

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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CALENDAR

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| Wednesday, 6th October | 'The Mary Rose' by Margaret Rule at the Hexagon, Reading |
| <u>Thursday, 7th October</u> | RECENT RESULTS FROM SAXON SOUTHAMPTON by Mark Brisbane, <u>7.30 pm, Jackson Room, Chute House</u> |
| Thursday, 21st October | AGM of Friends of the Willis Museum, with 'Castles in the Channel Islands' by K J Barton, Willis Museum |
| <u>Thursday, 4th November</u> | BRITISH COIN FINDS by Edward Besly, <u>7.30 pm, Jackson Room, Chute House, Basingstoke</u> |
| Friday, 12th November | 'The Mary Rose Drama', 7.30 pm at Farnborough (further details phone Farnborough 511208) |
| Wednesday, 17th November | 'Fieldwalking', Alton History & Archaeology Society, 7.30 pm, Community Centre, Alton |
| Thursday, 18th November | 'Butser - a decade of Ancient Farming' by Peter Reynolds (Friends of Willis Museum) Willis Museum |
| Saturday, 20th November | 'Urban Archaeology in Hampshire' One-day Conference, Hampshire Field Club, Southampton University |
| <u>Thursday, 2nd December</u> | EXCAVATIONS AT ST MARY'S ABBEY, WINCHESTER by Annie Robinson, joint meeting with Hampshire Field Club, <u>7.30 pm, Willis Museum</u> |

NB Our lecture evening has now become
the first Thursday of the month
 and we meet in the Jackson Room,
Chute House at 7.30 p.m.

RECENT RESULTS FROM SAXON SOUTHAMPTON

The Society's October lecture will be given on Thursday, 7th October by Mark Brisbane, of Southampton Museums, who has sent us this introductory note.

Southampton offers a unique archaeological story of three ports: Roman (Clausentum), Saxon (Hamwic) and Mediaeval (within the area of the Mediaeval Walled Town). Each port was located in a different area, thereby ensuring that at least until the nineteenth century the habitation of a site did not destroy the archaeological levels of its predecessor. So, unlike Winchester or London, we have surprisingly good evidence surviving, especially in the case of Saxon Southampton.

Recent excavations in this area of Southampton, known as Hamwic or Hamtun in the Saxon period, have revealed the extraordinary density of population and high level of organisation within the Saxon town. In particular, the excavations at the site known as Six Dials have revealed a great deal about the layout of streets, location and number of houses and workshops, types of industrial activities and the level of economic prosperity within the town.

The Archaeological Section of Southampton City Museums is currently involved with the post-excavation and publication of the Hamwic sites excavated between 1946 and the present. In addition, major new excavations are planned to begin this October at Six Dials.

BRITISH COIN FINDS

The lecture on Thursday, 4th November will be given by an ex-member of the Society, Edward Besly of the British Museum Department of Coins and Medals. The subject will cover recent interesting mediaeval and Roman finds, in particular what Edward calls the Roman 'monster', the large Cunetio hoard at Mildenhall in Wiltshire, which he is working on now. Edward hopes to have a paper ready for publication next year.

Edward has also been working on other third century AD hoards from Lincolnshire and Wiltshire. He is also responsible for the collection of mediaeval and modern European coins and fringe areas such as coin weights.

MARY ROSE APPEAL

A few members recently manned a stall for the Mary Rose at the Fete at Westfield Lido. We ran a game, 'Find the Mary Rose' and sold items such as pickles, jams, mincemeat, garden produce, dressed dolls, books, decorated stones and crocheted octopuses and 'wiggly worms'. Profit £40. With the items members are selling elsewhere, we shall soon be able to send the Trust over £60.

PRACTICAL FLINTWORKING

This course was organised by Southampton University and was held in mid June. The main tutor was Mr J C Draper, who earlier in the year gave a demonstration to our Society one Saturday afternoon in Eastrop Hall. David Johnstone of Southampton University also assisted as a tutor.

The course assembled on Saturday morning in the Archaeology Laboratory at Southampton and then went straight out to a chalk pit near Marwell Zoo. The chalk pit not only demonstrated the layering of flint in chalk but also provided a plentiful supply of flint nodules.

Suitably equipped with protective goggles and a glove, we were offered a choice of different types of hammer-stone and antlers and set about emulating our forefathers of several thousand years ago.

Some six hours later we had come to realise that there was a little more to making axes and blades than the skilful demonstration of a tutor might lead you to believe.

The first thing we came to understand was that flint varies enormously in quality and recognising the best flint is a skill in itself. With hammer-stones we started to find out about where to hit flints and what was likely to happen from hitting it in any particular place. This leads on to attempting to make axe rough-outs and ultimately to produce cores, and using antler to try and produce blades. As there were some 16 people of varying backgrounds and experience there was quite a variation in what was ultimately achieved, although between us we produced a fair amount of flint gravel, ending the day tired but somewhat wiser.

Sunday morning saw us gathered together in the laboratory with the best of our products from the previous day. We were initiated into such mysteries as thinning flakes and pressure flaking and were then inveigled into starting what were described as some simple exercises. From a heap of flakes we were invited to produce an end scraper, a notched scraper, a backed knife, a borer, a projectile point as a willow-leaf or a barbed-and-tanged arrow head. I think by the afternoon most of us had found a lot of muscles in our forearms and fingers that certainly hadn't been used for quite a long time if ever before. We then departed for home with our little bags of artefacts.

An interesting and challenging activity for a couple of days, but what had we really got out of it?

If you are interested in pre-history and excavation, then there is no doubt that an understanding of the techniques of flint making and what flint looks like when it has been worked on by a human will make you a very much more valuable member of an excavation or a field-walking team than ever before. For, not only does one recognise the artefact much more easily but one also recognises the sort of debris that is going to be associated with flint-working.

There are only about 16 people allowed on the course and there is one course a year, so if you are interested it is essential that you book fairly quickly after the dates of the course are announced. The course

has been run for a number of years and they are getting people coming back onto the course so that they can improve their skills and knowledge. Of course, like most other courses, the more one knows about the subject the more one recognises the depth of one's own ignorance.

MICHAEL DIXON

VISIT TO ST MARY'S ABBEY, WINCHESTER: 11 AUGUST 1982

A warm summer's evening provided the ideal setting for a visit by members of the Society to 'Nunnaminster', perhaps the least well known of Winchester's three Saxon monasteries. The proposed extension of the city Guildhall has provided the spur for a 'rescue dig' last summer and this, to excavate a small part of the nave and south aisle of the abbey church. The excavations have been carried out jointly by the Winchester Archaeology Unit and the History Department of King Alfred's College, and we were fortunate enough to be shown round the site by Annie Robinson of King Alfred's and joint director of the dig.

Our attention was caught immediately by the evidence of numerous burials scattered across the site: graves of various shapes, sizes and dates, including the remains of one medieval vaulted tomb. Some graves contained worked stone coffins, others were formed of chalk blocks. The staining of the sides of one grave attracted comment, but no fully satisfactory explanation can as yet be adduced for this phenomenon. Some evidence for wooden coffins has been found, in the form of nails, but other graves clearly are too narrow to have accommodated anything more elaborate than a shroud.

A number of interesting finds have been made on the site, including a large quantity of painted glass, which is currently being analysed. The discovery of a worked staff head (not a crozier) in one tomb clearly indicates a burial of some importance - but who? Perhaps an abbess of the foundation, but if so, why was she buried here rather than in the chapter house in accordance with normal practice? It is more likely that this is the tomb of a benefactor, or perhaps a chaplain to the abbey.

Clearly visible too were the foundations of one of the piers on which the pillars of the eleventh century abbey were built (another has been removed in the course of the excavation). On closer examination one can perhaps just make out the edge of the familiar Norman round column. Most impressive, however, were the massive chalk platforms on which these foundations were built. Compressed together over the centuries, the chalk today is virtually indistinguishable from a natural formation. This constitutes a formidable obstacle to further excavation, the more so as it is underlaid with a mortar base.

The day after our visit, it was intended to sink a trial borehole to establish the precise depth of this platform. Some clue might also be gained as to the nature and extent of the Saxon layers as yet untouched beneath.

A fortunate feature of this season's excavation has been the dry weather - only yards from the river, the high water table means that in more

normal conditions the excavations would have been waterlogged, necessitating the costly use of pumps to continue work. However, because of the seasonal variations in the water level, no pieces of clothing or other delicate items have survived in the graves so far excavated. The bones recovered from the burials have been removed for safekeeping, but it has not yet been decided to what further analysis, if any, they should be subjected.

By the time this article appears, the excavation will have come to an end, and therein lies a curious irony. It started as a rescue dig because of the plan to extend the Guildhall, but subsequent surveying work has established that extensive dry rot in the existing Guildhall building will require expensive treatment. As a result, plans to build over the site of the dig have been postponed, sine die. However, since the site is no longer directly threatened, no further money is likely to be forthcoming to continue the excavation and there is a plan to conserve and present to the public the remains so far exposed.

As a result, the foundations of the late Saxon abbey building are likely to remain unexplored. This is a particular disappointment to Annie Robinson, whose special interest lies in that period, for which the archaeological evidence in this country is relatively scarce at this point in time. A familiar story, perhaps - an excavation proceeding less swiftly than originally envisaged because of the wealth of material from later periods overlying the earlier strata, compounded by administrative and financial constraints! We look forward, though, to Annie Robinson's visit to our Society in December, when she will be giving us a fuller, firsthand account of the excavations and their significance.

MICHAEL JUPE

Note Annie Robinson's lecture on the Excavations At St Mary's Abbey, Winchester on Thursday, 2nd December, is a joint meeting of our Society and the Hampshire Field Club. It will be held, not at Chute House, but at the Willis Museum.

THEN AS NOW

Recent allegations in the Press and widespread public disquiet at corruption within the police force struck a chord when I came across the following (translated from the French):

Statutes 3 Edward I (AD 1275)

Chapter XXVI

And that no sheriff, nor other the King's officer, take any reward to do his office, but shall be paid of that which they take of the King; and he that so doth, shall yield twice as much, and shall be punished at the King's pleasure.

This Chapter was repealed by 50 & 51 Victoria, c 55, insofar as it relates to a sheriff or any officer of a sheriff: the fact that it had lasted intact until that time speaks for itself!

SUE HEADLEY

EXCAVATIONS AT SHERBORNE SR CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL, SHERBORNE ST JOHN, HAMPSHIRE

When a skeleton was found at this school in Sherborne St John, our Society offered help. Eric Robinson reports:

Following an article in the local paper, our Secretary made arrangements with the Headmaster for me to call on him to discuss the children's excavation. I was pleased to see, on my arrival, that the site had been carefully covered awaiting my visit. The Head and pupils were enthusiastic about completing the job so we decided to dig at a convenient time.

The Headmaster had gathered a lot of information about the immediate vicinity. The nearby cottage, thought to have been a Quaker Meeting House at one time, has some gravestones in its garden and the church graveyard is on the other side of the lane, so the burial area might well have been larger in former times. However, the children's 'dig' was far too shallow to have been a traditional burial.

The human bones recovered were: a femur, patellae, a tibia, one skull fragment and other small bones. Some pottery was found, two sherds of Alice Holt type, one piece decorated, a piece of worn ware with slip which appeared to be of recent origin. A fair number of clay pipe fragments were found. The children's original reason for starting to excavate was to find pieces of clay pipe.

One fine Saturday morning, a number of Society members, the Headmaster and a good number of interested pupils, met to complete the excavation. The first task was to remove the backfill to expose the polythene sheet that had been put over the site - full marks again to the Headmaster for his care in this matter.

The surface was exposed, then trowelling soon revealed further human bones: the right femur of an adult and, lying alongside it and partly over it were both femurs of a young child. Further trowelling revealed the right fibula and tibia of the adult. The tarsals and metatarsals of both feet were interlocked and gave the appearance of being shrouded or tied in that position. No fragments of cloth were found to be related to a section of thorax lying above the child's femurs.

The site had been disturbed earlier by a trench having been dug through the centre and at an angle to the excavation. The trench may have been dug when the school was built during the 19th century.

As the soil was of an acid nature, it was surprising that the bones were in such a good state of preservation.

It was disappointing that the site lacked any positive dating material but it can be inferred beyond reasonable doubt that the burials were first time burials and not reinterments. The bones were in the extended position. I think that the adult would have been about 5'10" in height. There were no pelvic bones to enable the sex to be determined.

The site was drawn and measurements taken. It was excavated to a depth of 20 cm. As all the remains had been found resting immediately on top of the subsoil, it was considered that that level was the required extent of the excavation.

There were no positive results of this excavation but it was a worthwhile exercise, both for the Society and the children of the school.

I conclude on a serious note. The Vicar of Sherborne St John, whose co-operation we had enjoyed during the whole episode, intended to reinter the remains.

ERIC ROBINSON

'THE SALOMON AFFAIR' AT LA MARTYRE

The last Newsletter carried a short report by Bob Mulla on the holiday which eight members spent in Brittany this year, and slides were shown after the AGM. The highlight of the holiday was our meeting with the historian, M. Fons de Kort, who showed us his own fourteenth-century house and the church of La Martyre, with all its intricate detail. M. de Kort told us of his research into the origins of the name of La Martyre, and he has kindly sent us this report. If anyone would like to read the French original, please let me know.

BARBARA APPLIN

The name of the village of La Martyre, 'Merzer' in Breton, has its origin in 'the martyrdom of Salomon' (Merzer Salaün). This refers to the assassination here of someone of that name.

There are two conflicting explanations, partly because of a long-held confusion, partly because interpretations are based on what is almost legend, and partly because no irrefutable historic document exists about the place and person in question.

The explanation which up to now has most regularly been passed on down the ages and retold by one historian after another, makes La Martyre the site of the murder of 'Salomon gratia Dei totius Britanniae partis Galliarum princeps' according to Le Baud; 'Dux Britanniae nul tarumque aliarum regionum' according to Bili, who was deacon of Alet (Saint Malo) about 870.

Salomon was the nephew of Noménoé who had himself killed his cousin Erispoé ('he pierced him with many thrusts of his sword' (Actes de Bretagne) in order to gain the throne. He in turn was assassinated by Pascweten and Gurvand near Gouarec, according to F. Le Lay, after having fled to the region of Poher, 'juga lapsus in paucherum secessit' (Annals of the monastery of Saint-Bertin).

Salomon was King from 857 to 874. He was buried in the monastery which he himself had founded at Saint Maxent, in the parish of Plélan, seven or eight years before his death (A. de la Borderie). The founding of that monastery had been announced to the people one Sunday by Ratuili, bishop of Alet (M. Tresvaux: L'Eglise de Bretagne). It was in this abbey, which was then under Liossic and was a dependancy of the abbey of Redon, that the body of his wife Wenbrit had already been buried. It was from there that the relics were sent to Pithiviers in 932, following the Norman invasions.

This must lead to the conclusion that the King had never been buried at La Martyre or at any rate that the famous reliquary called 'Salomon's' had nothing to do with ... Salomon. (It came into the possession of this church after the sanctuary was despoiled during the Revolution and it contains no remains of anyone of the name of Salomon). The distance from La Martyre to Plélan is such that it seems at the very least hardly probable that his assassination should have taken place here. One must bear in mind the clear absence of any authentic text, and the very problematical nature of any reason for the King to flee to La Martyre (where there has never been any sign of a 'monasteriolum').

It is much more likely that the cult of Salomon at La Martyre, in the typically old Breton name of Merzer Salaün ('Merther' is a common British name which is found in Wales and Cornwall and so from the very first Breton centuries and could not be 9th century - A. Raude) is linked to the Principal of Leon called Salomon, son of Gérontius (Gereint). The latter was general to Theodosius and one of the three heads of the maritime zones.

This Salomon, grandson of Urbien (Urban, Erbin) was married to a daughter of Flavius, a Roman patrician (Histoire de Bretagne by P. Le Baud and Histoire ecclésiastique de Bretagne by Deric) and he seems to have been assassinated in 435 or 439 (this was recorded by Paulinien, who was bishop of Léon before 974 and who, less than a hundred years after the reign of King Salomon, could not have confused the King with the son of Gérontius). This murder took place near the Roman camp set up between 'Crue Ochident' (the pointe Saint Mathieu), the marshes at the foot of 'Mont Jovis' (the Mont St Michel of Braspart and Yeun Elez) and 'Cant Guic' (Quintin?) (Historia Britonum - 8th century). It is exactly in the middle of this triangle that we find the considerable Roman camp of La Martyre, about 550 by 800 metres (which is, according to Hacquard, a camp for two legions) and where Salomon, coming from the British Isles, must have found himself at the head of the Roman or post-Roman garrison. This is the camp which Jourdan de la Passadière (B.S.A.F. 1904) already claimed to be on the plateau, revealed by aerial photographs and clearly visible on the ground, and it is surrounded by several advance posts (castra), some of which are near Flagelle. It is situated at the crossing of the important Roman road which goes through Hanvec and Quimerc'h and links Douarnenez (45 leagues to the south) to l'Aber Wrac'h - the width of the road is 50 Roman feet, that is, 14,70 metres - with another road going from Conquet to Carhaix via Lampaul-Guimiliau.

Finally, it has proved possible to recognise the Gaulish cemetery under the Christian cemetery of La Martyre (B. Le Pontois: Le Finistère Préhistorique).

In the present state of researches, then, everything supports the belief that La Martyre must owe its name to the murder in this place of Salaün, son of Gereint, and not to the assassination of King Salomon in 874.

F. DE KORT

NEWS FROM THE HAMPSHIRE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

The County Record Office in Winchester have acquired an important collection of records of the family of the Lords Bolton, formerly of Hackwood Park. They have held some documents since 1949, and this collection now adds

material relating to the family's southern estates which has been transferred from Bolton Hall in Yorkshire. As Basingstoke's earliest map (1762) was compiled as evidence of the estates of the Dukes of Bolton in Basingstoke, there may be much of interest in this material.

WELL, DOGGONE!!

One of our farmer friends filled in an ancient ditch on his land, and last month went to see how it was settling down. He kicked an object with his foot and stooped to pick it up as it looked interesting. It certainly was.

He assumes it to be a dog collar - it's a strip of brass, approximately 15½" long, broken into three and mended by copper rivets, and burned over. The outside of the 'collar' has a pretty pressed pattern along the edges, top and bottom: little circles. Along the inside of these are half circles about an inch wide, with three little circles making a triangular pattern. Two slits in the end of one piece (one broken) and one in the adjoining piece are like letter boxes, 10/16" x 3/16". The other end is bent back on itself and has two small holes. Most exciting of all - the 'collar' is impressed with a name (of its owner, surely, not the dog?) JOHN HOLLAN 168-.

Now, who can let us know ... When did dogs have to have addresses or names on their collars? What is the date of the earliest known dog collar? Is this a dog collar? Any other ideas, please?



JOSIE WALL

NEWS FROM THE HAMPSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM SERVICE

The new Keeper of Archaeology for the County Museum Service is Dave Allen, Curator at Andover. We are pleased to welcome Dave as a new member of our own Society and look forward to seeing more of him.

Ken Barton will direct the 1982 season of excavations at Odiham Castle, North Warnborough, from 2 - 17 October. He is hoping to trace the earliest building on the site and determine its relationship to the standing remains of what is thought to be the keep of King John's Castle of 1214 AD.

URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN HAMPSHIRE - One-day Conference of the Archaeological
Section of the Hampshire Field Club

This conference will be held on Saturday, 20th November at Southampton University. Fee £5.

Session I TOWNS & ORIGINS introduced by Professor Martin Biddle

Dr M J Fulford Silchester

Dr B Yorke Later development of Hampshire Towns

Session II WINCHESTER & SOUTHAMPTON

M Brisbane Saxon origins of Southampton

K Qualman Winchester

R Thompson Southampton

Session III PLANS & BUILDINGS

M T Hughes Origins & evolution of small towns

Dr D Lloyd Standing buildings, especially in Portsmouth

VINDOMIS GROUP

This Group has recently been formed to find the Roman roads leading from Neatham, a Romano-British settlement near Alton. David Graham will talk about this during the Alton History & Archaeology Society meeting on Fieldwalking on 17th November. See Calendar.

DAY & EVENING CLASSES

If you don't mind the distance, Sue Headley has details of courses at Wokingham and Earley: * = daytime

Wokingham: *5 week courses on Georgian England starting 12 January;
England under Victoria, starting 23 February; A Century of Change
1883 - 1983 starting 20 April
*6 week course: England under the Stuarts, starting 3 Nov.

Earley: 10 week course by Mike Fulford on Roman Archaeology, starting
6 October
One day Schools: The Family in History Friday, 18 March;
The History & Archaeology of the Kennet Valley
Saturday 15 January