

# BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



N E W S L E T T E R

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## CONTENTS

A HISTORY WORKSHOP ON HOOK  
THE TECHNIQUES OF MUMMIFICATION  
OAKLEY HELP  
AN UNUSUAL PARTNERSHIP

LIVING IN MEDIAEVAL LONDON  
ALEXANDRIA - THE FIRST  
THOUSAND YEARS Part 1  
CBA GROUP 12

## CALENDAR

- \* Thurs 12 Feb A HISTORY WORKSHOP ON HOOK Glynis Wilsdon  
Thurs 19 Feb "The Re-birth of the Basingstoke Canal" Robin Higgs, 7.30 pm, Willis Museum (Friends)  
Sat 21 Feb CBA Group 12 AGM 2 pm & "A Watershed in Archaeological Investigation in Wessex" 3.15 (Salisbury Museum) see page 8  
Fri 6 March "Mediaeval Timber-framed Buildings in Hampshire" Edward Roberts, Herbert Jarman Lecture Theatre, King Alfred's College, Winchester, 7.30 pm (Hampshire Field Club: Historic Buildings Section)  
\* Thurs 12 March THE TECHNIQUES OF MUMMIFICATION W V Davies  
Thurs 19 March "Pendon Museum" Austin Attewell, Willis Museum 7.30 pm (Friends)  
\* Thurs 9 April BASING, LONDON & MID SAXON ENGLAND David Hinton  
Fri 10 April "Bishop Waltham Palace" Dr John Hare, Herbert Jarman Lecture Theatre, King Alfred's College, Winchester 7.30 (Hampshire Field Club)  
\* Thurs 14 May THE ROMAN BASILICA AT LEADENHALL COURT, LONDON Simon O'Connor Thompson

\*Society activity 7.30 pm, Chute House

Practical sessions (pot washing, drawing etc) continue on most Wednesday evenings, except lecture weeks, at the Kempshott Village Hall. All are welcome, but please ring Basingstoke 27713 or 24263 first to check on a particular evening, and for directions

A HISTORY WORKSHOP ON HOOK  
Thursday 12th February

Glynis Wilsdon has called our February meeting a "Workshop" because it is not simply going to be a lecture, but an opportunity to look at a variety of documents relating to Hook. She has the maps, trade directories, census returns and much else. We shall be able to look at these for ourselves, in the light of the research she has already done on Hook. Some members may already have come across several booklets Glynis Wilsdon has produced on the local area, and the work on Hartley Wintney which she did with children.

THE TECHNIQUES OF MUMMIFICATION  
Thursday 12th March

W V Davies of the British Museum is making a welcome return visit to let us into the mysteries of exactly what went on in the process of mummification in ancient Egypt - an insight not only into the techniques available, but also into the motives behind them.

Both lectures as usual at 7.30 pm at Chute House

OAKLEY HELP

"LINK", Oakley's village magazine, runs a monthly Oakley Archive page. Graeme Wheeler, the magazine's editor, would be delighted to receive any contributions to this page from our members - written, photographic or drawn. Please send any information to:

16 Braemar Drive, Oakley (tel: Bas 781556)

We have several past Oakley Archive pages in our Society "library" (available to members during each month's Wednesday pot-washing session at Kempshott Village Hall) and they cover a good variety of aspects of Oakley's past. There are several contributions of recollections by Mr Garrett, whose family were carpenters, wheelwrights and the main undertakers of the village. And there are articles on Oakley School, the church magazine of the 1920s, Oakley station, and a now-forgotten post office. Some recollections give a vivid picture of the days when the distance between Oakley and Basingstoke was covered by foot, or horse - or train - and when the local carriers were busy.

AN UNUSUAL PARTNERSHIP

The County Archivist has asked if any of our members have information about a "very unusual sounding partnership of architects in Basingstoke: Raymond & Canon Scoles". She writes:

"Canon Scoles was a Roman Catholic priest and the "firm" apparently operated from the Presbytery. They specialised in designing Roman Catholic chapels, but may have had a wide practice apart from this. My enquirer is interested in the location of the records of the partnership, and I wonder if any of the Basingstoke members might have any ideas on this. But failing this, any information about them would be of interest. Canon Scoles appears in the Directories

of 1903, 1911, 1915 and 1920 (not 1895 or 1927); Geoffrey Raymond in those for 1915, 1920 and 1927. They are both listed among the private residents, not in the commercial section, so the Directories give no evidence of a partnership. Canon Scoles lived in Sherborne Road; Raymond at Wayside, Wallis Road in 1915 and 1920, and at The Yews, Wallis Road in 1927."

We have found out something; Anne Hawker has discovered that, according to Gerard Dwyer in Diocese of Portsmouth, Canon Scoles was already an architect when he arrived in Basingstoke on 30 May 1901. He designed several churches: St Swithuns at Southsea; Holy Cross at Eastleigh; St Josephs at Copnor and the Immaculate Conception at Liphook, as well as the porch and west end of the Cathedral of St John at Portsmouth. He died in 1920 and was buried "beside the church".

Can anyone add to this - particularly with information about the partnership records?

### LIVING IN MEDIEVAL LONDON

This day school on 17th January made me more enthusiastic than ever about my favourite museum. The Museum of London demands a great deal of its staff - and they rise to the challenge. Not only must they do a considerable amount of research and fieldwork, but they have recently mounted the exhibition Capital Gains which Richard Dexter described in Newsletter 96 and now they have followed it up with a very stimulating day of lectures:

The Appearance of London (John Schofield)

The Craftsman (John Clark)

Clothing (Kay Staniland)

The Waterfront, Wharves and Shipping, (Gustav Milne)

Trade and Business (Peter Stott)

Cooking and Eating (Jane Cowgill)

All the lectures were fully illustrated by slides, with constant reference to recent finds: from false hair and a hairnet at Baynards Castle to part of a mediaeval chapel at Aldgate that the museum nonchalantly arranged to have lifted out of the way by a crane while development went on, and then put back - it weighed as much as 8 double-decker buses. It would take an entire Newsletter to justice to this fascinating day.

BARBARA APPLIN

As well as giving items of news, reports of meetings etc, the Newsletter is an opportunity for members to tell us of their special interests in archaeology or history. The following article conveys Frank Mayo's enthusiasm for Alexandria and its founder (Part 2 will follow in the next Newsletter)

Farouk was King when I went to Egypt; Sidhi Pasha his (mostly) resented Minister. The Eighth Army had departed, but the impact of the desert war remained, not yet history.

My life was busy, but fortunately my job permitted me to spend time in Alexandria, which I found much more fascinating than the "Ancient Egypt" of the guide books. Two questions became important to me. First, how did Alexandria come into existence, and second how did it become the place I knew?

I concluded that the first question involved the study of Alexander the Great. But how can one understand the complex character that changed so much after his pilgrimage to Siwa and its Oracle; changed further after the dramatic and brilliant defeat of Darius III at Gangamela and towards the end of his short life believed himself a god? This was after he had founded and himself marked out the site for Alexandria! Did he expect to rule an Empire including Egypt and that of Darius from this place? For my second question I concluded that the key figure was Constantine, but after Alexander I find I can not call him "the Great". Presumably one is entitled to an opinion.

There are perhaps three other reasons for an interest in Alexandria. The historically-minded will be interested in a city which was planned and still survives on the same site after more than 2500 years - one of the few in the world. It was the birthplace of mathematics and scientific inquiry. The classically erudite will recall that according to Homer, Menelaus and Helen landed on the island of Proteus on their way from Troy. Herodotus (450BC) recounts that before this, Paris, going to Troy with Helen and stormbound, landed on the same island; that Helen never went to Troy but was hospitably (and virtuously) detained in Egypt. A dwindling few will recall "Alex" for what it has always been - stimulating, irregularly faceted and interesting; civilised; and a contrast with the aridity of the Libyan desert, where some hundred kilometres to the west are those who remain permanently, set in rows and godly piety.

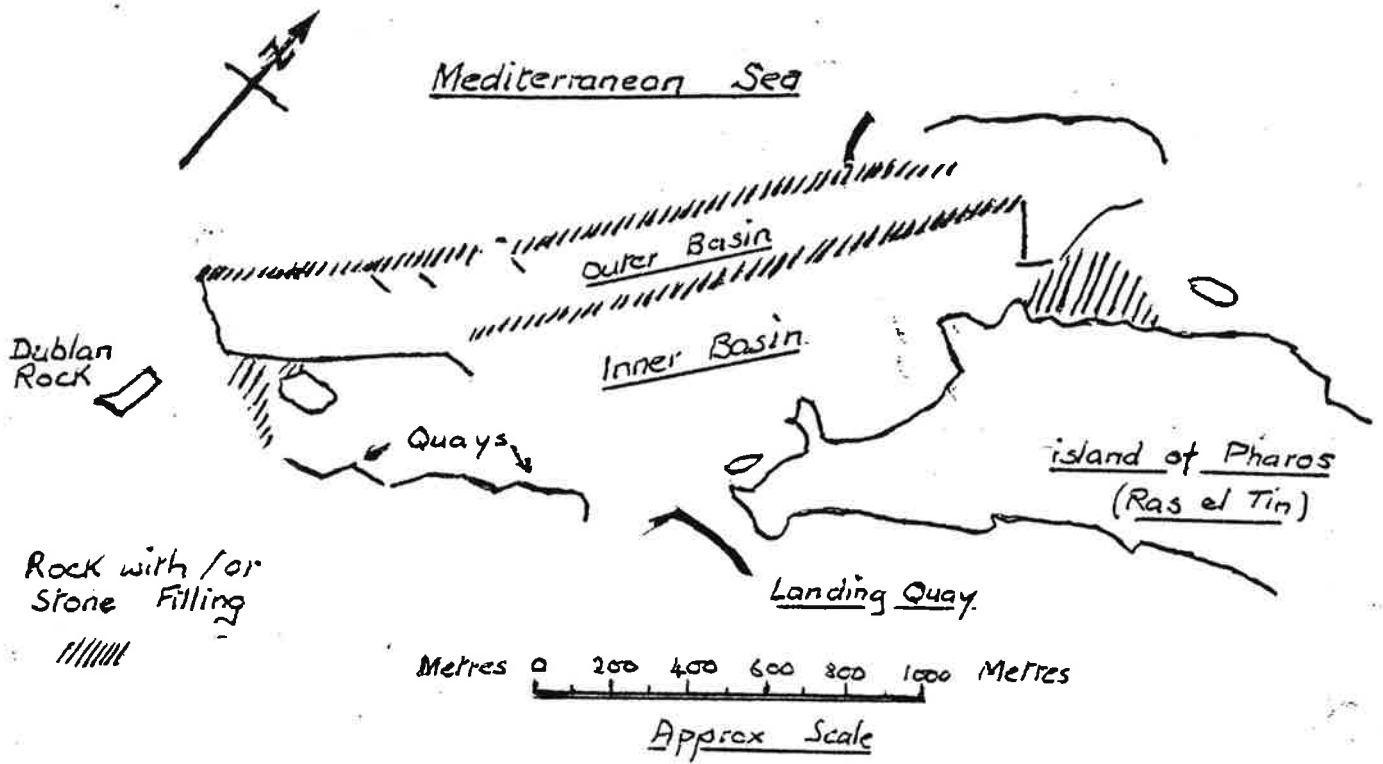
### The Site

The geology of the site includes several parallel ridges of hard Tertiary limestone rock. These go roughly east-north east from the north east corner of the Libyan desert. In ancient times, the western branch of the Nile was thereby constrained to find its outlet to the Mediterranean at the Canopic mouth (near Aboukir) and also formed Lake Mariout between ridges.

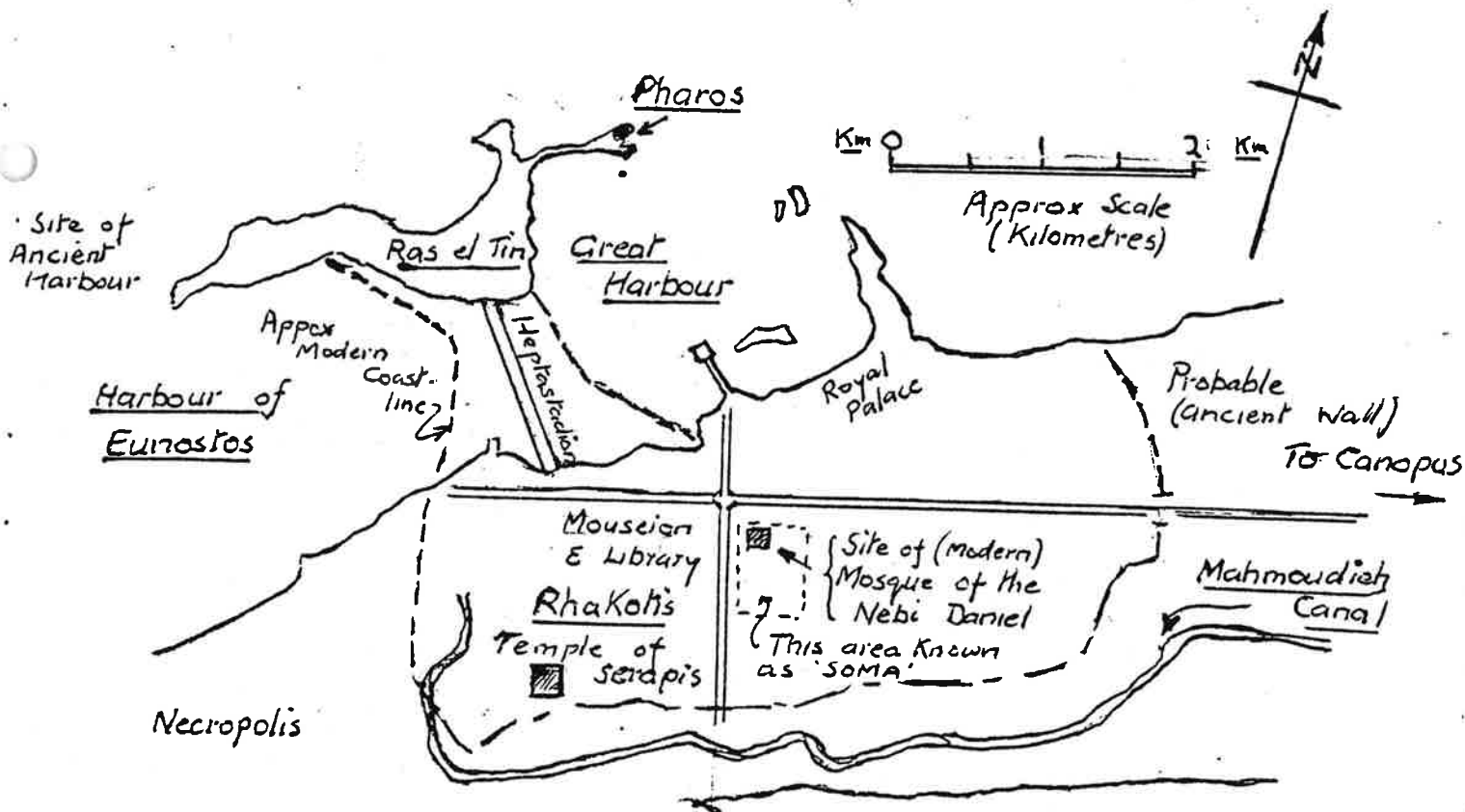
The island of the Proteus (hereafter referred to by its later name, Ras el Tin) was more than a kilometre long and 300-400 metres broad; it was a south west - north east ridge mainly above sea level some 800 metres from the stable main shore line behind which was an ancient settlement, Rhakotis, and Lake Mariout. At the western end of Ras el Tin, seaward, the rock-ridges formed a rough harbour, hazardous but with an elementary natural breakwater.

### Alexander the Great 353-323 BC

A brief account of this extraordinary man is essential because he was responsible for creating the city. He was the son of Philip II of Macedonia and a pupil of Aristotle (384-322 BC). Philip was murdered in 336 BC and the 17-year-old Alexander was accepted as successor after violent but decisive intrigue. An admirer of the Greeks, he lost no time in re-establishing Macedonian dominance throughout Greece.



PRE-HELLENIC PORT OF PHAROS, c. 1800 BC.



ALEXANDRIA  
(about 320 b.c.)

Lake Mariout

[Ref: Journ. Inst. C.E (Nov 1940)]

His father had created an effective army and Alexander perfected it. The heavy infantry fought in phalanx formation up to 16 ranks deep, and each man carried a 'sarissa' (pike) about 12 feet long. This proved a more effective weapon than the 6 foot spear of the Greek hoplite. Alexander formed a corps of light infantry, the 'peltasts', highly trained and able to fight in open formation. With them were Cretan archers, slingers and javelin men. He formed a siege train of 'sappers' which enabled cities to be stormed rather than starved. Two divisions of trained cavalry were also formed and used for reconnaissance and pursuit.

Alexander's picked troops were his "Companions of the King". All soldiers were tough, well-drilled and commanded by a highly efficient and experienced officer corps. Above all, Alexander recognised the need for speed and mobility in battle and for himself, though no mean fighter, to lead and direct the fighting. His charisma must indeed have been more than extraordinary.

Alexander's primary aim was to destroy the Persians, the traditional enemy of the Greeks. He led an army of about 35,000 foot and 3,000 horse across the Hellespont. They beat off an attack at the river Granicus (334 BC), then marched by the coast of Asia Minor to near modern Antalya. Here they turned north to near modern Ankara, then south to Tarsus. Nearby, at the Issus, they had a not completely decisive victory (333 BC) which was, however, sufficient to prevent the Persians interfering with Alexander's plans.

With his army he marched south, by the coast, stormed Tyre, neutralised other coast settlements and went on to Egypt. This coast route was determined not only by the towns and settlements there but also by the 'fertile crescent' of land fringing the Arabian desert which here projects northwards.

At the southern end was Memphis on the Nile, where Alexander made good his claim to a not unwilling Egypt (hitherto under Persian domination) and crossed the river. The north east end of the 'crescent' is in the "land of the two rivers" - Tigris and Euphrates. By the same route in reverse, Alexander would return before starting his later march eastwards to be briefly described below. Meantime he sought a capital for his new empire.

He needed a site where a secure harbour could be constructed, enabling domination of the eastern Mediterranean. A good water supply, reasonable security from land attack, and stable foundations were essential. He found all this in the Rhakotis area. Moreover, Lake Mariout was navigable and directly connected with Memphis, via the Western Nile. From here an ancient canal led to the Gulf of Suez via (modern) Ishmailia. At Rhakotis, therefore, Alexander ordered his new capital to be built, and himself helped to mark it out. The brief which he gave his engineer, Dinocrates, included a causeway connection to Ras el Tin (331 BC). Alexander never again saw the site.

The rest of Alexander's story is here told briefly. He led his army north by the coast from Memphis and, though outnumbered, decisively defeated the Persians under Darius III at Gaugamela (near Nineveh) in 331. He then led a remarkable march eastwards by devious ways to Ecbatana, the Kindu Kush. Kandahar, Kashmir and across the Indus into the Punjab, where his troops fought and won a tough battle against the Indian King, Porus (326). The Indian forces used an elephant corps which, after initial surprise, were successfully dealt with by the Macedonians. This marked the limit of Alexander's eastward progress. He turned westwards and marched to Babylon, where he died in 323 BC.

The vast empire which Alexander had created at once disintegrated and was fought for between his warring generals. Three major powers finally emerged: northern Greece and Macedonia; then part of Asia Minor, north Palestine and Syria, with a capital at Antioch; and third Egypt, the capital of which was the still incomplete Alexandria. Its Satrap (ruler), later King, was the former general Ptolemy, the first of a new Egyptian dynasty.

### Alexandria - its plan and growth

The city was laid out on a base of two main routes at right angles. The larger went roughly west to east and can be called the Canopic way because it was continued east eventually to Canopus. The shorter, nearly south to north, had its southern end at Lake Mariout east of Rhakotis; thence north until it reached the harbour. Nearly a kilometre west of the junction, a "Heptastadion Dyke" was constructed, going north-west to link the city with the island of Ras el Tin. It was 850 metres long, built on rock and perforated by arches to prevent water pressure difficulties in construction and maintenance. Incidentally, Julius Caesar made use of these arches during his brief campaign in the city in 48-7 BC (Suetonius).

The Heptastadion created two harbours: to the east was the Royal or Great Harbour and a palace was built on its south-east shore. On the west was the Eunostos or "harbour of safe return".

A Pharos or lighthouse (described later) was built at the eastern end of Ras el Tin. Temples to the old gods of Egypt and of Greece were built, but the city's presiding deity came to be Serapis. This deity combined the qualities and powers of Osiris, Apis, Dionysus, Zeus, Pluto and Aesculapius. This apparently satisfied the formal religious requirements of the mixed Greek, Egyptian and eventually Jewish population. The temple was near the site of ancient Rhakotis and had a statue of the god. What the increasing Jewish population really thought about this is not clear. In time, Alexandrian Jewry, influenced by Greek thought, diverged from the conservative Jews of Jerusalem. Later devotees of Serapis were to be the final and most stubborn opponents of Christianity.

Ptolemy was able, enlightened, wealthy and took trouble to keep well informed. He lived in the city and contributed lavishly to its building. Before he died in 285 BC, Alexandria was the economic and cultural capital at the centre of an empire from Cyrene in the west to Cyprus, Palestine and part of Asia Minor, with wealthy Egypt and the Nile valley to the south. Trade flourished.

Ptolemy brought the body of Alexander, sealed in a glass coffin and encased in gold, from Babylon, first to Memphis and then to Alexandria. Here it was entombed, probably near the south east corner of the junction of the two main routes, but the exact site is not known for it has never been found. The area was originally known as Soma ("Body"). Now the Mosque of the Nebi Daniel stands not far away. It is a very holy and ancient place indeed to Islam, strictly forbidden to unbelievers. Alas, I did try - in all humility. According to Suetonius, Octavian-Augustus saw the sarcophagus in 29 BC and made profound veneration with rich offerings. Stories are told of it having been seen since that time, but nothing is really known.

A great contribution to the city made by Ptolemy and added to by his successors was the Temple of the Muses, or Mouseion. The idea followed that of the Mouseion at Athens, but the new one was larger and richly endowed with royal funds. There is now no trace of its site; it was probably on the south-west corner of the main route junction. It is said that one Demetrius Phalerus, a pupil of Aristotle, organised the place with a Library (the Athenian Mouseion contained the Library of Aristotle), an observatory and

areas where lectures could be given and experiments made. There was also a book-copying department - important in those days and for years afterwards.

Royal funds were provided for able scholars from the known world to be invited to reside and work there. The remembered contribution to human thought by individuals associated with the Mouseion is mainly mathematical and scientific. Contributions to philosophy and art (except poetry) are minor. Later, royal patronage invited ephemeral 'courtly' learning and research with almost frivolous speculation.

### The Pharos

The function of this structure, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was to be a guide and lighthouse at the entrance to the Royal Harbour. In effect it was more; it was a practical and very visible symbol of Alexandrian power and scientific thought. Its form is not speculative; similar smaller structures existed along the flat coast of the western desert well into historical times, the nearest near Bourg el Arab (Abousir), 40 kilometres west of Alexandria. Others were built at intervals to Cyrene.

Ancient coins illustrating the Pharos have been recovered. At the east end of Ras el Tin, it stood in a colonnaded court and temple. The tower had three main sections, first a rectangular base, part of which existed up to a hundred years ago. Above this was a circular or more likely octagonal (on plan) section. The third housed the lantern. The fuel was wood, carried from the base. The engineer is said to be one Sostratus, of whom little else is known.

The total overall height has been variously estimated but was certainly considerable. Between 300 and 400 feet seems favoured. If 300 feet, the tower would be visible for some 22 English miles out to sea. The whole monument was completed about 280 BC and dedicated to Poseidon. The need for guidance to sailors approaching Alexandria is very real, as modern charts show, but the Pharos emphasised the city's dominance as the primary city and port of the eastern Mediterranean.

For comparison, as a work of civil engineering, the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops to the Greeks) at Gizeh, which I have inspected and entered, is of similar height to the Pharos - though I see it as a monument to brute force and ignorance. The Pharos existed complete up to the Arab conquest of AD 641, soon after which the neglected lantern section fell. Restoration work was done AD 880-1000 but the second section collapsed following earth tremors about AD 1100.

F B MAYO

(A Bibliography will follow Part 2)

### COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY Group 12

On Saturday 21 February at the Lecture Theatre, Salisbury Museum, 65 The Close, Salisbury: 2 pm AGM; 3.15 "A Watershed in Archaeological Investigation in Wessex" by Andrew Lawson