

BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter Number 250

FEBRUARY 2025



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Letter from the Editor

Happy New Year, and welcome to the 250th edition of the BAHS newsletter! On such a milestone, it seems fitting that our front cover should feature Mary Oliver, one of our founding members, at the launch of her latest book, ‘The Early Story of Old Basing’. The cake, which had an image of the book cover in icing, was provided by our very own Pauline Hedges. The event was a huge success. So much so that our initial print run sold out on the night! A round-up of the evening can be found on page 6.

Also on the front cover: Chloe Rowland points the way to the Time Team excavations at Sutton Hoo last summer - you can read about her visit with Annabel Stowe on page 15. The black and white photo, taken in the 1970’s, shows The Boy’s Brigade on parade in George Street. The Working Men’s Mission Hall was still standing at this point, as Roger Ottewill explains on page 10.

Also in this edition, Peter Stone discusses the endlessly intriguing topic of the date of the Cerne Giant; and dust off your kneelers and trowels because the dates for Stanchester 2025 have just been released!

Finally, Ginny Pringle has once again succeeded in putting together a varied and interesting lecture programme – details are on page 21.

Penny Ingham

WEBSITE UPDATE

The society's website has recently been updated to give it a fresher look and to pare it down so that it can be viewed on computers, tablets, and phones. The home page will keep you up to date on the next lecture; the 'what's on' page gives details of the current lecture season; the 'Publications' page is a shop window for our current books, and the Newsletters page provides a gateway to the newsletter archive.

BAHS Newsletter Archive

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The newsletter archive gives access to copies of all the newsletters published by the society which with this issue come to a grand total of 250. The archive has been improved with a search engine that allows you to find a newsletter by date, or to find an article by matching a keyword in its title, or you can find articles written by an author. Each type of search has its own tab. Once you have found an article, you can click on the title link, and it will open the newsletter file in your web browser.

If you need reminding, the society's website address is:

<https://www.bahsoc.org.uk>

Stanchester Excavation 2025

This year we will be returning to the Stanchester Roman site for a three-week block of excavations from Saturday July 26th to Saturday August 16th. This year we are aiming to complete our investigation of the domestic building that we have been working on since 2021 and to explore what lies around the possible stoke hole discovered last year.



If you would like to get involved, then you would be welcome to join in. We will provide training and opportunities to take part in the wide range of activities that keep the site running including digging, recording, surveying, photography and finds processing.

If you would like to know more, or would like to make sure that you are on the list for Stanchester 2025 then please contact me.
Mark Peryer (email: markperyer@gmail.com
Tel: 07770 832397)



Guided Tour of Roman London, Sat 17th May

(PLEASE NOTE: CHANGE OF DATE)

We have arranged an exclusive tour entitled 'A Walk in Roman London' on Saturday 17th May. The tour will be led by Pauline Hedges, who used to run her own guided tour company. The tour will start at 11 am and will last for about an hour and a half. It will start from the Royal Exchange which is in easy reach from Waterloo Station (Waterloo and City line to Bank).



The tour will be offered at no cost to members, but there will be a fee of £6.00 for third parties which can be offset against a membership subscription.

If there is enough interest, we will then visit the London Mithraeum which is located under the Bloomberg building in the city. There is no cost to visit the Mithraeum, but we would need to book some tickets.

Places are limited and available on a first come, first served basis. To register your interest, please contact me by April 30th, indicating whether you would also like to take part in the visit to the Mithraeum so that I can book a ticket on our behalf.

Mark Peryer – email: markperyer@gmail.com or Tel: 07770 832397

BOOK LAUNCH

'The Early Story of Old Basing'

On Monday 9th December 2024, BAHS celebrated the launch of 'The Early Story of Old Basing' by Mary Oliver – the sixth volume in our Basingstoke Histories series.

The event was very well attended - more than 60 members and guests came along. The evening began with a Q&A session with Mary and our Chair, Mark Peryer. This was followed with a talk by Paul McCulloch of Pre-construct Archaeology on excavations of a Saxon cemetery at New Alresford. Mary then signed copies of her book (the queue stretched the length of Church Cottage!). The celebrations concluded with Mary cutting a splendid cake (specially crafted by Pauline Hedges – see front cover photo) to mark the occasion.

The book costs just £6 and has full colour photographs throughout. Copies are available at our monthly meetings, or from the Willis Museum. They can also be ordered from our website <https://www.bahsoc.org.uk>



"Well-researched and beautifully-written... this is a gem of a book, and will appeal to anyone with an interest not only in local history, but in the broader picture, stretching back into the mists of time" - Annabel Stowe, author of "Roman Roving: walking a Roman road", and "A-Harrowing We Shall Go - exploring the Harrow Way: Britain's 'Oldest Road'".

THE CERNE GIANT DATE MYSTERY

by Peter Stone



Members may recall the talk by Dr Mike Allen on February 12th last year about this subject, when they were offered the opportunity to pre-order a forthcoming book which has now been published. ^[1] It is thoroughly comprehensive in scope with contributions from a number of experts about the history of the Giant and the implications of its location close to the ancient abbey.

It begins with a section presenting in detail the results obtained from using the method of optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) on soil samples taken during 2020 excavations, under the direction of Martin Papworth of the National Trust SW region, to date the Giant.

OSL is a proven technique that has been relied upon for many years by archaeologists to establish the date of long buried items such as building materials or pottery and by geologists to study landscape chronologies. The results in this case were surprising: the Giant it seems is not prehistoric, Roman or 17th century but early medieval, from the period AD 650-700, and its outline was apparently re-chalked within the period AD 990 -1510. The date range of the latter is wide but both date ranges, along with the presence of shells of a woodland species that came to this country during the medieval period, point to an early medieval date.

But OSL dating has not proved wholly convincing for Professor Ronald Hutton of Bristol University and others who say that the absence of historical evidence from the tenth century until 1694, when a record was made of three shillings paid by the churchwardens of Cerne Abbas for the maintenance of the hill figure, should not be disregarded. Professor Hutton goes so far as to argue cautiously in his contributory essay that there may be something amiss with the OSL process that has produced earlier dates than the early modern period suggested by the place of giants

in English culture during the 15th to 17th centuries. And there is the Bronze Age date produced by OSL for the Uffington White Horse: horse figures are largely absent from Bronze Age culture whereas they are often represented in Iron Age metalwork and coins.

Interestingly Mike Allen, who was responsible for geo-archaeology and archaeological science at the site cannot come to an unqualified conclusion. In his contribution he admits that there are uncertainties with OSL dating, especially when applied to hill figures, so he shores up the argument in its favour by citing evidence provided by soil deposits around the Giant in order to explain its absence from the historical record. These deposits post-date the original outline, which was in the form of a shallow trench cut through a thin soil associated with grassy areas and therefore not exposed to chalk. Consequently, with the passage of time, the combined effects of soil erosion, different grazing regimes and the re-growth of grass caused the outline to disappear.

So perhaps that tips the balance of the argument in favour of an early medieval date then?

Well, not quite because it implies that knowledge of the outline's former existence would have been preserved in oral tradition and that woodland growth would have been sparse enough to prevent it becoming completely obscured - neither proposition seems very realistic. Then there is the small matter of the location of the very large Giant on abbey land. If an early medieval date is correct then it would seem that it could have been there from before the time of the abbey's foundation in the tenth century until its dissolution in the sixteenth, even though, as Professor Hutton points out, '*...there is no parallel example, from anywhere in the Christian world of a medieval monastery fashioning or maintaining a [pagan] figure of that kind...*'

Perhaps reference to research into the origin of the Long Man of Wilmington might help. In their contribution to the book, Professor Martin Bell of Reading University and archaeologist Chris Butler, who investigated the site in 2002 - 2004, express the opinion that the '*...superficially cut...*' Long Man could not have survived for centuries. They considered all the historical and archaeological evidence - including OSL dating it to the Bronze Age - but nonetheless tentatively conclude that the figure could be 17th century and that Sir Henry Compton (1584-1649) MP for East Grinstead, whose Catholic faith led to his investigation by

Parliament, was its originator. Compton was the tenant of Wilmington Priory from 1618 and they suggest that he could have created it as a folly but with a hidden religious meaning now lost.

The evidence supporting this conclusion makes interesting comparison with that used by Joseph Bettey, and cited by Katherine Barker in her contribution to the book, to favour a 17th century date for the Giant. It is well worth considering.

During the Civil War and Interregnum periods the Cerne estate was owned by Denzil Holles (1598-1680). Before the outbreak of hostilities in 1642 he was one of the five MPs who King Charles I had attempted to arrest. Later he became opposed to the war and the influence of religious and social radicals it had brought about. Holles also disliked and distrusted Oliver Cromwell. Excluded from Parliament in 1648 he went into exile until he was allowed to return in 1654. In 1645 there was the rising of the Dorset Clubmen in protest against the undisciplined conduct of both Parliamentary and Royalist armies and the plundering of livestock and possessions. It was suppressed by Cromwell. Finally, Hutchins says in his *The History and Antiquities of Dorset* published in 1774, that he was told by a steward of the Cerne manor that '*...the figure was made by Lord Holles servants...*' Even allowing for the long period of time that elapsed following Holles death until Hutchins' reference, this explanation from a local source still sounds rather more likely than reproduction of the figure from an oral tradition preserved over about five centuries.

It might then be concluded that Holles ordered the making of the Giant to be viewed from the road between Dorchester and Sherborne as a symbol of opposition to the war and Cromwell in particular. But is that plausible while, as in the case of the Long Man of Wilmington, downplaying the significance of the OSL results?

I'll leave you to decide for yourself.

[1] '*A Date with Two Cerne Giants*' published by Oxbow Books 2024 and edited by Michael J Allen

[2] Interested readers can find out more about uncertainties in OSL dates from a report on the website of the European Geosciences Union <https://gchron.copernicus.org/articles/3/229/2021/>

The Afterlife of the Working Men's Mission Hall George Street 1928-1997

Roger Ottewill

As recorded at the end of an earlier article, in 1928 the trustees of the Working Men's Mission Hall, situated at the junction of George Street and Deep Lane (see Figure 1), sold the premises to the Wesleyan Methodists (*BAHS Newsletter*, no 223, May 2018, pp.13-8).



Figure 1: Working Men's Mission Hall, looking east along George Street

The subsequent use made of the Mission Hall was then summarised but a mistake was made by giving the year for its final closure and demolition as 1970, 'a casualty of the Town Centre Redevelopment'. This was incorrect and it was not until 1997/8 that the premises were sold and houses built on the site. The purpose of this short article is to set the record straight and to give some attention as to how and by whom the Methodist Mission Hall, as it was listed in trade directories (see, for example, *Kelly's Directory*), was used after 1928. In so doing a heavy reliance is placed on small number of reports which were published in the *Hants and Berks Gazette* [HBG] and some papers at the Hampshire Record Office [HRO].

After its sale, the first reported event was the hosting, in May 1928, of a sacred concert given by the Cliddesden Methodist Choir (*HBG*, 12 May 1928, p.5). In July of the following year the first anniversary of the Hall ‘under its new auspices’ was celebrated over two days. On Sunday there was a special preacher, the Rev James Day of Richmond Theological College, and on Monday evening a ‘fully attended’ meeting with a contribution from the Church Street Methodist Church choir. One of the elders, Mr Bavis, gave an account of the year’s work. As explained, the idea was ‘to develop the Mission as far as possible on the lines of a Young People’s Centre’. Thus, there were bible classes on Sunday mornings, young people’s services on Sunday evenings, and a variety of indoor and - in Baths meadow - outdoor recreational activities, including billiards, table tennis, cricket and football. However, it was mentioned that some of those who had been associated with the Hall when it was home to the Working Men’s Mission ‘did not like the idea of having the recreation and games in the same room as services’. It was therefore suggested that the trustees should consider installing an upper floor as a games room (*HBG*, 13 July 1929, p.6). However, there is no evidence to indicate that this suggestion was followed up.

By all accounts, from the 1930s to the 1950s the Hall performed a useful service in ministering to the youth of the area in which it was situated. There are relatively few references in the press but one from 1938 suggests that it hosted a branch of the Wesley Guild which was represented at a rally of Christian Endeavour Societies held at the Sarum Hill Methodist Church (*HBG*, 4 February 1938, p.6).

In a brochure produced in 1955 to celebrate the golden anniversary of Church Street Methodist Church, mention is made of the Mission ‘carrying on vital work in the neighbourhood under the leadership of the two brothers Bath, “seconded” from the Mother Church’ (HRO Ref: 57M77/NMS176). The Bath brothers, Ernest Frank, a carpenter, and Albert George, a local government officer, were also trustees of the Hall.

In addition, there is testimony from David Young regarding his attendance at Sunday school classes held on the premises:

[Basingstoke \(Church Street\)](#) | [Hampshire](#) | [My Wesleyan Methodists](#)

By the 1960s, however, the future of the Hall seemed uncertain since it was anticipated that it would be adversely affected by changes to the area arising from 'the new Town Development' scheme. In the event the major alterations to the townscape of Basingstoke during the 1960s and 70s did not impact on the Hall to any great extent. Thus, although it was formally closed as a place of worship in 1965, under a renewed trust it continued to be used by youth organisations, in particular the Boys' Brigade. With a grant of £200 from the London Mission Fund the roof was renovated and what was described in official records as 'a wood and corrugated iron building' survived for another 20 years or more. Thanks to the efforts of the Boys' Brigade the Hall was subsequently redecorated and rewired (HRO Ref: 57M77/NMS 243). In parallel with these developments Trinity Methodist Church, situated on Sarum Hill, had opened in 1970, replacing Church Street and Sarum Hill Methodist Churches both of which had been demolished.

Reports in the *Trinity Church Newsletter* confirm the contribution that the Boys' Brigade made to the upkeep and improvement of the Hall (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: George Street Mission Hall when occupied by the Boys' Brigade

In the December 1975 issue, for example, reference was made to the fact that:

Over the years the Boys' Brigade have been steadily improving the Mission which was practically derelict when we moved in ... working as we do week by week in this building makes us realise what dedicated work was done there in times past, under conditions which none of us would tolerate today (HRO Ref: 57M77/NMS117).

Three years later, in the November 1978 issue, in its comments on the painting of the Hall it was observed that senior members 'practically lived at the Mission for 3 weeks.' Clearly it was a 'labour of love'. Following its extension and renovation, the Hall was valued for insurance purposes at £36,300.

The only discordant note appears to have been the disappointment expressed in the June 1978 issue at the lack of support from Church members regarding attendance at that year's Boys' Brigade display and inspection. However, a year later it was reported in the August 1979 issue that they had undoubtedly taken this to heart and the equivalent display was 'very well attended' to the extent that extra chairs had to put out.



Figure 3: The Boy's Brigade on Parade in George Street

During the early 1990s, the future of the Mission Hall was again in doubt. The quinquennial inspection undertaken in 1990 by Simmons and Sons highlighted a number of repairs and improvements required. At the time the premises comprised: 'Entrance porch, Hall, Staff Room, Rooms 1, 2 and 3, and the rear extension ... a small kitchen, W.C. and ancillary area'. Thus, it had a range of facilities. However, in 1993 the trustees reported to the Property Division of the Methodist Church that in order 'to bring the premises up to the standard required for the 1995' inspection, repairs would cost £52,000. Alternatively, the Hall could be replaced for £83,000.

In the light of this, it was 'decided not to incur such expense and to rehouse the Boys' Brigade at Trinity [Methodist Church] in 1994 ... [with] no decision [having] yet been made on disposal or future use of the premises' (HRO Ref: 57M77/NMS 291). Although the record is then silent, it is clear from a Land Registry document that the property was sold in 1998 to Anna Mannerstrale with houses subsequently being built on the site.

For nearly a century the Mission Hall had been a local landmark, serving as a place of both worship and recreation. Reflecting its origins, when it was eventually sold the following prohibition applied - 'no building which may be erected on any portion of such Land shall be used for the sale of Beer Ale Wine or Spirits excepting only that it shall be permissible for the Owner or Occupier thereof for the time being to use and exercise thereon Grocers or Chemists Off Licenses.'

Note

I am very grateful to (a) Cathy Williams for drawing my attention to the error in my earlier article; (b) Alastair Blair for the images which constitute Figures 1 and 3; and (c) Bob Applin for the image which constitutes Figure 2.

A-HOO-ing We Did Go! **Visit to Sutton Hoo (and Time Team Live)**

by Annabel Stowe

The first question you might ask is, what exactly is a *boo*? Answer: it comes from the Old English for a piece of land that sharply projects into a valley. So, the *southern settlement* on *high ground* would have been in a commanding position overlooking the tidal River Deben, highway of its day, forming a link to the sea.

The second question you might ask is, who (sorry) went *a-booing*? Answer: Chloe Rowland and her aunt, on an archaeological jaunt in June. To our great delight, **Time Team** were also *a-booing* there at the time.



Time Team and volunteers. Dr Helen Geake 2nd on left

As many of you will already have visited this world-famous site, and/or read John Preston's excellent book 'The Dig', and/or seen the film (I haven't), I will adopt a personal approach, telling you a little about our visit. An amusing observation to share with you before I start ... online reviews can be quite startling, such as the person who gave Sutton Hoo

only a 2* rating out of 5 because (wait for it) the ship wasn't there to be seen! Clearly this unfortunate reviewer has missed the point, and in so doing has missed the magic and mystery of one of the greatest archaeological discoveries, in Britain at least, of all time.

Back to our exploration of this 'hauntingly beautiful, endlessly fascinating' place (not the same reviewer's words!)

A Tale of Two Cemeteries

From our lovely Airbnb farm cottage on the estate, it was just a ten-minute walk to the Visitor Centre, with its National Trust Shop, tea room and High Hall exhibition space, and to the Time Team excavation in the adjacent Garden Field. Time Team have joined forces with the National Trust on a new two-year research project, exploring the earlier history of Sutton Hoo, with live digging throughout June. Crossing the car park, we reflected that a Bronze Age barrow once stood here which, as is often the case, may have become the focus for an Anglo-Saxon cemetery nearby.

Before going any further, I should clarify that there are two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries – one in Garden Field (discovered in 2000 prior to the construction of High Hall and the shop/café) which is where Time Team was in action, and the more famous Royal Burial Ground (7th century) about 500m away overlooking the river.

Chloe and I wandered first into Garden Field, home to the earliest evidence of Anglo-Saxon life at Sutton Hoo, in the form of a late-6th century cemetery. 19 inhumations and 12 cremations have been found since 2000. One of the aims of the current excavation is to investigate 'mysterious anomalies' in Garden Field, and perhaps find the extent of this earlier cemetery. The graves here are of mixed status, generally less grand than those in the Royal Burial Ground, which superseded it from c.AD590. We happily engaged in some archaeo-geekery at this point – Time Team members were spotted and even spoken to (I'm a bit of a 'groupie') as we watched the dig and perused the display boards in the geodome. Volunteers from around the world, along with members of Time Team and F.A.S. Heritage, were trowelling away in the trench where a patch of darker earth suggested burning (cremation?). Previous finds from Garden Field include the 6th century Byzantine Bromeswell Bucket,



The Byzantine Bromeswell bucket

fragments of which were ploughed up in 1986, with further pieces unearthed during a metal detecting survey in 2012. It is now on display in High Hall.

Chloe and I would return to Garden Field periodically to check progress, but now it was time for a coffee and our guided tour of the Royal Burial Ground.

Ghostly impressions in the sand

The story of the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon ship burial, on the eve of WWII, makes fascinating reading. How grave robbers who, over the centuries, had robbed out all but two of the 18 barrows, somehow managed to miss the burial chamber in the King's Barrow, with its priceless treasures, including Byzantine silverware, exquisite jewellery, a lavish feasting set and, most famously, an ornate iron helmet; how the finds (now on display in the British Museum) survived the war, initially stored under someone's bed then in Aldwych Underground Station; how the discovery of the first rivet, such a key moment, fell to Jacobs the gardener, new to excavation and never having seen a ship rivet before. Incidentally, the humble rivet is still providing us with key information, such as the thickness of planks used, in the reconstruction of a replica vessel, taking place in a Woodbridge boatyard, to be launched, hopefully, in 2025.

The one thing which was *not* found in the burial chamber, of course, was a body – the acidic sandy soil put paid to that. However, phosphates in the earth indicated that a body had once lain there. Whose? We shall consider later.

Back to our tour, led by an excellent guide in Saxon costume. I hadn't realised that there had been two ship burials here – a smaller, plundered one in Mound 2, and the famous larger one in Mound 1, the King's Mound. Along with a third ship burial at nearby Snape, these are the only ones dating from the Anglo-Saxon period to have been found in England.



our guide, with canine friend

We climbed the end of the King's Barrow where the 27-metre length of the ship can be appreciated thanks to the installation of a metal prow projecting from the mound. Retracing our steps, we paused by the grave of a young warrior buried with his horse, and learned that Professor Martin Carver, Excavation Director during the 1980s and 90s, used the mounds as target practice...for his golf! The unfortunate mounds had already fulfilled a similar role, though for something much less harmless than golf balls, when WWII tanks had rumbled around between them.

We can't leave the Royal Burial Ground without reference to a grim period in its history. After tales of sumptuous splendour came the stark reality of its use as an Anglo-Saxon execution cemetery, AD700-1100, like that found at Weyhill. We stood where a gallows had stood. Unlike at Weyhill, a sand body in a shallow grave can still be viewed, thanks to various modern techniques for preservation. The imprint of the body, with a gallows rope round its neck, was revealed to us, protected by a heavy wooden trolley. I was at this point rather full of the horror of the place and failed to take a photo, but Google Images has examples, if you must.

Tranmer House

The former home of Edith Pretty and her husband was our next port of call, to view the audio-visual displays, including photos of the ship's discovery by two talented amateur photographers, Mercie Lack and Barbara Wagstaff. Finds processing was in progress in the Discovery Room, where we watched minute pieces of cremated bone being painstakingly extracted from soil samples. There is not space here to do full justice to the life story of Edith, of how Frank proposed on her 18th birthday, and every birthday thereafter, until she accepted at the age of 42,

their son Robert being born when she was 47. And we only have time to touch on the history of the house itself, bought at auction for £15,250, where they entertained friends, including spiritualists William and Peggy Parish, who may have roused Edith's interest in the mounds on her land. After Edith's death in 1942, Frank having died in 1935, the house was commandeered by the War Office (hence the presence of tanks). Land Army girls left their mark – literally – in graffiti round the fireplace and holes in the wooden panelling near where the dart board would have hung!

Site overview

There was one more treat in store for us, albeit a rather strenuous one, the following morning – ascent of the viewing tower, as it swayed gently in the breeze (I am assured this is a good sign!). The views from the top were magnificent – out over the Royal Burial Ground in one direction, and down towards the river in the other, enabling us to picture the funeral procession, in the early years of the 7th century, hauling the ship from the river up the steep slope to its final resting place on the *hoo*.

So who ...?

This piece has been peopled with ghosts and shadowy shapes, both human and nautical, but we cannot end without addressing the question of who was buried in the King's Barrow. Was it indeed Raedwald, King of East Anglia, who died in AD625, as is the accepted belief? Or could the two barrows with ship burials - one with its priceless treasures, one empty - have been destined for two kings, as has also been suggested? We shall never know. Grave diggers may have had the last laugh after all. But let's not lose the magic and the mystery, and allow photographer Mercie Lack to have the last word: *The impression of the ship, alas, was of a fleeting nature, a kind of ghost-ship revealed for a short time, during which it was possible to make records, photographs and sketches and then the original was gone for ever.*

Post-script: only days after our visit came the discovery, in Garden Field, of further fragments of the 6th century Byzantine Bromeswell Bucket, complete with decorated figures that match those on the original find. Thrilling stuff!

BAHS PROGRAMME OF TALKS

Monday 3rd February (ONLINE TALK VIA TEAMS)

Bits Buried in Pits: The St Mary Bourne horse harness hoard

Dr Sophia Adams, British Museum

In early 2020 a hoard of horse harness items was found in the parish of St Mary Bourne, Hampshire and has since been acquired by Hampshire Cultural Trust. These copper alloy and iron objects, over 2000 years old, are part of the metal components for a chariot and bridle bits for two ponies. This presentation takes a close look at the finds and sets them within the wider context of horse drawn vehicles, metalworking and hoarding practices during the Iron Age in Britain. This is a story of the power of ponies, long distance connections and local practices, with some very curious details.

Monday 3rd March

Bluestone, Bones and Bombs. Excavations at Boles barrow on Salisbury Plain 2024

Richard Osgood MBE, Senior Archaeologist for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation within the MoD

The work at Boles Barrow was an investigation of the earliest monument type yet for Operation Nightingale. Their quest was to see how well it was preserved; were there traces of Neolithic combat victims; of the antiquary excavations by the renowned William Cunnington, or even traces of the legendary bluestone supposedly found there and donated to Salisbury Museum by the war poet Siegfried Sassoon? The monument had been deemed At Risk by Historic England and their excavation was part of a programme to preserve the site. This talk will highlight the results so far.

Monday 7th April

“Don’t Delay - Enrol Today”:

The Women’s Land Army in Hampshire

John Lander

John's book of the same title has just been published by The History Press in advance of the 75th anniversary of the demobilisation of the Women’s Land Army in 1950. During WWII, Hampshire was in the forefront of the recruitment of Women’s Land Army members, known as “land girls”, with the county’s National Farmers’ Union Chairman claiming ‘that there were more land girls in Hampshire than in any other county in England’.

Monday 12th May

Nightlife in Eighteenth-Century Hampshire

Prof Maria Hayward & Dr Julie Gammon, University of Southampton

Taking Southampton as our starting point, contextualised with work on Winchester and Portsmouth, we will explore what constituted ‘nightlife’ in the eighteenth century, where events such as the masquerade and dances took place, and who attended them. We will consider where the great and good of Hampshire would have acquired the clothes they needed to appear at such events, as well as the role of clothing in less reputable evening pursuits, including visits to brothels, molly houses and gaming halls. What the people of eighteenth-century Hampshire did, where they went, and what they wore once the sun went down will be investigated during this talk.

Monday 2nd June

AGM followed by East Anglia and the Arrival of the Anglo Saxons

David Whiter, BAHS member

How England emerged from the wreckage of Roman Britain is a puzzle, with very little written evidence, either contemporary or over the following centuries. Even Bede is largely silent about East Anglia. Archaeology is providing a basis for understanding the huge change involved as towns became increasingly irrelevant, and identity, language, economy, religion and social norms were transformed. East Anglia was pivotal in this for 350 years - but how?

BASINGSTOKE YAC REPORT - January 2025



As we start 2025, we are pleased to report that our membership remains strong at a steady 20 – and our waiting list has managed to maintain a healthy prospective 25 or so hopefuls! November started with the YAC being invited to the CBA Wessex conference at Middle Wallop, where they had the opportunity to learn more about Operation Market Garden. We were delighted with the Basingstoke response, as we managed to have 10 of our regulars in attendance.

Our last meeting of the year was the trip to Shaw House. The children were really engaged and there were areas of the house that sparked the imagination of everyone, from musket shot through the window, narrowly missing a Royal, to the house's use during WWII - they all had a favourite part. The trip down to the Bakehouse, was as always, a lot of fun and our YACsters really enjoyed being able to do something a bit out of the ordinary. As always, the children blew us away with their behaviour and attention. They also listened to what was said and this resulted in some very mature, well thought out questions! We were so proud of them.

As we move into January, we are delighted that Luisa (former YACster, now Young Leader) will be delivering her very first session. 'Medieval Mayhem – a teenagers' guide to getting by in the Dark Ages', is a game that Penny and Paul first introduced from Reading Uni a few years ago. It's a game of chance, and relies on the cards that you are dealt and the decisions that you make, to decide whether you escape the plague or succumb to it. The YACsters love a bit of role play, especially if it involves dying in a dramatic way, so it should be just up their medieval street.

Finally, it's across to David Hopkin's Scout Hut in February so that we can make a mess! Yes, you've guessed it, we're getting mucky with a bit of cave painting. Our thanks as ever, go out to the whole volunteer team, for that is what we are, a team. We now also welcome Louise Franklin and Kayleigh Cooper. Soon Penny, Paul and I can retire!

Nikki Read Co-Leader, Basingstoke YAC

EDIBLE HISTORY



A big thank you to Pauline Hedges, who continues to provide delicious cakes for our monthly lecture meetings. **Top and left:** There were British Legion themed cupcakes on Armistice Day last November, when war historian Rhyddian

Vaughan MBE gave us a talk about 'The Unknown Warrior' and his tomb.

Opposite: In January, Dr Gordon McKelvie from the University of Winchester spoke to us on 'Winning the Peace: After Edward IV's Victory in 1461'. Photo shows Gordon cutting Pauline's 'War of the Roses' inspired cake, which was much enjoyed by all.



BASINGTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Lectures are at Church Cottage at 7.30pm.

Monday 3rd February **(ONLINE TALK VIA TEAMS)**

Bits Buried in Pits: The St Mary Bourne horse harness hoard

Dr Sophia Adams, British Museum

Monday 3rd March **Bluestone, Bones and Bombs. Excavations
at Boles barrow on Salisbury Plain 2024** *Richard Osgood MBE*

Monday 7th April

“Don’t Delay - Enrol Today”:

The Women’s Land Army in Hampshire

John Lander

Monday 12th May

Nightlife in Eighteenth-Century Hampshire

Prof Maria Hayward & Dr Julie Gammon, University of Southampton

Monday 2nd June

AGM followed by East Anglia and the Arrival of the Anglo Saxons

David Whiter, BAHS member