



Newsletter

April 2011

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❁ Travellers Tales ❁

2011 Programme of
meetings and visits

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The WARG Newsletter provides reports on the activities of WARG, the society for Winchester archaeology and local history. It also carries other information of interest to the WARG membership.

For more information on WARG, and to join, call 01962 867490, e-mail membership@warg.org.uk or visit www.warg.org.uk

Chairman's notes

This is being written on an un-seasonable April day, warm and sunny. Doubtless we will soon be back to normal. But please keep your fingers crossed that the first two weeks in August will be as nice as now.

Big Dig 2011

We are still dotting i's and crossing t's but we are very hopeful that we will be digging again in the first two weeks in August, this time at Winchester College. We will be working with some of the College students to re-locate what is thought to be the site of the chapel of St Elizabeth's College. The dig will involve training the students in archaeological techniques as well as carrying out our normal tasks. Numbers may be limited, but we are waiting for a Southampton University resistivity survey before we draw up a detailed programme.

The College of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary was founded in 1301 by Bishop Pontoise of Winchester and dissolved by Henry VIII. Henry gave it to Thomas Wriothesley, who sold the site to the warden and fellows of Winchester College for £360. The Victoria County History says that the site we are digging is not that of St Elizabeth's College, but of a chapel to St Stephen. The Ordnance Survey maps show both. A dig, not well recorded, by Winchester College in the 1960s certainly found massive foundations just under the surface.

If you are interested in digging, a form will be on the web site by the end of May, or contact Julia.

Cheriton Battlefield

There is some news about involvement in the Cheriton Battlefield Project, an attempt to solve the mystery of exactly where the battle took place in 1644. See page 22 for more details.

Contributions

The scribes' record of our meetings makes up the backbone of your newsletter, and Julia provides contributions, especially the news snippets she discovers. But we could do with more material. When your holiday takes you to places of historical or archaeological interest, then please think about sharing this with other members. 800 words, the length of a sensible article, doesn't take that long to write, and will be very valuable.

Subscriptions

Techer will take outstanding subscriptions at the May 9th meeting.

Dick Selwood

Fieldwalking and a Roman Coin

WARG's done quite a bit of fieldwalking in the Winchester area over the last few years and has helped to increase the City Archaeologists' knowledge of what went on and where from our finds. Mostly we've been able to create a "time line" concerning the land we've walked and in several instances been able to prove that certain land has been worked continuously since the Iron Age. The majority of our Iron



Age finds has always been burned flint and our Roman finds mostly housing materials such as roof tiles etc. On a recent project in Hensting we managed to find lots of those things as well as much worked flint and a small Roman coin. The latter was in perfect condition and looked little different to the day its owner lost it. You can see from the photos what excellent condition it's in. As to its history, we can tell quite easily that it is a Nummus from the House of Constantine, struck in the German city of Trier in either

330 or 331 AD. It is a commemorative coin to mark the passing of the Eastern Roman capital to Constantinople in 330AD and is made of copper alloy. The bust looking to the left is the personification of the new city and the reverse side of the coin shows Victory (recognisable by the wings) standing on the prow of a ship, one hand on a shield and the other holding a sceptre.

At that time apparently the London Mint had recently stopped striking coins and about 60 – 70% of all the Roman coins in England came either from Trier or Lyons. This little coin was not worth much so the owner wouldn't have been too concerned at its loss: think of it like one of our 5p pieces – too small to worry about. But how lovely for us to find it and wonder about the man who dropped it – was he a British farmer working in the field or a foreign soldier stationed over here, living at Hensting and out for a walk. So many ideas come to mind and remind us of the long and varied history of our surroundings.



Julia Sandison

New Year Party 2011

For those of you unable to attend the New Year Party you really missed a treat as the “surprise” entertainment was a Magic Lantern Show, given by Stan Roberts, Chair of Eastleigh Local History Society and a member of the Magic Lantern Society. Stan, the Magic Lantern Man, has been performing such shows since 1975, with audiences now totalling over 14000.

History

Leonardo da Vinci first discovered how to project a beam of light using a lens, Jesuit priests painted pictures onto glass for projection and a man by the wonderful name of Athanasius Kircher used a Phantasmagoria lantern to amaze his audiences. This worked by back projection and his skeletons, giants and other gruesome figures became larger as he drew closer to the screen, no doubt to gasps of delight and horror.

In the early 1800s experiments with lighting for stage effects produced “limelight,” an explosive mixture of oxygen, hydrogen and lime, which when lit gave a spotlight. The development of photography in the 1850s led to the first showing of photographic slides in 1856 and during the ensuing twenty years this became big business, initially using gas light for projection.

Entertainment

At the Party, by the wonders of electricity, we were treated to a miscellany of slides that illustrated various aspects of a Magic Lantern Show. Chromatropes slides, worked by a rack and pinion mechanism, emulate a moving kaleidoscope. Early slides were hand painted and a series, such as the story of Alice in Wonderland, could be hired from the local chemist shop for audience or home viewing. (Compare this with hiring a DVD today!)

A sliding or rotating mechanism worked educational scenes, such as an opening rose or amusing items like the cut-throat barber or the man who swallowed rats during his slumber. As with everything Victorian, each set of slides ended with a moral message!

With the advent of colour photography portrait painters found their livelihood under threat, so many artists became photographers and hand-tinted their black and white slides.

Scenes from “Historic Winchester” and the re-erecting of the fallen stones of Stonehenge, both from over one hundred years ago, delighted

and astounded WARG members. What an historic record to possess.

Of course, advertisements interspersed each section (there's nothing new) and Fry's products were heavily advertised, both Five



Biunial Magic Lantern
© Magic Lantern Society

Boys Chocolate bars and cocoa . We think "texting" is a modern phenomena but a slide of a love story included U R, 4 2 me, 14-8 (fortunate), and 13ly (certainly).

Conclusion

So, still magic lantern slides led to moving slides, worked by a mechanism. Moving film gave us silent, black and white "flicks" which in turn developed into colour, sound track cinema, we could then hire VHS tapes, now DVDs. Shorthand texts are nothing new and the computer gives access to a whole world of movement, film and news.

Two thoughts - will my holiday slides from the 1970s one day be history as they are projected onto a screen and, I wonder, what is coming next in this age of technology?

Thank you Stan for a most entertaining beginning to our party, which set the tone as we enjoyed the delicious party food and thank you Julia for arranging such a wonderful surprise.

Valerie Pegg

Early art

Prehistoric rock art up to 5000 years old has been discovered at nearly 100 sites in Somaliland. A team from the Institute of Archaeology at UCL found paintings of antelopes, giraffes, snakes, and a man on horseback (one of the earliest known depicting this alliance) of such clarity and quality that some of the sites will probably be given World Heritage status.

Due to the ever-continuing war and piracy in Somalia, little attention has been paid to its archaeology, and Somali-born Dr Sada Mire believes that these paintings suggest an early farming capability amongst the people of this area of Africa.

Few of us will ever visit this neck of the woods but this is exciting news for those of us who've been lucky enough to see prehistoric art in Europe and know how beautiful it is.

Members Miscellany

The December meeting was an experiment. We asked different members to give a short talk on a subject of interest to themselves that was relevant to WARG. We had a wonderful evening with a wide range of presentations, a few of which we have here. If you didn't come to the evening you missed a wonderful set of talks.

Neolithic Stone Monuments Of Jersey

Early Neolithic sites would have been established around the coast of Jersey with people building the earliest stone monuments known as passage graves or dolmens. 12 of them remain, only a fraction of the original number. You can visit them all, but you will need this book to find them! "A Guide to the Dolmens of Jersey" by Peter Hunt.



La Hougue Bie is one of the finest passage graves in Europe. Cruciform in plan, it is covered by a 12m high mound, topped by a Christian chapel. Managed by the Jersey Heritage Trust, it is a ritual site with burial being only one of its functions.

First investigated in 1924/5, further excavations were carried out between 1991-1995 when the study of Neolithic monuments began to consider structures in the context of their landscapes. The massive stone structure found beneath the grass-covered mound led to the possibility that the entrance to the grave was aligned to the rising of the sun on the equinox.

On 20th March 1996 the rising sun cast its rays along the length of the passage for the first time in 5 millennia.....

Edwina Cole

Aerial Archaeology- A Personal View

For those of us who do archaeology and history for a hobby, not a profession, we have the luxury of being able to take a “personal view”. The luxury view I can take is from hundreds, or even thousands (2 or 3) of feet above features, landscapes and spatial relationships, in a small aeroplane. With a photographer, especially some of the more highly skilled and equipped people I have come to know, some quality images can be obtained which add to the understanding of features and often cast a new light.

I gave a brief synopsis about what aerial photography is all about, and showed some of OGS Crawford’s actual mounted pictures I had examined at Oxford Institute, with his scribed interpretations in the margins. The presentation also allowed me to showcase some shots which I’d accumulated over the years. It is amazing what you can see from 2,000 feet from an aeroplane WITH A VIEW, unlike your average airliner, and of course if I want to take a shot at a different angle, I simply dip my wings and do it all over again.

Chris Sellen

A True Story

In 1925 a young family was living frugally in Shepherds Bush where the father ran a market stall and the mother was a cleaner. Inheriting £500 they leased a DIY supply shop in Gravesend. Here they resided until the parents split up and the father abandoned his four sons with foster parents. Money for the boys’ upkeep ran out so they were taken to Farnborough Workhouse.

The boys then attended the Holborn School for Destitute and Orphaned children where the three youngest learnt a trade. Jack, the eldest, was bright, passing a scholarship to Grammar School but could not attend as he was “Poor Law”! Instead, at the age of fourteen, he became a junior library assistant in Holborn. In the ensuing years he served in the army, married, studied, gained a degree in Librarianship, became Head of Lending Services and was presented to the Queen Mother. He had two daughters who both became teachers.

That boy Jack, from the Workhouse, was my father of whom I am extremely proud.

Valerie Pegg

From Lithuania to Whitechapel to Winchester

When, in the late nineteenth century, my grandfather was chased by the Tsar's police from Vilnius for having seditious literature, he was taken in by my grandmother's family in Slobotka. Although he rather fancied the prettier younger daughter, the arranged marriage was to the elder, my grandmother, Ruchel-Leah. She had enough dowry to allow them to join the Jewish emigration to Whitechapel, in East London.

They had seven children and six survived to adulthood, five daughters (one, my mother) and a much pampered son, Morrie. They grew up speaking Yiddish, a version of medieval German, as my grandmother, Buba, was not interested in assimilating. She spoke only a few words of fractured English and did her best to recreate the life they had left behind, which was closely bound up with religious observance. The rituals of lighting candles on Friday night to welcome in the Sabbath, refraining from any sort of work on that day, strictly observing kosher dietary laws and for the women, a monthly ritual bath, the mikva, were all devoutly maintained. In their exclusively Jewish area, Buba could live a life very much like the one she had left behind, subsisting on a diet of barley soup, black bread and pickled fish. She produced delicious food for the family, but never sat down with them.

All my mother's siblings went into the garment trade, the girls as seamstresses and my uncle Morrie as a garment cutter. They moved out to the suburbs, and the next generation, like myself, even further afield.

Iris Gould



Caesar's village hotel

According to tradition, Julius Caesar crossed the Thames in 54BC at Brentford in Middlesex, and it is there that a pre-Roman agricultural village has been discovered during preparations for the building of a new hotel. Remains include skeletons, jewellery, pottery, a dagger, coins and a golden Bronze Age bracelet. Perhaps more importantly the foundations of huts and a stretch of Roman Road, only half a metre below the grass, are also there beneath the parkland surrounding Syon House. Archaeologists describe the site as a fascinating insight into the little known aspect of farming in this period of our history. Possibly the best reason for yet another hotel in a green area.

The Excavation at St. Cross in 2010

Review by Chris Sellen and Don Bryan (5th April 2011)

Background

Excavations by WARG in the field immediately south of the Hospital of St. Cross were begun in 2007. In the four years of summer excavation some twenty trenches have been excavated following archival and geophysical research.

In the three seasons prior to 2010 the south range was uncovered, confirming it was identical in plan to the west range, and had established that the Lockburn (the medieval drainage channel) extended along the southern edge of the demolished range. Other work done in these three seasons included a section across a 2.5m deep boundary ditch, cutting through a pit of Anglo-Saxon origin. This is likely to have been the boundary ditch of the de Blois foundation in the 12th century. The other feature explored was the “water feature”, a rectangular ditch in which water flowed at one time, which had been used to deposit some of the demolition debris from the south range and some of the building rubble created when work was carried out to “improve” the church in the nineteenth century.

The aim in 2010 was to further explore some of these features, in particular the boundary ditch and the extension of the Lockburn, and to tidy up some of the unfinished excavations from previous years.

Geophysics

A geophysical survey conducted in 2008 was extended this year. The most exciting result was clear evidence that the outline of significant buildings in the Bowling Green area immediately east of the Hospital were shown to extend south into the Brothers’ graveyard. Other features, less clear but likely to be of related structures, were found in the Masters’ garden. Excavation at some future date is planned.

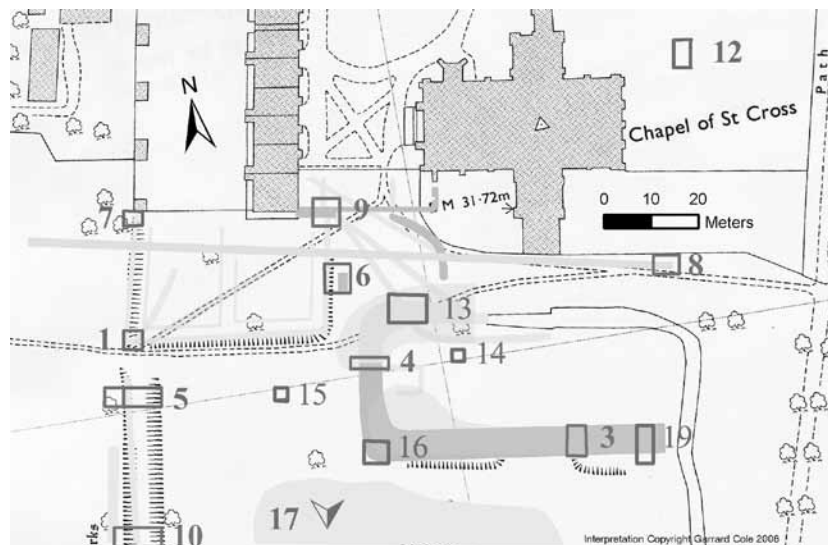
Boundary Ditch (trench 17)

To complement the earlier work done on the boundary ditch, a further section was opened on the southern-most section, an east-west orientation immediately adjacent to the cricket pitch. This revealed a multi-phase ditch of comparable depth to the earlier one. One non-diagnostic sherd was the only artefact but additionally a sheep skull was found visually of the same sort as three found in the earlier section excavation (trench 10). These skulls were smaller than most modern sheep and seemed to be “Soay” type, a species bred in the Iron Age.

Radiocarbon dates are currently being determined and may give further dating evidence for this ditch.

Water Feature (trench 13)

The “water feature” was a sizeable rectangular feature (perhaps a carp pond) with water flowing through it from the Lockburn. This feature is now substantially filled with building rubble from the South range demolition and work on the church; the Lockburn flow is now diverted into a stream. This season’s excavation aimed to explore this earlier phase.



The uncovered drain was shown to be a fifteenth century stone-lined conduit, i.e. dating from the period of construction of the Beaufort almshouses. Although originally open, it was roofed with brick arching, probably in the eighteenth century. At some point this drain section, some 27.3m in length, was abandoned but not before work was carried out to extend the medieval conduit towards the water feature. This extension was of degraded greensand stone with no foundation and is probably of nineteenth century date.

Test Pits (trenches 14 and 15)

The two test pits were excavated to establish some evidence about areas that had not been examined. Trench 14 was in the middle of the water feature and revealed evidence of ploughing at some point with a layer below of hard packed flint. Trench 15, outside the water feature, unexpectedly revealed the skeletons of two infants. No artefacts were found and, in the absence of C14 dating, they cannot be dated. They

were left in situ.

Topography (trench 16)

The southwest corner of the water feature was dug and revealed no well-defined ditch section on the south side.

South side of Water Feature (trench 19)

This trench was opened up to establish if there was some track way on the low bank which appeared to run parallel with the water feature on its south side. Layers of compressed chalk lay just below the surface and appeared to lie across the low bank. In extending this section to the south to clarify any stratigraphy, a flint wall was encountered. This, on further excavation, appeared to be a small building of unknown date. However, it was roofed (as evidenced by slate roof-tile debris) which indicated a date not earlier than the mid-nineteenth century. The roof appeared to be supported by posts set into slots on the building interior. An animal pen seems to be the most likely interpretation.

Artefact Research

A pottery specialist from the University of Southampton has examined the pottery sherds from the various trenches. The range of dates extends from Roman, through Saxon to later medieval and post-medieval.

Steve Taylor



Peterhouse archaeology

Many of you will have noticed in December of last year that the one-storey modern building known as Peterhouse and attached to the south side of St Peter's Catholic Church in Winchester's Jewry Street was demolished.

Because of its position so close to such a lot of medieval archaeology excavated over the last few years, the City archaeologist kept a watching brief. The remains of a substantial medieval stone building were identified but the developers opted for the foundations of the replacement building to be created using piles, thus ensuring that little of these remains were uncovered but thus not destroyed.

The Prehistory of Malta – Kay Ainsworth

In writing this account of what proved to be a highly entertaining and informative evening talk given by Kay Ainsworth on the Early Archaeology of Malta, I would like to offer a health warning. Kay obviously engrosses herself in the places she visits, to the extent that she can pronounce the various Arabic place-names like a local. Indeed she, like some of the audience, had spent time living there, often as children of defence forces stationed there before Malta's independence from Britain in 1964.

So my health warning revolves around both my interpretation of Kay's Arabic, and my dubious spelling of the result. So if, dear reader, you wish to use this article as the basis of planning a visit to Maltese prehistory, then you have been warned.

Complex names diminished not a jot the enjoyment of Kay's photographs and explanation of the fascinating prehistoric sites on the islands. With a general introduction which described evidence of a chronology stretching back to the Neolithic, even the Mesolithic, she was to concentrate on the major temple building phase from 3600 to 2500BC. There are 10-12 major temple sites, some of which rival the complexes of Ireland, in a concentration similar to that of the Orkneys. Many of these are in a ruinous state but many in a wonderful condition, though attempts recently to further protect such intensively visited sites as Hagar Qim and Mnajdra (told you) by covering them in protective "tents" are controversial and unsightly.

Early sites

At Gar Daram in the east, early Neanderthal remains (teeth) were found in 1917 with butchered animal bones, and pottery found is identical to 5000BC examples found in Sicily on the island of Panarea, so it is believed there will have been early settlement, it just hasn't been found yet.

So prehistoric evidence centres on the temples. Kay gave us a guided tour beginning with one of the oldest sites at Skorba, dated from 3600-3000BC by excavator David Trump. Associated with the very dilapidated site are flints from Sicily and Pantelleria indicating the origins of the people and continuing



Skorba Temple
(© Wikipedia Commons)

trade with the homeland. This seems to fade out around 3100BC and the island culture takes on its own unique style. Burial caves at Skorba are lobed, the early form of later temples. The nearby temple at Tal Hagraat and that in the hotel gardens in Bujibba begin to adopt this style (the hotel is called Hotel Dolmen, but don't let this confuse your itinerary – the “dolmen” is actually the temple entrance).

Gozo

To Gozo next, a delightful, green island across two or three miles of Mediterranean, with its own smattering of prehistory. At Ggantija, in the centre of Gozo, a temple with a long history of extension and re-use, with walls measuring up to 16 feet thick! It follows the emerging standard pattern, having a façade with entrance, a precinct and a surrounding wall. Some of the “furniture” items are reminiscent of Skara Brae and there are traces of plaster and patterns in ochre. Finds include Neolithic axes, pottery sherds and pins. At nearby Xaghra, two stone circles (the so-called Brochtorff Circles, now lost) had been re-dug in the 1980's and 1990's by Anthony Bonanno following work a century before which had found figurines in flint and obsidian. A long-lasting and finely adorned culture.

The Main Sites

Back to the main island, and to temples of the main phase of building. Tarxien, all but swamped by the relatively urban sprawl of Valetta, demonstrates the long-term use of these sites. The four temple elements are built in a sequence, and on top of even earlier lobed tombs. “Roller” stones are visible which may explain partially how the massive monoliths were moved. At Tarxien we see spiral designs and depiction of animals, also massive statues wearing the distinctive “Tarxien skirt”. While the temples are no longer high, steps indicate that some of these temples may have been multi-storey.

At the opposite extreme the nearby hypogeum (underground temple/burial area) of Hal Saflieni is one of the true prehistoric wonders of Malta, again built over a period of time on different levels, there are rooms with specific functions including the ochre-painted Oracle Room, and the Holy of Holies. Thousands of skeletons were found here from its necropolis phase. A



*The Sleeping Goddess of Hal Safrieni (©
Wikipedia Commons)*

prize artefact is the Sleeping Lady or Goddess, who wears the Tarxien skirt. For your itinerary, book a visit to Hal Saflieni well in advance, access is limited.

On the south side of the island are the temples of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra which again display multiple temple elements, over a large period of time, with altars and evidence of multiple storeys. Spectacularly sited near the southern cliffs, these much visited temples are the subject of the “tents” previously mentioned.



Hagar Qim (© Odyssey Travel)

From c. 2500 BC, the temple building vogue disappears, the climate worsens, and the ability of the treeless soils to support crops diminishes. But there is Bronze Age settlement, and evidence of the use of copper and tin, with potted cremation burials.

Later Prehistory

By the end of the Bronze Age, the Phoenicians, the great Mediterranean traders, see and use the strategic position of Malta though there is little evidence bar a few Greek and Punic funerary inscriptions - a well differentiated society being evidenced by rich burials in sarcophagi but poor ones in caves.

After the Carthaginian defeat in 218, Rome takes over the island, again recognising its strategic position. By now, of course, we move out of the prehistoric to the documented, to the shipwreck of St. Paul in AD 60, the conversion of Publius and Paul's subsequent martyrdom in Rome.

Kay went on to give a tantalising glimpse of the later history of the island, including the story of the Knights Hospitallers, a story that would have to await another day. A fascinating evening, especially for those whose childhoods had been touched by this special island.

Chris Sellen

Butser Ancient Farm

The people at Butser have asked us to let you know about the wonderful range of activities that they have. If you want to get your hands dirty with ancient technologies, have a look at: <http://www.butserancientfarm.co.uk>



Jordan

To be honest, there doesn't seem to be a lot of point to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It's not got oil (none that it's found, anyway), just phosphates and some minerals. Up in the north it has a certain amount of agriculture but not nearly enough to support itself, and even in the area where it grows bananas, the ones that one buys there still come from Ecuador! To tourists the country is roughly in 3 parts – the south around the Red Sea port of Aqaba (Jordan's only port), the middle part which is mostly desert, and the northern part which holds the most ancient history as well as Amman, Jordan's capital. However the north of the country is part of the Holy Land in so far as several places and areas are mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

So, that's the point of Jordan! Sites range from the Old Testament places through New Testament ones to Roman and then beyond. What most people interested in the past know of Jordan is that possibly its most famous site is Petra – the rose-red city half as old as Time. Indeed this Nabatean city is truly worth a visit, having been founded by this Arabic people around the 6th century BC. They built their city within encircling cliffs of sandstone with only one entry – a narrow fissure in the towering rocks – and today this is still the main way one gains access. The city was thus virtually a fortress, but watered by perennial streams which the Nabateans channelled to their great advantage, allowing them not only to have copious quantities of water for themselves but, by having plenty, also to control the ancient commercial caravan routes between Gaza, Damascus, Aqaba and the Persian Gulf. The area was much visited by flash flooding but the people had a sophisticated system of dams, conduits and cisterns which of course pre-date the Romans and their ability to “harness” water.

The rock-cut buildings – many of them actually tombs – are sheer and stunning. The multi-coloured rocks are beautiful in both sunshine and at twilight, and overall the city is a positive visual feast. The city went on to be lived in under both Greek and Roman rule, so there is a great mixture of architectural styles and periods – making this a lovely place to spend the day. Yes, it's touristy, but with a certain charm since the Bedouin sell locally-produced “souvenirs” as well as providing camels and horse-drawn carriages for those of us with less ability to climb! The “souvenirs” that I came away with were a large unidentified bulb – potted up and growing even as I write – and old Nabatean and Roman coins. What more can one ask for?

The desert close to Aqaba, and indeed that city itself, was home to Lawrence of Arabia when he was doing his thing to encourage and aid the Great Arab Revolt. One can visit his main desert camp in the Wadi Rum, and see how the Bedouin still live. Much the same as always, although they now run jeeps for the tourists to travel around that part of the desert. Aqaba itself still has the remains of its original settlement, Ayla, dating back to the early Bronze Age when it was a thriving Red Sea port. Also in Aqaba are the foundations of a 3rd century Christian church, believed to be the oldest known in the world.

Once one is up in the north then one can visit the many Biblical sites, ranging from Mount Nebo where Moses was shown the Promised Land by God and told that he'd never get any closer, to Bethany where John the Baptist baptised Jesus. My first sight of the River Jordan was at Bethany and I was expecting to see the river as the old slave song tells it – deep and wide – but it is certainly no longer that. Due to over-abstraction of the river's water both the river and the Dead Sea are shrinking fast and the River Jordan was a huge disappointment to me. There are also several Crusader castles in the north and I visited Kerak / Karak – there are 2 or 3 spellings for some sites! However the most amazing place to visit in the north is Jerash. This huge site is one of the largest Roman city sites in the world and it's still only 15 – 20% excavated! It was one of Rome's Decapolis cities – known then as Gerasa - where Emperors like Hadrian went to spend a warm sunny winter. It holds not only Roman but also Greek and Arabic remains and should be accorded at least one full day to visit, if you cannot manage two. The main plaza is oval with over 60 columns still standing, there are two amphitheatres, a hippodrome, and several temples. One of the most charming discoveries for me was the southern amphitheatre where the front row seats were numbered for the bigwigs!

Although the long drives through the country to visit all the areas I've mentioned are mostly dreary and boring – rocky desert has little variation! – try to be in Tala Bay for a sunset if possible. Tala is a fantastic new development south of Aqaba, part of an area of land bought not so long ago from Saudi Arabia to ensure that Jordan has sufficient land for its commercial and industrial docklands and various marinas. From there one can see both Egypt and Israel to the west, and that of course is where the sun sets. I sailed out into the Red Sea in a traditional local sailing “yacht” to view the most fantastic sunset I've ever seen and was entertained with local songs sung to ancient

one-stringed instruments. Don't think, like I did, that a one-stringed instrument will be somewhat monotonous – not so!

Overall, Jordan was a fascinating mixture of ancient and modern, and like so much of the Middle East had plenty to offer the historically-minded traveller of today. Was there any wildlife for me to see? No, just sparrows and pigeons really, and one falcon in the desert was pointed out to us as it flew over the coach, leaving me with the impression that if it was pointed out to us it must be pretty unusual! Jordan IS a very arid country!

Julia Sandison



Ghosts of Winchester

In the absence of the advertised speaker, Don Bryan stepped into the breach with an entertaining talk on the ghosts that are said to haunt various locations in Winchester. Don has been a City Guide for 21 years and one of his specialities is a Ghost Walk around the sites of these haunting stories. Despite this interest, Don claims never to have seen a ghost himself.

He began with a story from the 1950's when a tourist took a photograph in the Cathedral nave. When the negative was developed he was amazed to see 15 people in medieval costume grouped around the high altar.

The Saxon princess Ethelburga died at the age of 17 and was buried in the old Abbey of Nunnaminster. She was later declared a saint. It is said that on cold, November evenings a young girl can be glimpsed through the mist around the site of Ethelburga's tomb.

The corner of the A333 near St Cross is known as 'Ghosts' Corner' because of the numerous sightings there. One man came out of the Bell public house and spied the ghost of a monk. The shock is said to have turned his black hair white instantly.

Number 11 Alswitha Terrace is reputed to be the site of the high altar of Hyde Abbey and the ghosts of monks have been seen there too, although there are no reports of any change of hair colour after these sightings.

In front of St John's House in the Broadway there used to be an open stream with a dipping hole where horses could drink. Animals often seem to have a sensitivity to ghosts. On one occasion, a pony took fright and ran into the hole, followed by his owner, a young boy,

who reported seeing a ghost there.

There is a little garden along the Weirs associated with Earl Waltheof, one of William the Conqueror's followers. Waltheof had been invited to the wedding of William's daughter and disgraced himself by getting drunk. For this disrespect, William sentenced him to death by beheading. In order to prolong his life, Waltheof recited the Paternoster as slowly as he could. His head can still be heard, rolling down the hill and saying 'Amen' at the bottom.

Number 9 The Close by the Cathedral is said to be haunted by a monk with a limp. Archaeologists excavating in the area have uncovered the skeleton of a man with a deformed hip. Could he be the mysterious limping monk?

Winchester's pubs seem to be favourite haunts for ghosts. The Vine is said to have the ghost of a man who cries, and the Dolphin a disembodied head floating around.

Lady Alice Lisle was sentenced to death by Judge Jefferies for supporting Charles II's illegitimate son in a plot to replace the Catholic James II. She was beheaded outside The Eclipse pub, where people have reported seeing her ghost. She is also reported to haunt the dress shop opposite.

After the Eclipse, the Hyde Tavern is known as the second most haunted pub in Winchester. One of the bedrooms is extremely cold, and a dog belonging to a recent landlord steadfastly refused to enter that room. The story goes that a woman was refused entry to the pub during a blizzard, and died on the doorstep. She takes her revenge by trying to pull the bedclothes off guests who sleep - or try to sleep - in that cold room. The adjoining bedroom is much warmer.

Jewry Street cannot be left out of this account. A man with a baritone voice has been heard in the Discovery Centre basement. At the time of World War I a girl reported seeing the ghost of a young soldier in the Theatre Royal at the very moment he was killed in battle.

Near the Durngate there is now sheltered housing and at the time it was being built, the timber posts of a sluice gate were found. Don visited one of the tenants who had reported seeing the ghost of a monk in a black robe every afternoon. This man had been unaware that this was the site of a monastery of the Black Friars.

Anyone with a susceptible nature could be forgiven for feeling rather uneasy after Don's talk, but even sceptics could not fail to be interested, although possibly not entirely convinced.

An Egghead interrogated

WARG members are lucky enough to count among their number the illustrious Kevin Ashman, one of the world's most successful quiz participants, having won Mastermind, Brain of Britain, Brain of Brains and most of the other top-level quiz tournaments in which he has taken part. Techer Jones turned the tables on Kevin, asking him the questions for a change, and very entertaining it was.

Techer said he first noticed Kevin as they both waited for the morning commuter train to London because he always had a carrier bag full of books with him. Kevin had read Modern History at Southampton University before joining the Civil Service, and started his remarkable quiz career in Civil Service competitions, winning so consistently that it was suggested he enter Mastermind, which he did, in 1995. The first subject he chose was the Political History of the USA. His semi-final topic was World Cinema and for the final he chose the life and work of Martin Luther King, scoring 41 with no passes in his heat, which remains a record to this day. He says he retains very little of this knowledge now.

The following year he entered Brain of Britain on radio, which needless to say he won, scoring 38 in his semi-final which remains the highest individual score ever made on the show. He then went on to win Brain of Brains, contested between the previous three years' Brains of Britain and Top Brain, contested every nine years between the previous three Brain of Brains. There is a long list of other triumphs.

During this time he continued to work as a Civil Servant but his success led to the offer in 2002 of the job of question-setter and arbiter on Brain of Britain, working under the pen-name of Jorkins. This lasted until 2006 when the team was moved to Manchester.

Since 2003 he has been a competitor in the British quiz show Eggheads, teamed up with other quiz champions, in which members of the public pit their wits against them in order to win a cash prize.

Kevin's quiz career has led to a great deal of travel and his remarkable memory means that he can find his way around a city after many years' absence. His powers of memory have given this modest man an unrivalled reputation as an Egghead, a fascinating career and the opportunity to travel the world.

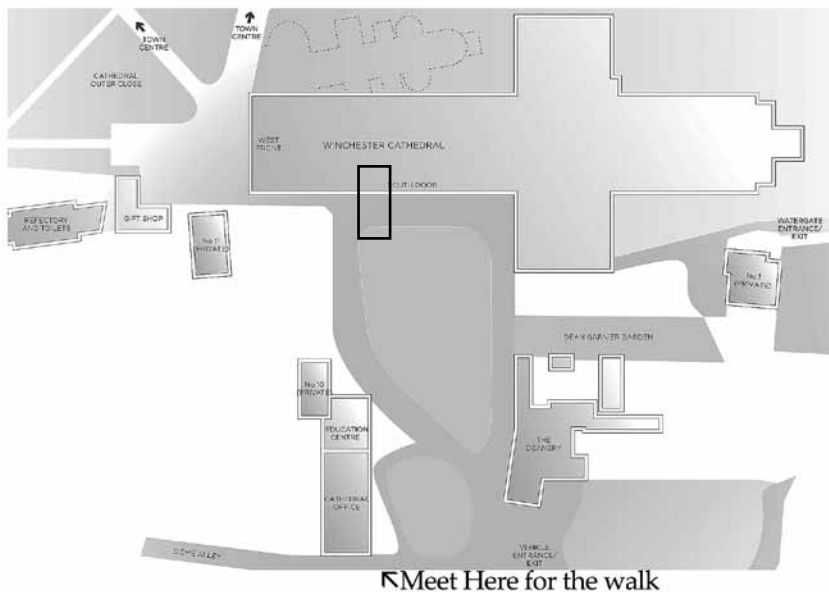
Thank you, Kevin and Techer, for giving us this glimpse into the mind of this amazing Winchester quiz genius.

2011 Meeting Programme

- May 9: **British Submarine History**
David Ottley (Gosport Museum of Submarines)
- June 13: **Pilgrims and the Close, an Evening Walk:** guided by John Crook. Meet at 6.30 at the Cathedral end of Dome Alley (see map, below).
- July 11: **Twyford Waterworks visit:** See flier enclosed.
- Sept 12: **Unreliable evidence of photography,** a revisit by Doctor Martin Parsons of Reading University.
- Oct 10: **Early Roman quarrying and building stone use in Southern England: a geological perspective,** Dr Kevin Hayward.

The remaining meetings for 2011 and those for 2012 will be in the next issue.

All meetings, except the evening walks, are in the Science Lecture Theatre, Peter Symonds College, Berewecke Rd.



Cheriton Battlefield Project

WARG has been invited by the Cheriton Battlefield Project to join the Winchester Museum Service and the University of Winchester in trying to solve the mystery concerning the actual site of the Battle of Cheriton in March 1644. Although it has traditionally been thought that the site is where there are now information boards, no skeletons or mass graves have ever been found. The number of dead was not properly documented at the time and veers wildly from 30 to 10,000, but one might think that around say 1,000 men could have been killed. Once a battle was over and the losing side was fleeing, with no time to bury their dead, the winning side was usually almost as fast to move on to take the next “prize” and the dead were therefore commonly left for locals to strip and bury. There would have been much on the dead which was of value to peasants and farmers, not just their weapons but clothing, footwear, possible jewellery and “fol de rols”, even horsemeat. As no graves have been found, it is possible that they are under what is now woodland, so the project aims to discover if this is the case.

WARG’s role would be to carry out the fieldwalking and possible finds processing with the involvement of local residents. WARG has good experience in both activities and would work alongside and help train the locals. The fieldwalking cannot take place until the autumn when the crops have been harvested. We have a few members who live in the area and whom we hope will be involved with the coordination of all the activities.

The University, under Simon Roffey and Phil Marter, will be responsible for the technical side of the project using GPS and resistivity etc. Again it is to be hoped that the locals will be fully involved with all these methods to find answers to the queries.

This is going to be a large and possibly quite lengthy project and it is to be hoped that WARG will have plenty of members interested enough to take part.

Watch this space, as they say!

Julia Sandison



There is a web site for the project at <http://www.battleofcheriton.co.uk/home>

News Items

Ice Age “pottery”

Three human skulls unearthed in a Somerset cave appear to have been fashioned into drinking vessels. Around 14,700 years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age, early modern humans used stone tools to turn the skulls into cups. The skulls, two adult and one from a 3-year-old, were found along with other human bones showing distinct signs of butchery, implying that the bodies had been stripped for meat and the bones crushed for the marrow. Although these human remains were discovered several decades ago, new techniques have enabled palaeontologists to re-examine them and discover that the skulls were carefully cut to the required shape and still carry the pattern of hard strikes followed by the more finesse tool work.

Using skulls as drinking vessels is not unknown as some are still used today in Hindu and Buddhist rituals. Silvio Bello, the palaeontologist who led the London’s Natural History Museum team, feels that probably the bodies died naturally rather than being killed for food, as the Cheddar and Mendips areas where the humans lived was teeming with life such as deer, wild boar, reindeer and horses. It is believed that the use of the skulls was a way of honouring and remembering the dead. Certainly the work on the bones shows skill and great care – neither of which would surely have been used with the bodies of enemies.

Roman Lankhills

Paul Booth, et al, *The Late Roman Cemetery at Lankhills: Excavations 2000-2005*, Oxford, 2011, by ISBN 978-0-904220-62-9, £25.00

Oxford Archaeology has published its report on the 2000-2005 work, the follow-on to Clarke’s in the 1960s. They found a further 307 inhumation graves and 25 cremation burials, almost all of 4th century date.

Most burials were laid out roughly west-east and grave goods, including nailed shoes, pottery and coins, were more common than usual in such cemeteries. Jewellery was associated with adolescents and young women and spindle whorls with older women. Six crossbow brooches buried with males, were associated with belt equipment and indicate an official/military element within the cemetery population. A spectacular individual burial contained a gilded and inscribed crossbow brooch, silver gilt belt fitting and decorated spurs, unique for Roman Britain. Isotope analysis shows some of the cemetery population were immigrants from a variety of locations in Europe and perhaps even North Africa.

Human migration backdated?

A truly spectacular haul of Stone Age tools has been discovered in the United Arab Emirates, forcing archaeologists to reconsider, and disagree, on the story of human migration out of Africa. The collection consists of handaxes and other tools for a variety of uses such as cutting and scraping. The disagreement centres around the fact that these artefacts have been dated to 125,000 years ago. This is about 55,000 years before it was thought that humans left the continent of Africa. This might suggest that our early ancestors left via the Horn of Africa through the Arabian peninsula, across the Red Sea – just a shallow channel at the end of an ice age – in the direction of the Persian Gulf. Who knows, they may even have continued on to India and further.

From an anatomical viewpoint, mankind closely aligned to us today evolved in Africa about 200,000 years ago but until this find archaeological evidence has supported the belief that the waves of migrations, along the Mediterranean coast and Arabian shoreline, were between 60,000 and 80,000 years ago.

Interestingly, the haul was from a limestone mountain about 35 miles from the Persian Gulf coast, where in the past quantities of finds from the Iron, Bronze and Neolithic eras have been uncovered – this suggests that even early Man found moving house stressful!



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