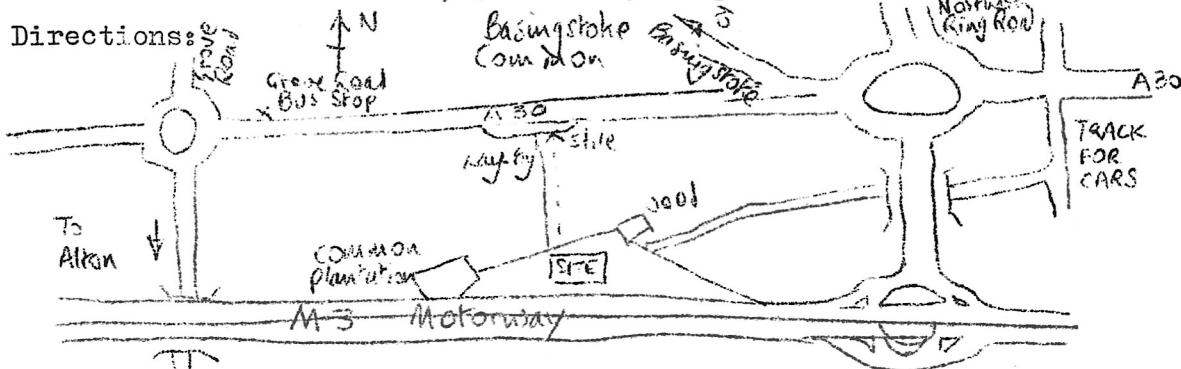


..... EXCAVATIONS 1973

We shall start excavating again on 24th March 1973 - we are able to return to Ructstalls Hill for three weekends, to investigate pits and post-holes that were not excavated last year. For this occasion we shall not, you'll be glad to know, have long journeys to the spoil heaps, but we'll put spoil beside each feature being excavated, for backfilling later. Please bring a pen/pencil and some paper with you, as we would like to ask for help in recording. For new members we repeat the advice: bring a pointing trowel, hand brush, hand shovel and polythene bucket; wear old clothing; bring refreshments for breaks and lunch if you wish to picnic on the site. Members are reminded of the RULES issued with the Constitution and membership forms, and by which they have agreed to be bound. Newcomers to the excavation must also undertake to observe them. Please remember particularly that children under the age of 14 years on excavation sites must at all times be accompanied by an adult member responsible for their actions.

10 am to 5 pm  
24th/25th March Saturday/Sunday  
31st Mar/1st April " /Sunday  
7th/8th April Saturday/Sunday

As this is a short season, please try to give as much time as possible.



We have just heard from Stephen Moorhouse that he will not himself be able to direct the Popham dig this summer (Deserted Medieval Village) but we shall announce the excavation dates as soon as we know them, and hope that many members will be able to help.

..... POT-MARKING

We are still marking pot on Thursday evenings, from 7.30 pm, in the annexe behind the Willis Museum. Bring a marking pen and indian ink. Or if you prefer to take pot home to mark, contact Barbara Applin or Mary Oliver.

..... CROFTON BEAM ENGINES

The Industrial Archaeology Group have invited our members to join them in a visit to Crofton Pumping Station on the Kennet & Avon Canal, when the 1812 Boulton & Watt engine will be "in steam", on Saturday, 28th April. They are also proposing to visit a windmill which is under restoration nearby.

Directions: Signposted from Great Bedwyn (West of Hungerford, off A4). Own transport. For further details, or if you need a lift, ring Woolhampton 3477. The Group are meeting at Crofton at 10 am. Take packed lunch, or there is a pub nearby. Admission 25p. Children 10p.

The engine will also be "in steam" on 29th April, 9th and 10th June, 7th and 8th July (9th and 10th July for school parties only), 25th, 26th and 27th August, 15th and 16th September and 20th and 21st October,

..... FORTHCOMING LECTURES

Thursday, 29th March: Don Cross: Road Signs and Road Furniture (joint meeting with the Industrial Archaeology Group).

Thursday, 26th April: F. G. Aldsworth: Historical Development of Winchester.

We are hoping to arrange a Sunday afternoon walk round Winchester in May. Further details later.

..... RECENT WORK IN BASINGSTOKE

Richard Rushent-Oram has contributed the attached notes on his recent observations and finds, arising from the construction of the new Inner Loop Road. We will welcome other contributions from members, on any topic, to include in newsletters or circulate separately.

..... ROYAL EXCHANGE, WOTE STREET

Notice has been given of the intended demolition of a group of buildings including the Royal Exchange, but it has been suggested by one of our members that the Royal Exchange is a building that is worth while preserving, as underneath the present facade is the remains of a half-timbered building. It has been suggested that the Society should make a formal objection to the demolition of this building. The Committee carefully considered this, but decided that they had no mandate from the members to make this sort of representation. It is proposed to raise the principle involved at the next Annual General Meeting so that future committees will have clear guidance on such matters, but in the meantime if individual members wish to object to the demolition of this building, objections should be sent to the Town Clerk, to be received by him not later than 23rd March 1973.

..... 1973 EXCURSIONS

The Committee have had several suggestions for possible summer excursions and will welcome more - by the end of March, please. Suggestions so far include Fishbourne, West Dean Open Air Museum, Maiden Castle, Rockbourne and Danebury. Any comments?

..... FUTURE LECTURES

If anyone has suggestions for future lecture topics, please let the Committee know. We are planning the 1973/4 programme now.

..... RECENT PUBLICATION

The February AWRE NEWS carries an article by Duncan Russell, on The Revolt of the Iceni, a review of the political and military background to the revolt of the Iceni, under Boudicca, against the Romans. The magazine section of Basingstoke Library has a copy - and so do some Committee members.

..... WROXETER

Members who visited Barnsley Park last year, and thought 30 years a long time for excavating a site, will be interested to hear that its director, Graham Webster, has also for many years now been directing excavation at Wroxeter (the Roman city of Uriconium) which has now been bought by the Department of the Environment. The present estimate is that excavation of the full site will take at least a hundred years! Perhaps our efforts at Ructstalls Hill look rather smaller now in comparison!



The inner loop road will run from Eastrop Roundabout, pass under the new town centre, emerging near the Church Street/Cross Street road junction. It is from this point that the road shows a slice of the history of the town.

Old wells, hundreds of years old, have been discovered when workmen cut a 20' deep trench here. This area was once the centre of old Basingstoke. Here is also the site of the Bluecoat School. This school was founded in 1646 by Sir Richard Aldworth for the education of seven poor boys. Many large rubbish pits have also been cut into, these being in the grounds behind the spot where the buildings once stood.

I have collected clay pipes, bottles and other items at this point. Many large animal bones also came to light.

The new road curves from here and runs behind the present Flaxfield Road. In Flaxfield Road stood many inns: The Star, The Pear Tree (which was once a private brewery), The Green Dragon and The Pheasant. It would seem that all these inns deposited their empty bottles in the ground behind Flaxfield Road. I would think thousands of bottles have been **dumped here. Nearly all have been smashed, and many used as rubble for walls to be built on, also used as rubble for under floors. Two pieces of medieval pottery came to light where the road cuts through a local scrap dealer's yard (itself a museum). A little further on, the new road crosses Mortimer Lane, and history moves forward into the Victorian era.**

Even after bulldozing, I have managed to rescue several bottles intact. Each bottle is itself a masterpiece - blues, greens and clear glass mainly, but full of air bubbles, each one different. It was at this point that I found a stoneware wine container intact, bar the handle, with the name of "F. Blunden, Wine and Spirit Importer, Basingstoke" on it. Mr F. Blunden had a shop in Church Street and was Mayor of Basingstoke in 1861-2 (there are several documents of his on show in the Willis Museum).

While standing watching a tipper lorry drop its load of soil - for from Mortimer Lane the new road comes out of a cutting onto an embankment - I noticed a Codd's mineral water bottle slide down with the soil, and to my complete surprise it was intact. These bottles are very common, "broken", because children smashed the neck off to get at the glass marble which formed the stopper. It is embossed "F. Newman, Mineral Water Manufacturer, Basingstoke".

From Mortimer Lane the new loop road carries on until it joins Churchill Way at the Victory Roundabout. This stretch has yielded a dozen or so embossed bottles of the Victorian period, plus a few of the 1920 period. I believe this was a large rubbish dump, then later used as a fairground. The whole length of the loop road is littered with pottery, mainly plain, Victorian marmalade jars, cream jars, storage jars etc., and to date I have only found one small Victorian storage jar intact.

Lastly, if you visit this area, wear boots as at the moment it is the biggest mud pie in Basingstoke!