



Newsletter

Spring 2014

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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

The coverage of the Southgate Street Roman Wall in the Hampshire Chronicle brought to the fore two debates. The first is what a planning authority can ask a developer to do, the second, and a closely linked debate, is about how we treat archaeology when it is found.

I spoke to Tracy Matthews, who is the Archaeologist on the Historic Environment team of Winchester City Council (and a WARG committee member). Tracy's job includes advising the planning team on archaeological matters and maintaining the Historic Environment Record (HER - it used to be called the Sites and Monuments Register). The rest of this article draws on our conversation, but any errors and opinions are mine.

It is only relatively recently that there has been any attempt to limit what a developer can do on a site. (Developer is here used as shorthand for anyone doing building work that could impact on archaeology. It could be an individual householder or a massive international company.) In 1990 following considerable public unhappiness with developers destroying archaeology, the government issued PPG (Planning Policy Guidance) 16 which explicitly provided for a planning authority to require archaeological activity. The guidelines preferred preservation in situ for nationally important remains, whether designated or not, designing the development so that the archaeology remains intact. However it was accepted that there would be times when this might be impossible and here preservation by record was required. This normally required a complete excavation with detailed records.

In the last four years things have changed. The Government has published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), claiming that it replaces a thousand pages of national policy on planning with around fifty. Inevitably in this document archaeology shrinks into part of one section, *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*. This talks about Heritage Assets, defined as "building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest." This significance includes archaeology. It makes clear that a planning authority has to maintain an HER and that where a development may have an archaeological interest, the planning authority should require from the developer a desk-based assessment

and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

One quirk in all this is that before the NPPF, the Government had replaced PPG 16 with PPS (Planning Policy Statement) 5 - *Planning for the Historic Environment*. Alongside this, English Heritage published a *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* which still remains in force as guidelines for local authorities, owners and applicants. This says in one section, *"Some non-designated assets of archaeological interest, such as the buried remains of Roman Winchester, are known to be of at least equivalent importance to this and future generations as many places that are designated"*. So virtually every development in the historic city of Winchester is going to have to carry out assessment and probably evaluation.

Through all these changes the presumption is that the task is to conserve the significance of the remains for future generations. This may be through leaving the archaeology alone, through careful planning of the development, or it may be preservation by recording.

This leads to the sometimes rather paradoxical decision that archaeology that is in good condition will be left in-situ without more than some test pits, while archaeology which is already in a mess, often through earlier development, will be fully excavated and recorded. After all, the very act of excavation is itself destructive to a greater or lesser degree.

Now we come to Southgate Street. Before the start of work by Bargate Homes, it was known that the site would include parts of the Roman and medieval wall and of the City Ditch. Since the building on the Southgate Street frontage had a concrete floor, it was expected that this would be thick, and that any remains of the city wall would have been heavily impacted.

When they removed the floor they found that there was a big chunk of archaeology, only just below the surface. This triggered a large scale excavation, carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology.



Roman Wall Foundations
Photo: Don Bryan

The excavation found two phases of a Roman earth rampart, a chunk of Roman wall foundation and some medieval masonry, which may be associated with the South Gate. The Roman wall remains were mainly flint and chalk rubble with a clay mortar. This would have been faced with stone, which has been removed

at some time, and at some time part of the rubble had been removed. (Techer Jones has described this in more detail, see the following article).

If the wall remains were to be left exposed, the weather would soon have reduced them to nothing. Any attempt to drive piles to carry a raft over them would have damaged the remains it was trying to preserve, so the decision was made that Bargate should go ahead with clearing the site and completing the buildings. There is still more of the wall and ramparts further to the west of the site, under the building that was once part of the barracks.

If you read the Hampshire Chronicle you would have thought that the site had uncovered real walls, not just the rubble core. It is not at all clear what people calling for their preservation were expecting to happen. We now have a detailed record of a few meters of the wall, something that we don't have for the much longer stretch of wall that disappeared under the County Council's Ashburton Court offices and car parking in the 1960s. We still have potential archaeology relatively undisturbed at the back of the site.

It is clear that both Bargate and Pre-Construct have acted properly in this, and so has Winchester City Council. It is a shame that their generosity in allowing us to visit should have generated a press storm in a teacup and I have apologised to all parties on behalf of WARG.

Big Dig 2014

We are returning to St Elizabeth College again this year, thanks to the kindness of the Headmaster, Dr Ralph Townsend. We will be digging for the first two weeks in August and a sign-up form is enclosed with this newsletter.

As we will be sharing the field with children's activity camps, only those registered for the day will be allowed on-site, so there can be no informal visits this year. If you want to see what is going on, you will have to come on the open day, Sunday August 10th.

Dick Selwood



Caption Competition

Pretty poor response to our caption competition I am afraid. Michael Fielding came up with

Left portaloo : Archaeologists

Right portaloo : Unisex

And so wins eternal fame.

Visit Report: The Roman City Wall at Southgate Street

Paul McCulloch from Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd kindly led two short visits for 54 WARG members at the site of the old Peugeot garage on the west side of Southgate Street on Thursday 6th March. The area had been developed as a garrison mews in 1865 and then in 1925 William Short built a motor showroom, retaining part of the mews. Until about two years ago the site was a Peugeot showroom and workshops. It is now being developed as residential homes. Paul praised the developers, Bargate Homes and Tracy Matthews, for their understanding and cooperation.

Pre-excavation work had forecast that a portion of the city wall might be uncovered. Amazingly both the 1865 and 1925 developments managed to avoid the city wall by about two metres. The site exceeded expectations as all three phases of the Roman wall could be viewed. The first phase, built in the first century AD, was a turf embankment with a large ditch on the outer side. In the second century AD, the bank was enlarged. In the third century a vertical flint and mortar wall about two metres thick was cut into the bank, with the original embankment re-enforcing this on the inner-city face. We were able to see a small area of the first phase but see much more clearly the second phase embankment and third phase flint wall foundation. We also had an excellent view of a construction ditch cut into the phase two embankment, which had allowed the footings of the phase three flint wall to be built. The wall itself consists of large flints, not knapped or dressed, set into very thick layers of a pinkish mortar. The wall rests on a footing of tile and below that, footings that splay out in two layers by about a metre and a half. The footings are on a substantial base of chalk. But this is imported rammed chalk, not natural.

On the south side of the Roman wall is the defending city ditch. This is around 35m wide and up to 7m deep. The edge of the ditch-cut was clear to see. Paul explained that they had taken auger depth-findings of the city ditch. It was 7m deep for most of the site but raised to 5m deep just short of the existing Southgate Street. This suggests that the ditch did not terminate, but actually continued on in front of the Roman gate and must have been crossed by a wooden bridge. On the south (outer) side of the Roman wall, again at the western extreme, absolutely adjacent to the Southgate Street pavement, were footings

of what might well have been the Medieval city gate. The Roman gate was inside the wall and the Medieval gate outside.

The site is immediately adjacent to the Roman south gate. Martin Biddle excavated the Roman wall on the opposite (east) side of Southgate Street around 1967 and a diagram of his findings can be seen in the car park of St Swithun's House at the corner of St Swithun's Street and Southgate Street. Biddle had uncovered the same three phases, but additionally he had found a bastion tower extending outwards (south) built in the fourth century. This is consistent with the bastion towers found on the late-Roman Saxon shore-forts, such as Porchester. There is also evidence of a bastion on the outer side of the wall on this site on the west side of Southgate Street. However, the mortar is yellow, rather than the pink of the Roman wall. Paul is convinced that the two abutment walls about 3m apart are not Roman, but are part of a bastion added in the time of Henry III when that king was reinforcing the castle area.

Paul told us that there was no evidence of any Alfredian alteration to the wall, and indeed, the footings we saw remain very sound. This suggests that both in Alfred's time and later, the wall was merely patched up rather than needing any significant rebuilding at this location. This excavation, coupled with Biddle's, also confirms that the south gate of the city was in the same location in Roman, Alfredian and later times i.e. under what is now Southgate Street.

In the narrow 3-4 metre gap between the outer face of the wall and the city ditch were four rubbish pits, each about 2m across and 3-4m deep. These contained finds ranging from later mediaeval (including some Saxon) to a 19th century rifle cleaning tool. A couple of us paced out the 35m ditch and it is clear that Canon Street and St James' Lane run along the southern



Site overview Photo: Don Bryan

side of this ditch.

It is amazingly fortunate that the mews and car showroom developments did not impact on the Roman wall. The houses on the east side of the road have deep cellars, but fortunately there were no house developments on this western site. Paul is very happy to have re-affirmed with great certainty the three-phase development of the Roman city wall and boundary ditch. After our visit he plans a final mechanical cut through the wall to enable a clear section to be gained including the chalk under-raft. Our thanks to Paul for – as ever – being a great and clear guide and to Bargate for allowing us to visit.

Techer Jones

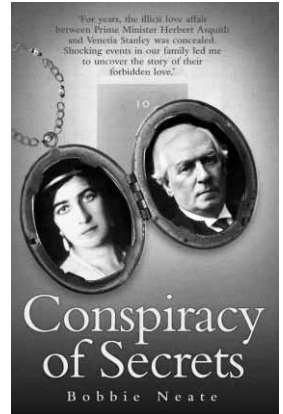


Conspiracy of Secrets

This is the title of the book Bobbie Neate has written about her research into the intriguing origins of her stepfather, Louis Thomas Stanley. It was the subject of her talk, a tale of politics at the highest level and a reckless love affair.

Bobbie began with a reference to the recent television series “37 Days” about the events leading up to the First World War. While they were dealing with weighty matters of state, some of the politicians involved were also preoccupied with their tangled personal lives. Most people are aware of Lloyd George’s affair with his secretary Frances Stephenson, whom he later married, while Edward Grey had made a girl pregnant and persuaded his brother to marry her. What Bobbie has uncovered is the well-concealed story that her stepfather was almost certainly the illegitimate son of a British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, and an aristocratic young woman called Venetia Stanley.

Bobbie described her stepfather as a charming, persuasive man but also a deceitful psychopath who married her mother for her money, having already been married to an heiress and run through her fortune. When Bobbie’s mother suffered a stroke, Louis did absolutely nothing



to help her or call for assistance. He had racked up huge bills and was unable to pay for her mother's care.

His past history was a dark secret. It was forbidden to ask him any questions about his origins. Two strange women were introduced into Bobbie's childhood home by Louis and the family were told that they were his mother and sister, although the sister looked far too old for this to be the case. Bobbie and her siblings speculated about Louis, especially after seeing a photograph of Asquith, to whom he bore an astonishing resemblance.



Herbert Asquith

Asquith was known as a sexual predator and a heavy drinker. The term "squiffy" is derived from his name. Churchill recalled a time when he had to pick Asquith up from the floor of the House of Commons because he was so drunk. Asquith met Venetia Stanley while he was married to his second wife, Margot Tennant, and had seven children. Venetia was in her early 20's and Asquith was 65. His daughter, Violet, later Bonham-Carter, was Venetia's best friend while Asquith was a close friend of Venetia's father, Lord Sheffield. Margot's mental health had deteriorated after a series of miscarriages and there was ample opportunity for Asquith's love affair with Venetia to take place. She had been very spoiled and indulged in bizarre behaviour, such as carrying a pet monkey about.

Asquith became totally besotted with Venetia and wrote 500 letters to her which have only recently come to light, many of them recklessly indiscreet, about important affairs of state at a time when Europe was on the brink of World War 1. In one letter he claimed to have cancelled an appointment with the King in order to spend the time with Venetia. He kept her letters tucked under his pillow. A collection of letters from Asquith to the Stanley family was published in 1982 but the love letters to Venetia were not included. Any references to the affair were consistently covered-up.

Louis spun a web of concealment over his origins. He claimed to

have lived in Hoylake as a child but changed his account of the address from one grand house to another. It later emerged that he had lived in a much more humble dwelling nearby. Bobbie described his birth certificate as a complete pack of lies. It stated that his father was a cotton broker, also called Louis Thomas Stanley. No record of such a person exists. The address given on his birth certificate has also proved to be non-existent. His mother was named as Mary Anne Applegate, who later changed her name to Stanley. Bobbie is convinced that she was chosen as a suitable person to look after baby Louis, as was common practice when illegitimate babies were born to upper class women. Mary Anne had been born into a poor family of cotton workers yet moved to a prosperous area in the Wirral and managed to send Louis to a private school. Bobbie is convinced that she was one of the women who moved into her childhood home,

She also believes that the date of the baby's birth was earlier than April 1912 as stated on the birth certificate, as a dated photograph shows a picture of a baby who looked too mature to be born on that date. Bobbie speculates that Louis was born in August 1911, when Venetia was known to be in Germany. Upon her return to England she was secluded for two months with an alleged attack of jaundice. Could she have been recovering from the birth? It seems that a determined effort was made to create a completely false scenario.

Venetia ended the relationship with Asquith because she felt he had become too obsessed and dependent upon her. She married a Cabinet Minister called Edward Montague, converting to Judaism in order to do so.

Bobbie built up a persuasive account of Louis' true origins but they are unlikely to be proved conclusively. However, seeing the almost identical photographs of Asquith and Louis side by side convinced me of the truth of her story. Bobbie wonders why so many determined efforts were made to conceal the truth and whether there is any more of this story to be uncovered. A conspiracy of secrets, indeed!

Iris Gould

Editor's Note

Whatever Bobby Neate felt about her step-father in the motor racing world he is greatly admired for his fight to improve safety for drivers, including having hospital quality care on site at Formula 1 events world-wide and the use of fireproof clothing.

DS

Gunner 85269 Sharratt – the life of a Great War Soldier

In Mansfield, near Nottingham, is Sharratt Court, a block of sheltered accommodation named after my Grandfather, Harold Sharratt, and opened by my Grandmother Maud in 1972, ten year after his death. The name recognises his work with the Royal British Legion, and that, in turn, resulted from his service in the Great War.

Harold's war time service started with a medical examination. In January 1915 his physical development was recorded as good, his height as 5'8½" and weight 130 lbs. His chest measured 35" after expanding by 3". He had no distinguishing marks apart from four vaccination marks from infancy on his right arm and no defects. His medical category was A1.

He enlisted "for the duration of the war" on 12th February 1915 at Mansfield as Gunner 85269 Sharratt of the Royal Field Artillery, aged 22 years and 2 months, previously a valet married to Maud with no children and with an address in Shirebrook, Derbyshire.

As a volunteer (conscription was still a year away) he was asked for a character reference, and named Colonel Sir Lancelot Rolleston KCB. Rolleston was a local hero in Nottingham who had commanded the county regiment in the Boer War, where he was wounded. Sir Lancelot replied that he had known Harold for five years and had last spoken to him two years earlier. Harold was sober and honest and had been a satisfactory footman with no previous military service. This relationship was confirmed by the 1911 census which showed Sharratt as Rolleston's footman and a Maud Naylor as a kitchen maid. Harold and Maud married in June 1913 at St Peter's Parish Church, Mansfield.

Later in February 1915 Harold reported to No 6 Royal Field Artillery (RFA) Depot, Glasgow. The record of the kit issued goes down to drawers and puttees. After initial basic training, which seems to have lasted 14 weeks, in May 1915 he was posted to "Heavy Section, 4th Reserve Brigade RFA" as a "driver". The RFA was equipped with 18-pounder field guns and the heavier 4½" howitzers both drawn by teams of horses ridden by "drivers". Several guns formed a Battery, and four Batteries plus an ammunition column was a Brigade, which served alongside Infantry Brigades in Divisions.

He was not a driver for long as it was decided that his previous experience in civilian life as a footman and valet could be put to best

use as an Officer's Batman (personal servant), with the rank of Gunner. In May 1915 Harold's unit became the 99th Brigade RFA, part of the 22nd Division. The Division, created shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914, was based in Sussex near Eastbourne and Seaford, with the artillery brigade at Lewes.

In September 1915, after home leave (Maud gave birth to a son Thomas Sidney Sharratt in April 1916 at Forest Town), Harold left for the Western Front. The Division sailed from Southampton to Le Havre, and by September 9th was near Flesselles, a hamlet north of Amiens on the River Somme.

Almost immediately it was transferred to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, formed in March 1915 for the Gallipoli landings in Turkey. The British and French were trying to link up with Russia in the Ukraine. The Turks stopped their advance with artillery supplied by the Germans.

However, after embarking at Marseilles in October, the 22nd Division sailed not to Gallipoli but to Salonica (now called Thessaloniki) in Greece to support Greece and Serbia against Bulgaria. Before they landed, on 30th November 1915, an infantry brigade had been beaten by the Bulgarians. The Allies retreated from Serbia and fought a rearguard action just north of Lake Doiran. It was stalemate until July 1916, when Bulgaria invaded Greece and was repelled by an Allied force of four British divisions, including the 22nd, as well as French, Serbian, Russian and Italian troops.

It was then, with temperatures in the 90s, that Harold contracted severe malaria. He was sent to a Casualty Clearing Station at Salonica, before moving to Malta and being invalided home. He arrived in England on 30th August, posted to 5th Reserve Brigade RFA. He was instantly admitted to the Military Hospital in Liverpool, transferred just over a month later to a convalescent home, and in April 1917 moved to Liverpool University's School of Tropical Medicine under the care of Sir Ronald Ross, the world's leading expert on malaria. After a couple of months Harold was sent to the RFA Command Depot Hospital in Ripon, and finally discharged from hospital at the end of July.

In September 1917 he was posted back to France, to the Divisional Ammunition Column of the 20th Light Division. This was the time of Passchendaele and the Cambrai Operation. His DAC remained in that area of Belgium until the Armistice in November 1918. Harold was granted 2 weeks home leave in February 1918, the only home leave on

his record.

After the Armistice, coal miners were granted immediate return to UK and Harold managed to jump the queue by an apparent overwhelming desire to become a miner – like Maud’s father. However he was unable to board a ship at Boulogne until January 1919. He was transferred to Class Z of the military reservists, and discharged from the army. As he declared himself to have no injuries, no War Pension was due to him.

In October 1916 Harold’s officers had reported that he had been sent home “for discharge or permanently for any reason”. He had been an officer’s servant, was sober, thoroughly reliable and intelligent and was “very willing and hardworking”. There were no instances of drunkenness, other offences or any punishments. Like most servicemen he received the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal (or Pip, Squeak and Wilfred).

In May 1921 four ex-servicemen’s groups merged to form the British Legion. Harold was a founder-member of the Nottinghamshire Branch and served the Legion for the rest of his life. He became a member of its National Executive, and represented the British Legion on War Pensions Appeals Tribunals and at the Queen’s coronation in Westminster Abbey in 1953. Later he accompanied



After the war: Harold and Maud with their children c.1920

Her Majesty to Australia as a member of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and was awarded the OBE for his services to the Legion. He died on 14th September 1962 and ten years later the Royal British Legion named the sheltered accommodation in Mansfield after him. Harold and Maud were both buried in Mansfield Cemetery following funerals at St Peter’s Church where they had been married.

Chris Sharratt

New Year Party 2014

Julia surpassed herself with this year's "surprise entertainment"! Mrs. Vera Cox and her henpecked husband, Mr. Albert Cox, (Actors from Pedlars and Petticoats) thoroughly entertained and educated us as to domestic life in 1942.

Speaking "ever-so-nicely", Mrs. Cox from the Women's Voluntary Service and Ministry of Information gave us many handy home hints and tips guaranteed to boost morale, prevent waste and eke out meagre rations. Playing "Guess what Mrs. Cox is cooking?" we learnt that mashed potato mixed with sugar and cocoa could pass as mock chocolate spread, the addition of dried milk powder made a milk chocolate version or by adding a little whisky and moulding the mix into truffles even liqueur sweets could be made! Grated carrot mixed with curry powder made a sandwich filler paste and even "crumb fudge" made from bread crumbs could be created. Of course, when obtaining ingredients, the Black Market had to be avoided at all costs.

Reminding us that "loose lips sink ships," "walls have ears" and "keep Mum, she's not dumb", Mr. Cox, whose war work building Spitfires was top secret, emerged from his shed to give us his gardening tips which included planting mint between potatoes to keep the cabbage white butterfly away, letting seed potatoes sprout eyes and feeding hens with boiled potatoes. A strong advocate of "Dig for Victory", he also hates waste of any kind so exhorted us to make jams and chutney with our spare produce and "Don't hurt Mr Middleton's feelings, even cook the potato peelings." (Mr. Middleton was the wireless gardener during the war.) Potato Pete said "If you have the will to win, cook potatoes in their skins" and Doctor Carrot encouraged the eating of his namesake to enable seeing in the dark.

"Put your best face forward," even in these times of austerity women should have a touch of glamour, Mrs. Cox explained that by using a kirby grip to scrape out the bottom of old lipsticks and melting the resulting mix in a bowl over a pan of boiling water, then letting it set in a small pot, you can make your own "new" lipstick and rouge. Build up a good relationship with your chemist then ask him to mix cochineal with cocoa butter and mould it in a suppository mould before refilling an empty lipstick container to create a completely new lipstick! The final touch being face powder made from chalk.

We rounded off the evening by heartily singing “You are my sunshine,” “My old man said follow the van” and “Run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run.” Who said the spirit of the Blitz is dead?!

Abandoning all thoughts of rationing (thank goodness) we then enjoyed the usual delicious spread of party food. TTFN!

Valerie Pegg

Reporters Note

Pedlars and Petticoats (www.pedlarsandpetticoats.co.uk) is normally Jane Glennie and Terri Reid. Terri was unwell and Mr Cox was played at short notice by Michael. (Never did hear his surname). What a great find, Julia.



Geoffrey Ellis

Many of you are aware that our eldest son, Geoffrey, suffered a serious mountain bike accident in April 2013 and broke his back and is now confined to a wheelchair. Three weeks ago Geoffrey moved into his new home and we are pleased to say that he is coping and settling quite well. Many WARG members have kindly sponsored Don on his walk of Offa's Dyke and made donations to support Geoffrey. What can we say! To walk 177 miles, an average of 15 miles a day, in all weathers is a real challenge. He walked through freezing water and mud and didn't give up. That is impressive. Thank you Don for offering to raise money for our son Geoffrey, it was a wonderful gesture. Thank you *to everyone who contributed* to Don's sponsorship, we truly appreciate your support. Techer and two others in our village are acting as trustees for the funds raised by Don and from another event. All the money raised will be used for specialist equipment to help Geoffrey and to go towards retraining for his future. So thank you WARG.

Geoff and Jenny Ellis

Sarsens

I've always been fascinated by Sarsens aka Druid Stones or Grey Wethers, those boulders of sand or flint bound by silica cement. To most of us they are associated with Britain's ancient stone circles such as Stonehenge and Avebury but of course over the centuries they've been moved around a lot and now are frequently found as gateposts or single marking stones for various boundaries etc. Not surprisingly they occur all over our islands and Hampshire has its fair share. Mesolithic Man used Sarsens and since those times they've been regularly used for a dozen different uses. Our own county has pockets of them in places as far apart as Milford-on-Sea, Eastleigh, Warsash, Froxfield and between Andover and Ludgershall. They don't all look the same however and there are two distinct shapes: tabular and bulbous. The Froxfield variety for instance is a pale sandy colour and contains inclusions of chalk, as well as being smooth and rounded as though exposed to weathering over a long period.

In 1977 Hampshire's Sarsens were listed as just over 300, whether groups or concentrations, and the main areas include Winchester, Twyford, Hayling Island, the Candovers and the area north west of Andover. Over the last 200 years or so they've been moved into positions where we don't always recognise what they are: sometimes being used as mounting blocks or kerb stones and even tombstones. Weyhill, Hayling Island, Steep and Hinton Ampner all have one of the latter, and there are still several large gardens with examples in. Also Sarsens have often been used in the building of parish churches and these can be seen in Eversley, Bighton, Compton, Littleton, Houghton and Morestead. According to tradition some churches, notably Bishopstoke, Twyford and Tangle, are on the sites of stone circles, and Winchfield's 18 stones were set in a circle close to the church.

Of course there are some lovely legends surrounding these fascinating stones: for instance, apparently when Twyford's bells are rung, the two large Sarsens near the church go down to the river to drink. All over Britain there are stories about the stones of circles which can never be counted the same number each time – but such fun trying! Julia has a list of all the Sarsens in Hampshire as well as a list of those in Winchester itself and can always give you a copy. These lists give map references for each stone so when the hot summer is with us, why not go a-searching?

Denise Baker & Julia Sandison

Britain: One million years of the Human Story

Review of the exhibition and the book

I thought WARG members might appreciate a review of this exhibition, which runs until 28th September 2014 at the Natural History Museum, London. In summary, this is like walking through a textbook of the British Palaeolithic. Triggered by the finds over the past few years at Happisburgh (Norfolk), the exhibition brings together almost every key artefact that you have heard of in the Palaeolithic era in Britain. It would be a like a football fan walking through a room which contained Pele, Stanley Matthews, George Best, and Rooney (no jokes about Rooney and Neanderthals please).

The exhibition is divided into five smallish rooms, some of which have video stories as well as artefacts. The entrance has reproduction heads from various Homo genus.

Room 1: 900,000 years ago, focuses mostly on Happisburgh. There is a selection of flint tools and three pine cones. Here also are the Pakefield flints from 700,000 years ago together with the jaw and a molar of a steppe mammoth. A video shows the oldest footprints in Europe discovered at Happisburgh in March 2013.

Room 2: 450,000 years ago, has no artefacts. It explains the Marine Isotope Stages of climate change varying between big freezes and warm periods. There are moving maps which wonderfully track the to-and-fro of glaciation and coastal changes in Britain.

Room 3: 400,000 to 180,000 years ago, Neanderthals and big game. The change to Levallois stone technology is explained. The tibia and teeth from Boxgrove are exhibited together with Boxgrove axes and a butchered rhino pelvis. The Swanscombe Homo Heidelbergensis skull is here with Swanscombe hand axes. The Clacton spear 400kya is exhibited alongside a reproduction. The Pontnewydd Molars and hand axes are also here. The video in this room features the major British Neanderthal site at La Cotte de St Brelade, in Jersey.

Room 4: 180,000 to 60,000 years ago is called the deserted island. Throughout this period no evidence of Homo anything has been found in Britain. We have only the bones of animals. But the room includes the famous rhinoceros found in Trafalgar Square and a hippopotamus from near Cambridge.

Room 5: 60,000 to 12,000 years ago. Obviously there is more evidence of human inhabitation in this period. Here is the Kent's

Cavern jaw: this maxilla is from the oldest modern human in Europe. Here too is the enigmatic Red Lady of Paviland (who we all now know is a bloke). The Gough's cave skulls are here which provide evidence of human cannibalism – the skulls also having been re-formed as drinking vessels. This room – contains two very life-like models of a Neanderthal and a Homo Sapiens with explanations of the differences. The video shows evidence of cross fertilisation between the genus. Amusingly it shows that Prof Alice Roberts is 2.7% Neanderthal, while Prof Chris Stringer is only half that.

Throughout the exhibition are multiple animal bones and also variants on hand axes. I liked the way that some hand axes said, “please touch”. This is definitely *the* exhibition for Palaeolithic junkies and nerds. You are unlikely to see all these things in one place again in your lifetime. It is definitely not an exhibition for bored children. Remembering the Warg trip to Boxgrove and the later talk by Mark Roberts, I came away with a childlike enjoyment “ I have seen the *real* Boxgrove tibia”. Perhaps I can get a car sticker. This isn't my period, but I really did enjoy the exhibition very much, and, perhaps a better test, so did Janet who is more into the history thing than archaeology. For the over 60s the price is £4.50 and we took a good hour and half to go through the exhibition. Ideally you book a timed ticket on line, but I think you would be unlucky to be turned away if you just turned up. It wasn't exactly heaving with viewers. I might well go back.

Naturally, there is a book to accompany the exhibition. “Britain: One Million Years of the Human Story” by Rob Dinnis and Chris Stringer published by The Natural History Museum (ISBN 978 0 565 093372). It costs £12.99 and is 152 pages. It is a very good read. It basically puts meat on the bones (deliberate pun) of what you have seen in the exhibition. It is very informative yet not overly academic. The illustrations are good quality in reproduction, but to my mind, the smallish size (17 x 23cm) means that some pictures are too small to allow real inspection. I have the hardback of Chris Stringer's *Homo Britannicus* (ISBN 978-0-713-99795-8), which was published in 2006. That means it does not cover the Happisburgh finds, which have taken the British Palaeolithic back from 700,000 to 950,000 years ago. But, for me, it is the better book. Perhaps I am being mean – the exhibition-related book is not a quick pot-boiler. It is a serious book, but I would rather have paid double for a bit better quality and larger sized hardback of the exhibition.

Techer Jones

A fresco holiday

Any excuse to visit Italy is fine with me so a holiday in the north of the country appealed to both of us. We stayed in Treviso, up near the lakes and handily close to Venice. Why Treviso? Any medieval town is also ok by me but if it invented *Prosecco* AND *Tiramisu*, what other choice is there?

Neatly using a couple of rivers like a moat, this town has plenty to recommend itself in the way of old water wheels, churches and other spectacular buildings. As always in Italy, it's the latter which impress and in Treviso, since they had little local stone, they built mainly with brick which they then painted all over with many patterns and pictures to make them more interesting. Its history started before the Romans, during which period it converted to Christianity. Spared by Attila the Hun (though I cannot find out why), it was governed by the Byzantines, then joined the Lombard League before coming under Venetian rule in the early 14th century. Fortifying walls and ramparts were built and the water wheels also to enable trade and fresh fish to be brought in to the city – there's still a lovely outdoors fish market. In the late 18th century the French took over the city until the defeat of Napoleon when it passed to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Treviso stayed under their control until 1866 when it was



Prosecco
Photo Wikipedia/Creative Commons



Piazza dei Signori e Palazzo dei Trecento, Treviso
Photo Wikipedia/Creative Commons

annexed with the rest of the area to the kingdom of Italy. Such a varied history shows everywhere and as a place to potter round, with frequent stops for a coffee (or a *prosecco*), it's excellent.

The Italian railway system is also excellent and we were a short walk away from the station, so visited Padua for the day. Much larger than Treviso, it also stands alongside a river and, quite apart from its own varied history, claims to be the oldest city in northern

Italy, dating itself to Virgil's Aeneid. Of course you should never attempt to visit anywhere in either Italy or France on a Monday when virtually everything's closed, but also remember that lunchtime lasts from 12 till 4. However their large outdoor daily market is a treat and the Baptistry was open. The latter is quite simple stunning, every inch being covered by the fantastic frescos of Giusto de' Menabuoi, a local chap from the 14th century. I could waffle on for hours about these glories so just put his name into your search engine and look at the detail (and number of different faces on the roundel). The paintings tell



Duomo di Conegliano

Photo Wikipedia/Creative Commons

stories from the Old and New Testaments and are truly glorious. Padua has many churches too, of course, and one dedicated to Thomas a Beckett – sadly not open daily. This large University city has many little alleyways and has JUST discovered that it has a huge Roman amphitheatre – not sure how they'd missed that.

Conegliano is a small medieval town to the north of Treviso and is unassuming and quiet. It has a rather amazing cathedral which looks like an ordinary building from the outside, as well as a hilltop castle. The cathedral's highly frescoed outer walls alert one to an extension building filled inside by Cima's frescos (late 15th century). Next door are 2 large rooms with more frescoes as well as the story of David and Bathsheba shown in tapestries. Fantastic views from the castle, reached by a steep narrow pathway – coffee etc definitely required on reaching the castle square.

And then, of course, there's Venice, easily reached by train and... but that's another story.

Julia Sandison



Leprosy at St. Mary Magdalene

A blessed punishment: evidence for leprosy at St. Mary Magdalene, Winchester.

In December, Katie Tucker from the University of Winchester gave us a fascinating technical lecture on the work being done at this site. Extra chairs had to be found for the large number of people who turned up, all keen to hear what she had to say.

She explained that she was a 'bone person' who had joined the project as a volunteer in 2009. The site has revealed well-preserved skeletal remains with head niches and ledges in every grave. It took a lot of effort to dig these graves through the chalk.

The site.

The first written evidence tells us about the foundation in 1148 and refers to the 'Lepers on the hill'.

It was an almshouse in the 16th century, a Royalist camp in 1640 and a prison in 1665. It was demolished in 1788/89.

Work on the site began in the 1990s, with Time Team conducting a dig there in 2000. Winchester University got involved in 2007 when a geophysical survey gave evidence of a lot going on and they have been involved ever since.

Earlier drawings of the building show it to be very elaborate, and indeed we can see that for ourselves as a door from St. Mary Magdalene is now at St Peter's Church in Winchester.

The burials.

As soon as the burials began to emerge, it was thought that they had to be of a relatively early date. The carbon dates were done and checked twice because the date of AD 940 – 1040 was earlier than anticipated. This was potentially the earliest leper hospital in the country. The site is clearly laid out, but it is felt that the chapel building is not contemporary with the majority of the burials. Indeed, the stone buildings may be a later phase built on top, giving rise to the notion that the site may have been re-founded in 1148.

60 burials have been found so far, 56 by the University of Winchester and 4 by Time Team.

11 were chapel burials, 5 were from the southern cemetery and 44 from the northern cemetery.

22 out of 49 (45%) cemetery burials are those under the age of 25.

22 out of 44 (50%) in the north cemetery alone are those under

the age of 25.

41 out of 49 (84%) have evidence for leprosy.

38 out of 44 (86%) in the north cemetery alone have evidence for leprosy.

Such high percentages are rare in the UK.

The disease.

Leprosy is also known as Hansen's disease and nowadays we are trying to avoid calling people lepers.

It affects the nerves and is still endemic in India.

It is more treatable than it used to be, and thalidomide is an effective treatment.

It was a big problem in Northern Europe in the Middle Ages and common in the 11th-14th centuries. It was thought it could be connected with TB.

It may be that lepers were considered blessed, because they were suffering purgatory on earth. They had to be separated, but maybe they were not stigmatized.

The care that is evident of individuals in death assumes a similar level of care in life.

The Individuals.

An older child: 9 – 11 years.

This burial is interesting since the bones are tumbled suggesting that the bones may have been moved after death and reburied. The leprosy is at a relatively early stage. The calculus on the teeth suggests that the child was infected at an early age before the teeth developed.

Adolescent: 14 – 19 years.

Here there is inconsistent skeletal development and evidence of anemia, suggesting that the bones were not allowed to develop in the first place. This demonstrates that the leprosy was affecting development.

Young Adult:

Here there were severe changes to the hands and feet. This was the most deformed skeleton and showed the amputation of one of the feet.

Ancient DNA analysis has been done on 9 skeletons, allowing work to be done to see how leprosy evolved. There are still people working on material from the site.

It was found that a lot of other pathological conditions were

present in the individuals.

A pilgrim of the early 12th century was found to have an unusual facial shape. More work needs to be done here.

The Dutchman is in a different shaped coffin of the 17th century. This may be related to the prisoner of war time on the site. Again, more work is needed to establish more detail.

Excavation of more burials is needed on the sites of the chapel and the southern cemetery, and Katie concluded her presentation by thanking all those who had helped in the work so far, especially past and present students of the University of Winchester and all the volunteers.

The questions (and answers!)

As might be expected, this lecture prompted many questions from the audience. A selection of questions and answers follows:

Q. How many more graves are there?

A. Hundreds, possibly thousands.

Q. Would young individuals have contracted leprosy in the womb or later?

A. Not sure if leprosy can be contracted in the womb....more work needs to be done.

Q. Was the decline of leprosy linked to the Black Death?

A. There were probably lots of factors, so not sure.

Q. Is it possible to find out the incidence of leprosy?

A. There were not so many females in our sample, so we need to excavate a bigger sample.

Q. Is it possible to say how different the diet was in the hospital?

A. Not yet. A student from Cambridge will be looking into this.

Q. Were all graves the same depth?

A. No, they are of differing depths; some deep, some shallow.

Q. Which way are the graves aligned?

A. East/west

Q. Is there any evidence for locals living in the leper hospital? Did families pay?

A. No evidence for this at the moment.

Valerie Pegg

Note

More at <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/academicdepartments/archaeology/Research/MHARP/Pages/MHARP.aspx>

Meandering Among Monasteries – Early Christian and Byzantine Art

Terry Hemming said he had been asked to deliver a talk that would cheer us up during the drab days of February. He could not have achieved this more fully, providing an evening of sheer escapism, beauty and colour, with a bracing dash of erudition thrown in for good measure. He suggested that an alternative title for his talk might be “holiday tips for the historically minded”. Monasteries are often set in wonderful scenery and offer warm hospitality.

We began in Armenia, the first declared Christian country. Many of its churches date back to the 3rd and 4th centuries. As Armenia was not part of the Byzantine Empire, icons were not as important as manuscripts and carvings, of which we saw some fascinating and distinctive examples. The churches were neglected under Communism but are now being lovingly restored.

Next came Georgia, where the monasteries were founded by Syrian monks. Unlike the Armenian churches, most have domes. They too are being beautifully restored after being used as target practice by Russian soldiers. I was charmed to learn that one of these monasteries was founded by Gregory the Illuminator. I wonder if he was famous for his illuminated manuscripts or did he shed his holy light on the word of God? Another was founded by Maximus the Confessor who is buried there. The churches were often built over the caves where the earliest hermit monks lived, the preference being to build on top of existing buildings rather than demolishing them. Sometimes frescoes remain on cave walls even when the buildings have collapsed.

Romania is enjoying a great revival of monastic life, unlike Bulgaria which lacks Romania’s vibrancy. Both countries have a tradition of painted churches, decorated on the outside as well as inside. Church bells were forbidden during the period of Ottoman rule so logs were suspended and beaten with rods to summon people to services.

One of the joys of visiting these churches is the absence of tourists. Visitors can be quite alone and spend as much time as they wish to enjoy the art and architecture. Terry and his wife Ruth own a guidebook to Bulgaria published in 1931 and were delighted to meet the grandson of the driver mentioned in the book.

Serbia was the next country we saw, with a gentler landscape than in the previous countries. It had formed part of the Austro-Hungarian

Empire and its influence can be seen in the architecture. Crowds of people were attending a religious ceremony in Belgrade, patiently queuing for a candle to celebrate the feast of St Elijah. The involvement of entire communities in the life of the Church gives a glimpse of Europe in pre-Reformation times. One young woman confided with complete conviction that she knows St Nicholas can perform miracles because when white socks are put on his statue in the evening they are dirty the next morning, proving that he has been walking about.

A number of Serbs are moving back to Kosovo but they are still rather nervous and some churches are protected by barbed wire. We were shown a photograph of an old woman who had become a nun before the outbreak of the Second World War. She would have had several different passports during her life as the country changed its name.

It is remarkable that so much religious art has survived in Albania, despite the severity of the Communist regime. Some Eastern European churches have been converted into mosques, while others have reverted to churches. In some cases, mosques and churches stand side by side.

Red ochre on the outside of a church denotes royal connections. Members of royal houses frequently became monks and nuns. Frescoes often contain images of the founder of the monastery holding a model of the church and presenting it to God.



Simonopetra monastery, Mount Athos
Photo Wikipedia/Creative Commons

Thessaloniki in Greece has some wonderful Byzantine churches. We saw a magnificent depiction – Terry’s favourite – of the wedding at Cana, showing an array of splendid wine pots. We were told that on Mount Athos the only females are cats. Eggs and milk are brought from the mainland.

We finished with a view of the oldest monastery in the world, in Sinai.

What a treat to be shown so much beauty and to learn about the fascinating history and topography of the region in such an entertaining way. I was only sorry that I missed some of Terry and Ruth’s stunning photography while I was taking these notes, but that’s the lot of the scribe.

Irish Gould

“Yes, Dresden was a wonderful city”

Yes, Dresden was a wonderful city. You may take my word for it. And you have to take my word for it, because none of you, however rich your father may be, can go there to see if I am right. For the city of Dresden is no more. It has vanished, except for a few fragments. In one single night and with a single movement of its hand the Second World War wiped it off the map. It had taken centuries to create its incomparable beauty. A few hours sufficed to spirit it off the face of the earth. This happened on the night of February 13th, 1945. Eight hundred planes rained down high explosive and incendiary bombs on it. When they had gone, nothing remained but a desert with a few giant ruins which looked like ocean liners heeling over.



Dresden April 1945
Photo Wikipedia/Creative Commons

Erich Kastner, author of *Emil and the Detectives*, wrote that in 1956. He was only partially correct. Not content with 700 British bombers on the night of February 13th, the Americans sent a further 600 the next day. The desert was the centre of Dresden, including the Baroque Altstadt. But across the Elbe the Neustadt was largely intact and the extensive suburbs were barely touched.

He was also incorrect in that today we can again see much of the Altstadt. Many of the buildings including the Saxon Royal Palace, the Semperoper opera house and the Fraunkirche have all been painstakingly rebuilt, along with other buildings. But close to them are huge sites, largely untouched since they were cleared after the bombing. Some of these are currently the site of huge archaeological excavations exposing the 18th century foundations, in advance of further development.

But while this is admirable there are other areas less well served. To return to Kastner

... I stood in the midst of that endless desert and could not make out where I was. Among the broken, dust-covered bricks lay the name-plate of a street – ‘Prager Strasse’, I deciphered with difficulty. Could it be that I was standing in the Prager Strasse, the world-famous Prager Strasse, the most magnificent street of my childhood?

The street with the loveliest shop windows? The most wonderful street at Christmas-time?

Prager Strasse was restored under the East German government as a bombastic pedestrian street but even today, renewed and polished by modern western shops and a huge shopping mall, it is like a film set with no hinterland. To the west is an area of car parks and empty bombed areas, while to the east is an area of wide roads, strips of grass and tram lines followed by 1960s housing blocks. The mass of streets of shops and houses surrounding Prager Strasse are all gone.

Dresden was the capital of the Kingdom of Saxony until 1918. It is strategically placed at the junction of the North South trade routes and the East West routes along the Elbe. As such it was besieged and burned many times, and after making the mistake of allying itself with Napoleon it lost nearly 40% of its territory to the newly emerging



Yenidze cigarette factory
Photo Wikipedial/Creative Commons

power of Prussia after the congress of Vienna. Later in the 19th century the city grew into a major manufacturing centre as well as a large garrison town. The emerging middle classes built their scaled down version of palaces as magnificent villas in the Eastern suburbs, and in one case built a cigarette factory in the form of a mosque. (Now Yenidze is offices with a performing space under the dome.)

I am not certain I would make Dresden a destination for a holiday, but as a place for two or three days there is a lot to see. The double decker tourist buses (hop on and hop off - two days for Euro 22) take you through and around the Altstadt and then out into the Eastern suburbs, through the villa streets and the Grand Garden – 363 acres of parkland, with a small palace, a narrow gauge steam railway and a zoo. Then across the Elbe and up into the resort areas of Bühlau and Weißer Hirsch and back through to the Neustadt and into the centre again. This alone takes nearly two hours, even before you get off to visit, for example, *the most beautiful dairy shop in the world*. But after April 1st (and I was there in March!) the ticket also gives you additional walking tours and other options. Also after April 1st the fleet of paddle steamers, at least one of which is coal fired, take you up and down the Elbe to the Saxon countryside, the Sächsische Schweiz (Saxon Switzerland) or to Meißen.

Once you are oriented by the bus tour, you may want to use the intensive network of trams, depending on where you are staying. You need to spend a little time working out the ticket system, but then you can go and have lunch at the Volkswagen factory (yes - seriously). Book well in advance for an English language guided tour of the factory where they build the Phaeton by hand and where most of the parts arrive on VW's own tram. And follow up with a ride on the steam railway in the Grand Garden.

If you are visiting Germany, combine Dresden and Leipzig (I spent a few hours there and want to go back) for an interesting few days

Dick Selwood



Working Lunch

Here are some photos taken at the now Annual WARG Monday Work Parties Christmas Lunch, sent in by Valerie Pegg.

She writes: "We are a group of WARG members who regularly go to F2 and help Helen Rees with absolutely anything that needs doing in the Winchester Museums Store!!

Our lunch is held in the Winchester Cathedral Refectory and just gets better and better, with more and more attendees every year. It is a chance for all of us to say a thank you to Helen for "looking after" us throughout the year and as you can see - a good time is had by all!"



A Romano-British Farmstead site near Cheriton

For those who were not at the WARG meeting on 14th April, here is a brief dig report.

Over 14 days between mid October and late December 2013, 38 WARG excavators dug at a rural site near Cheriton. The farmer had been picking up pot shards for some time and had a friend fly him over the site. The crop marks photographed during the flight showed a classic Romano-British farmstead pattern of ditches and enclosures. The farmer has asked that we keep the site location secret and so we are not even mentioning his name – but we are really grateful to him and his family for their patience and support.

David Ashby undertook resistivity. In January 2013, Don Bryan led a team putting in a couple of test pits. In October a JCB took off the top soil – oh what luxury – it was just like Time Team. We opened 5 trenches, each about 30m long, which revealed several of the ditch cuts we had identified through resistivity and the aerial photos. Excavation revealed a number of Iron Age ditches forming enclosures. Most were classic v-shaped ditch cuts about 1m deep. But others were probably of an earlier date and deeper. One ditch in particular was a Late Bronze Age pattern and included LBA/EIA pottery as well as an enormous residue of burned flint and ash. Most of the ditch cuts held a small number of fragments of Roman pot as well as a fair amount of animal bone.

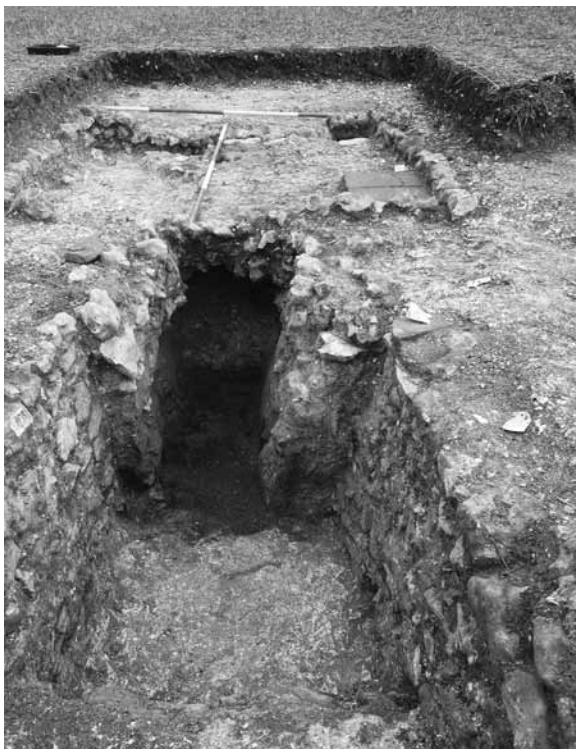
One area, at the entrance to the main enclosure, was of black friable soil that was just stuffed with finds. This was clearly a rubbish dump – heaven for archaeologists! Time and availability of diggers meant that we only excavated a small portion of this area. It yielded handfuls of Roman pot, mostly greyware but some Oxford ware; a fibula brooch; a metal tool, boot studs and a coin of the time of Emperor Constantine (306AD onwards).

The west end of trench five had a number of post holes - possibly suggesting an Iron Age round house - as well as working scrapes. Other features included a 2m wide grain storage pit and various chalk quarries.

The star find was a Roman grain dryer. Despite being only about 15cm below topsoil level, it was remarkably preserved. It was cut into the natural chalk, but used an earlier V shaped ditch cut as access. At the west end was a step down to a natural chalk floor. The stokehole area had single layer flint and mortar walls. It narrowed to a furnace area



that had a (now collapsed) flint arch roof. The furnace fed under an area about 2m x 2m square which was tiled with clay tile. One of the two tiles intact had a maker's mark. The tiled area was the grain drying floor. At the west end of the drying area was a flue. Tracy Matthews, the City of Winchester archaeology officer, visited and was delighted with the dryer. In due course, it will be recorded appropriately on the Historic Environment Record.



The finds have yet to be washed and recorded - look out for a request for working parties. The farmer is already talking about what might happen at a second excavation this autumn. He is keen to have us back!

It is wonderful that WARG can manage two excavations in one year at such different sites and I am so grateful to the diggers who worked at a very beautiful, but sometimes quite Spartan location in the winter months.

Techer Jones

Corn drier from above and looking west

Photo Techer Jones

Julia's Jottings

An extended round-up of interesting bits and pieces of archaeological and other news seen by hawk-eyed Julia.

Yet another of Egypt's wonders

There's a lot to be said for a dry warm climate and Egypt is the proof. A Polish team have uncovered the remains of dozens of children of all ages deep in the desert region of Gebel Ramlah, down near the southern border of the country and about 140km west of Abu Simbel. The burial ground dates to around 6,500 years ago and includes stillborns with an adult – probably an indication that the mother died in childbirth. In one case the archaeologists were able to determine that one of the mothers was only 14. Although the graves were relatively small and shallow and probably not visible on the surface, those of the child / mother burials were delineated by kerb stones. Sadly the bones have not fared well and the remains consist mostly of skulls or long bone fragments. All of the graves contained a few modest grave goods including lumps of reddish ochre which are considered to have



been an important and integral part of the belief system of the time. In a few graves there were bracelets made from ivory or shells from the Red Sea.

Most interestingly, at Nabata Playa in the Western Desert are stone circles which are considered by some to have been calendars. So similar to Stonehenge, Avebury and all the Orkney circles – wonderful!

World's oldest iron?

In a pre-dynastic Egyptian cemetery, iron beads have been found. Their period dates to 3400-3100BC – pre-dating the earliest known iron smelting by a millennium or so. So how come? Apparently the beads are made from meteorites and were hammered and shaped using smithing techniques rather than the later methods of smelting. Just goes to show that Mankind has always been an adaptable species and appreciates useful material when he finds it.

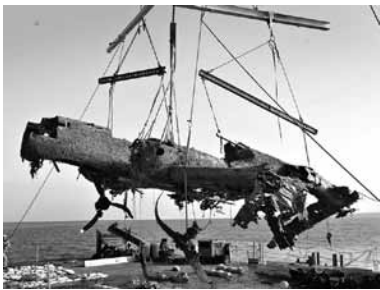


And another Egyptian wonder.....

Egypt is absolutely stuffed with wondrous things and with all the archaeologists excavating there, I can only imagine that it's standing room only. And now another Pharaoh has been brought to light: the impossible-to-pronounce Woseribre Senebkay (whatever were his parents thinking of), an Abydos Pharaoh from the Second Intermediate Period. Not as inspiring a period name as say Elizabethan or Plantagenet really, but then these very early periods have been mostly just inklings rather than hard fact. So this dynasty, thriving some 3,600 years ago, had been entirely forgotten and

was unknown by experts till this exciting find. That was a period of economic decline in Egypt when small kingdoms sprang up to take over from the collapsing central authority, so Wosey wasn't either very important or wealthy. In fact he had been mummified and placed in a sarcophagus chamber robbed from the tomb of one Sobekhotep I, who lived 150 years earlier. No honour even amongst Pharaohs then, but Wosey's cartouche is rather charming.

Battle of Britain prize



Since the Second World War was during the lifetime of many WARG members, we may find it difficult to think of it as "history". However it's what they learn in schools so the lifting of a Luftwaffe's Dornier 17 from the Channel just off the coast of Kent near Deal is really considered archaeology. The area of its final resting place is known as the Goodwin Sands and

the crash-landed "flying pencil" was swallowed by the seabed until recent weather exposed it. It's thought that the plane, part of a group targeting the Kent airfields on 26th August 1940, wasn't shot down by the RAF but, having become separated from its German escort planes, was probably shot down by them. Damage limitation, I suppose.

More recent history...

Isometimes think we know more about the ancient world than we do about the modern one. Here we are, busy remembering the start of the Great War but really mostly only how it affected either the Troops abroad or the Home Front. We've always been taught that British males, mostly young, flocked to enlist for the war, in order in many cases, I suspect, to escape drab badly paid jobs and have a bit of an adventure. The implication is that they were herded on to boats and sent straight to the Front for wholesale slaughter. However it now appears that this might not have been quite the case. Down at Gosport the discovery of a huge training area has finally been recognised – complete with zigzags of frontline, communication and reserve trenches and the enemy's frontline. The British frontline was jagged so that if the Germans broke through, there wasn't a clear line of fire along the entire length, and the communication trenches were wider so more men could be rushed up to the front or carried back injured. Digging those trenches would have been training for men who were not used to a hard outdoor life, and small slit trenches just big enough for one man were probably their first efforts.

My next Christmas present.

It seems to me quite ridiculous that I haven't yet acquired a metal detector and so am not spending my every waking hour scouring the countryside for long-lost goodies, for goodies to be found there definitely are. Frequently one reads of this or that fabulous find by someone who's only had a detector for 2 or 3 weeks. One of the most fantastic was found in a Dorset field in 2012 – a silver ewer in almost perfect condition, hallmarked in London in 1635. The finder thought it might be the FA Cup stolen from Birmingham in 1895, but I imagine everyone considers the ewer to be a great deal more interesting. It was apparently in immaculate condition, very close to the field's surface, and still shining brightly as though recently polished, having no doubt been buried during the Civil War.

Some unexpectedly good news!

With the huge amount of rain and wind that we've experienced across the country since just before Christmas and with all the

major problems such as flooding and no electricity or phones, it's hard to imagine that anything good can have come out of it all. But the saying is "every cloud has a silver lining" and that's what one can say about the coastal strip along Cardigan Bay in Wales. The gale force storms have stripped thousands of tons of the beach's sand to reveal the stumps of an ancient forest – oak, alder, birch and pine – that were swamped by rising sea levels over 4,500 years ago. As the water surrounded the trees, they rotted away under the ensuing layers of peat, sand and of course salt water.



Also uncovered was a timber walkway made from short lengths of coppiced branches held in place by upright posts. This has been dated to between 3,100 and 4,000 years old and is believed to have been one of the methods employed by our ancestors to cope with their increasingly waterlogged

environment. A couple of years ago when one or two tree stumps were uncovered, both human and animal footprints were found preserved in the hardened top layer of the peat, as well as scatterings of burnt stones from ancient hearths. Wouldn't it be great to think that modern Man could adapt so well and be so in tune with his environment like those humans were – scant hope there, I'm afraid.



The reason WE'VE had so much rain

A granite bridge nearly 3000m long has been discovered in Jiangxi, central China, following such a drop in rainfall that a 4500sq k freshwater lake has been steadily drying up. Poyang lake is China's largest freshwater lake and ok, ok, the problem is not entirely due to lack of rain

but partly because the building of the Three Gorges Dam nearby has lowered the level of the Yangtze River, helping to create the knock-on effect. The bridge dates back to the Ming Dynasty about 400 years ago and had long been used by the peoples living around and near it for fishing, both subsistence and for trade. Apparently in 2012 the local authorities air-dropped many tons of shrimp, millet and maize to feed the thousands of birds at risk of hunger due to the dropping

water levels. I rather like the idea that a nation which killed millions of sparrows at Mao Tse-Tung's order now cares for its wildlife as well as for its astonishing archaeology.

The real point of car parks.

It's not only kings who are found in car parks – a publican in Bourton-on-the-Hill has had to wait to turn some wasteland into a car park by the uncovering of an Iron Age skeleton. The first remains to be revealed by the excavators were Medieval walls and the site is believed to be that of a farm complex with 10 rooms arranged around a courtyard – apparently unusual for a settlement of that time. However, even more exciting was the subsequent discovery of the burial of a male from approx 100BC. Nicknamed Rusty, the skeleton had been given a full burial – again unusual for this period – and is now being tested for age and cause of death.



Waste not, want not

Iremember writing before about the marks of various wild animals found on the skeletal remains of gladiators during Roman times. Well, the decapitated heads of some of these defeated men who competed over 2,000 years ago in London have revealed that they were thrown into an open pit and subsequently gnawed on by dogs. Also fed to dogs were the remains of other animals such as bears who didn't survive this horrendous form of entertainment. An early form of recycling, I think.



2013/14 Calendar

2014

- May 12th **Saving Winchester: Voluntary Societies, historic buildings & urban redevelopment** - Michael Nelles
- June 9th - **St Catherine's Hill & Plague Pits Valley** - a walk with Don Bryan
- July 14th **The Hampshire Record Office - a visit**
- Aug 2nd- 16th **St Elizabeth's - Big Dig**
- Aug 10th **Big Dig Open Day**
- Sept 18th **Winchester & the Arrival of the Railway** - Mark Allen
- Sept 15th **Chichester** - Day trip
- Oct 13th **Lies, Damned Lies & Maps** - Giles Darkes. And AGM
- Nov 10th **The Battle of the Solent & the sinking of the Mary Rose 1545** - Dominic Fontana
- Dec 8th **Old School Ties: Educating for Empire & War** - Martin Parsons

2015

- Jan 12th **Social Evening with Entertainment**
- Jan 30th **A Suffragette Evening**
- Feb 9th **Roman Work at Durrington** - Andy Manning:
- Feb 13th **June Lloyd Lecture: March, Women, March** - Lucinda Hawksley
- Mar 9th **Initial Results from Recent Archaeological Investigations into Saxon and Medieval Oxford** - Ben Ford:
- Apr 13th **The update on 2014 excavations**
- Apr 20th **Day trip to Marlborough and Ludgershall**
- May 11th **Lost Monuments: Morn Hill Camp** - Phil Marter:
- Jun 8th **Walk** tba
- Jul 13th **Visit** tba
- August **Summer Excavation**

India - echoes of the British Raj 2014

Having visited Tamil Nadu in south India many times in connection with an Indian charity working with poor children, I had become used to a landscape of palm trees, red soil, cattle with their patient attendant egrets, and villages where huge pestle and mortars still stand outside the houses for grinding spices and where house thresholds are marked each morning with intricate rangoli patterns. I was familiar with the bustle of the towns – Dindigul, and, further afield Madurai with its incredible temple. The only reference to the Raj that I have ever heard was a comment on Dindigul Fort, dramatically built in the early 17th century on top of an enormous outcrop of rock. It became 'one of yours', as an Indian friend said, by 1799 when it was of strategic importance in the East India Company wars with the local ruling family of the Madurai area. One visit to the top once in baking sun made me wonder how any soldiers in full uniform ever survived the summer.

This year, though, we planned to follow the heat of the south, where the temperature varied between 34 and 37 degrees and all the talk was of tube-well boring to find water, for a more refreshing time in Shimla (or Simla) in the western Himalayas. We arrived in a snowstorm. At least the fleeces and walking boots that seemed so bulky and heavy in the south were not going to be wasted.

My husband had visited Shimla in the 60s while working near Raipur in Madhya Pradesh. He remembered it with some fondness: girls seemed to feature prominently in his recollections, but he also spoke of a town where there were no cars, only tongas for transport, of moving from there to Manali and the Rotung pass and attempting to get to Tibet. I was intrigued.

Nowadays to the visitor, even one like me relishing the cool clear air at 8,000 feet and the green of the cedars, Shimla appears to be a rather scruffy collection of houses, hotels and decaying guest houses perched on the slopes of the ridge where an Englishman, an agent of the East India company, first built a bungalow in 1822.



*Shimla and the church.
Photo Jan Church*

It was hard to see many traces of the town that became the summer capital of British India. In its early days, after Lord Bentinck, the Governor General of India from 1828 – 1835, had acquired 4,000 acres of land on the hills that became the nucleus of the hill-station, it was described by a French visitor as the resort of ‘the rich, the idle and the invalid’. By 1864, however, this hill-top village had become the place from where one fifth of the human race was ruled.

Gradually the signs of this earlier way of life emerged. Here and there, dotted among the shops and deodars, were the occasional bungalows, in varying states of repair with very British chimney stacks and, in some cases, bow windows. We walked along the Mall where faded mock-Tudor black and white still survives among the shop signs and extravagant loops of electrical wiring. We visited the church whose steeple marks the Shimla skyline and where Rudyard Kipling’s father designed the stained glass. But there were two buildings that seemed to encapsulate two sides of life in Shimla.

The most impressive by far was the Vice-Regal Lodge built by Lord



Shimla: The Vice-Regal Lodge
Photo Jan Church

Dufferin and completed in 1888. Built of stone in what can kindly be described as the Scottish baronial style (and unkindly as Pentonville prison style), it dominates the town, though mercifully now softened by rhododendrons and deodar cedars. From here were ruled millions of people from Burma in the East to Afghanistan in the West. Summer after summer the entire government moved, firstly from Calcutta and later from Delhi, with long baggage trains winding up the roads from the plains. Apart from the business of government the Viceroy’s house estate here, of some 330 acres, provided opportunities for lavish entertainment: balls, fairs and garden parties, the latter enhanced by the later

landscaping of the gardens with rose pergolas and terraces. These gardens - lush lawns, immaculate flowerbeds, rhododendrons and magnolias - are still kept in good order by 23 gardeners.

It was in this building that the famous Simla Conference to determine the self-government of India was held, and the table round which

Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah discussed the future of India, together with others, can still be seen. Ironically its small size and round shape were consciously chosen to facilitate a harmonious meeting. The conference failure to keep a united India was to have tragic repercussions; a later conference here between the Congress, the Muslim League and the British failed to agree on any of the main issues.

Nowadays the Vice-Regal Lodge houses the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies where eminent scholars from India and the international academic community can undertake research. The Library, housed in the former ballroom, is considered one of the finest in the country.

The second building was designed solely for social pursuits, providing many opportunities for flirtation and frivolity. This is the Gaiety theatre, newly restored on the Mall. The theatre, built in Victorian Gothic style, opened in 1887 and had a lively history, with Kipling and Baden Powell, among many others, treading the boards in amateur dramatics. Lord Dufferin, incidentally, described one of Kipling's performances as 'too horrid and vulgar'. It is an intimate theatre seating 300 and many of the 'fishing fleet' of young women arriving in India in the hopes of attracting a wealthy husband must have found it irresistible.



Shimla: Gaiety Theatre
Photo Jan Church

It is surely significant that a few hundred yards away is a corner known as Scandal point. Several of Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills* deal with life in Simla and the effects of gossip and speculation.

So the signs of the Raj are definitely there in Simla, but there was an unexpected postscript. Much refreshed by a week of sightseeing and walking we returned to the UK via Delhi. There we were entertained one evening by some Indian friends who took us for afternoon tea at the Gymkhana Club, founded as the Imperial Gymkhana Club in 1913. As we entered I could not help being fascinated by the waiters carrying tea-trays bearing plates of neatly triangled sandwiches and, above all, by the teapots, each of which bore a familiar sight – a tea-cosy!

Jan Church

Editor's note

The poster for the Theatre is dated 1898 for an amateur production of an Oscar Wilde play that opened in London only in 1895.

Trip to The Shetland and Orkney Islands

On a tour of Shetland and Orkney, last July, with Brightwater Tours Ltd., and accompanied by a professional archaeologist, we found the islands absolutely stuffed with prehistoric remains. All are well maintained and displayed by Historic Scotland.

At Clickmin, near Lerwick, a causeway in Clichmin Loch leads to a small island, the site of a Bronze-Age farmhouse, built between 1,000 and 600 BC. This was followed around 100 BC by a broch, 12-15 metres high. A broch is defined as an Iron Age dry stone building, with hollow walls, usually a dwelling. This one is in the form of what is known as a 'wheelhouse' – a circular building with internal piers supporting a roof, which resemble the spokes in a wheel. There was a surrounding stone wall and an unfinished 'blockhouse', thought to be for defence. A curious feature of the site was a stone slab set into the causeway, with footprints sculpted into it.

Later, we took the ferry to the small island of Mousa, a nature reserve where there is a 2000-year-old broch, still standing 13m high. Steps inside the internal walls lead right to the top. There would probably once have been internal wooden floors. In fact the building may originally have been preceded by a wooden round-house. A stone bench lines the interior and there are vertical rows of cubbyholes.

The highlight of that day, however, was the visit to Jarlshof, on the southernmost tip of mainland Shetland. Abandoned in the 17th century and revealed by storms in the 1890s, there had been occupation, on and off, from the Neolithic period, i.e. 2,700 BC.

The remains of a series of middens – rubbish dumps – hearths and stone buildings have been dated to 2,500 – 1,500 BC. The middens contained cockle, limpet and mussel shells. There was a pierced eagle's claw, probably used as an amulet.

Between 1900 and 1700 BC, there was Bronze Age settlement, surrounded by fields. Round stone-built houses can be seen, each containing a central hearth and a series of interior chambers separated by buttresses from the outside wall. One building was apparently altered, around 800 BC, to accommodate a bronze-working smithy and, in one of the room divisions there was a small bench on which were three pots made of soapstone and part of another. Soapstone, or Steatite, was quarried on Shetland at Cunningsburgh. There was also the site of a flint-knapping workshop. Apparently flint was rare



A Broch

Photo Pat Fenwick

on the Islands, and often of poor quality.

An Iron Age settlement was built, partly over the Bronze Age village. The houses had a central hearth, with stone boxes inserted into the floor. Eventually they were altered and underground souterrains, or passages were built, the longest of which survives to 6m. Later, a new group of settlers built a broch, with a well in the centre, and two small cells, built into the thick wall. Part of a roundhouse and outhouse has been discovered in the courtyard to the broch. The next development on the site was a group of wheelhouses, dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. One of these was built into the broch.

The Vikings arrived at Jarlshof during the 9th century, and established a large settlement of longhouses. These comprised farmhouse, smithy, byre, etc. with thick walls made of rough stone with an earth core. In Medieval times - 1200 AD - Shetland was ruled by Norway and descendants of the Vikings may have built the new, stone-built farmhouse, corn dryer and barn at Jarlshof.

In 1469 Shetland passed into Scottish ownership and in 1581 Sir Robert Stewart became the owner of Jarlshof. He erected the latest building on the site, the 'new' Hall, again in stone.

Another trip took us to the Isbister Neolithic Chambered Tomb, or 'Tomb of the Eagles', on the coast of Ronaldsay, Orkney. It was found by a local farmer 50 years ago, and his family has maintained it ever since.

You have to crawl through a narrow tunnel to enter the main chamber which branches out into five compartments. Skulls and bones were found in four undisturbed chambers and pottery in the centre of the main chamber. The tomb was covered by a cairn and supported by a rear wall. Curved walls (known as hornwork) flanked the entrance. White eagle talons were found which gave the tomb its name. Like the eagle talon found at Jarlshof, they seem to have special significance.

Nearby is the site of a Bronze Age midden and an oval-shaped Bronze Age house, with double walls, which has a huge stone trough, water system and hearth. There is also an interesting museum at the farm, displaying an impressive collection of stone tools, beads and pottery, and the farmer's family delight in giving lively talks to visitors.



*Part of the Ring of Brodgar
Photo Pat Fenwick*

a possible 60 stones are still standing. Dating from 2,000 to 1,500 BC, it is surrounded by 13 prehistoric burial mounds.

Every year since 2004, archaeologists have been excavating a huge mound lying on the land between the Stenness Standing Stones and the Ring of Brodgar. It was originally thought to be a Bronze Age Burial mound, a midden, or merely a natural feature. So far, a stratigraphic series of stone buildings, dated to between 3,400 BC and 2,100 BC, has been revealed, each with stone furniture and a central hearth. (To find out more go to www.orkneyjar.com/archaeology/nessofbrodgar)

Nearby, on the shore of Loch Hannay, stands the Neolithic village of Barnhouse, revealed by a storm in the mid-nineteenth century. Occupied around 3,000 BC, it consists of the remains of free-standing buildings, with central hearth, internal stone 'tank', dresser and box beds. Finds included a hoard of flint – a precious commodity on the Islands - and pitchstone which could have been sourced from Arran.

A few miles away is the world-famous site of Skara Brae. Uncovered in 1850 by a storm, the surviving seven or eight buildings belong mostly to the period 3,100 to 2,500 BC and were built into middens deliberately built up by the inhabitants. A narrow passage separates the living quarters from the surrounding midden. The viewing route is well laid out, so that you can see from above the stone dressers and benches lining the interior walls, with what appear to be bed niches.

On mainland Orkney we visited one of its richest Neolithic landscapes which is absolutely heaving with archaeology.

Maeshowe, built before 2,700 BC, is considered to be the finest chambered tomb in Europe. The Vikings occupied it during a 12th century raid, and left their runic inscriptions inside.

Then there are the Stones of Stenness: huge monoliths. Dated from 3,100BC, they are one of the earliest stone circles in Britain.

At the opposite end of the 'ness' – a narrow isthmus of land - is the huge Ring of Brodgar, where 27 of

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Skara Brae "house"
Photo Pat Fenwick

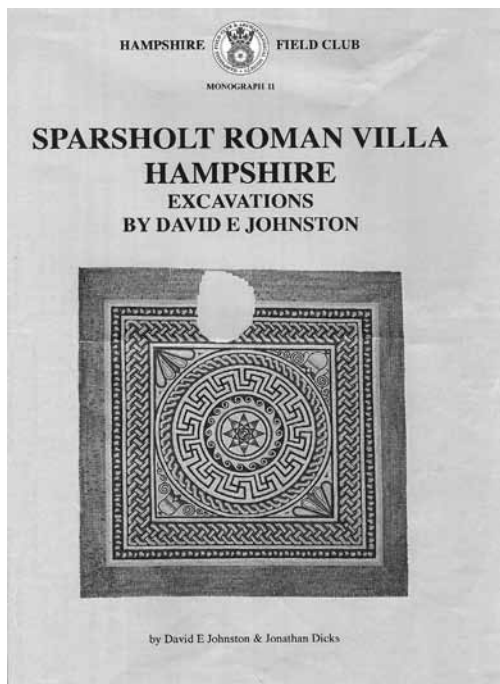
Each building has a stone tank and cubbyholes. Cells set into the double walls may have been indoor toilets but any related drainage would be under other buildings and so has not been investigated. Among the finds were shards of Grooved Ware pottery, also found at Maeshowe, Stenness and Barnhouse.

This trip is thoroughly recommended – if you're not looking for a rest! There is plenty more to see, on the Islands, for those not particularly interested in archaeology, such as castles, museums, wartime relics, wildlife and wildflowers.

Pat Fenwick



Sparsholt Roman Villa



Sparsholt Roman Villa Hampshire: *Excavations by David E Johnston, by David E Johnston and Jonathan Dicks*

David Johnston's excavation of Sparsholt villa has been described by Prof. Martin Biddle as "one of the last triumphs of the age of the local volunteer..." The report of the eight seasons of archaeology from 1965 will soon be available as the latest Hampshire Field Club Monograph.

It is not a light read, but gives a lot of information about the dig that produced the wonderful mosaic in the City Museum.

We will have example copies

and subscription forms at WARG events later this year.

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