



Newsletter

Summer 2015

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Chairman's notes

Summer excavation

Due to a number of things not coming together smoothly, we are not having a Big Dig this summer. Later this year there will be an opportunity for a small number of the more experienced diggers to work on a scheduled monument; there will be more information coming soon.

Apology

I had asked for volunteers to carry out some desk research. Unfortunately I put off replying until certain things were sorted out, and they never were – sorry.

Help wanted

The WARG treasurer has, until now, also acted as membership officer, but now we are getting bigger, it seems like a good idea to split this role off, so we are looking for someone to take it on. You would normally need to spend a few hours a month on the work, and then in the spring, a couple of days spread over several weeks. You would also attend the three committee meetings a year to report on membership matters. If you are interested, please email me.

Summer holidays

We don't have any travellers' tales in this issue. Now most of you are off to interesting places, so please think about letting me have a report. The ideal input would be around 800 words and a couple of photos.

Foot note

This is the last newsletter where I will be writing Chairman's Notes, as I will be standing down at the AGM in October. I will continue to edit the newsletter so I will pen (or rather key-board) the odd editorial.

Dick Selwood

Ludgershall and Marlborough

WARG outing 20th April 2015

Ludgershall lies on the main route from Andover to Devizes and Marlborough. The town developed to serve its castle, which covered a huge site. To each side of the High Street, with its town cross, were burghage hidal plots whilst Royal deer hunting parks lay to the north and south. The Queen's Head public house dates from the 16th century and, with the arrival of the railways, the Prince of Wales Hotel was built in 1910 hoping to attract high ranking army officers and their wives. During both World Wars the area became a large army camp, the RAMC and the Tank Regiment being located here.

According to the 1086 Domesday Book, Ludgershall Manor



Ludgershall Castle -Photo: Edwina Cole

was owned by Edward of Salisbury, Sheriff of Wiltshire, who built a medieval castle in the late 11th century. By 1103 the wooden castle was owned by John the Marshall. On her escape to Devizes and Bristol, Empress Matilda slept here for one night in 1141. During the reign of King John (1199-1216) substantial

stone buildings were erected including ovens that would cook three complete oxen! King Henry III (reigned 1216-1272) spent a vast fortune building a great hall and having the Royal chamber whitewashed with black lines drawn to look like masonry blocks. Stone apartments were built for Prince Edward in 1251 (later Edward I) and these had two privy chambers, the height of luxury in the 13th century! For the next 150 years it became a retirement home for the wives of English Kings, finally no longer used by Royalty, by 1540 it was falling into disrepair. The worked masonry was reused by the town folk, even earth from the great ramparts was taken.

Ludgershall was for 300 years one of the most important places in England, of greater standing in Medieval England than it is now, being able to send two members to Parliament, a privilege it kept until

the Reform Act of 1832.

Marlborough was possibly named from the legend that Merlin was buried under the nearby prehistoric tumulus. After the Norman conquest William I assumed control of the area. Developing in medieval times with the wool trade this market town lies at the crossroads of east/west and north/south routes. It is served by the River Kennet and nearby Kennet and Avon canal. The medieval High Street was crammed with wooden, thatched houses until the Great Fire of 28th April 1653, which started in a tanner's yard and spread rapidly, important buildings and 244 houses were destroyed. During the rebuilding the High Street was widened giving ample space for a local market. Fire swept through the town again in 1679 and 1690 so an Act of Parliament prohibited the use of thatch. The High Street boasted dozens of pubs and inns as Marlborough was a coaching town, where horses could be changed.

Tour guide Don Bryan took us to some of the interesting places in the town. The industrial area near the Kennet was used for milling, tanning, fulling and rope making. The Town Mill is first mentioned in 1195 as being owned by St Margaret's Priory, it was a working mill until 1922 when it was demolished.

St Mary's Church boasts an original Norman doorway but unfortunately the church roof and interior was destroyed in the fire of 1653. Cromwell helped with the rebuilding of the church, as Marlborough had supported him during the Civil War. Note the burnt stone column and cat mouldings. (A female cat rescued her kittens from the fire.) The terrace to the south of the church housed 11 tenements or "shambles" before the fire. The present Town Hall was rebuilt in 1867, the previous town halls having been destroyed. The Green houses the medieval part of the town, a Sheep Fair was held here, pubs surrounded the pleasant open green, the old Town Hall was on one side and on the other side weavers' houses can still be seen. The author William Golding (1911-1993) lived in a house on the Green.

Returning to the High Street via Silverless Street we passed jettied medieval houses which had survived the fires then reached larger, brick built, Georgian houses with their porticoes, fanlights and arched windows. The fires of Cromwellian and Stuart times presented an opportunity for redevelopment on a much grander scale. On the north side of the High Street is the Merchant's House, which was



Merchant's House -Photo: Edwina Cole

built following the 1653 fire. It was the property of Thomas Bayly, a silk merchant, he lived here from 1653 to 1670 with his wife, 9 children and servants. Still retaining its original room pattern we were given a private guided tour of this wonderful property, seeing many of its original features,

notably the recently uncovered wall paintings which are undergoing conservation. The dining room, painted in a striped pattern which copies silk hangings, is perhaps unique in Great Britain.

Walking along the High Street we passed a plaque commemorating the Civil War Battle of Marlborough on 5th December 1642 when the Royalists attacked the Parliamentarian stronghold. William Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, performed in the yard of the White Hart Inn in the 1690s. St Margaret's Priory is now a public garden but we learnt that Henry III gave bread and cheese and permission to the inmates to gather wood from the nearby Savernake Forest. The skeletal remains of 18 monks were excavated at this site. Another plaque by the Wellington Arms marks the tannery where the 1653 fire began.

Marlborough Mound, Castle and Marlborough College: turning right at the end of the High Street into Bath Road, this prestigious college is located on the opposite side of the road. The Mound lies within the college grounds and was constructed in 2400BC (a similar date to Silbury Hill). In 1067 William the Conqueror ordered Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, to build a wooden motte and bailey castle on the prehistoric mound. William established the nearby Savernake Forest as a royal hunting ground and the castle became a royal residence. Subsequent Norman and Plantagenet Kings all spent time here and a stone castle was constructed by 1175. In 1267, under Henry III, the important Statute of Marlborough was enacted. This gave property rights to small landowners and limited the royal right to seize possession of property on the owner's death. After the death of Henry III the castle fell into

disrepair and stones were scavenged. In 1683 a new mansion was built for Charles Seymour, 6th Duke of Somerset which later became the beloved residence of the Hertfords in 1779. Lady Hertford turned the Mound into the centrepiece of her landscaped garden, creating a spiral path so that tea could be taken in the summerhouse at the top. In 1751 the house was leased to an inn keeper, becoming The Castle Inn, one of the largest coaching inns in Europe. So it remained until the founding of the College in 1842 for the “sons of clergymen” which has at its centre the mansion once owned by the Hertfords. Katherine Middleton, her brother James and sister Phillipa are “famous” ex- students.

St Peter’s Church was constructed in 1450 using masonry from the castle. In 1498 Thomas Wolsey (1473-1530) was here ordained as a priest, later rising to become a Cardinal and Lord Chancellor.

In 1974 the church was declared redundant and was deconsecrated but 1977 saw the formation of a Trust to save the building, which is now used by the community for plays, concerts, exhibitions and craft fairs.

Don was an excellent guide and I am only able to include a taster of our wonderful tour.

I would recommend returning to both places as they have so much to offer. Thanks Don, and thanks Julia for the superb organisation.

Valerie Pegg



St Peter's Church -Photo: Edwina Cole

Odiham

WARG Walk

What a Welcome, but not for us! Festooned with bunting and flags the historic village of Odiham was celebrating its connection with the sealing of Magna Carta on 15th June 1215. Half way between Winchester and Windsor, Odiham was an overnight stop for medieval kings and queens either in the castle (built 1207 by King John) or in one of two palaces. It was from here that King John set forth to Runnymede.

We met at the aptly named Deer Park View which overlooks the former Royal hunting grounds, originally 560 acres and now a 200 acre public space. Palace Gate refers to a palace that may have stood in the grounds of a house called The Priory (Elizabeth I stayed here) and leads to Queens Mead Gardens, associated with former English queens. The Cross Barn, built 1532, is the oldest brick barn in Hampshire, now used as a Community Centre. This area is known as The Maltings where hops were dried, there was also a stable block, possibly belonging to the palace. Monks Cottage, 111 High Street, is the oldest house in Odiham, roof timbers date to 1300AD.

At the western end of the High Street is The Old Hall built in the 16th century. Originally an open medieval hall with two cross wings, it was the first Vicarage. It is alleged that in 1644 the Vicar, his wife and their newly-born baby were turned out into the snow by staunch Parliamentarian soldiers who objected to his preaching in the "old style." The house is said to be haunted by "a sad lady in grey."

Crossing the High Street, which used to be narrower until the centre row of houses was demolished, we walked up Church Street passing The Old Church House dating from 1350 and the second oldest house in Odiham. The solicitor's office was built in the grounds of Bury House by Francis Cole, attorney, in the early 19th century and has been a Magistrate's Court and Registrar's Office. In 1841 an unusual caller was a fox seeking refuge from the Odiham Harriers! At the top of Church Street is The Bury, a rising hill and location of the 7th century Saxon settlement. This medieval open space hosted (from the mid 15th century) sheep, cherry and May fairs, later these changed to horse, cattle and even toy fairs. The stocks were introduced in 1376 to "encourage virtue and discourage evil doers" whilst the whipping post had three sets of manacles to suit all sizes! All Saint's Church dates from the 12th century but is on the site of the earlier Saxon church, the base of the tower is 14th century whilst



the brick top was built in 1647. Bury House was a Ladies' Boarding School, then became the home of Miss Hilda and Miss Ida Chamberlain, sisters of Neville Chamberlain, and generous benefactors to the community. Bury Villas and The Bell conceal 16th century timber-framed buildings.

At the apex of The

Bury lies Beacon Hill (Bury Fields) an open space and the possible site of the palace of Henry I, no evidence having ever been found. Prior to the Enclosure Act this area would have been common fields. Here also stands the Armada Beacon, which definitely does not date back to 1588! Descending past The Pest House, built in 1625 for travellers and local people suffering from the plague, smallpox or other infectious diseases, it was in use until the late 18th century and is one of only five surviving examples in Great Britain. We next passed the delightful Old Court Almshouses endowed in 1587 then stopped to admire the Magna Carta figures created by the pupils of Mayhill Junior School, so named after Robert May, a local mercer, who gave money to found a long gone school in 1694.

Further down Church Street is the purpose built Bridewell of 1743 which subsequently became a Police Station, closing in 1972. James Aitkin (James the Painter) was held here after attempting to burn down Portsmouth Dockyard during the American War of Independence. After he was hung at Portsmouth and his body was hung in irons until it rotted; allegedly the gibbet at the Westgate (Winchester) is this very object! The Parish Room and fire station were built in 1903, the fire station being demolished in 1966. Forge Cottage, a black and white timbered building, is on the corner of Church Street and King Street and contains the original bellows. The Brewery in King Street was constructed in 1790 by William King, the licensed maltster, and nearby cottages housed the brewery workers. The buildings opposite processed hops and barley, there being 37 acres of hop fields south of the town. The Old Market Hall and Assembly Rooms in King Street consisted of a meeting room above

a covered market which was accessed from the street through an open arcade. This was the centre of Odiham between 1860 and 1938 hosting social events, celebrations and dances. The Kings Arms and the Queens Arms lay either side of the junction of Kings Street and the High Street.

Turning right at this junction we reached an area called Gospel Green, the site of the Gospel Church. This was the “poor” end of town including the Angel Pub, Wellington Arms and Mill cottage. All the houses were originally timber-framed but are now covered with brick, stone or pebble dash facades. If you continue down London Road you reach the Basingstoke Canal; a “packet man” transported goods from the canal to the nearest station.

Returning back along the High Street to the centre of Odiham, on the southern side Don pointed out the “twin” cross-winged medieval houses behind the War Memorial, the 18th century grand Georgian house called Mary Court, the home of the Doctor, the old timber-framed post office, the shambles area and the site of the Guildhall. The 18th century Capital and Counties Bank started in Hamilton House and has gradually relocated three places along the street. On the northern side of the High Street we saw Hellis Cottage (opposite the War Memorial), the Hellis family lived here and were hop-pickers, they were also in charge of the town water pump. Fountains Mall was originally a farmhouse, acquired by William Fountain in 1890, it became the Mechanics Institute housing 1000 books for its 1000 members. Charles Kingsley rode over from Eversley to lecture and give reading and writing lessons to locals for 2d a week. The Institute developed into a corn merchants and agricultural supplier. The timber-framed, jettied George Hotel dates from 1473, was licensed in 1547 becoming a commercial coaching inn and posting house. Inside is a fireplace and oak panelling from Basing House. In 1783 the Odiham Agricultural Society started here which led to the formation of the Royal Veterinary Society. Next door was the Red Lion, two doors along the Tuns Inn and nearby The White Hart, just a few of the 22 coaching inns in Odiham at one time.

Is Odiham a small town or a large village? It does not really matter, what counts is its interesting history and wonderful architecture with over 250 listed buildings, including 12 of the 35 oldest in Hampshire. Thanks to our guide Don Bryan and all his research we saw most of them. Unfortunately, having organised it all, Julia could not be with us but we enjoyed an evening of sunshine with no rain! Say no more!!

Valerie Pegg

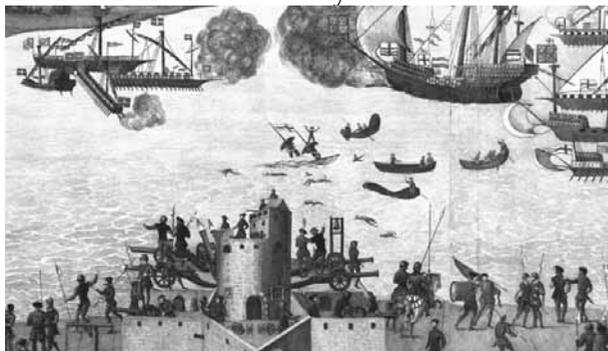
The Battle of the Solent & the sinking of the Mary Rose 1545

Talk by Dominic Fontana, University of Portsmouth
10th November 2014

At Portsmouth in 1545 the English fleet of Henry VIII, including the MARY ROSE, was defending the country against a threatened invasion by France.

The talk was an account of the events of 19th July 1545 based on a synthesis of historical records, archaeology, contemporary topography and a key illustration. The illustration was a painting of the south shore of Portsmouth island and the Solent showing the deployment of the French and English fleets, the land forces and some of the key participants in the events of that day. It was commissioned because of Henry's interest in recording events in his reign and hung in Cowdray House, the grand Tudor residence of Sir Anthony Browne, master of the Kings Horse. Sir Anthony was present on that day along with the King. Although the painting was destroyed in a fire at Cowdray in 1793, by good fortune the Society of Antiquaries had commissioned an engraving of the painting by William Blake and James Basire, a work completed just before the painting was destroyed. It is now in the British Library.

The surviving engraving has turned out to be a very accurate record of the location and the events of that day. Topographically, it located buildings such as Southsea Castle, hurriedly built in 1544, the round tower at the harbour entrance and the medieval hospital of Maison Dieu, all of which survive today. It also showed the sunken Mary Rose, visible



The centre section of the Cowdray engraving showing the sinking of the Mary Rose

only from topmasts and a fighting top, the accurate depiction of which was confirmed by the spars of these that were excavated from the vessel.

The excavation of the Mary Rose has produced much other evidence to help recreate



The whole of the Cowdray engraving showing the battle in the Solent off Portsmouth on 19th July 1545. The ships on the left are the French fleet with the English ships in the centre and to the right of the picture. The land in the top of the image is the Isle of Wight and the southern shore of Portsmouth is at the bottom. The sea in the middle is the Solent.

the events depicted in the engraving. The very great care taken in the excavation and the amazing survival of so much that was on board the ship (even down to the nits in combs) have provided a wealth of background. Humble shoes, the pewter tableware of the privileged and peppercorns still giving off their distinctive odour are among the countless artefacts recovered.

Apart from the engraving and the archaeological treasure trove, other information has been researched to assemble the historical account. A 1545 map of Portsmouth, perhaps the first of an English town properly drawn to scale, along with later maps of 1552 and 1584 all supported the accuracy of the engraving. The Time Team excavation in 2009 supported the interpretation of the neighbourhood of the Maison Dieu hospital. A 1760 copy of the original picture by the Sherwin brothers, now located at the Spencer house at Althorp, also portrayed the scene consistent with other sources.

Along with the historical sources, computer mapping of the foreshore and the sea bed in the Solent has shown a remarkable consistency in the topography depicted in the early illustrations.

Synthesising all this data has enabled the creation of an account of the events of that day in July 1545. It opened with the French fleet located off the east end of the Isle of Wight and the English fleet, led by the Flagship, the Great Harry, along with the Mary Rose, at anchor just outside the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. The French forces numbered 30,000 in over 200 ships, a significantly larger force than could be mustered by the English. They had only 12,000 men, many of them ill-trained militia with the main army still in France.

The French forces were seeking to land on the English mainland. Chichester harbour was too shallow for their vessels so they attacked

Portsmouth as a preferred berth to disembark their troops. They had landed some forces at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight but their progress across the island was foiled by the local militia in the fort at Yarborough and the destruction of a key bridge needed for access.

The French naval assault was led by five galleys which, powered by convict rowers, could manoeuvre in the Solent without being dependent on the force and direction of the wind. These vessels had large cannons located in the bow which could fire directly forward and it seems that they advanced towards the English ships, firing their ordnance and then withdrawing to reload. It may have been a tactic designed to draw the English fleet out of their anchorage so that the French fleet could engage them at close hand. Against them the English ships had no armament which could fire directly forward. Their main guns were intended for broadsides from parallel vessels.

The English ships were initially unable to respond due to the lack of wind and the flow of the tide. However, in the afternoon a sea breeze came up and enabled the English ships to leave their anchorage and engage the French with their broadside guns. It was at the point that the *Mary Rose*, her gun ports open, heeled over in a gust of wind whilst turning and, with the inflow of water through the gun ports, sank very rapidly. It is possible that damage from the French cannonade contributed to this and caused her to sit lower in the water than normal. When she sunk she was pointing towards a sand bank on which, six minutes later, she could have gone aground and saved herself from sinking.

It is not clear why the French forces did not attack more vigorously. It is possible that the French commander, judging that both monarchs were elderly and not likely to survive much longer, decided that invasion was an unnecessary risk to achieve their strategic objectives.

This account is neither complete nor certain. Further research is needed. Part of the *Mary Rose* is still on the sea bed and probably in fair condition. It also seems probable that there are the remains of a French galley still to be located. But England survived that day and would be able to apply some of the lessons learned to repel the Spanish Armada some decades later.

S C Taylor

New Year Party 2015

The “surprise” entertainment this year was provided by “Chapter and Verse,” a sprightly group of fifteen members from whom six came to deliver their alternative version of the Book of Genesis. Entitled Adam and Eve and All That, it proved to take an amusing, wry and also serious look at some of the well known stories.

Beginning with creation (well obviously) we learnt that having worked so hard God decided to “call it a day!” The life span of Man resulted from God bartering with some of the animals He created. Man ended up with his allotted first twenty years in which to have fun, plus forty years from the cow during which man has to toil under the sun, then ten years from the monkey when man performs tricks to entertain grandchildren and finally the last ten years come from the dog- which is the reason why we bark at everything we dislike. (Or does it make us barking mad!)

Man is a living soul fashioned from clay which was breathed on by the creator. However, Native Americans tell how the clay had to be baked, underdone clay gave the white man, overdone clay gave the black man, whilst Red Indians were “just right.”

The “perfect woman” would have cost Adam an “arm and a leg” so he settled for one created from just a rib who was made during Adam’s last peaceful sleep. At one point Eve became suspicious of Adam and counted his ribs to check for evidence of other women! When it came to procreation God had to instruct Adam in every step; how to kiss, how to caress, and how to make love. Reaching the final act Adam emerged from behind the bush asking, “Lord, what is a headache?” God’s punishment to his children, Adam and Eve, for eating the forbidden fruit was to ensure that they had children of their own!

As to fruit, vegetables and all other food created by God it is healthy and will only bring benefits to mankind. However, Satan created double dairy ice cream, chocolate sauce, cake and biscuits. Even when God came up with nutritious potatoes Satan turned them into chips and crisps. Finally Satan invented the sofa and TV remote, thus when cardiac arrest eventually occurs and you go for help you will see the initials of Adam and Eve clearly above the doors.

On a serious note the group read from the Roman poet Ovid, giving his version of the Flood and describing the resulting deluge and maelstrom. In Keith Waterhouse’s How Long, Oh Lord? Noah



gave many excuses as to why the ark had not been finished, blaming the shortage of wood and delivery delays. We heard from the two woodworm in the ark and learnt what they thought of the other inhabitants and discovered that the two termites had done some damage! A hole in the ark made by a swordfish was initially filled by a dog's nose, then Eve's elbow and

finally Noah's derriere. This explains why the dog has a wet nose, women have cold elbows and men raise their coat-tails to warm their backside in front of a fire!

Delightful quotes from children included "Noah's wife was called Joan of Arc" and "Look, a dead rainbow," said a child on seeing a pool of petrol on the tarmac. I loved the tale of a child who was busy drawing a picture of God. "But no-one knows what He looks like," said the teacher. "They will when I have finished," replied the young person! Humour was also used to tell us about the construction of The Tower of Babel, with the nightmare of planning policies and a multitude of builders all speaking different languages. Moving on to Joseph we heard from Potiphar's wife, who lusted after Joseph declaring that he had a "nice bum."

Finally, in sombre mood, the group turned to the story of Abraham, where God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his only son. Wilfred Owen in The Parable of the Old Men and the Young saw a link between this story and the generals who sacrificed so many young men in the Second World War. Another work, entitled World War Twelve, imagined a desolate earth where love had died. The last remaining flower was found by a young couple who nurtured it, love was reborn and the world flourished only to descend into conflict and war yet again. Will mankind ever learn?

Ending on this poignant 'food for thought' we then all met downstairs for the usual delicious spread. Thanks to Julia for booking Chapter and Verse, a collection at the end raised funds for the Winchester Nightshelter, their chosen charity.

Valerie Pegg

Julia's Jottings

Oh no, I did promise.....

I know I promised not to write another piece about hoards found by metal detectorists, but this one's a bit different since 3 detectorists in Scotland spent a very long time researching an area they were sure had held an early medieval site. They spent much time poring over old maps and antiquarian documents before they strode out into the field. Their research paid off and the hoard they uncovered was actually Viking silver and gold. Finds were buried deeply with a layer of hard-packed gravel placed between the silver hoard and the lower gold one. The detectorists called in their local archaeologists as soon as they uncovered the first objects – rules concerning finds underground are different in Scotland – so the specialist team decided to open a 30m sq trench to get at a few smaller pits. As a result of this a rectangular timber building with a double row of posts was uncovered, and the early indications are that this was a Christian foundation with traces of an even earlier monastic site.

For those WARG members who annually confirm their love of and interest in practical archaeology, this is an important lesson. If you wish to practice metal detecting, do your thorough research first – it'll be worth it. The standard and sheer beauty of the Galloway Hoard is astonishing and we should be so grateful that many detectorists are honest and contact the official experts so that we citizens can enjoy the skills and imagination of our ancestors.

Seek and ye shall find

Following the much-publicised discovery of the skeleton of the contentious English king Richard III, the woman who pushed that project through, one Philippa Langley, has announced her intention to find the body of an earlier English king, Henry I, in Reading. Henry, son of William the Conqueror, was buried in or near Reading Abbey and as English Heritage is to undertake GPR (ground penetrating radar) on the whole area of the Abbey, it could well be that Henry's skeleton will come to light.

Personally I feel that any monarch whose whereabouts are not definitely known can now expect to be searched for and definitely no longer accorded the peace and quiet which burial over the centuries has ensured them.

A New Stone Circle

At around 525m above sea level, this newly discovered stone circle is the second largest on Dartmoor and measures around 34m in diameter. Consisting of 30 now recumbent stones and one extra just outside the formation, its radiocarbon dating suggests that it had actually fallen over by about 2000 BC. The views from this circle must have been stunning and all the stones were carefully chosen for their similar size from Sittaford Tor during the Neolithic or early Bronze Age period. Preliminary results have also revealed a wide ditch running in a linear formation just beyond the eastern side of the circle.

Handy little critters

I'm not sure that at up to 15 kilos a porcupine can be called a "little critter" but they sure do have their uses! They dig big burrows in which to live and these can easily spread over more than 15 metres. As a result Israeli archaeologists frequently find ancient artefacts in the "spoil heaps" above a burrow. Recent



finds on a Romano-Byzantine site in central Israel included a 1400 year old oil lamp in perfect condition, complete with burn marks proving that it had been used. Whilst some of us would be envious of having such a successful digger on site, there are disadvantages – namely that this method makes it difficult to date stuff from the contextual aspect and the experts have to assume that any artefacts on top of the pile of soil were in fact further down in the ground than any other finds – elementary but somewhat unreliable!

Mankind's religions!

A hotel with attendant golf course was built at Sandford Springs near Kingsclere where the springs seem likely to have been a place for religious activity and rituals. Whilst constructing the Kingsclere bypass in the 1980s, Bronze Age tools such as a tanged chisel and a socketed axe had been recovered. Previous enlarging of the pond had uncovered a large quantity of Iron Age and Roman coins and sundry offerings which included a very fine enamelled military-style Roman belt buckle. Almost more important than any of these finds though was the "Kingsclere Crock" discovered by the landowner with his

metal detector: a large flint nodule with a clay “plug” in one cavity. On removal of the “plug” seven Iron Age gold staters tumbled out. They probably date to around 50BC and were struck by the Atrebates at Calleva (Silchester).

You can see them at the lovely small Willis Museum in Basingstoke.

Origins of Leprosy?

Those members who’ve visited the St Mary Magdalene excavation site over the last few years and attended Simon Roffey’s talk to us about the leper hospital aspect of the site will be interested to hear that researchers at the University of Southampton have been studying a 1500-year-old skeleton from Essex. Various changes to the toe bones and joints of this young man, reckoned to be in his 20s, point to leprosy. Isotopic tooth testing shows he was brought up in southern Scandinavia and so probably brought the leprosy bacterium with him when he migrated here. Two interesting points here: first, he was probably trying to get to a slightly milder climate and second, were Customs and Excise not checking health records?

DIY disaster

The foundations of a Roman villa uncovered about 4 years ago in Abermagwr also revealed much in the way of pottery, glass, gaming counters and the almost inevitable dog’s paw prints in some of the brick tiles. There were many indications of trade, both within Britain itself but also Gaul and Spain. The latter provided some of the Samian ware as well as the olive oil. Across the nearby region coins for Constantine I and Severus Alexander have also been found, prompting hopes that there are more Roman villas awaiting discovery in that part of west Wales.



Important Repairs!

This is almost certainly my favourite “Julia’s Jottings” since it brings some often needed humour to the serious aspects of archaeology and excavations. In Lecce, a city in Italy’s “heel”, a building was bought by a man who wanted to open a trattoria. As the building apparently had a sewage back-up problem, he and his 2 sons set to with spades and pickaxes to try to clear the blockage situation. Imagine their surprise

on finding underground corridors and many rooms which revealed a subterranean world dating back to the time of Jesus. Finds included a Messapian tomb (look it up!), a Roman Granary, a Franciscan chapel and even some etchings from the Knights Templar. Lecce was once one of the most important cities in the Mediterranean, being the critical crossroads coveted by Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, Normans and the Lombards. Under the watchful eye of local heritage officials, Signor Faggiano and his sons continued to excavate and uncover the land under their premises and brought up many a treasure, including ancient vases, Roman devotional bottles, a ring with ancient Christian symbols, medieval artefacts and even frescoes.

All of these finds were kept together to furnish a small museum. It's interesting to note that the Faggianos had to pay for all the excavation costs for several years whilst being scrutinised by the local city archaeologists.

So 2 things come to mind: 1) be grateful that WARG can choose whether or not to excavate anywhere and 2) be wary of excessive cost to come if your cess pit or local sewage system overflow!

The Cathedral's Mortuary Chests

Most of you will be aware that the 6 chests on top of the wooden partitions at the sides of the main altar in the Cathedral have been removed for analysis by experts at the University of Bristol. These Renaissance wooden boxes are said to hold the remains of the early kings and bishops eg Edmund Ironside, Cnut and William Rufus. However the chests were "disturbed" by Roundheads in 1642 and certainly they now contain "some unexpected contents" including a piece of animal bone. Early results from carbon dating suggest the remains date from "the late Anglo-Saxon and early Norman periods".

The reason for the analysis? To be part of Kings and Scribes: the Birth of a Nation – the project to create a new exhibition area in the south transept of the Cathedral.



Julia Sandison

Florence Hyde

WARG has lost one of the last of the founding members.

Florence Hyde, who died in May aged 92, moved to the area, with her husband John, after retiring from the BBC in 1972, and joined the fledgling WARG, working in the old chocolate factory in Little Minster Street, with Frank Green, then working for the city, on environmental work, particularly looking at snails.

She succeeded Amicia Carroll as chairman in 1980 and held the post for eight years. It was a difficult time for WARG, and she had quite a fight for its continued existence. Her success is shown by the fact that we are still here. While chairman her forte on the social side was the organisation of outings. Two that I particularly remember were the trip on the Kennet and Avon canal by horse-drawn narrow-boat followed by a visit to see the mosaics at Littlecote, and one to Avebury and the West Kennet long barrow.

Florence didn't drive, and as she lived at South Wonston, her husband John used to ferry her to and from meetings. He and I used to have long chats, mainly about the Greenjackets, while waiting for committee meetings to end. After John died in 1992 Florence rarely came to a WARG event.

Apart from archaeology Florence was a member of the Winchester Art Club, and her pictures were often to be seen in the Annual Exhibition. I have one of which I am very fond though it is not in her usual style.



Florence Hyde as outgoing Chairman in 1988.

David Lloyd

Roger Brown

Roger Brown, a WARG member, died peacefully on 14 April, aged 90. Roger, after retiring as County Planning Officer for Hampshire in 1987, built the magnificent model of Winchester in 1870. He said that he chose to represent the City early on a Sunday morning, so that there were no people around. The model has been displayed several times, most recently in the Great Hall last autumn, but has still to find a permanent home, and sadly every time it is packed away and then unpacked it suffers.

Although Roger suffered from blindness, he didn't let this limit him and, even after the death of his wife, he travelled widely, and continued to be involved in a wide range of activities.



Volunteering at Winchester City Museum

I have been a “front of house” volunteer at both Winchester City Museum and The Westgate for several years. My role entails meeting and greeting visitors, tidying the galleries, being present in Foster’s Tobacconist Shop and answering general questions (if I know the answer!). Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided and all the staff are really friendly: I was invited to their social events and made to feel part of the team. Volunteers are trained and then asked to do regular half day slots.

The City Museum (now run by Hampshire Cultural Trust) is always interested in new volunteers, just contact them directly at the front desk:

telephone: 01962 863064

or email: tom.brown@hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk

You will then receive a simple application form.

Another WARG member has recently joined the team of volunteers and is enjoying the experience. Something to consider to fill your spare time!

Valerie Pegg

Odiham Castle

WARG visit 13th July 2015

The original plan had been to cruise from Odiham to Odiham Castle on a canal boat, listen to a talk about the castle and then cruise back, sipping prosecco. However the English weather didn't co-operate: hot dry weather had lowered the level of the canal so the boat couldn't make it. Time for Plan B Mark 2. Drive to a field near the castle, then a short walk to the castle site, carrying chairs and picnics. A wonderful talk on the castle's history by Dave Allen, Keeper of Archaeology for the Hampshire Cultural Trust, then swigging prosecco and eating.

Like all good plans, however, what you can't see is the phone calls, emails and general to-ing and fro-ing that Julia had to do to get from Plan A to Plan B to Plan B Mark 2. Many thanks Julia –you even managed the weather, shame about the helicopters.



Dave Allen in full flow, Photo Val Pegg



Prosecco anyone? Photo Val Pegg



Castle & WARG members, Photo Val Pegg

2015/16 Calendar

Sept 7th Day trip to Christchurch

Sept 14th Wellington – from Ireland to Waterloo - Geraldine Buchanan

Oct 12th A Day in the Life of a Curator - Jane Ellis-Schon
This meeting will also be the AGM

Nov 9th Hampshire Record Office: Treasures, Sources & Services - David Rymill

Dec 14th The Battle of Agincourt: where are the battle dead? - Anne Curry

2016

Jan 11th New Year Party

Feb 8th Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War - Steve Fisher

Mar 14th 1000 Years of Bell-ringing in Winchester - Colin Cook

Apr 11th Excavation Report

Apr 18th Day Visit tba

May 9th TBA - Martin Parsons

June 13th Evening Walk tba

July 11th Evening visit tba

Meetings are normally in the Hampshire Record Office cinema, starting at 7.30. As the cinema has a maximum capacity of 80, we are unable to allow in anyone who is not a member.

Books for sale

With this Newsletter you'll find an updated list of the secondhand books that Julia has for sale for WARG funds. Few of them cost more than £2 and nearly all of them are in "as new" condition – some even look as though they've never been read!

Contact Julia by phone or email (details on the cover of the list) and either collect any books from a meeting or from her home. Bear in mind that if you need them to be posted, the UK's postage system will always cost more than the book costs you!



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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