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CALENDAR

- Thurs 21 May "A History of the Postcard" John Silman,
7.30 pm Willis Museum (Friends)
- Wed 17 June "Hampshire Days, Hampshire Ways"
Norman Goodland, 8 pm, St Paul's Church,
Tadley (Tadley & District Society)
- Sat 20 June Visit to Museum of the Iron Age, Andover
(Friends of the Willis Museum)
- * Thurs 25 June ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7.30 pm, Chute
House
- Sat 4 July Visit to garden at The Manor House, Upton
Grey (Friends)
- Wed 15 July "Gilbert White, the Natural History and
Antiquities of Selborne" Dr June Chatfield
(Tadley & District Society)
- Sat 19 Sept Hampshire Field Club Annual Conference+
THE RISE OF SUBURBIA", Brighton Hill
Community Centre, Basingstoke, 10 - 5
- Sat 14 Nov Hampshire Field Club & Winchester Archaeology
Office: Day Conference on THE BROOKS
EXCAVATIONS, WINCHESTER in The Conference
Chamber, Winchester Guildhall

*Society activity

Practical sessions on Wednesday evenings (except lecture weeks)
at Kempshott Village Hall. Ring Basingstoke 27713 or 24263 to
check.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and AFTER

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 25th June at Chute House. After the business proceedings, Peter Heath will report on this year's training dig at Odiham - a rather unusual site that gave good opportunities for practising techniques, even if its archaeological value was limited.

THE BROOKS EXCAVATIONS, WINCHESTER

The excavation programme at The Brooks, from March this year to July 1988, will investigate the origins and development of the Romano-British Venta Belgarum as well as Saxon and mediaeval development. Records of a 13th century Winchester merchant and financier, John de Tytyng, show that his house should lie within this area.

The Hampshire Field Club and the Winchester Archaeology Office will be holding a day conference on The Brooks Excavations in Winchester Guildhall on Saturday, 14th November. More details later.

KEMPSHOTT: THE STORY OF ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR CHURCH

An interesting book by Jane Leese has been written to celebrate the opening of St Mark's Church, Kempshott, by tracing the history of the area and describing its present-day community. Price £1.50.

HFC CONFERENCE: THE RISE OF SUBURBIA

The Annual Conference of the Hampshire Field Club will be held this year at the Brighton Hill Community Centre, Basingstoke on Saturday, 19th September (10 - 5) on THE RISE OF SUBURBIA. Entry £3 for members of the Field Club, £5 for non-members.

CRONDALL IN THE TIME OF ELIZABETH I

This book on Crondall, by Joan Harries, has been published by the Farnham and District Museum Society, price £4.50 post free from Farnham Museum. It is based on an analysis of Probate Inventories from 1548 till 1603.

The first part presents a general picture of the village under the headings Population, Wealth, Systems of Tenure, the Village Community, Crafts and Trades etc, and the second part analyses the inventories in detail.

On Bank Holiday Monday (May 4th) the excavations of the mediaeval remains in Southampton's French St and Lower High St were shown to the public.

58 French St is a merchant's house with vault that has been restored by English Heritage and will be opening as a museum with a shop in the Autumn. The building has had a multitude of uses, including a brothel and finally a pub, and had been extensively altered and repaired, but it has been returned as nearly as possible to its original 13th century form.

The excavations around the outside are designed to find property boundaries and the garderobe. So far the objectives have been partly achieved, the boundary has been found and they think they have the garderobe and another cess pit. The site of the kitchen, external to the main building for fire safety reasons, has also been located. Three weeks are left for large tasks of excavating these through the centuries of accumulated infilling.

The High St site about 100 yards away is an area that was bombed during the Southampton blitzes of 1940-41. It had been partially excavated in the early 1970s when some of the vaults were found.

The current excavation is being carried out to learn the history of the site before redevelopment. Part of an east/west road with a length of 13th century ceramic water pipe has been exposed in a very disturbed site; there are several modern service trenches running on the same alignment.

The vaults were constructed in various ways. One was stone built with the exposed roof being of very well fitted limestone blocks. Another was formed of rubble and mortar with rammed brick earth on top. These vaults were built parallel to High St, at right angles to the houses built above them. It is thought that the houses and vaults were rented out separately. All show evidence of modifications to the light wells and accesses, for, as they were originally built, they were only partially underground. All are currently full of infilling or rubble and will need weeks of backbreaking and potentially dangerous excavation before the real work of investigation can begin.

These excavations and the house were shown very ably by members of the excavation team, and the conducted tour finished in one of the vaults that has been restored, with a lady Southampton City Guide in attendance, in appropriate mediaeval costume. This structure was of the order of 40' x 15' by 8' high at its centre and had a Tudor addition. It was interesting that it had a fireplace near the entrance, whether to keep the goods dry or because at some stage it was used as living quarters is not known. If these vaults were filled to capacity with luxury goods like wine, the merchants who used them must have had considerable capital to invest.

When the work is complete, another major part of the jigsaw of mediaeval Southampton will be in place.

BOB APPLIN

HAMPSHIRE ARCHIVES TRUST

We have become an institutional member of the Hampshire Archives Trust, and the best way of explaining its aims is to quote from a letter from its Secretary, the County Archivist

"... the Trust is an exciting venture designed to give better protection to archives in the county through increasing public awareness and appreciation of this important part of our heritage. It aims to provide a forum through which the many local history interests in the county can work together, acting as a pressure group where necessary. Its surveys will build up our knowledge of archive collections kept elsewhere than in the established record repositories, and it will place particular emphasis on providing for the storage of records in newer formats such as film, tape and computer generated records. "

The first AGM will be held at Rotherfield Park, where the speaker will be David Vaisey, Bodley's Librarian and a recently appointed Historical Manuscripts Commissioner. If anyone would like to attend on our institutional membership, please contact our Secretary or Chairman.

We receive the Trust's Newsletter, and the recent issue contains a very interesting article on The Chronology of John Hobbs of Overton, 1828-1882 by Richard R Oram, who is a former member of our Society and now Chairman of the Overton Local History Society.

TUTANKHAMUN AND THE DINOSAURS

In Dorchester (Dorset) you can buy a joint ticket for two very different exhibitions, run by husband and wife: the Dinosaur Museum and the new Tutankhamun Exhibition which opened recently in a former monastic church.

The aim of the Tutankhamun Exhibition is to re-create the experience of Howard Carter in 1922 when he discovered the famous tomb. Careful facsimiles have been made of the major treasures, using the same techniques, tools and materials as were used by the ancient Egyptians. Even the smells noted by Carter have been imitated by skilful use of oils and ointments.

The Tutankhamun Exhibition is at 25 High West Street, Dorchester, admission £2 (£1 for children).

EDITOR'S NOTE If any members visit an interesting exhibition, excavation or site, do let me have a piece for the Newsletter, even if it's just a few lines.

Alexandria from 221 BC to the death of Augustus

From the earlier date the city of Alexandria apparently remained prosperous but its history is unremarkable. After the defeat of Carthage in 202 BC, Roman influence began to extend to the eastern Mediterranean. Antioch and Pergamon were important trading centres and Roman conquest extended to Asia Minor and then to Palestine (by Pompey) and Syria. Julius Caesar, with Pompey and Crassus, formed the First Triumvirate (60BC). Then Crassus disappears from history and Caesar defeated Pompey in Greece (48BC). Pompey was murdered in Egypt where Caesar fought a brief campaign to secure the country and Alexandria (47-7 BC). Cleopatra VII, Egypt's Queen, and the Cleopatra of Plutarch, Suetonius, Shakespeare and Dryden, enters the story but chose the wrong lover; Caesar was murdered in 44 BC. But before this it was Caesar who instituted the calendar reforms calculated and proposed but never adopted in Alexandria some 190 years previously.

Octavian, Caesar's nephew, now dominated the west; he then turned east. His rival, Mark Anthony, died with Cleopatra in 30 BC and Egypt became a Roman province; Alexandria was its main port and capital.

Octavian, now Augustus, appreciated the importance of Egypt, strategically and as the granary of the Roman Empire. He forbade any Roman patrician to visit Egypt without his permission and personally appointed the Prefect. He stationed two legions in Egypt, ostensibly for defence and to keep order, but they spent much time repairing irrigation channels and navigable canals and in stabilising the banks of the Nile, thereby increasing agricultural potential.

Three Centuries - Augustus to Constantine

After Augustus died (AD 14) the official attitude of Rome towards Egypt and Alexandria particularly seems to have softened somewhat. When Trajan recut the old canal to the Red Sea in AD 115, prosperity improved. Nevertheless, the government of Alexandria, with its racially mixed population, developed problems. Tension between Greeks, Egyptians and Jews was often high, with a new sect, the Christians, becoming noticeable. The distinction between the Jewish people and this Christian sect was anyway imperfectly understood by official Rome.

Between AD 100 - 180, say Titus to Marcus Aurelius, the official attitude of the Roman Emperors, Senate and magistrates more or less continued (so far as Egypt was concerned) the ancient religious toleration, albeit with reservations respecting Jews. In 134, it is said that the Emperor Hadrian when in Alexandria wrote with disfavour, though without rancour, about the "bad behaviour" of certain people. He referred thereby to Christians who refused divine honours to the Emperors, but who nevertheless were, and remained, prosperous folk.

Rome hitherto had no religious trouble with Egyptians of pre-Christian times. Their ancient beliefs, from 4000 years back,

involved visible images satisfactory to matter of fact Roman ideas. The subtle spiritual aspect of this ancient religion was ignored. However, Christians became increasingly unpopular, particularly in Alexandria where the scholars had abandoned science in favour of philosophy and especially religion. Gibbon records the multi-racial mixture of the population of Alexandria of this period and also refers to the later "Tumults of Alexandria" in AD 248-269.

A notable contemporary name is Clement (of Alexandria) c150-213) who taught the Egyptian Origen (c185 - 254); Origen was persecuted by Decius (Emperor 249 - 51). Plotinus (203 - 262) and later Athanasius (c 296 - 373) should also be mentioned.

Constantine (274 - 338)

A brief account of Constantine is essential. By about AD 250 maintenance of stable government throughout the extensive Empire was becoming increasingly difficult. Attacks from across Rhine and Danube by alien forces, extended land communications necessary for defence over a vast area (in spite of the roads), lack of organised Roman permanent sea-power and personal animosity in high places - all contributed.

A relevant example is provided by the successful revolt led by Carausius in Britain in 287. Constantius, one of two caesars appointed by Emperor Diocletian (284 - 305), had to deal with the revolt. Lack of sea-power and available troops delayed action until 296, when Constantius with his able Praetorian Prefect, Asklepiodotus (of Greek origin) landed in Britain and defeated and killed Allectus, successor to the murdered Carausius. A gold medallion, struck at Trier and found at Arras, commemorates Constantius.

Constantius then sought to restore stability to Britain, which was still of economic importance to Rome. Pict raids from north of the abandoned Wall, and marauders from across the North Sea kept him busy. He died at York (Eboracum) in 306; his son Constantine (born 274) had hurried from Rome where he served under Diocletian, to be with his dying father, and he was proclaimed by the British based legions. By now the division between the west based on Rome and the east on Byzantium was manifest.

Constantine, with a combination of influence, intrigue, luck and considerable ability, had success in a civil war and won Rome in 312. There he was proclaimed Western Emperor, and turning east after a lengthy campaign, decisively won a final critical battle at Adrianople in 323. He was proclaimed Sole Emperor in 324 and chose to make his capital at Byzantium.

Persecution of Christians had been officially ended in 311 by Galerius with an "Edict of Toleration". Constantine issued his own "Edict of Toleration" from Milan in 313. The formal rule of Egypt, and hence of Alexandria, seems to have lapsed almost by default about 310 - 315. The precise rule which replaced that of Rome is not clear. Presumably trade continued; Egyptian grain and Alexandrian industrial products such as glass and metalwork, retaining importance.

The Emperor Constantine had appointed a Prefect in Egypt and an army garrison to support his authority, but the Christian ecclesiastical hierarchy in the numerous forms it took in multi-racial Alexandria seems to have had considerable influence. This gained impetus from Christian monks who abandoned solitary lives in the desert (eg in Wadi Natrum) and concentrated themselves into monasteries and each sought vociferously to make their views known. The result, to say the least, does not seem to have contributed to peace and quiet in Alexandria.

It is not known whether Constantine ever visited Alexandria; it could be considered a well-sited and almost ready made capital for his new Empire. He may have thought it too cosmopolitan, too sectarian in the new religious sense and therefore politically unstable; all true in hindsight. Instead he chose to rebuilt Byzantium on the Bosphorus and there created Constantinople, which had little or no history.

With further hindsight one might remark that Egypt in general and Alexandria in particular, then as now, were both vulnerable to strong influences from the politically always inflammable Near East. Ironically, Alexandria fell to unfanatical Arabs in AD 641 and Europe paid scant attention. Constantinople survived until 1453 and Europe was thereafter never the same.

From Constantine to Islam

Disputes between Christian sects, particularly those in Alexandria, had their part in causing Constantine to summon, in 325 AD, the first ever Christian gathering in Nicaea on the Black Sea. His object was to prevent the creation and growth of politically inopportune schisms. The meeting consisted of two or three hundred Christian leaders, priests and bishops, and two characters from Alexandria were particularly vociferous. Arius (250 - 336 AD) expressed very strongly his views on certain matters of belief which were not acceptable to all Christians. Athanasius (296 - 373) in particular led the opposition to these views.

From the resulting often violent debate came an agreed prepared statement of ultimate verity which the Christian world still knows as the Nicene Creed. The doctrines of Arius, however, continued to exercise theological minds and to create dissension for years afterwards. Athanasius was accepted as Orthodox, presently was made a Bishop and later became Patriarch of Alexandria.

The monish element already mentioned, with its origin in native Egyptian desert "solitaries", developed a somewhat ambivalent attitude to this now Roman-supported Hellenic Christianity. Ultimately it played an important part in the creation of a native Egyptian Coptic Church, with its own language (derived from the ancient Egyptian tongue), its own liturgy and a Cathedral in Alexandria. However, the worship of Serapis continued until about 390 AD. By 450 there were two Patriarchs in Alexandria - one wealthy, appointed by the Emperor but with only nominal authority over the Egyptians, the other poor, native in origin and essentially Coptic. The Orthodox Greek element became unpopular, remained thus for centuries and was the cause of much later civil disorder.

In 570 Mohammed was born in Mecca. In 610 he received a call from God - a revelation which later became the Koran. He formed a political/religious community where none existed. He died in 632 and Abu Bekr succeeded him as Caliph - Commander of the Faithful and Representative of God on Earth. He was followed two years later by Omar.

In Egypt in 631, Cyrus, Imperial Viceroy and Patriarch, started a disastrous rule of ten years. The Emperor Heraclius himself then intervened to restore order. A brief Persian interlude followed but was checked. Then in 641 an able Arab General Amr invaded Egypt with a small force of cavalry. With this Islam gained Egypt, and Alexandria speedily followed because, as has been said, the place had no soul and no will to resist. Little material damage was done; the Library which the Arabs are usually said to have destroyed had already been destroyed partly in Caesar's brief campaign in 48-7 BC but mainly in Christian feuds, riots and disorders in later years. The churches, which had been temples, became mosques - that of Nebi Daniel is one of the oldest. The Arabs could not understand the complexities of Alexandrian thought and they left it to build their own city, the modern Cairo.

Envoi

Forty years ago, knowledgeable Alexandrians whom we knew, conscious inheritors of its past, still sought to make the place their own, as so many before had sought. They faced an uncertain future.

With two companions, I swam from the western end of Ras el Tin and landed on one of the barely submerged ancient breakwaters a hundred and fifty metres or so seawards. There we rested. This, we believed, was part of the ancient harbour of Pharos; here, we said, the legendary Helen walked.

Alexandria remains, now el Iskandarya; an attraction for a few discerning (or perhaps merely curious) tourists; haunted by its own past - and rarely newsworthy.

F B MAYO

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Acknowledgements to:

My wife Charis for patiently accepting and correcting my minute knowledge of the Greek tongue

Mrs Salmon (former member) for elucidating some aspects of the Coptic Church

Numerous partly remembered acquaintances in Alexandria from whom I learned much by listening, often at the cafe tables of Pastroudis, but elsewhere also.