



WARG

Newsletter

March 2012

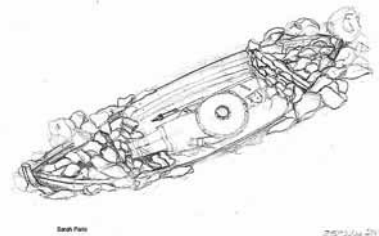
❁ News ❁ Meeting Reports ❁ Di

❁ Travellers Tales

The 40th anniversary summer
programme of extra walks, visits
and even a picnic

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*Viking chieftan
Sarah Parish / University of
Manchester*



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

It is not just policemen getting younger seasons are coming around so quickly. It seems only a few days ago that we were digging in the field at St Elizabeth's and now we are planning next year's dig. But also we are announcing the programme of meetings and visits for the rest of the year, and for our 40th birthday there is an amazing set of visits. If you look at page 15, you will have an overview. Then fill in the application forms and rush them to Julia, with a separate cheque for each visit.

Constitution

For about 37 years we managed without a constitution but, in order to get funding for St Cross dig, we had to put one in place at very short notice in 2009. It now needs to be fine tuned, reflecting our experience.

The most significant change your Committee proposes is to move the AGM from April to the autumn (Paragraph 7). This allows the treasurer time to complete the accounts and have them reviewed by a third party, before presenting them to the membership. (This year he has only a day!) It also means we can see clearly whether to change subscriptions in the following year. Looking at this change, we realised that the period of notice for an AGM, was less than the time allowed for members to propose matters for discussion. This has been changed to give 28 days notice in advance of the meeting and then two weeks for additional suggestions. This also includes a change to 8 (d).

Your Committee has always met three times a year, so 8 (a) has been changed to recognise this. The Committee has always had a representative of Winchester City Council serving as an ex-officio member and this year we have invited Simon Roffey to represent the University of Winchester. By making a change to 5(b) we can add further ex-officio members without having to make yet more constitutional changes. We also clarify in (c) that it is only the officers and representatives of members on Committee that have to be elected annually.

Two further tidying up measures are designed to reduce dependence on people. If the Chairman is not present at any meeting, the Secretary can chair it (6). And if the Treasurer is not around, then one of the other officers with signing powers (currently Chairman and Secretary) will be able to sign cheques up to £100. It will still need two out of the three to sign cheques over £100 (9(c)).

There is a copy of the constitution with the proposed amendments in this mailing.

Ancient Almshouses in Southern England

This talk is a summary of research done as background to archaeological excavations being carried out at the site of the leper hospital of St. Mary Magdalene, east of Winchester. Sparse documentary evidence indicates that the leper hospital was founded in the twelfth century by the Bishop of Winchester. At some point in the late medieval period it became an almshouse probably because the number of lepers declined. There is no known documentary evidence about the foundation and evolution of the almshouses. All the known historical data relates to the decline, fall and eventual demolition of the almshouse between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The research examined the evolution of almshouses between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries in central southern England, some 25 in total.

Medieval hospitals, often precursors of almshouses, were as much about the soul as the body. Most had both staff and patients engaged in some form of liturgical life. The religious dimension became even more pronounced



with the increasing emphasis on the doctrine of purgatory whereby the inmates of hospitals and almshouses provided intercessory prayer for souls in purgatory, particularly those of the founders.

New Foundations

With the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, infirmaries and hospitals that formed part of religious houses were often closed. It was not until late in the sixteenth century that new foundations started to replace those lost. In the main, these were not founded by religious bodies but by the aristocratic and merchant classes whose wealth was increasing in this era. These philanthropists were driven by a combination of religious belief and human vanity, the former based on the Calvinistic social ethic obligating them to help those less well off. The latter was a desire for “immortality in stone”, i.e. a way of ensuring that a man’s name lived on after death in the form of elaborate tombs and memorial plaques.

Alongside changes in belief were changes in the type of

accommodation provided. The earlier medieval open halls with a chapel at the east end were replaced by individual accommodation and provision of a place of worship nearby. Some buildings were adapted such as the medieval hall of St. Mary's Chichester where rooms, complete with chimneys, were inserted. But already in the fifteenth century, new foundations were being built with individual accommodation, St. Cross being one of the earliest such almshouses to use this approach. By the end of the sixteenth century and the early part of the succeeding century all foundations followed this pattern, most with simply a simple row of dwellings but some harking back to an earlier monastic quadrangular model, e.g. Guildford, Odiham and Dorchester. Memorialisation of the founders was ensured by incorporating their names in the name of the institution such as at Dorchester, Godalming and Basingstoke. Some went even further as at Bray where a life-size statue of the founder, William Goddard, survives in a prominent situation on the front wall of the almshouse.

Inmates

The wishes of the founders, usually incorporated in the statutes of the almshouse, governed much of life of the inmates. Eligibility for becoming an inmate was most usually by residence location. So, in Sherborne they had to be householders in the town; at Abbot's



hospital in Guildford they had to have been living in the town for twenty years. A minimum age, typically fifty or sixty years, was additionally required and once in the almshouse many were required to wear a distinctive garment which identified them as almsmen or women. Alongside these benign requirements there

was often a long list of exclusions, clearly designed to ensure only those in reasonable physical shape and of good character were admitted. The "deserving poor" were very much preferred. To maintain the standards a further list of rules and regulation was imposed on the inmates. The "do's" included hours of curfew to be observed, times for attending church or chapel and, less often, the type of work that should be undertaken. The "don'ts" were even more extensive and were clearly aimed at deterring the almshouse dwellers from becoming the

sort of people who would never have been admitted in the first place. Any transgression of the law of the land was sufficient to warrant expulsion at Guildford and many lesser punishments were laid down (normally in the form of fines) for offences such as swearing, gambling, haunting inns and ale-houses, etc.

Anglo-Saxon?

As a coda to the talk, reference was made to the continuing excavation at the hospital of St. Mary Magdalene. Along with evidence of the almshouse many graves have been excavated including some showing clear evidence of leprosy. Radiocarbon dating of these is still in progress but from results obtained so far it seems very likely that this hospital may prove to be the oldest one so far discovered in medieval England with dates indicating a foundation in the Anglo-Saxon period.



Steve Taylor

Editor's note: Steve stepped in, at very short notice, to cover for a speaker who was unable to appear, and gave a wonderful talk.



WARG's 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

After much negotiation, Twentieth Century Fox has agreed to re-release their film "Titanic" in April as part of WARG's celebrations this year. The film has been updated to 3D for those of us old enough to remember the original form of film-making in the 1950s.

Those members who have booked for our Southampton Titanic Day on June 18th may wish to see the film to gain further insight into the trials and tribulations of movie stars.

Fortunately WARG members will remain dry on our day out unless Don Bryan's customary weather god decides to accompany us.

JS

The Winchester Police: 1832-1943

Covering 111 years of the Winchester City Police Force, Chief Inspector Clifford Williams, who now works with the Andover Criminal Justice Department, gave the February 2012 lecture.

Foundation of the Police Force

Constables go right back to Medieval times, whilst the Pavement Commission had looked after law and order in Winchester prior to the creation of a modern-type force. In 1829 Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan Police and Winchester swiftly followed in 1832 with its own City Police Force, paid for by Public Subscriptions, and set up to “suppress vagrancy and mendacity.”

Locations

The first Police Station was situated on the corner of Colebrook Street and the Broadway, it then moved to the old Guildhall (now Lloyd’s Bank.) The new Guildhall, built in 1871, housed the next Police Station, then North Walls was purpose built in 1962. Finally the Hampshire Headquarters were constructed on Romsey Road in 1966.

Superintendents

A grand looking Victorian gentleman named **Harry Hubbersty** was appointed the first Superintendent, he had previously worked in the Met and in Norfolk. In the 1851 census he was single, living with his mother and niece at the Police House. In 1872 Hubbersty retired and Superintendent **Morton** took over, on a salary of £150 per annum. In 1893 **William Felton** was the next Chief Constable, holding the post until retirement in 1909 when **John Sim** was appointed. Sim was aged 34 with 12 years experience in Leeds, he lived rent free in the Police House, received free coal and light, £10 uniform allowance and a salary of £200 per annum.

William Stratton, from Salisbury, was the last City Chief Constable.

In 1836 Central Government and the City Council had responsibility for financing the force and police were monitored by the Mayor and Council. Lord Palmerstone’s Police Act of 1856 created Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and their detailed records are a good source of information.

In 1857 there was 1 Superintendent, 2 Sergeants, 10 Constables, all provided with clothing, an office, 2 well arranged cells and the force was deemed to be efficient and in a good state of affairs. The

population of Winchester was 13,704 giving a ratio of one officer to 1,000 members of the public, a ratio that continued into the 1930s.

Pay and Conditions

A list of the costing of uniforms in various Hampshire establishments showed that Winchester had the cheapest helmets but the most expensive tunics! Pay increased in 1897 from 22 shillings a week to 26 shillings, the city police being paid a lower rate than other forces. The 1910 Police Weekly Rest Day Act meant one day a week off duty, previously the police had worked 7 days a week!

Innovations

The Stove Pipe hat was replaced with a modern shape helmet in the 1860s. John Sim introduced mounted police officers to Winchester around 1910, whilst Police Boxes arrived in 1928 during Stratton's time. New estates such as Stanmore meant that the city had expanded and the boxes (£33 each) could be used by Constables or members of the public to phone the Police Station, officers could write their reports leaning on the sloping desk or eat their refreshments. However the boxes were misused and a severe reprimand about graffiti and litter was issued to the constables!

In 1900 the City expanded, new boundary stones were laid, and a ceremony of "Beating the Bounds" was performed on 15th November 1900, with boys being "bumped" at each stone. At the last stone the Head and Deputy Chief Constable were also "bumped"!

Frederick Beeston provided recreational facilities for the police, opening Beeston House in Water Lane in 1922. This later moved to the corner of Tower Street/Cross Street and there is still a designated recreation room in North Walls called "The Beeston Room."

Anecdotes

In 1864 a crowd gathered on Orams Arbor, a riot ensued, 300 troops were summoned and the crowd dispersed. Constable White was reported for a minor misdemeanour in 1872 and was dismissed by the newly appointed Morton. 1877 again saw disturbances at Orams Arbor on Bonfire Night, inflammable material was thrown into 33 Hyde Street, the conduct of Superintendent Morton was investigated and he was reprimanded for lack of supervision, so in future years Special Constables were sworn in to provide extra policing. In 1893 P.C.1 was commended for his actions when he found 60 year old Elizabeth Coombs, in Winchester, destitute and close to death.

Horses and Cars

Off-duty Police Sergeant Jelliffe encountered a man maltreating his horse in Chesil Street, he reacted and the owner was prosecuted. P.C. Dayman stopped a runaway horse in Parchment Street in 1910.

1922 saw the theft of 60 cars from London which Stanley George Coombs, a Winchester dealer, then bought in good faith. Tracked down by the Met, a vehicle identity parade was held on The Broadway, owners reclaimed their cars, at a financial loss to those who had purchased them from Coombs. The Met donated £10 to Winchester Police as thanks for their assistance in the case. With the arrival of the motor car and the city's expansion the police force was enlarged in 1930.

Old Photographs

These can be a record of police involvement in the city. The popular annual cricket match between Winchester College and Eton, shows the deployment of several officers. Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations of 1897 and the erection of King Alfred's statue in 1901 in the Broadway both depict police attendance. Police were often photographed whilst on point duty, children played hoops and sticks in North Walls, with very little traffic and a P.C. present, officers attended accidents including one in Alresford Road in 1938 when a car was found on its roof. During WWI rumours that Maypole Dairy was a German business caused trouble and police dispersed the mob.

A Safe City

In 111 years of history there were no murders recorded within the city boundaries, however, a bomb in WWII in Hyde Street caused the death of 7 citizens including P.C. Hodder. By 1942 there were 3 female special constables and 3 plain clothes detectives in the force.

Amalgamation

Local non-viable small forces like Lymington and Andover had already joined Hampshire Constabulary (founded 1839) but by 1942 the amalgamation of Winchester City Police with Hampshire was being discussed. A good argument was put forward to retain the separate City Police but the Home Office insisted on amalgamation. The Guildhall continued in use for the Winchester Division, until North Walls opened in 1962.

This is just a "taster" of the fascinating history of the Winchester Police Force, if you want to know more, then look out for Chief Inspector William's book, due to be published soon!

Valerie Pegg

Winchester T

Spring/Early S

| Date | Time | Start from | Price | Title |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Sat 10-Mar | 3:00 | TIC | Free | Winchester through the ages |
| Wed 14-Mar | 12:00 | Abbey House | £6 | Abbey House |
| Sat 17-Mar | 11:00 | TIC | Free | Kings & Castles |
| Sun 17-Mar | 2:30 | TIC | Free | Mitres & Mortar boards |
| Tue 20-Mar | 6:30 | TIC | £5/£1 | Ghost Tour |
| Tue 3-Apr | 11:00 | City Museum | £5/£1 | Look Around Again! |
| Mon 9-Apr | 2:30 | TIC | £5/£1 | Ruthless Romans |
| Sat 14-Apr | 3:00 | TIC | £5/£1 | Jane Austen's Winchester |
| Sat 21-Apr | 3:00 | TIC | £5/£1 | Parchment and Persecution |
| Tue 24-Apr | 6:30 | TIC | £5/£1 | Look Up! |
| Tue 1-May | 6:30 | TIC | £5/£1 | Roman Winchester |
| Wed 2-May | 12:00 | Abbey House | £6 | Abbey House |
| Sat 5-May | 11:15 | TIC | £5/£1 | Chesil Railway & Tunnel |
| Mon 7-May | 11:00 | Hinton Arms | £5/£1 | Battle of Cheriton |
| Tue 8-May | 6:30 | St Paul's Church | £5/£1 | Finding Fulflood |
| Sat 12-May | 3:00 | TIC | £5/£1 | Capital Winchester |
| Tue 15-May | 6:30 | City Museum | £5/£1 | Pevsner Perambulations |
| Tue 22-May | 6:30 | Hookpit Farm Ln SO23 7NA | £5/£1 | Kingsworthy's Lost Railways |
| Tue 29-May | 6:30 | Durmgate car pk | £5/£1 | Winnal Moors |
| Tue 5-Jun | 6:30 | Westgate | £5/£1 | Winchester's Queens |
| Sat 9-Jun | 3:00 | TIC | £5/£1 | Hidden Gardens |
| Tue 12-Jun | 6:30 | Discovery Centre | £5/£1 | Hyde & Seek |
| Wed 13-Jun | 12:00 | Abbey House | £6 | Abbey House |
| Tue 19-Jun | 6:30 | Westgate | £5/£1 | Winchester's Warriors |
| Tue 26-Jun | 6:30 | Station Car Park, PO17 5HY | £5/£1 | Wickham Wanderings |
| Sat 30-Jun | 3:00 | TIC | £5/£1 | Jane Austen's Winchester |

Tourist Guides

Summer Walks

Brief Description

Find the clues to the city's rich history on a free guided walk of the city.

By special permission of the Mayor - an opportunity to visit his official residence which dates from Georgian times and before.

Round the centre of Winchester, passing the cathedral, the Great Hall and the site of King Charles II's royal palace.

Follows the River Itchen before passing Wolvesey Castle, Winchester College, Jane Austen's House and the Cathedral Close.

Stories of ghosts and other ghastly goings-on - bring a torch.

A guided tour aimed at encouraging children to look at some more of the interesting things they can see in our city.

Invasion or invitation? Why was Winchester right for the Romans?

What were Jane's connections with Winchester?

Exploring the dark secrets of Parchment and St Peter Streets.

A guided tour with a different perspective looking up at the architecture and evidence of bygone activities in our city.

Where in our city did the Roman work, rest, and play?

By special permission of the Mayor - an opportunity to visit his official residence which dates from Georgian times and before.

A guided walk exploring the route of Winchester's 'other' railway, the old Didcot, Newbury and Southampton line. Includes a chance to go inside the disused Chesil Railway tunnel.

Take a guided walk around this Civil War battlefield.

Explore more of this Victorian suburb.

Visit the times when Winchester was England's first capital.

A fresh look at our city with the aid of the new edition of Pevsner's guide.

Seek out the lost railways of Kingsworthy.

Why was water so important to our city and where does it all go?

A celebration of England's Queens who have visited the city.

A tour around some of Winchester's 'Secret Gardens'.

Find King Alfred's grave, where the monks lived and a prison!

By special permission of the Mayor - an opportunity to visit his official residence which dates from Georgian times and before.

From Chainmail to Greenjackets.

Take a look around this historic medieval town.

What were Jane's connections with Winchester?

Book Reviews

The New Antiquarians: 50 Years of Archaeological Innovation in Wessex. Edited by Rowan Whimster. CBA Research Report No 166, ISBN 978 902771 85 4 234 pages price £20.00

If asked for a general book on the archaeology of Wessex, I always suggest 'Wessex to AD1000' by Barry Cunliffe (Longmans). This still remains an excellent introduction, but it was published in 1993, and in 1993 the Amesbury Archer and Bayesian Theory relating to C14 dating had not even been thought of. Even in archaeology, things change. 'Chalklands' by Andrew Lawson of Wessex Archaeology published in 2007 (Hobnob Press) brings things much more up to date. It is an outstanding book, but it is rather Stonehenge/Wiltshire-centric.

In November 2008, the Wessex regional group of the Council for British Archaeology held a two-day conference in Southampton to celebrate 50 years of CBA Wessex. Several WARG members were there and will remember a wonderful experience. But there was simply too much to take in. The conference content (and more) has now been edited and written up in this volume. The book contains a number of essays and papers ranging from the Mesolithic through to industrial archaeology. There are also papers on new techniques and new frontiers. Authors include Barry Cunliffe; Garry Momber; Josh Pollard; Geoff Wainwright; Tim Darvill; Michel Fulford; David Hinton and many other stars totalling over 30 contributors. The book, like the conference, is punctuated with short anecdotal stories like Phil Harding's retort to the inevitable question 'What was the best thing you found?' There are also short (2 page) profiles of some key sites.

When each paper is usually 4-6 pages long, there is not exceedingly deep analysis on particular subjects. But the writing is meaty and succinct. Over and again, I kept thinking 'I must find out more about that'. Almost every paper gives a picture of what has happened in our region in archaeology over the past fifty years in a given archaeological period or specialist sector such as under-water archaeology. Many papers highlight the key excavations or finds in recent years and track the changes in thinking brought about by new discoveries and new techniques. Several times the role of the amateur or part-time archaeologist is not only recognised, but also championed. The book is worth buying for the bibliography alone. It is 24 pages long and a treasure chest of where to find out more.

This is a very readable book, beautifully produced, well edited, with good clear photographs and diagrams. I know that I shall go back to it many times for direction and inspiration. It will be part of the kit that helps me know where to dig deeper – both with my trowel and with my mind.

Techer Jones

***A view from the West: The Neolithic of the Irish Sea Zone* by Vicki Cummings, Oxbow Books, ISBN 978-1-84217-362-6 200 pages, £9.95 (web site price direct from Oxbow)**

Without any hesitation, this is the best-written book on archaeology I have ever read, and I have read several hundred. Cummings' writing style is clear, precise, refreshing and without serious jargon. As a result, this book just hums along.

It is very tightly focussed on the early Neolithic chambered tombs of the Irish Sea zone. Cummings refers to later Neolithic monuments such as causewayed enclosures or stone circles, but only in context. This book is really very concentrated on its subject. And all the better for it. Over ten years she has visited all the tombs of the zone. She has analysed their structure, location, groupings, styles, contents and, of course, where available, records of their excavation. The book begins with a hefty chapter on the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition. This is totally appropriate and gives a wonderfully sound background to Cummings' later analysis of what the tombs might have meant. She analyses in some detail the differences, and the similarities, between early Neolithic chambered tombs in Wales, the Isle of Man, southern Scotland and the southern Scottish Isles, North West Ireland and South West Ireland. She talks in detail about trade and interchange of material culture. For me, the meat of the book was chapter six where she analyses the landscape settings of the various tombs and zones – finding remarkable consistent patterns in each zone.

The book is well produced, has dozens of photos (a bit small) and some figures, and is well indexed. There is a good bibliography. The only additional thing I would have liked would be a detailed gazetteer. But perhaps that would be a *Magnus Opus* in its own right. This is now available directly from Oxbow for £9.95. If this is your period – it's a snip. Even if it isn't your geographical location – buy it now. It won't disappoint.

Techer Jones

Fixing Easter

With the passing of Advent, Christmas and New Year, it is time to think of Lent and the Easter public holidays in April. This year Lent started on Wednesday 22nd February. Christmas and New Year are fixed dates, although their accompanying holidays are customarily moved to the following Monday, should they fall at a weekend. May's Spring holiday usually falls on the last Monday of the month (except this year, due to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations) as does the one in August. But the small variation in the dates when public holidays are celebrated is nothing like the variation which pertains to the Easter weekend.

In the Western tradition of Christianity, Easter Sunday can only fall between 22nd March and 25th April, determined by calculations based on a Lunar calendar and which this country adopted in AD 664 at the Synod of Whitby. In the Eastern tradition the dates are 4th April to the 8th May. This year, 2012, the Eastern tradition will celebrate Easter on Sunday 15th April, a week after the Western tradition.

However, the UK passed an Act in 1928 to fix the date of Easter which, as the reader will realise, has yet to be implemented.

Doctrinally, there is no reason why the Eastern and Western churches should not share the same date of Easter: the Vatican acknowledged this in 1963, as did the 1997 meeting of the World Council of Churches.

It is worth remembering that the date for Christmas was not fixed until AD 440. In Anglo Saxon England the New Year began on 25th December, which changed in the late 1100s to Lady Day, 25th March, where it remained until the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar in 1752.

Educational institutions have a degree of flexibility in deciding where Easter should come during the holiday period but I wonder if there would be an advantage in having a fixed Easter, not only to the educational calendar break but to the whole of the country. In fact, I might even go so far as to suggest that this country should change the concept of the Easter and May Day holidays in favour of a New Spring Bank Holiday weekend to be centred on the second Sunday in April. The redundant May Day holiday would leave a spare bank holiday which could be celebrated on Trafalgar Day, 21st October each year and is conveniently near to the autumn half-term break. Practising Christians could continue with their Liturgical Easter Calendar as before.

But it won't happen, will it?

Michael Fielding

Diary for 2012

As you can see, we have a very busy year. Places are filling fast, so please return your application form if you want to go on one of the visits, and immediately put the dates in your diary, whether your magnificent WARG diary, or otherwise!

March 12th: **The Strawberry Industry in Hampshire**: George Watts

April 2nd: **Big Dig 2011 Update** (& AGM)

April 23rd: 10am **Uffington, Burford & Rollrights**: Day out lead by Don Bryan

May 14th: **Farming the Past: Life on BBC 2's Victorian, Edwardian and Wartime Farms**: Alex Langlands

May 20th: 6pm **Stonehenge**: Evening visit (Fully booked)

June 11th: 6.30pm **Wickham**: Evening walk (Fully booked)

June 18th: 10.30am & 2pm **Southampton and the Titanic**: Walk lead by Don Bryan & Pamela Boyes

July 2nd: 2pm **Hengistbury Head**: Afternoon visit lead by Don Bryan*

July 9th: 6.30pm **Stockbridge Down**: Evening walk lead by Don Bryan*

July 28th- Aug 12th: **Big Dig** at St Elizabeth's College

Aug 5th: **Big Dig** Open Day

Aug 27th: 6.30pm **Merdon Castle**: Evening picnic with tour lead by Don Bryan*

Sept 10th: **The History of Military Prisons**: Ian Bailey

Sept 17th: 2.30pm **Old Sarum**: Afternoon visit lead by Don Bryan*

Oct 8th: **BBC and Children's Hour**: Martin Parsons

Oct 22nd: 10.30am **Lacock**: day trip lead by Don Bryan #

Nov 12th: **Bathing Houses and Plunge Pools**: Vivien Rolf

Dec 10th: **Exploration of a Downland Landscape –the archaeology of Bow Hill in West Sussex**: Mark Roberts

* = Application form in this newsletter.

= Application form in next newsletter.

Evening meetings are in the Cinema at the Hampshire Record Office, starting at 7.30pm.

Please check www.warg.org.uk in case we have to make last minute changes.

Julia's Jottings

Julia regularly collects odds and ends of interest to archaeologists and historians, and shares them with us here.

A brief break.

They say that a change is as good as a rest, and Dick and I discovered that even just 2 days in Paris can be a great rejuvenator at this time of year.

You're not interested in where we stayed or what we ate or did for most of the time, but you may well be keen to hear of an exhibition we visited in Le Grand Palais. It was called "La France en Relief" and ended in mid-February, but it was an absolute cracker of an exhibition. It featured 16 relief maps made for the French monarchs from the c17th to the c19th for military and defensive purposes. Originally 280 were created to allow the monarch and his advisors to assess exactly where France was at risk of invasion, but also to see where France could invade to increase its own land-holding – the latter mainly along the Alps and the border with Italy. This area was in a state of constant flux over the centuries and yoyo'd between France and the Italian States many times. These maps continued to be used for the purposes of town planning, road building and landscape issues, as well as those of borders, fortifications and map-making for all the monarchs between Louis XIV the Sun King (1638-1715) and Napoleon III (1808-1873).



A small part of the model of Brest

Of the 280 maps created only about 100 now exist, but they are huge and made of wood, powdered silk (promise you!) and metal. The details of each town are perfect, down to the number of windows on each house, the trees and the flying buttresses on the cathedrals, and it's an incredible opportunity to see what a long, long-gone France looked like centuries ago. The maps have been repaired and updated over the centuries and are a truly amazing asset to France's history. When the exhibition closed at Le Grand Palais, the maps returned to

their permanent home in Les Invalides, although about a dozen are permanently housed in Lille's Beaux Arts Museum.

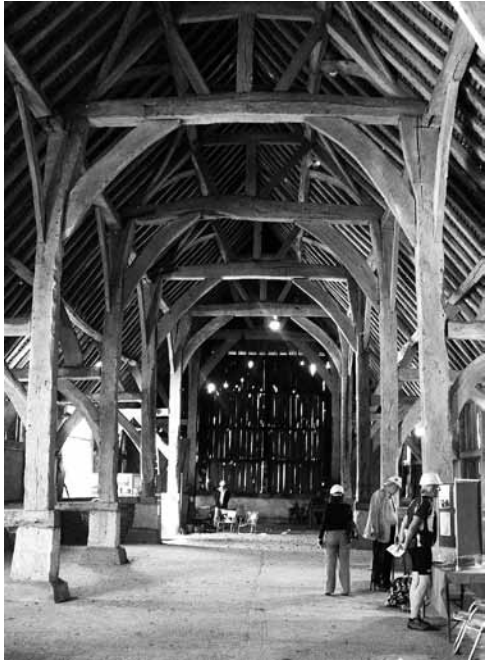
If you have a few hours spare in either Paris or Lille, and the ease of a 7am flight from Southampton to Orly gives you several hours in Paris even if you go just for the day, do try to visit the maps – we have nothing like them in this country and they show a vision and determination of quite an astonishing degree. I even gave a short interview for a BBC TV crew!

Editors note: The website for the exhibition, <http://lafranceenrelief.maison-histoire.fr/> was still active in mid February.

Beautiful Barns.

A 14th century barn at Harmondsworth in Middlesex has been bought by English Heritage in a move to save it from further decay.

The Great Barn, built in 1426, has been trapped between the M25 and the M4 and is considered to be the best preserved medieval barn in England, possibly in Europe, as well as being the 9th largest ever built in this country. It's 60m long, 12m wide and 11m high. Its history links in to our own area since Bishop William of Wykeham bought the estate on which the barn's predecessor stood in the late c14th and records show that he sent carpenters to repair a barn on this estate in 1398. Records also state that in 1426 the Master Carpenter William Kypping was commissioned to choose oak trees from Kingston Forest and use them to build a mighty new barn.



*Harmondsworth Great Barn
Jim Bush / Pollards Hill Cyclists*

It remained an agricultural barn for almost 700 years but began to deteriorate when its Gibraltar-based owners refused to carry out repairs despite its Grade 1 listing. However now that it's owned by people who understand its true value, it may well stand for many more centuries – the proud reminder of our ancestors' outstanding building abilities.

Britain's oldest rock art

An archaeologist has found what he believes to be the oldest rock art in Britain in a cave in the Gower Peninsula in South Wales. He feels that the faint scratchings of a speared reindeer are over 14,000 years old. Dr George Nash, a part-time academic from Bristol University, found the art on one of his many visits to the cave with his students, but the dating is not yet confirmed. The characteristics of the drawing match many found in Northern Europe, but those have been dated around 4,000-5,000 years later. However flint tools found by Cambridge University in the 1950s were dated to between 12,000 and 14,000BC and Dr Nash feels that his discovery dates to that period.

The limestone cliffs along the Gower coast are known for their archaeological importance and the earliest known formal human burial in Western Europe was found there – this is considered to be around 29,000 years old. Dr Nash says that the area was open until the ice limit came down from the glaciers 15,000-20,000 years ago and stopped about 2km short of the cave. Hunter fisher gatherers were roaming the landscape there, albeit seasonally, burying their dead 30,000 years ago and making their mark through artistic endeavour between 30,000 and 40,000 years ago.

Needless to say, the cave's whereabouts is being kept a strict secret!

A Historical Perspective.

I found this fascinating article, which I've had to heavily shorten, in a book about life in Hampshire during the late c19th and the early c20th and think it gives us all a little food for thought!

"Before the NHS started in 1948, doctors had their own dispensaries in their surgeries where most of the medicines they prescribed were prepared by dispensing assistants. These were women who had trained in pharmacy to a recognised standard and passed an examination at the Society of Apothecaries in London. In practice the duties involved a good deal more than dispensing. They were expected to test urine and blood samples for a diversity of medical conditions; deal with accidents and emergencies when the doctors were out of the surgeries; sterilise instruments and assist at minor operations. Book-keeping, filing, wages, general clerical work and typing were also part of the job. Additionally it helped if they could unblock drains, smooth ruffled feathers and make a good cup of tea!

"I was employed in this position by a partnership of 4 doctors whose practice was centred at Elingfield, Totton and spread from Ower

in the north down the western side of Southampton Water to Lepe and Calshot. It included many New Forest villages, farms and gipsy encampments. The building in the High Street, one of the oldest village houses complete with a ghost, had been divided into 4 consulting rooms, a waiting room and the dispensary on the ground floor. Upstairs was a spacious flat occupied by the junior partner and his young family.

“The dispensary was in fact little more than a portioned-off cubby hole lined from floor to ceiling with many shelves of bottles, jars and packets of all shapes, sizes and colours. Dozens of Winchesters (large cylindrical bottles with narrow necks used for transporting chemicals – JS) containing bulk liquids crowded underneath the shelves. The working surfaces were hardly less cluttered. The minute dispensing bench was topped with an off-cut of ancient brown linoleum, on which stood an antique set of apothecary’s scales. Next to this a Bunsen burner hissed under a heavily furred tin kettle which steamed on a tripod every surgery, its contents used for cleaning syringes and making tea. As a gesture to modernisation, a new deep white porcelain sink had been installed at one corner. At the opposite end of the dispensing bench was an old wooden desk top bearing the Day Book in which the doctors daily recorded every visit and consultation. Prescriptions were also recorded here. All these entries had to be transcribed to the Accounts ledger so that bills could be sent out either monthly or quarterly by myself. Preparing these hand-written bills was a mammoth task, taking many hours, and had to be done after surgery hours.

“There were 2 surgeries daily from Monday to Friday and a morning one on Saturdays. The senior doctor was the district’s factory doctor and so was on call for serious accidents. However injured people who were able to stand would be brought to the surgery and, in the event of no doctors being available, I had to deal with the situation. I quickly learned to get all the details of the accident before uncovering the wound – this partly prepared me for some of the horrific wounds with which I had to deal.”

So, don’t let’s complain about being overworked again!

Viking Burial Ship in Scotland

For over 1,000 years a Viking chieftain warrior has lain in his boat with his shield on his chest and his sword and spear by his side on the remote western Scottish peninsula of Ardnamurchan. Of the first undisturbed Viking ship burial to be uncovered on the British mainland, little trace is left either of the ship’s timbers or the bones of

its occupant. However its outline with its pointed prow and stern is revealed by hundreds of rivets, some still attached to scraps of wood. An expert on Viking boats from the University of Glasgow has dated it to the 10th century. At only 5m long and 1.5m wide, it's considerably smaller than movies have led us to expect, and it would quite possibly have been a perilous journey across the North Sea in it.

The occupant was also accompanied by a Norwegian whetstone, a bronze ring-pin from Ireland, a knife, an axe, some pottery and what is thought to be part of a horn drinking vessel. The remains of his beautifully decorated sword hilt, spear and shield survive merely as metal fittings, but he was well-equipped for his journey to, and stay in, the next world. His own remains consist of fragments of his arm bone and several teeth, so isotopic analysis should reveal from whence he came, plus the fragments of wood should uncover the provenance of the trees. The boat had been laden with rocks but archaeologists are not all sure why, though the practice has been found in other Viking burials.

Incidentally, the Sutton Hoo ship burial was of course Anglo-Saxon, not Viking, and several centuries older than the Viking one. But you knew that anyway.

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