

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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## CALENDAR

- \* Thursday, 3rd Nov THE BLACK DEATH AND CLEOPATRA'S NOSE by George Watts, Chute House, 7.30 pm
- Friday, 11th Nov 'Prehistoric Cranborne Chase' by Richard Bradley, Reading Branch of the Historical Association, 7.30 pm, Bulmershe College
- Mid-November to Feb Reading waterfront excavations (see inside)
- Thursday, 17th Nov 'Ghosts of North Hampshire & Beyond' by Peter Underwood, 7.30 Willis Museum (Friends)
- Friday, 18th Nov 'The Mediaeval Yateley Parish' by Derek Doherty (NE Hants Arch. Soc, RAE Farnborough) 7.30 pm
- Saturday, 19th Nov 'Cemeteries & Society in Hampshire & the Isle of Wight' One-day conference of Hampshire Field Club Arch. Section & Southampton University. 9.15 - 6 (see inside)
- Wed, 23rd Nov 'Chalk Cob Walls of Wessex' by Gordon Pearson (Hampshire Field Club Historic Buildings Section, joint meeting with Somborne Society) King's Somborne, 7.30 pm
- \* Thursday, 1st Dec RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT WINNALL DOWN, WINCHESTER by Richard Whinney (our joint meeting with Hampshire Field Club Arch Section) Chute House 7.30
- \* Thursday 8th Dec WINTER SOCIAL 7.30 pm, Church Cottage

### THE BLACK DEATH AND CLEOPATRA'S NOSE

George Watts has produced the most intriguing title of the year for our next lecture, at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 3rd November at Chute House. Come and find out what on earth Cleopatra's nose can have to do with the Black Death!

George Watts is an Open University Senior Counsellor, and one section of the Open University Interdisciplinary Course concerns the Black Death. He holds a research degree in the mediaeval history of part of south Hampshire and he has recently edited a book about his native Titchfield which has received some excellent reviews.

### WINNALL DOWN EXCAVATIONS 1982-3

Our December lecturer will be Richard Whinney, Winchester City Archaeologist. This will be our annual joint meeting with the Archaeology Section of the Hampshire Field Club, held in our usual room in Chute House at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 1st December.

Richard Whinney will give us an up-to-the minute account of recent exciting prehistoric discoveries on this site - yet another of the many discovered and examined in advance of work for the M3 motorway.

### WINTER SOCIAL

The Winter Social at Church Cottage at 7.30 on Thursday, 8th December will have a Roman theme, and members are invited to dress appropriately (nothing to prevent you simply being a modern tourist to Rome, of course!) As usual, contributions of food or ingredients will be welcome - Betty Waters has some interesting Roman recipes and Jean Mellor (Basingstoke 64206) will be in charge of catering and would like people to ring her to say what they can bring. The entrance charge will be £2 for adults and £1 for children. Prizes for a raffle would also be welcome.

### HELP WANTED!

Peter Fasham of the Wessex Archaeological Committee will be excavating on the Reading waterfront again from the middle of November until February. This important rescue excavation is on the site of the waterfront of the medieval Reading abbey (some members attended an open lecture which Peter Fasham gave in Reading Town Hall on his previous season's work). Further exciting information is likely this winter. Anyone wishing to take part will be very welcome - details from Peter Fasham on Salisbury 26867.

### FORTHCOMING FIELDWORK

FIELDWALKING: The Society is hoping to organise a short season of fieldwalking at Worting in the field adjacent to that already walked. The plan is to concentrate our effort into just a few

weekends in the hope of getting a larger turnout than in previous years, when the walking has been spread over the whole winter. If you are interested, please contact Peter Heath (Bas 27713) or Eric Robinson (Bas 28503) - no previous experience necessary!

TRAINING DIG: There will also be a training dig over two weekends in March (not Easter). This will probably be on the site at Hatch Warren, where there is due to be a rescue excavation organised by the Wessex Archaeological Committee - Peter Fasham is working hard to find money to finance this dig, as there is not so much D of E money available this year. Again, Peter Fasham will welcome any help we can give him, and for those with no previous experience who want to take part in the training dig, Peter Heath (Bas 27713) will be pleased to hear from you - or anyone who wants a 'refresher'. If the Hatch Warren site is not available, another site will be found.

### HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB

#### CEMETERIES AND SOCIETY IN HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT:

With the Dept of Adult Education at Southampton University, the Archaeology Section of the Hampshire Field Club is organising a one-day conference on this subject in the Education Lecture Theatre at Southampton University, from 9.15 am to 6 pm on Saturday, 19th November. The theme of the conference covers religion, ritual and society, mainly in prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods in three sessions:

- 1 'Life and Death' (introduced by Bob Chapman, author of 'The Archaeology of Death') with particular reference to the pre M3 discoveries at Winnall, Winchester (see our December lecture).
- 2 'Burial and Human Sacrifice' as revealed by excavations of barrows in the Isle of Wight, the urnfield at Kimpton and the sites of the Iron Age, especially Hayling Island.
- 3 'Cemeteries and Society', particularly based on Roman and Saxon evidence from Winchester and Southampton (Hamwih), ending with 'the Victorian Way of Death' in a Winchester Cemetery.

The fee for the day is £5 and advance booking can be made to the Enrolment Secretary, Adult Education Dept, The University, Southampton SO9 5NH. Ploughman's lunches can be ordered in advance, £1.50. There are parking facilities.

#### ALRESFORD:

The Annual General Meeting of the Local History Section of the Hampshire Field Club, held in Alresford on 1st October, was preceded by talks on aspects of the host town. Dr Isobel Sanderson (author of the delightfully illustrated series of booklets Dwellings in Alresford) spoke first on 'The History of Alresford', giving a clear picture of the town newly 'planted' in the thirteenth century which became so dependent on sheep that its East and West Streets were called Ram Alley and Sheep Coop Street. Mr R. Elliott then described in more detail 'The Buildings of Alresford', with particular reference to the work of the local architect W. H. Hunt, and Mr J. Adams spoke of the making and now the re-making of 'The Watercress Line'. It was a pity that the rain was so heavy that most members missed the planned 'Walkabout', but for us Alresford is near enough to explore many times, and these talks confirmed the feeling that there is much to see.

## ESSAY COMPETITION FOR YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The Trustee Savings Bank in the South East and the Southern Archaeological Services Ltd are running an essay competition for students under 19 years old in full-time education at school or college. The essay can be on any aspect of British archaeology and must be between 500 and 1000 words, with relevant illustrations if necessary. Prizes to the students and their school or college include archaeological courses and holidays, books and subscriptions to magazines.

Entry forms are available from branches of the Trustee Savings Bank, who will forward essays to the Southern Archaeological Services Ltd for judging. Closing date January 31st, 1984.

## COTTAGE LIFE 1900

This was the title of a recent exhibition staged in the hall of North Waltham School by village organisations in aid of local funds. It showed just how much material and knowledge of eighty years ago remains in the locality.

The exhibition was arranged as a series of rooms - kitchen, dairy, dining room and bedroom, each furnished with a range of artefacts. These rooms were complemented by a series of photographs of the period and an interesting duplicated sheet of information about village life. There was also a selection of craft stalls, at which it was nice to see one of our members, Barbara Lovell, and her daughter Amanda respectively showing off their skills at lace making and spinning.

The church was also decorated with flowers with the theme of 1900 and it was a pleasant treat to see simple arrangements rather than the usual elaborate flower festival display.

All together it made an enjoyable visit and judging by the other people present everyone liked the chance to talk about 'old times'. Perhaps our Society should consider promoting some similar event in the future.

JOHN OLIVER

## BRADWELL ABBEY AND BANCROFT ROMAN VILLA

While on a visit to Wolverton (Bucks) at the end of May, I was fortunate to read in the local paper about the newly opened exhibition of "The Archaeology of Milton Keynes". This exhibition had just been arranged in the renovated cruck barn of Bradwell Abbey - it opened on June 1st and I was due home on the 2nd!

The site of Bradwell Priory, a Benedictine foundation (long known as Bradwell Abbey) was acquired in 1971 by Milton Keynes Development Corporation. They renovated the farmhouse and the remaining abbey buildings for use as a field centre for archaeology and the ecological sciences. As well as the home of the Archaeological Unit of Milton Keynes, it is also the home of Bradwell Abbey Field Centre. This field centre provides facilities for local societies, e.g. archaeology, astronomy, geology, bee-keeping, natural history and lace making (there are some fine examples of both old and modern lace at the house).

In the cruck barn the archaeological exhibition is a well-planned display of artefacts found in the area, coupled with maps and photographs of digs in various stages, all well-captioned and explained. Models of barrows, also housing and activities associated with the different periods capture children's interest. My 8-year-old grandson was particularly fascinated by the "boiling pit" with its "joint of beef".

There is a display of merchandise for sale with an excellent map for about 50p, "Milton Keynes Heritage". This map covers the whole of the new city boundaries, showing the various sites from earthworks, deserted villages, moated sites etc through to the "concrete cows". Given away free are leaflets of different areas, "Ancient Monuments in..." e.g. Loughton Valley, Ouzel Valley, Ouse Valley Park. These leaflets give a brief description of each site with road and walkway routes to each one, very useful.

The chapel was in process of restoration so I was only able to walk round the outside, but I had a stroll through the herb garden and the wild garden.

In the office there was a huge wall map of the area, and the member of staff on duty showed me the way to the Bancroft Roman Villa, on which a dig was just starting. Bancroft is a winged corridor villa complete with outbuildings and walled garden. Excavation first took place in 1972. Time was running out for me and I wasn't able to visit the villa site, but I was assured that I would have been made welcome.

Came the end of August and I was again in Wolverton. Using my leaflets, I found the deserted village and motte and bailey site in Old Wolverton and then I set off for the Roman villa. Alas, this time I didn't read the local paper first and reached the site to find no-one there; they were all at Bradwell Abbey for an archaeological 'open day' - the chapel was newly opened too!

Never mind, I prowled around the perimeter fence, took photographs (tried to), climbed on the spoil heap for a better view, and hoped they'll dig again next season.

The Bradwell Abbey Field Centre is open all year on normal working days and the cruck barn exhibition on Mondays to Friday 10-12 and 2-4; admission adults 40p, children 20. Arrangements can be made for organised parties through the centre.

BETTY WATERS

Betty wonders if this would make a good Spring excursion - see the questionnaire with this newsletter.

#### HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION LECTURE AT BULMERSHE COLLEGE

Richard Bradley, lecturer in Archaeology at Reading University, will be speaking to the Reading Branch of the Historical Association at Bulmershe College on The Prehistory of Cranbourne Chase at 7.30 pm on November 11th. Further details of this and other HA lectures from Mrs M Lockey, 12 Amity Street, Reading

THE URBAN EXPERIENCE: A source book: English, Scottish & Welsh  
Towns, 1450-1700 ed R.C.Richardson and T. James, Manchester University  
Press £19.50 (A review)

Our first lecturer this season, Dr Tom James, has collaborated with his colleague at King Alfred's College in editing this fascinating collection of extracts from historical writings. Although it is expensive for an 'impulse buy', it is a must for any good library, and I hope the Basingstoke Library will get one for their historical section.

Excerpts are grouped under headings of "contemporary topographers and historians" (from William Worcester in 1479 to Celia Fiennes in 1697); "the economy"; "government and politics"; "law and order and public welfare"; "religion and education". Sources are clearly given throughout.

I was interested to see that two of Tom James's own ancestors appear in a list taken from the Port Books of Southampton for 1469: John Jamys burgess having 2 barrels of soap, 1 barrel green ginger, 20 linen cloth come by ship on 11th October, while the next day Walter Jamys burgess had 2 bales madder, 4 barrels cork, 4 barrels soap, 2 bales hemp and 20 linen cloth. It isn't a book to hurry through; I'm sure there are lot more fascinating details to come.

BARBARA APPLIN

ODIHAM CASTLE 1200-1500 by A & P MacGregor, ed Barry Stapleton,  
Alan Sutton, £8.95 (A review)

In the last newsletter I wrote about the publication of a new book about Wallis & Steevens. Now there is another local history book. This one records the fascinating history of Odiham Castle and is the result of many years' research by Alasdair and Patricia MacGregor, neither of whom lived to see the work completed. Now Barry Stapleton has put the book together and it has been published.

Odiham was recorded as a royal demesne in Domesday Book and its royal connection over a long period has meant a number of references in ancient documents, which result in a book full of interesting detail. It is from the pipe rolls that the information comes of the building of the castle by King John in the early 13th century. As John never stayed in one place very long and trailed the Government with him, the records give most of the times that he stayed in the castle including the day before going to sign Magna Carta.

The castle passed into the ownership of Eleanor, the daughter of King John and husband of Simon de Montfort, and it is from this period that a very detailed account of life in Odiham Castle can be reconstructed. By chance Eleanor's household accounts have survived and fully itemise the provisions consumed and names of visitors on a daily basis.

There is a wealth of more absorbing information in the book up to the castle's abandonment and ruin. If you want to know what it would have been like living in a castle, then you will enjoy this book.

JOHN OLIVER