bring your friends, they are always thoroughly enjoyable - if exhausting days, and it would be very sad if we had to cancel a second excursion because of lack of support.

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## Festival of India

The current Festival of India has made India a topical subject. Due to my natural affinity I have visited many of the current exhibitions and was most impressed by the one at the Hayward Gallery on the South Bank in London, entitled In The Image Of Man, and believe it may be of interest to many of our members.

The exhibition spans two thousand years of history and tries (quite effectively) to show that such a long time span has not changed very much of the imagery, fundamental cultural values and art of India. It occupies the whole of the Hayward Gallery. It is laid out in an apparently non-cohesive sequence but actually is in the various main areas of Indian thought and mythology. The main ones are: Enlightenment (Buddha and Mahāvira) Devotion (Rama and Krishna) and Mythology (Shiva and Vishnu). There is a continuous slide/sound programme of about 30 minutes duration which explains a few fundamentals of Hindu beliefs.

There is a display of many miniature paintings in the Life At Court section, which reflect quite accurately, I think, the pre-occupations of Indian peoples such as government, war, hunting, etc. They also show life in the palaces: ideal beauty, ideal love, etc. The paintings are exquisite and intricate in design; always crowded.

The first four sections - Natural Life - Abundance Of Life - Man in the Cosmos and Four Goals Of Life, do not really succeed I believe, in conveying a clear message. It is understandable because of the vastness of the area of knowledge it tries to cover in a very limited space. It tries to say something by images which is more easily expressed with words.

What is on display is the artistic expression of consistent and continuous human experience of life spanning 2000 years and conveying traditions even much older. Because the imagery and values have changed very little it is difficult to believe that two adjacent similar exhibits are 15 centuries apart in time.

The aesthetic is exotic but the meanings are of direct relevance today.

Bob Mulla.

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## The Welfare State 1798

One of the documents which I had the chance to study, during the recent WEA course on documents, was the Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Basing. This gave a fascinating insight into the ways a parish helped those who had fallen on bad times and an intriguing glimpse of the personal histories of some of the people living in Basing nearly two hundred years ago.

The first thing that is obvious is that the Overseer of the Poor had a very unenviable task, in the one year there are many hundreds of entries, hardly a day passes without a batch of payments. I do not know if there was some set time or place to make a claim, but I suspect that this was not so, it is more likely that those needy people went knocking on his door. The books I saw only dealt with daily payments. He also had to make monthly payments and probably, the hardest task of all, to collect the Poor Rate.

In one year the Daily Disbursements amounted to £393 3s 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d and for half the year other payments, for which I did not see details, were £141 1s 9d. If you consider that the weekly wage for a labourer was 8s 0d this probably represents £40 of today's money, so to equate 1798 expenses with today you must at least multiply by 100. This means that even if the hand outs were pretty small, the total amounted to a very heavy burden particularly on the small farmers.

Most of the payments of poor relief went to help people who were ill and to widows, it does not seem that many people were paid because they were out of work. The names of recipients include some who only appear once where their rent was paid and one surmises that these were old persons who were nearly able to support themselves. The widows and dames appear sometimes receiving relief - sometimes being paid for nursing and laying out, this meant they were doing useful jobs and saving on the poor rate.

One of the most interesting aspects of the record is to trace individual persons. For instance, throughout the year weekly sums varying between 2s 0d and 6s 0d are paid to Samuel Ackland "when ill", then in August similar payments are paid to Samuel Ackland's family, then you find the reason for the change with a payment for Samuel Ackland's laying out and burial. It seems that orphans were looked after in the village. John Drumwood was paid for looking after Charlott Pain, and Thos. Cobbet for looking after Martha Pain at the rate of 2s. 0d each per week. Dame Drumwood received £1 1s 0d "to buy clothes for the Pains children".

The longest history to be learnt concerns Elizabeth Humphreys who we meet at the start of the year receiving 1s 0d per week. But on January 11th 3s 0d was paid for her "being sworn and a warrant to take Wm. Rumigate". The next week it is Elizabeth Rumigate who is receiving the relief, no doubt the marriage register would explain the change of name! In fact later we find fairly heavy expenses of £9 15s 2d for "apprehending William Rumigate, his marriage examination etc". The expenses do not end there - the weekly payments to Elizabeth increase. On March 6th there is mention of her lying in. She probably had a difficult lying in because three different people are paid for nursing her and 2s 0d is paid for "Gin and Beer", presumably for medicinal purposes! She is mentioned for the last time on May 28th with "Paid Expenses at Newnham when carried Elizh. Rumigates child home 5s0d." The poor husband gets the last mention on October 27th when Geo. Tubb of Hals (Hales Farm) is paid £1. 4s 0d for taking Wm. Rumigate. All this dates from the time when it was law that unmarried, pregnant women were examined by the Justices and told to reveal the father's name, who was then expected either to marry the girl or to support the child.

I do not know the circumstances that resulted in three payments of £5 1s 0d for "part of the Exps. of hiring a substitute to serve in the Militia". It sounds like a way of avoiding conscription, and I cannot understand why the Parish should be so generous. Another curiosity is the money paid to Jos. Corderly paid for "Beer at burials", at first I assumed this to be some hire charge for the bier to carry the coffin, but I have a suspicion that it is beer to drink as he could be an innkeeper, certainly he gets £8 1s 0d for "a Bill of Expenses at a Meeting to settle the rate" and 18s 0d for boarding John Faggas.

There are quite a number of official expenses, for meetings, going to Basingstoke to settle the Poor Rate, f times a year for "signing a rate" and £49 17s 0d for the County Rate. Jno. Lee seemed a useful person being paid 10s 0d for measuring land for making a new rate" and 2s 0d for "curing ye Itch". A lot cheaper than Mr Thomas the apothecary who was paid £14 14s 0d for medicines unspecified and ineffectual judging by the way most of the sick people die!

One final sidelight to those records is the insight into the Hampshire dialect. I bet the descendants of Mrs Aris who was paid 3s6d for making shirts for the Parish children, are known as Harris. Hanner Huss had me puzzled for along time until someone a little more enlightened made an entry and I find she was Hannah Hughes. Hanner and Hannah is obvious, but Huss and Hughes takes a bit of thinking about.

John Oliver.

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## BASINGSTOKE

Mrs Carpenter Turner's less than flattering opening remarks about present-day Basingstoke, at her recent lecture to the Society, have prompted me to produce some recollections for the 1950-65 period. When I compare the town that I remember with the present town, I come to the conclusion that the 'Old' Basingstoke was not a better place than the 'New' Basingstoke; for me, for all its shortcomings, the present Basingstoke is a better town. In many instances the rosy coloured spectacles are all too obviously tinting people's memories of what was rather a tatty town.

Basingstoke has grown where it has because of its nodal position in the road and later rail networks. It would have continued to grow naturally if the Town Council had not promoted its growth. The Basingstoke of the 1980s would not have been the Basingstoke of the 1950/60s unchanged. I feel that the disturbance of the town development programme has been preferable to what would have been produced by the piecemeal development of the town. The ring road and the hospital alone repay a very great deal.

The town I remember had a traffic-choked shopping area with small shops (the Co-Op in New Street was huge compared with everything else) that could not really cope with the then population of about 25,000 and growing. In education one either passed the 11+ and went to the Grammar School (boys) or High School (girls) or were relegated to the Fairfields Secondary Modern (Later the Shrubbery was built for the girls and Richard Aldworth School at South Ham took both). At Queen Mary Grammar School, which I attended from 1951-6, some of the staff were unable to forget they were no longer teaching in a semi-private school which had pretensions. We were not encouraged to fraternise with other schools in the town. However, we were given a sound education in a restricted range of subjects.

Employment was mainly in the engineering and related industries in a small number of companies. At the time I left school although jobs were plentiful, the choice was limited mainly to apprenticeships with the big companies, banking, at the recently established AWRE or commuting out of the town to Reading or Winchester. Commuting to London on the steam railway had not become established in a big way then. By the early 1960s the range of companies in the town was beginning to widen.

If one was sick or injured only the very simple things were dealt with in Hackwood Road hospital. Everything else was dealt with in Winchester, with all the travelling that involved in the days of much lower car ownership.

In sport, there was provision for the major sports, including a very substandard swimming pool.

There were plenty of special interest clubs and societies, as there are now, but no professional theatre. The highlight of the year at the Haymarket was the 'Opera' (D'Oyley Carte) by the Thornycroft group, and later the BATS musicals.

The town had its drunks and layabouts then, but instead of congregating in Porchester Square and the Memorial Gardens, they were to be found around the old bus station or in the Park. I think probably the ratio of drunks per head of population has gone down!

It is true that a few interesting buildings were demolished to make way for the shopping centre, but they were individual buildings of merit in a mass of poor quality repairs and additions to earlier structures and

Victorian infilling. Basingstoke never was a Winchester and would never have become an Odiham.

During question time at the lecture, it was shown that only three people out of about the 60 present were native to Basingstoke; however, many were residents of long standing. I would be interested to hear their views, but my main purpose is to present to members of the Society who are post-development incomers the other side of the picture that is usually painted about 'Old' Basingstoke.

BOB APPLIN

#### FOUR MARKS

Driving from New Alresford to Alton along the A31, one passes through an area of 1920/30s unplanned development called Four Marks that appears to be best quickly driven through and forgotten.

The area that is now Four Marks was a Homesteading plantation set up after the 1914/18 war, based on a small nucleus of scattered farms and houses (similar Homesteads were set up in the Winklebury and Kempshott areas of Basingstoke), and the village that it has become has grown to its present size by the provision of dormitory housing for the larger towns of central Hampshire and London commuters.

Recently the village held an exhibition of its history to celebrate the jubilee of its incorporation as a civil parish. Having seen the exhibition advertised in the Hampshire Chronicle, Barbara and I visited it.

Each of the village organisations (W.I., Scouts, senior citizens etc.) put on a display of their own activities over the years and there was a general exhibition of historical objects loaned by individuals. The quantity of material on display must have meant many hours of work by the team assembling and mounting the exhibition.

A slide presentation was given of the restoration of the village pond over a period of five years by a dedicated team of volunteers. They made what was a decrepit swamp into an attractive picnic place. An interesting object that came out of the pond along with all the old bottles and other junk was a late nineteenth-century lady's riding cape (I wonder what is the story behind that); after restoration it looked in quite good condition.

The time and petrol used visiting this exhibition was well spent for the social and agricultural history of the early twentieth century that we learnt. For instance, there were photographs of the Hampshire County Council's travelling van for instructing the Homesteaders in animal husbandry. And we learnt other odd facts, such as that there was a telegraph station in Four Marks, on the visual telegraph route from London to Plymouth; the village is one of the highest in Hampshire.

Next time we drive past the clutter on the A31 we will remember that there is more to Four Marks than meets the eye of the passing motorist.

BOB APPLIN

## VOICES OF BASINGSTOKE 1400 - 1600

At her recent lecture, Mrs Carpenter-Turner urged anyone working on local history in this area to publish their work, and she urged all those interested not just to borrow these publications from the library, but to buy them. As she spoke, she was looking particularly at Anne Hawker, whose book, Voices of Basingstoke 1400 - 1600 will be our Society's first publication this autumn. More details will be given later in the year, but meanwhile members may like to know that the manuscript has been edited and passed to the typesetter.

This publication has been made possible by a very generous grant from the Four Lanes Trust, to which we shall add a contribution from the Society's funds and the £50 allocated for this purpose by the Willis Historical Society when it merged with the Basingstoke Archaeological Society to form our present Society.

We shall be conducting an energetic sales campaign during the course of the year, and I should be glad if anyone who can offer help will let me know (Basingstoke 65439).

BARBARA APPLIN

## THE MARY ROSE

The latest news of this Tudor warship, which sank in the Solent on July 19th, 1545, is that it is hoped to raise her this autumn. Meanwhile the ship's effects will be on display at Southsea Castle, and in July there will be a major display about the Mary Rose Project at Longleat House, Wilts.

## VIKING HISTORY IN ENGLAND

More than 700 Viking objects from national museums in Britain, Denmark and Sweden are on display at the Yorkshire Museum, York (from April 3rd to September 30th, Monday to Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm). They include decorated weapons, manuscripts of the Viking king Cnut, replicas of Viking boats etc., and a collection of Viking Age sculpture. And, of course, objects from the excavation at Coppergate in York. A series of celebrity lectures is being arranged to coincide with the exhibition (details from the York Archaeological Trust, 3 King's Court, King's Square, York, YO1 2BH).

## HOLES IN THE GROUND

Bob and I, being compulsively drawn to holes in the ground, went to look into the footings trenches dug for a new house at Kite Hill (Old Kempshott Lane). We saw nothing but clean chalk and tree-root disturbance, but even this negative evidence is useful as the Roman road runs just behind this site and there could very well have been something connected with it.

This prompted me to wonder how many of our members make a point of looking into any trenches like these. The Society did once start to record any investigations of this sort, even when, as now, nothing was found - but there wasn't much response. I am sure that if anyone did find any pottery or other signs of occupation they would soon let a committee member know, but perhaps I should ask once again if people could let us know of any holes they have investigated, whether 'clean' or not - and exactly where they were.

BARBARA APPLIN

## Notes and News

Training excavation : once again a highly successful and enjoyable dig was held over the Easter Bank Holiday, very well supported by members the vast majority of whom had had no previous practical experience. The weather was kind and our efforts were rewarded by several features and although finds were sparse they were usefully positioned! Work will go on by those who took part to wash the finds, study the drawings and plans and write up a report which will appear in this newsletter in due course.

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Excavation at Basing House: it seems appropriate to follow up news of the training dig with an appeal for help on the HCMS dig at Basing House which continues this year under the direction of Mr Ken Barton the Director of Museums and which runs from Saturday 26th June to Saturday 17th July. As before, attention will be directed to the gate-house area, where it is hoped this year to reach the earliest levels. All help, whether during the weekend or the week, will be welcome and there is some financial help available towards travelling costs if necessary. Anyone interested in helping should contact the Willis Museum, New Street, for an application form.

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Sherborne St John skeleton: members probably saw in the press or on TV reports of the discovery by the children of the junior school, Sherborne St John of human bones in the school garden. The 4th year children were involved in a study of the history of their village and as a practical exercise were sent into the school garden to look for fragments of pot, clay, pipe etc. The headmaster Mr Cox had demonstrated to the children the importance of keeping proper records of anything they found. Members may be interested to know that the Society followed up this find by an offer of help to finish the dig, with the children present if they wished. This is planned to take place shortly.

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Basingstoke Books. Those who enjoyed Mrs Barbara Carpenter-Turner's lecture on the Parish of Basingstoke in the Middle Ages might be interested to know of a recent aquisition of Mrs Susan Batstone's which she has kindly offered to make available to members: several volumes of the Victorian History of Hampshire by Rev. Wilkes, including the relevant volumes for this area. They were found in an attic and are a little musty, but they are a very useful source of information. Such books are extremely hard to come by these days, and it is very kind of Mrs Batstone to offer to share her "find" with other members.

Mrs S. Batstone, 2 Augustus Drive, Roman Park, Basingstoke.

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### The Society's Annual General Meeting 1982: Notice of Meeting

This year's AGM will be held on Wednesday 7th July at 7.30 p.m. St Mary's Hall, Eastrop.

NB This meeting will be held in the small hall.

At the meeting, the Committee propose to place before the membership a RESOLUTION to change the Constitution to increase the size of the committee so that in addition to the three elected officers of the Society, it shall have six other elected members. In accordance with the provision of the Constitution the approval of a two-thirds majority of members present is required to give effect to this change.

Please come along to support your Society, vote in your new committee and offer your comments and suggestions.

After the usual business we hope that members taking part in the Brittany trip will describe their holiday and show some of their slides.

Would members please note that 1982/83 subscriptions are now due and that in order to be eligible to attend and vote at the Agm subscriptions should be paid in advance.



HFC Trips: The Archaeology Section of the Field club have a number of trips organised for this summer. They are

- 1) Isle of Wight 5th June- to visit Carisbrooke Castle, Newport medieval town and Brading Roman Villa. Assemble 9.20 a.m. Redfunnel ferry Terminal 1.
- 2) Winchester 17th July to visit St. Mary's Abbey excavation and Wolvesley Palace 2.00 p.m. outside the Cathedral.
- 3) Silchester 1st August Excavations and monument. Coach picking up in Basingstoke 10.30 a.m.
- 4) Butser 15th August to Iron Age Demonstration area and neighbouring earthworks. Admission £1.50

Those booking a coach trip will cost an additional £2.50.

For further details, please contact the Secretary on Basingstoke 24263

#### STOP PRESS NOTE FROM THE RECENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Accepting the lessons of last year's cancelled summer outing the Committee have planned this year's on the basis that we do not require a completely full coach to cover costs. In the confident expectation that we shall do somewhat better than merely break even, we are proposing to use any surplus from the outing to provide an appropriate launching occasion for Ann Hawker's book. The exact form this will take is as yet undecided but the provision for it will be quite distinct from the actual costs of launching and distributing the book i.e. expenditure on promotion and publicity. So please support your Society by coming on the outing - which will in turn help to provide a worthwhile launch for our first publication!

#### EDITOR'S APPEAL FOR ARTICLES

We hope that all members have found our less frequent but more "meaty" Newsletters interesting and worthwhile. We intend to keep this up - but to do so we need your help, please. How nice it would be if we could commence the new season with a surplus fund of unsolicited articles from members, perhaps based on some place of historic or archaeological interest visited during the summer holidays? The Editor would appreciate this so very much.....

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