

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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CALENDAR

*	<u>Thursday 2nd February</u>	CONSERVATION Col. Clayden (Conservation Officer, Ministry of Defence) <u>7.30 pm, Clennell Room, Chute House</u>
	7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th February	'Odiham Through the Ages', Son et Lumiere in Parish Church, 8 pm
	Friday 10th February	'Industrial Archaeology in North Hampshire' Dr Edwin Course, 7.30 pm Aldershot Library Hall (Joint meeting of HFC & Aldershot Hist. & Arch Soc)
	Thursday 16th February	'Conservation in Hampshire' Andrew Cleeve, Natural History photographer (Friends of the Willis Museum) 7.30 pm, Willis Museum
*	<u>Thursday 1st March</u>	POSTCARDS OF THE PAST 1905-1968 D. O. Collier <u>7.30 pm, Pritchard Room, Chute House</u>
	Wednesday 7th March	'Hampshire Mills' John Reynolds, 7.30 pm, Tudor Merchants' Hall, Southampton (HFC)
	Thursday 15th March	'NE Hants - home of the British Army for 125 years', John Reed (Friends of the Willis Museum) 7.30 pm, Willis Museum
	Saturday 24th March	'Silchester Workshop', School of Education, London Road, Reading, 9.30 am - about 6 pm
*	<u>Thursday 5th April</u>	ROUND BARROWS AND RING DITCHES David Allen <u>7.30 pm, Clennell Room, Chute House</u>
	Saturday 7th April	Symposium 'Nineteenth-century Towns in Hampshire' (HFC Local History Section), Adult Education Dept, Southampton University 10 am

CONSERVATION

Our February lecture will be by Colonel Clayden, who is Conservation Officer for the Ministry of Defence and has responsibility for archaeological (as well as environmental) conservation of sites owned by the Ministry. These cover a much wider range than might be supposed, not just Salisbury Plain but sites in Northumberland, East Anglia and elsewhere.

This lecture is at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 2nd February. As usual it will be at Chute House, but please note that we shall be using the Clennell Room on the first floor.*

*We apologise for the late start in January and the relocation of subsequent lectures, due to a misunderstanding over bookings. Future lectures this year will be in the Clennell Room (except for the March lecture in the Pritchard Room - see below).

MARCH LECTURE "POSTCARDS OF THE PAST"

Unfortunately, Marcus Donnelly has had to cancel his lecture to us in March, but the Committee have been fortunate enough to arrange a lecture by a very entertaining speaker who has a fine collection of glass slides of Basingstoke and Newbury at the turn of the century. This will fill our "local history" slot very well.

Further details will be posted in the Library, Museum etc. Please note that this lecture, at Chute House on Thursday 1st March, will be in the Pritchard Room on the second floor.

AN EXOTIC SUBSTITUTION

Our warmest thanks to Mary Oliver, who maintained the "exotic" contribution to our lecture programme when our January speaker (on Egypt) had to withdraw, owing to family illness. Mary brought forward the lecture on MINOAN CRETE which we had booked for 1985, combining lively enthusiasm with well-researched knowledge. It is easy to see now why Mary's O-level class at the Technical College has been so popular and why the exam success rate there is so high.

QUESTIONNAIRE

If anyone hasn't filled in the Questionnaire on Outings circulated with the last Newsletter, it is not too late to send it in (or hand it in at the next meeting). Please do, so that we can arrange the kind of outings you like. And if you've lost the form, Sarah Duckworth can supply another at our next meeting.

HAVE YOU GOT IT ...?

In a recent check of the Society's equipment, it was found that a 30m measuring tape was missing. This is used for excavation and fieldwalking, and it may be held by one of our members who took part. If you have it, please let Peter Heath know (Telephone: Basingstoke 27713)

ODIHAM SON ET LUMIERE

Derek Spruce has sent details of "an entertainment in sound and light" ODIHAM THROUGH THE AGES to be held in Odiham Parish Church on 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th February at 8 pm. Tickets can be obtained from Derek (71 2026) or the Fountain Book Centre, Fountains Mall, High St, Odiham (71 3272). £2 reserved; £1 unreserved, with a 25% reduction for parties of ten or more. We suggest that if members would like to form such a party on 8th, they should ring Derek - he has offered to give a tour of the church before or after if sufficient people are interested.

DAILY LIFE AT ROMAN SILCHESTER

Reading University organised a fascinating day course at the Abbey Gateway, Reading, on 29th October. It consisted of five lectures on different aspects of daily life in the Roman town of Silchester, followed by a visit to the Silchester collection at Reading Museum.

This followed very well on the yearly lectures given by Mike Fulford on work at Silchester, and our own conducted visit last summer to his excavations there of the Forum/Basilica and the Amphitheatre. And of course it was Mike Fulford who set the scene with a description of the town, describing the well-known plan as "a palimpsest of 400 years". His major theme was the commercial life of the town. Some of this could be deduced from the layout, identifying small "corridor houses", for instance, as probably those of artisans and narrow-fronted buildings along the main street as shops or workshops. He investigated too what evidence could be drawn from the buildings themselves, with tiles coming from local sources but later stone slates coming from Oxfordshire or the Forest of Dean. Similarly, while much of the building work was no doubt done by residents of the town - wallplaster, for instance, being something that needed constant renewing - some aspects suggested the calling in of specialists such as mosaicists, or masons who may have come from the Rhineland.

It was welcome to see how much could be learned about the people living in the town, and their commercial activities, from the results of excavations, and equally it was tantalising to know that so many questions can only be partially answered.

Martin Henig gave us a more detailed view of what the people of the town would look like, by talking of their dress and particularly their jewellery. Here again there was a mixture of what was probably locally produced and the more exotic, with occasional glimpses of the individuals who wore them. One gem stone from Silchester would have been an antiquity when it was worn, while a ring with the figure of Roma may have been worn by a member of some government office.

Susan Read expanded the theme of the people themselves - who, she felt, would be a mixed social group, at first mostly locals with gradually a few "incomers". She began her account of domestic life in the town by describing some of the main types of houses and how their rooms and gardens would be used. The furniture in particular often had a strikingly modern look.

Roger Tomlin's talk on Literacy inevitably referred to a wider range of people than the occupants of one town, though he made full use of Silchester evidence, making us aware of how much the written word would be part of the everyday world, if only in inscriptions or on coinage.

In the light of the day's talks, the exhibits in the Silchester collection at the Reading Museum took on new life, and the little lit up "rooms" became more impressive in the amount of detailed research that had led to their making. The lecturers and Leslie Cramm who had chaired the proceedings were there to discuss the objects, particularly some which had been laid out in a back room for us to look at more closely.

This was a full and fascinating day. But don't worry if you missed it - there is yet more to come. A unique opportunity to study the evidence for Silchester in greater detail will be provided in March - see the item below.

BARBARA APPLIN

SILCHESTER WORKSHOP

Mike Fulford has send us the following details (more information to follow later) of a day workshop at the University of Reading to be held under the auspices of the Department of Extramural Studies, on Saturday, 24th March, starting at 9.30 am.

"This year will see the fourth season of excavations on the site of the Forum/Basilica at Silchester and the fifth season on the amphitheatre. The former site has, in particular, produced a great number of finds which are currently being studied by a number of specialists.

Although many people have visited excavations or seen them on television, few have had the opportunity of learning about what happens after the excavation ends. The purpose of this day is for participants to learn something of the mass of information that can be gathered from studying the finds and environmental samples, to handle some of the finds, and to discuss them and their interpretation with the experts who are working on them.

The following have agreed to participate: G. C. Boon (coins); M. C. Corney (other metal finds); M. G. Fulford (excavations, pottery); A. Grant (faunal remains); M. Jones (seed and plant remains); M. Keith-Lucas (pollen); A. Martin Hoogewerf (wall plaster); J. Price (glass); D. Richards (iron and iron-working); N. Sunter (architectural reconstruction)."

The fee for the course is £3.60.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY TOWNS IN HAMPSHIRE

The Local History Section of the Hampshire Field Club will be holding a symposium on this subject on Saturday, 7th April in the Adult Education Department, Southampton University.

It will begin with a general lecture by Dr J. Davis on "The Development of English Towns in the Nineteenth Century", followed by individual lectures on Southampton, Romsey, Basingstoke and Bournemouth. The Basingstoke lecture will be given by our own member, Derek Spruce. The Hampshire County Record Office will be mounting an exhibition of source material.

The cost is £4 per person, and ploughman's lunch can be booked if required. Details from Mr C M Hayden, King Alfred's College, Sparkford Road, Winchester SO 22 4NR.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF DEATH

Several members of our Society attended the Annual Conference of the Hampshire Field Club, Archaeological Section, at Southampton University on November 19th. This was the first such Conference Sarah and I had attended since joining the Field Club.

The theme of the conference was CEMETERIES AND SOCIETY IN HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT, possibly not a title to attract a large audience, although the attendance of 74 meant that the lecture theatre was comfortably full.

We left at 5.30 pm with the feeling that the seats had grown progressively harder throughout the day, but pleasantly surprised at the way in which each lecturer had helped to enlarge our knowledge of "The Archaeology of Death". Perhaps a grimmer description of the subject than the advertised title, but most apposite.

Dr R. G. Chapman, Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology at Reading University, opened the conference with a brilliant critique of earlier work in this field. In the past archaeologists had used burials from historic and prehistoric periods to make inferences about chronologies, the identity of racial and ethnic groups, religious beliefs, health and nutrition and social organisation. He suggested that by linking such studies with the role of death and burial customs in present-day primitive societies a clearer picture can emerge of the reasons for differing burial customs such as inhumation and cremation.

Peter Fasham, Assistant Director of the Wessex Archaeological Trust, was the second lecturer of the morning session. His outline of the Easton Lane excavations on the line of the M3 extension, when 11 acres were cleared and examined in 1982/3, developed into a description of continual occupation of the area for perhaps 3000 years on the downs above the Itchen crossings. This takes the history of Winchester back to Neolithic times. The various burials found were placed in the context of what knowledge we can gain from the pottery found and the traces of timber structures in the cemetery areas.

After a pleasant lunch and a visit to the book-stall, we returned for the afternoon session with keen anticipation. It was opened by the County Archaeologist for the Isle of Wight, Mr D. J. Tomalin, who was to lecture on "Barrows and Settlements, an Insular View". The Isle of Wight is unknown land to me. I knew nothing of the barrow cemeteries on the chalk ridge which forms the back-bone of the island. The lecture was a fascinating exposition of the use of modern statistical methods to establish the population distribution in the early Bronze Age. He explained that there was a relationship between population centres and the eleven coombes in the ridge, all marked at their mouths by substantial springs. This lecture challenged the intellects of the listeners, yet was delivered with a sense of humour which leavened the more difficult passages.

He was followed by Tony King, Lecturer on Archaeology at King Alfred's College, Winchester, who described the discovery of scattered bones on the site of the Romano-British temple at Hayling Island, and reviewed the current state of knowledge of human sacrifice in Iron Age Europe. He was honest in outlining the limitations of the archaeological evidence in categorising such finds as sacrifices, even though there is historical documentation for such religious rites in Roman literature.

Mr K. E. Qualman, the Winchester City Archaeologist, then took us into the Roman period, describing the five main cemetery areas outside the defences of Roman Winchester. In a clear and well-developed paper, he summarised the ways in which evidence from burials can be used to interpret the development of the Roman town at different periods.

We then moved to Saxon Southampton. Mr A. D. Morton, a supervisor of the excavations at Seven Dials, gave an interesting and challenging analysis of the main cemetery associated with the early eighth century church on the site. The form and nature of the cemetery was assessed with reference to late mediaeval burial practices. He concluded with some bold assumptions about selective immigration, female infanticide, and the population size of Hamwic at that time. All of which might have been challenged by the audience if there had been time!

Back to the Isle of Wight for an unusual subject. Dr C. J. Arnold of the University of Wales, a specialist in mediaeval archaeology, explained how the archaeological evidence from the excavation of the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the 19th century suggests that the island was developed during the 6th century towards an economically strong kingdom, having links with Kent, although about AD 600 it was incorporated into the mainland kingdom. In spite of the variable documentation of the excavations and the lack of surviving skeletal material, this analysis had a scientific basis which could not be challenged.

By this time we were beginning to wonder how we could possibly remember all that we had learnt in a very full day, but settled back to enjoy a vignette designed to bring the conference to a delightful, leisurely close. Mrs P. Johnston, Head of History at St Swithun's School, Winchester, took us into the Victorian Age with an essay in local history research on the business-like foundation of West Hill Cemetery, Winchester, in 1840. The trappings of Victorian inhumation already have a fascination which is

historical rather than morbid, and studies of this nature are becoming more and more frequent.

So out into the winter evening and the home-going traffic. Was it my imagination which led me to drive home a little more carefully than usual? We had seen so many skeletons that day!

ANDREW DUCKWORTH

THE BLACK DEATH OR ANTHRAX?

A recent television TIMEWATCH programme showed that our lecture topics are in the forefront of current research, when a speaker suggested that the symptoms of the Black Death indicate not the traditional plague but the disease anthrax - his book on the subject is planned for the autumn. However, other speakers were sceptical. An extension of the M 42 motorway is to go through the site of a plague pit, and archaeologists and scientists will be ready to pounce. The publishers would be well advised to hold the book until the results are known of any analysis that can be made!

GOODBYE TO GAVIN

Gavin Bowie leaves the Willis Museum to prepare for the establishment of the County Museum Service's new branch museum at Eastleigh. He will also be concerned with the Twyford Waterworks, Bursledon Brickworks, Bursledon Windmill and the Southwick Brewhouse. We are very grateful for Gavin's interest and friendship in the past and wish him well, while we welcome to the Willis Museum his successor, Mrs Caroline Goldthorpe, Keeper of Costume and Textiles.

THE ROMANO-BRITISH ROOM AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The redesigned Romano-British room at the British Museum has now been opened. We would welcome a note from the first of our members to visit it.

THE WORLD OF THOMAS HARDY LIVES ON ...

At their Christmas party, the Friends of the Willis Museum once again turned back to the times of Thomas Hardy with a visit from The Madding Crowd. This year their programme of carols, hymns and entertaining anecdotes was presented as the last rehearsal before Christmas of the combined singers and orchestras of church and chapel. The "conductor" often had the task of reconciling two different styles of singing, on one occasion compromising by agreeing to perform two verses of the "church" version and two of the "chapel" version. The presentation was entertaining and absolutely convincing.

Eric Robinson has drawn attention to another aspect of the times of Thomas Hardy which recently produced an article in a perhaps little-known

journal "Justice of the Peace" entitled "Putting Wives Up for Sale". Apparently the custom of wife-selling recorded in THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE was in fact so widespread in this country that it was known as "the English vice". The husband took his wife to market with a halter round her neck and sold her for a shilling or more.

The writer of the article, E. R. Yarham, mentions examples from 1773 to the 1870s, the prices reached ranging from the traditional shilling (or on one occasion only fourpence) to £50. He suggests that the use of the halter may have been thought to be a legal requirement, perhaps confused logic since such sales were conducted in the market and the wives were often invoiced as cattle. (My own feeling is that the husbands must have been confused!)

Let us hope that this is one custom that did not reach Basingstoke - no copying by today's disgruntled husbands, please!

QUEEN CARTIMANDUA'S FEAST

Our Chairman, Betty Waters, presided over the Society's Winter Social in truly regal fashion as Cartimandua, Queen of the Brigantes. It was a very enjoyable evening, and members who missed it have something to regret! (Note - should we have our Winter Social after Christmas next year?)

After a challenging quiz game and a very good assortment of "eats", there was a varied entertainment. Sue Headley's impressive rendering of an excerpt from Winnie Ille Pu was followed by a down-to-earth Cartimanduan translation. John Oliver's delivery of the "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" speech gave true dramatic flavour to the evening and Andrew Duckworth, dressed splendidly as a Roman soldier, read the sad Kipling poem of the legionary who has been posted away from Britain. Alan Roach and Peggy Drury sang the favourite song of drunken soldiers As Est Mihi (I've Got Sixpence') and there were several spontaneous demonstrations throughout the evening from John Oliver on how to rewrap oneself in a toga.

We have been asked to print the poem read by Barbara, wife of Ap Plinius (commonly known as Pliny the Younger) and the description of Silchester written by Andrew Duckworth in the style of Norman Goodland and delivered by Bob Applin.

The Rolling British Road

Before the Romans came to Ramsdell or out to Sherfield strode,
A rolling British drunkard made the rolling British road.
A swaying road, a swing-swang road that cantered round the county,
From Five Ways up to Farleigh Hill, from Buckskin to the Bounty.
A swaying road, a swing-swang road along which we did hurry
The night we went to Winchester by way of Winklebury.

I knew no harm of Hadrian and plenty of the Council.
I'd stick no spears in Severus, or any like utensil.
But I did bend their ballistas because they came arrayed

To straighten out the British road a British drunkard made.
 Where we went singing down the lane and dined at Barton's Mill,
 The night we went to Silchester by way of Sarum Hill.

BARBARA APPLIN (apologies to G K Chesterton!)

Autumn in Silchester

The tree-tops are bare. Crimped leaflets of ash eddy and swirl into cornflake piles. Grass on the field verge has dried in the wind. Deep green of ivy runs rampant in neglected corners, and up the leaning five-barred gate. Along the road to the church suddenly it is there - the Roman Wall across the ditch. The church and the farm stride over the town to seal its antiquity. Up the path from the farm the sunset is red in the West. It takes a brave man to walk the Drove across the town when sunset falls - even the proud Romans kept together among the shaggy islanders, children went in at dusk and the sentries walked the walls. Suddenly ghosts crowd around me - I seem to hear the rattle of armour, murmuring of crowds, a hammer on an anvil and the cries of traders. The mists lie in soft shelves over the rough grass, an owl cries from the wall, and the ground seems to shiver with the resurrection of bones.

Calleva Atrebatum, the woodland town of the Atrebates, proud Belgae tribe - once the centre of a great crossing of roads, now lost in the woods and winding lanes. No-one walked in those woods when the Belgae were there. Sacred to Lud, Nodens and Sul, and the unknown God of the trees, whose oak trees in the glades hung heavy with votive offerings.

Across the lane in the amphitheatre dell lined with bare thickset and hazel and the skeletons of dead shrubs - dark shadows everywhere. The tree branches creak like the hinge of a gate, and do we mistake the howl of a cat for the misery of a mangy lion far from Africa, starved to make a Roman holiday tomorrow? In that deep shadow, is there a group of slaves lying in a wet cage, tomorrow's victims crying quietly for their Christian God to save them before dawn?

It is said that when the grass ripens you can see the blocks of houses and the streets imprinted in the fields - the Forum and the Basilica - and the Christian church. The wall marches on still in eight straight lengths, the six gates still point the traveller along the Roman roads to Dorchester, to London, to Winchester, to Old Sarum and Speen. In the dusk the rattle of harness in the nearby farm is suddenly the rattle of spears against armour on the gatehouse towers.

Then as the smoke of leaf fires wreathes over the trees, and the sun sinks over the Western wall - it seems important to hurry away from the unhappiness of conquest and the misery of the home-sick soldier - to leave a magic place to its ghosts and demons, as the still City enfolds its walls in darkness, and only the fox is left to burrow among old stones.

ANDREW DUCKWORTH

HALLELUJAH BASINGSTOKE

Queen Mary's College and the Proteus Theatre Company are presenting a musical celebration of "an amazing piece of local history" on February 7th - 11th at the Central Studio at 7.45 pm:

"In 1881 the Hallelujah Girls of the Salvation Army tried to clean up Basingstoke by banishing the evil drink and damaging the town's chief industry of the time, brewing. In the riots which followed bricks were thrown through the windows of the Gazette offices, the military intervened and questions were asked in the House of Commons. The colourful moment from Hampshire's past is vividly recreated in this specially commissioned play."

Tickets £2 (£1 children and OAPs) Bookings at the Haymarket Theatre.

'AN IRON AGE BURIAL AT VIABLES'

Members who took part in the Society's excavations at Viables (and anyone else who wants to read about it) will be interested to know that the report by Martin Millett and Duncan Russell has now been published in ARCHAEOLOGICAL JOURNAL Vol 139 for 1982. Martin Millett tells us that he has a limited stock offprints which he can sell to members at £1 each. Please let Mary Oliver know (Basingstoke 24263) at or before the next meeting if you would like a copy, so that she can order them all together.

TRAINING DIG

We still have not been able to fix a date for the training dig, but hope that it will be in the Spring. If you think you might be interested in taking part, please ring Peter Heath (Basingstoke 27713) now and let him know when you will/will not be available. Then he will be able to contact you quickly when details are known.