



# Newsletter

## Summer 2017

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**T**he 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](mailto:membership@warg.org.uk) or visit [www.warg.org.uk](http://www.warg.org.uk)

## Chairman's Notes



2017 is proving to be a busy year for WARG. Our usual eclectic mix of lecture titles follows on from an extremely well-attended June Lloyd Memorial Lecture given by Professor Mike Fulford, summarising his decade's worth of excavation at Silchester. We have also visited Abingdon and Stockbridge under Don Bryan's expert tutelage.

We helped the Hyde900 community group undertake a second year of excavation in Winchester gardens, with exciting and potentially historic results. You can read more about this successful 'long weekend' dig on Hyde900's website, suffice to say we are delighted to have been asked to help out, and share in the fun had by all (not least Dr. John Crook, who we have rarely seen so animated). And many thanks to all the WARG volunteers for their time.

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, in the summer we will return to Warnford to carry on our investigation of a fascinating and challenging site in the depths of the Hampshire countryside. In the meantime your committee continues to promote WARG as a society with our roving stall popping up at various local fetes, school history days and, for the first time, appearing at the Salisbury Museum Festival of Archaeology – a chance to compare ourselves with other societies and promote Winchester as a city for its historic and archaeological points of interest.

I will be standing down as your Chairman from the AGM on October 9<sup>th</sup> as, frankly, I have just got too much else going on in my life. So we will be looking for a new Chairman to step up. Indeed, the direction of the organisation is dictated by the thoughts and opinions of committee members, so if you feel you'd like to be involved in setting that direction and chairing or joining the committee please get in touch with me or any committee member – be part of moving WARG from strength to strength.

*Chris Sellen*

## Abingdon day out

Irritatingly, the weather for our day visit to Abingdon at the end of April was what is rapidly becoming known as “WARG Weather” – overcast, chilly and occasionally damp. However WARG members are made of stern stuff and refuse to be put off by such incidentals, mainly because, even in a thunderstorm, a day being guided by Don Bryan is more important than anything else! Due to persuasive powers, everywhere we wanted to visit around the town was opened specifically for WARG since Monday is the day everywhere’s always closed.

We met at the car park just across the river from the town from where we could see the old prison – built by and for prisoners of the Napoleonic wars but now expensive *des res* and restaurants – for Don’s initial talk about the founding of Abingdon and its general history over the centuries. Crossing the bridge we made our way to the Long Gallery and Checker Hall – now home to the Unicorn Theatre – the



Abingdon Abbey (Claire Ward - Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 license)

only buildings along with St Nicolas' Church that remain from the great Benedictine Abbey which was destroyed in Henry VIII's Reformation. We were split into 3 groups to see these timber-framed buildings dating from the 15th century before moving on to the Abbey gardens with an outline of the Abbey in the grass. The pond close to the north of the Abbey was not actually the monks' fishpond but only dates back to Victorian times when it was part of the pleasure gardens later built on the site.

From there we walked through the Abbey's gate – mainly 15th century – to the Tourist Office which is housed in the Guildhall. This



*Abingdon market hall (William M. Connolley - Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0)*

building, dating from the 18th century, has been closed since late summer 2015 for extensive refurbishment but we were allowed to visit the original schoolroom of John Roysse's re-endowment of Abingdon School, which had originally been founded around 675AD. We were able to enter a ground floor room, with a rather magnificent ceiling, which would have been the venue for important visitors to the town throughout Tudor and Elizabethan times.

From there we nipped across the road to the Mousehole – the County Hall's basement café where we were greeted by hot drinks and the delicious smell of plain and cheese scones baked just for us, since the café's closed on Mondays! Feeling much restored we climbed up to the first and second floors which are now the town's Museum. Built as the County Assize Court and Market House between 1678 and 1682 by Christopher Kempster, one of Sir Christopher Wren's master masons on St Paul's Cathedral, this is small but excellently well laid out, covering all aspects of the town's history, including its





connections with the famous MG car. Also there are beautiful tools from the Paleolithic period, medieval silver, Victorian police truncheons and so on. As a special treat they opened the door to the roof for us so that we could enjoy the fantastic views across the town.

We then broke for lunch when people could visit St Nicolas' Church if they wanted. We re-gathered for the afternoon by walking down East St Helen's Street with its large number of timber-framed buildings – each one more attractive than the last! Built on the remains of the Roman period, these houses were the homes of the wealthy merchants, being handily close to the river: the main route for commerce in medieval times. We visited No 26, discovered as being the oldest building in Abingdon by dendrochronology, and dated at 1431. At the end of this street is St Helen's Church, one of the largest and most beautiful churches in southern England. Parts of this church date back to the 13th century but there was a church here on this site



*Long Alley Almshouses (William M. Connolley -Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0)*



Former Morlands brewery building  
(Des Blenkinsopp - Creative Commons  
Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0)

in the 7th / 8th centuries. Home to the Medieval Parish Guilds, its several guild chapels make it wider than it is long, and some of its painted ceilings and walls are exceptional. Outside the church at the edge of the churchyard are the various Almshouses. Twitty's, now 3 residences and dating from 1707, is attractive but unexceptional, whilst the Long Alley Almshouses, which date from 1446, are truly amazing. Running along the front of these

houses is a wooden covered walkway with quotations from the Bible and a couple of now somewhat faded paintings dating from 1605.

From there we walked slowly along West St Helen's Street (amusingly at right angles to East St Helen's Steet!) to look across at the old Brewery, now also expensive *des res*, and stand at the edge of a small development called Neave Mews, named after Abingdon's one-time MP who was assassinated by the IRA in 1979. This brought us to the end of our day with, yet once more, heartfelt thanks to Don Bryan for such an interesting and informative day.

*Julia Sandison*



## Close to the Bone at the Museum of London

Not everyone would agree, but when I saw an evening course called 'Close to the Bone' advertised at the Museum of London I knew this would make my perfect Christmas present. So, early this year found me walking up from St Paul's towards the Museum, wondering what kind of people would also have been attracted to spending a few hours of a fine spring evening dealing with bones.

I found a motley crew of all ages and sizes - and several nationalities - making their way in ones and twos into an oddly muted

museum. Usually so full of movement with people coming and going, school parties clutching handouts and commemorative pencils, and with a lively buzz coming from the café at the entrance, tonight it was largely empty under dimmed lighting. We were ushered up some stairs I had never noticed before. Clearly we were not going to be let loose among the exhibits.



*Dr Jelena Belvalac curator of Human Osteology, Museum of London*

As we settled into our chairs for a film presentation I had a closer look at the group. There were some students with notebooks, various learned looking couples, lots of muscle-y men with beards, and a few people like myself whose motives were hard to fathom, apart from sheer curiosity. Quite a lot of people greeted each other, recognising faces from previous courses. Most were, naturally, from London.

Not surprisingly what was under London was to be the focus for the first part of the evening. The film presentation was from Dr Jelena Belvalac, the curator of Human Osteology at the museum and a leading light in the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology. To the accompaniment of pictures of skeletons she told us how the museum holds 21,000 human remains and that this means that London is unique in Europe in possessing remains from every period of the city's history. Most of these are kept in the museum's rotunda store, rather appropriately underground, where the temperature remains constant. Very few are from a site that has been totally excavated. This is not necessarily in order to leave remains for further excavation by archaeologists of the future but because most remains are discovered by accident, usually by developers.

One of the few exceptions to developer-led excavation is the Black Death cemetery at East Smithfield where about 2 hectares have been excavated. This cemetery was ordered to be opened by Edward III and is fully documented. Many early remains were laid carefully in individual graves but the later intensity of the Black Death is revealed



by the later digging of a 265m long trench for mass burial, though even here the bodies were laid carefully and not simply tossed in – a rather heartwarming feature given the horror of the sickness. Over 600 individuals from here have been identified. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Royal Mint was built on the site and copper coins surplus to requirements, or simply faulty, were buried in the grounds. This has resulted in some rather green-tinged bones. Nearly 50% of the cemetery lies under the Mint to this day.

The Crossrail project has obviously produced some interesting results, not least of which is the identification of the DNA of the bacteria responsible for the Great Plague of 1665, found in the skeletons in a mass grave at the Bedlam Burial Ground near Liverpool Street in 2015. This burial ground is believed to hold bodies of Londoners from 1569 to 1738. Also known as the New Churchyard it got its name from the Bethlehem Hospital for the mentally ill, though only a small number from there are thought to have been buried here.

Beneath the Bedlam burials lies the medieval Moorfields Marsh and below that the Roman layer of Londinium. From here skulls identified as Roman were at first believed to have been washed out from a Roman cemetery upstream of a small river channel. Closer examination of the skulls, found upside down, suggests that they were all beheading victims as their lower jaws are missing.

Another site of much interest has been St Bride's Church where lead coffins were found. One of these was opened to reveal a skeleton in such a good state of preservation that smallpox pockmarks could be seen on some surviving skin. The disease was inert on this particular body but no other coffins were opened in case the virus was still alive in others. St Bride's crypt, incidentally, is the burial place of Samuel Pepys' brother Tom, though not of Pepys himself.

These sites led on to a session on the importance of context. The range of burial places itself can give clues as to what might be found: graveyards, crypts, charnel houses or plague pits all used burial for slightly different purposes. Medical hospitals, for examples, often show complete skeletons but not all bones necessarily belong to the same individual. Some bones are missing, perhaps retained for teaching purposes, others have indications that at one time wires have been passed through them, again an indication that articulating the bones

had a practical application in the lecture theatre.

We heard about how to sex a skeleton from the pelvises, the bumps on the nuchal line at the back of the skull, and the bumps over the eyes, or superciliary arches. Assessing the age considered rib ends, auricular bone development - 'from the billowy to the granular to the dense' – and of course the all-important teeth. Teeth can give clues as to air quality, water quality and food quality and their sources. We were told that a common question people ask is about the cause of death, though this is always difficult as although chronic conditions such as syphilis may show up in the bones, and Harris lines on the tibia can indicate periods of stunted growth from a poor diet, acute conditions such as pneumonia or smallpox may leave no impression.

After a short break, while we studied displays of diagrams to help identification of bones and teeth, and those who had been on courses before took out their Thermos flasks, we then moved on to forensic archaeology. We began with a short film explaining how to identify the causes of various injuries to skulls and bones. Several enthusiastic PhD students then supervised the hands-on session that followed. Here we could try our skill at identifying three named individuals: a young Roman gladiator who fought in the London amphitheatre and whose grave was discovered near the Walbrook close to Bank station, a sailor from the Mary Rose, and a Victorian lady of the night. In all three the evidence of their life, their wounds and their diseases, could be seen in the bones. A rather gruesome task followed, identifying victims of arson from their dental records. Attempting a forensic reconstruction of a face from a skull was less challenging and more amusing as different people seemed to produce a different face from the same skull – and we all had trouble with the nose! Not something one practises every day.

After three hours, head whirling slightly, we wandered out into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I certainly wondered what was under my feet as I walked back.

*Jan Church*

## Jane Austen's Houses (WARG Evening Talk 13/03/2017)

Derek Spruce, local historian from North Hampshire, started his talk with an overview of Jane Austen, her family and their connection with the area, decamping to Bath for a while before returning first to Southampton in 1806 and then to Chawton in 1809. Jane died in Winchester at the comparatively young age of 41 in 1817. Derek, in order to put the rest of his talk in context, gave the following definition of a Country House;

“The English Country House is a large house in the country at the centre of an estate which provides the income to maintain the owner's family in a gentry lifestyle.”

Derek also discussed land ownership in Hampshire at the time and how 146 landowners owned 56% of the land while 21,236 cottagers owned 0.56% and many more owned no land at all.

### **The Role of the Church**

The Patron of the parish church was normally the lord of the manor who took income from tithes but was responsible for the maintenance of the parish church's chancel and the staff. If a Rector was in place, who could share the tithe income with the patron, a vicar had only his stipendiary income and the curate was the lowest paid. The Patron could give a living to a clergyman and in the case of Jane Austen's father, Rev George Austen, he had the living of two parishes, Steventon and Deane given to him by Edward Knight, a rich relative, but even this did not provide enough income so he also

had the tenancy of Cheesedown Farm as well as running a small residential school in the Rectory at Steventon for a while.

### **The Houses in the Local Area**

It was common for Jane and Cassandra, her sister, to walk to the local big houses from their home at Steventon Rectory for social events but they also had



*Deane House (Derek Spruce)*

the use of a coach for a while and had lifts from other local families when they had to give their coach up. Most of these houses were in easy walking distance. For the regular dances in Basingstoke they would have ridden in with another family.

Steventon Rectory was a fairly substantial house with seven bedrooms, three attic rooms, three reception rooms and a study for Rev George Austen. Steventon Manor was larger with 1000 acres of parkland and was let to the Digweed family until 1877.

Deane House had Deane parish church close by with a 70-acre park where a village once stood but was removed to improve the view. This was occupied by the Harwood family from 1628 to 1864. Deane



*Ashe Rectory, now Ashe House  
(Derek Spruce)*

Rectory is where Rev George Austen and family lived for a while when Steventon was being refurbished.

Ashe Rectory was the home of Rev LeFroy whose son, Tom LeFroy was Jane Austen's great love but was short lived. They met at a dance at Manydown House.

Ashe Park was a house Jane wrote about in her diary (1801), it was a place where she had a scare when she was left alone for 10

minutes in a room with the owner, Mr Holder, without a chaperone, a thing that was not done in those days.

Oakley Hall was the home of the Wither family and Jane, Cassandra and the rest of the Austen family were frequent visitors. The current house was greatly added to in Victorian times.

Manydown Park was where another Wither family lived since 1402. The resident when Jane was around was Lovelace Bigg who married into the Withers family and called himself Lovelace Bigg-Withers. They had 9 children. The Austens came back from Bath on numerous occasions to visit Manydown. Harris Bigg-Withers proposed to Jane which at that moment she accepted but then withdrew the acceptance the following day. If Jane had married Harris, her books could have been attributed to Jane Bigg-Withers.



*Chawton House (Angus Kirke - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)*

Chawton Great House was where Edward Knight Junior lived. He was the youngest son of George Austen but was adopted by Edward Knight senior who was childless. The Austens' house at Chawton was owned by Edward Knight.

Other houses were Dummer House of the Terry Family, Kempshott Manor which was rented by the Prince Regent 1780-1795, Hackwood House which was the Duke of Bolton (Paulet) family and Ibthorpe near Hurstbourne Priors where Jane was a frequent visitor. There is no evidence that Jane ever visited The Vyne.

Other houses that Jane knew, further afield, were Godmersham Park, Kent, main house of the Knight family, Adlestrop which was owned by the Leigh family, Mrs Austen was a Leigh, and Stoneleigh Abbey which was also in the Leigh family.

Derek finished with a discussion on the fact that servants did not feature in Jane's books but would have figured greatly in her life.

*Stephen Old*



## An Evening Walk in Stockbridge.

We cannot know what Julia and Don said to the weather gods – but it must have been good because we had a perfect evening for our visit to Stockbridge!

Gathering in old St Peter's Church the group heard Don outlining some of the early history of the area, explaining that no Roman remains have ever been found there. There are, however, Bronze Age barrows and field systems remaining on Stockbridge Down and two Iron Age hillforts, which dominate the hills - Danebury and Woolbury. Further excavations at Test Valley School produced decapitated human skeletons and there was a site for public executions on Stockbridge Down (opposite the National Trust car park), which produced a number of buried male bodies.

Stockbridge has always been a thoroughfare, and the original church was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although parts of it date back to a West Saxon chapel. By 1863 parishioners thought it was damp, so



*Stockbridge High Street (Edwina Cole)*

a new church was built in 1866 to replace the old one. Various items of stonework were taken from the old church, and incorporated into the new. The medieval oak door is famous because of its possible links with Stephen and Matilda (but Don had his fingers crossed when telling us that story!). The stones on the churchyard wall are saddlestones where people sharpened their knives.

As a thoroughfare, Stockbridge has seen its share of travelers – first on the canal and then on the railway. The canal was opened in 1795 but was never a great success. Unable to make a profit it closed in 1839 and one house that remains to remind us is Canal Cottage. The canal was bought by the London and South Western Railway (LSWR) Company, who formed another company called the Andover and Redbridge Railway Company. It opened in 1865,



*This way to the Sprat and Winkle  
(Edwina Cole)*

by which time it had been taken over by the Midland and SW Company. The initials SW and the link with Southampton gave the line its nickname of the Spratt and Winkle Line. This railway heritage is reflected in the names of local villages, which adorn the outside walls of the local primary school, which stands close to where the station was.

During WW1, troop and ambulance trains passed through Stockbridge. In WW2 many hundreds of ambulance trains stopped here to unload wounded soldiers as there was a large military hospital on the top of Winton Hill. The station even had a separate platform for racing horses, but it all came to an end in 1967 when the line closed. Two years later the tracks were lifted and in 1971 the station was demolished. In its heyday, it was chaotic in Stockbridge with huge traffic jams cluttering up the centre of the village. It was hard to imagine that as we stood in the June sunlight on a peaceful evening.

Looking over to the White Hart pub, Don reminded us that the white hart was the emblem of Richard 11 who shot a white hart by mistake. The pub has medieval origins going back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Stockbridge used to be full of tea and coffee houses together with 13 pubs. Just over the railway bridge was The Hero, presumably named after Lord Nelson. The building is now called Trafalgar House with Hero Cottage next door. This is where many jockeys stayed during the Races, sometimes sleeping 3 or 4 to a bed!

Just before we walked down the High Street Don explained that Queen Elizabeth I had granted the town the right to send two members to Parliament. Voters were bribed and Stockbridge became notorious as one of the “rotten boroughs”. Obviously, not everyone was happy with this! Eventually a committee from the House of Commons came to sort it out and two different members were sent. One of them wanted to increase his influence in the area and built some properties to form Blandford Row and Trafalgar Street. They were, however, shoddy buildings, overcrowded and unsanitary and earned the name of Bug Alley. The Reform Act of 1832 eventually put a stop to most of the problems and the doctor’s surgery now stands close to where Bug Alley was.

Several streams and one river pass through Stockbridge. By Becky’s Greengrocers is where the public washing area was located. By Lillie Langtry’s tea room is the path to Stockbridge Common (which is a lovely walk.) The building itself used to be a pub called the Red Lion.

Brian then explained that Edward, Prince of Wales was a regular attendee at Stockbridge Races. For a time, he came with his mistress, the famous beauty, Lillie Langtree. The houses in which they stayed lie either side of the River Test further up the High Street (but their gardens are connected via a footbridge).

Crossing the wide High Street we looked at the new St Peter’s Church and admired the font which is Saxon. This was one of the items removed from the old church.

We then heard about the Houghton Club, which is one of the oldest dry fishing clubs in the world with diaries going back to 1822. Women are not allowed, and only the great and the good are invited to join, only allowing 24 members at a time. Reaching the western end of the High Street we crossed the old bridge, which is medieval and crosses the main River Test. The White House on the left is where the Prince of Wales stayed when he attended the Races.

Just round the corner in Houghton Road is Drovers House with old Welsh writing on the walls that says “Seasons hay, Rich grass,



*Drovers House (Edwina Cole)*

Good ale, Sound sleep”

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it was common to see herds of cattle, perhaps 200-300 being driven through on their way from Wales to London or Portsmouth. This was because Stockbridge is on one of the South’s main east/west roads. Next door was a pub called The Cossack popular with jockeys and stable lads. It closed

in 1966 and is now a private house. Brian then told us a bit more about the horse racing at Stockbridge.

The first written mention of it is in 1753 when there was a 3 day meeting held. By 1831 the Bibury Club had moved to the village from the Cotswolds. More money could now be made because there was now a charge levied for watching the racing. The last race meeting was in 1898. There was a training area at Danebury (traces of which can still be seen from the hillfort,) run by Honest John Day (but he wasn’t!). The Grosvenor Hotel was the King’s Head. In 1900, it was owned by Tom Cannon the famous jockey. He is Lester Piggot’s great great grandfather. Next door was the Brewery Tap bar and above it was the Houghton Club.

Henry III granted Stockbridge a fair to be held behind the Grosvenor Hotel, which would have brought many people into the area.

Our walk finished at this point. The sun was still shining and Stockbridge looked beautiful and peaceful belying its busy past. Thanks were expressed to Don and Brian for all the information they shared so expertly and thanks must also go to Julia for her planning, organization (and deals with the weather god!)

*Edwina Cole*

## The Flying Boats of Southampton

We were delighted to host Colin van Geffen in May who presented the story of Southampton's flying boats. As well as an artist, Colin is a professional speaker who gave an entertaining and slick performance which included videos and audio illustration.

The story of Southampton and its place in the history of commercial air travel from water is one of leadership and innovation. Little physical remains to attest to the story except for the slipway at the old Supermarine, Woolston works (now flats) and the brick pier bases between the Ocean Terminal and the Red Funnel quays, rapidly being swallowed up by modern development.

The Woolston company was started by Noel Pemberton Billing in 1913 where his own, often not very successful, designs were built. During the First World War, 'boats were produced for the Royal Navy and it was during this time that the firm was sold to Hubert Scott-Paine who named the new company Supermarine, and were more successful in testing and building the Admiralty's Air Department (AD) designs.



*An AD Channel Flying Boat*

Post-war the emphasis changed to civil transport, commercial development being boosted by the Air Ministry's design competition in 1920 which resulted in the RJ Mitchell designed Amphibian. By 1923 another Mitchell design, the Channel, was providing a cross-Channel service with Southampton's status as a customs port providing the first true 'airport'.

For this purpose, Supermarine started up an airline wing called British Marine Air Navigation Co. This was incorporated into Imperial Airways in 1924 as the future of commercial air travel became assured, and Southampton became its main seaplane base with 'boat service and maintenance at Hythe. During this time, Mitchell became chief designer and was responsible for commercial designs such as the



Sea Lion, Scylla, and Southampton. Despite Supermarine's Schneider Trophy successes, a lack of capital saw the company sold to Vickers in 1928.



*Mercury-Mayo composite*

Many companies were now producing world-class flying boats, notably Shorts, with Imperial Airways using C-class 'boats for international flights. Getting the Royal Mail through to imperial destinations was still the priority and led to ingenious solutions to the range and speed issue, including in-flight refuelling and the Shorts Mayo combination.

But the most memorable aspect of the 1930's was the world-shrinking aspect of intercontinental travel represented by these liners of the air. And such style. Imperial routes were augmented by Australian (Qantas) and American (PanAm) carriers.

During World War 2, Southampton's importance dwindled as it was a strategic target, any commercial services moving to Poole Harbour. After the war flying boat travel competed with the world-wide development of land airports and destinations. For Southampton, the development of Heathrow in the late-forties sounded the death-knell for the great days of flying boat travel.



*BOAC Short Solent  
"Southampton"*

Aquila Airways continued to fly with ex-BOAC 'boats and undertook important work in the Berlin Airlift but the fleet was aging and flying finally ended in 1958, leaving those lonely pontoons at Berth 50.

During questions, the role of the Saunders Roe Princess was mentioned. Though associated with Cowes, not Southampton, the Princess was designed to follow the pre-war luxury 'boats with more capacity and would have been a regular at Southampton. At 220 feet, the wingspan was just 10 feet less than the Bristol Brabazon, and both these aircraft were destined to be, for largely the same reasons, just too late to have been the queens of the post-war skies.

*Chris Sellen*

## WARG Excavation 2016 – Warnford Park

In April Techer Jones and Chris Sellen gave the now traditional talk about what WARG and its active digging members had been up to during its summer 'Big Dig' – well it's big for us!



*Warnford House/Belmont just before demolition*

After a fallow 2015 we got our act together, took ourselves out of the city and into the countryside, though still in Winchester District. Warnford Park Estate in the Meon valley is the location of sites which offered potential. Not least was the Grade I scheduled monument known as St. John's or King John's House, a hall house c.1230/40. This was in some disrepair, and Historic England originally asked WARG to investigate the foundations of this little understood structure before they stabilised the building. We found the ruin so unstable

we struggled to justify any work on health and safety grounds!

A number of barrows exist on the estate which, while of interest, were not at any risk and didn't have the potential breadth of interest to members that our previous digs had offered.

The estate, however, was also the location of the original park mansion, 'Belmont', which was the culmination of a series of building phases since Stuart or Jacobean times. There was documentary evidence of a building here since the 1600's, together with written histories of the various families who owned, lived in and developed the property over some 400 years. Finding this was to be our main objective.

The landowner, Andrew Sellick, who farms the estate, was extremely helpful and keen to find out more about the estate's history. The lumps and bumps in the area indicating the final grand mansion, demolished in 1958, were only part of the story and Andrew had in his possession 19<sup>th</sup> century drainage plans which showed foundations, not just of the big house, but ancillary buildings which hinted at continuity of occupation.

### **The Historic Clues**

It is recorded that the hall house was ruinous, and that a new house was built when William Neale, an auditor to Elizabeth I, bought

the estate in 1577. Local histories tell that the house went through four main phases of development or major addition. First the Neale house; then an addition by the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl Clanricarde who bought the estate in 1765; a third phase was undertaken by Edward Tunno in 1846; and finally yet more major work was undertaken by Henry Woods after 1865. During the ownership of Earl Clanricarde, the parkland was landscaped by Lancelot “Capability” Brown in the 1770’s.

The house, now called “Belmont”, was demolished in the late 1950’s having fallen into disuse and disrepair after its occupation by Canadian troops in the Second World War.

Initial geophysics including ground penetrating radar had been carried out with the help of Winchester University in the spring of 2015. This showed buildings but also indicated that the foundations were deep, far too deep for the traditional WARG method of hand-removal of overburden. We were grateful to both the Hampshire Field Club and CBA Wessex for grants to fund a mechanical digger and its



*A big trench!*

driver which allowed the preparation of the trench, removal of turf and overburden over a vast area and ensured that WARG was able to do 15 whole days of archaeological excavation unencumbered with the tasks of ground-breaking and back-fill. Luxury!

### **The Dig**

Over 80 WARG members got stuck in to what became a complex multi-period site, with much head-scratching. Over the fortnight a number of local historians and archaeologists from Winchester peered into the trench. All contributed opinions and suggestions about what was being unearthed, summarised thus:

The trench was aligned on one wing of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Clanricarde building to try and establish wall lines and hopefully produce relative dates from their construction. The stratigraphically highest features appear to be features from World War Two. Certainly parts of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century building had been partitioned off with very poor WW2 brickwork which may not have even been a full storey high. Latrines and shower-blocks were the most likely explanation, especially as rudimentary drains had been dug through the earlier, more sturdy, structures.

A fascinating wartime feature was exposed. Nick-named “the sand pit” it was a rectangular brick feature which was full of clean sand about a metre below the floor level. No finds or age-related contaminations. A large number of theories were put forward from a place where secret documents could be hidden or stored, to a pit where the changing watch guards could discharge their weapons to ensure there were no live bullets in the barrel. Grain/hay storage for horses?

The majority of building foundation appeared to relate to the wing of the building from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This may have been an incorporation of the Elizabethan structures into a larger house, or a northern extension which eventually became servants’ quarters or utility buildings to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century structures. There are a number of drainage features and culverts, draining westwards towards the River Meon and a well with a beehive cover (probably quite late, to seal it off). Features such as that “pop up” unexpectedly and tended to throw the on-site interpretations, especially when dating can only be by association or typology. Clearly, however, the 18<sup>th</sup> Century phase of building was characterised by red brick structures, many of which

were placed on, or abutting, earlier flint walls.

Two key features emerged. Firstly, across much of the west of the trench site, a cobbled courtyard surface was revealed, sloping towards gullies of probable Tudor brick laid on their sides. Dating evidence was tantalising. Finding a figurine stylistically dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century sitting on a putative Tudor courtyard didn't help other than to say the courtyard is pre-18<sup>th</sup> Century.



*A quiet part of the open day*

The second aspect was that some areas of the trench were taken down much further than the rest, and massive flint walls which we thought may have been the walls of the Tudor house kept going below the courtyard. They appear to be resting on (rammed) chalk foundations as much as 2m below the supposed floor. These structures are far too massive to be a courtyard wall. Was there a period of demolition of the earliest Elizabethan structures before a courtyard was built on top?

## **2017**

In summary, WARG's initial set of objectives was met and we located at least part of the Tudor house and its immediate environs. However, we are a long way from being able to define the extent of those early buildings: which were accommodation, which outbuildings, and where do the courtyards fit in and how is the whole site phased?

This led the Dig Committee to suggest a return for a second year to the delight of Andrew Sellick and his family. Our strategy for 2017 is to extend the original trench at five specific parts of the building complex, to try and pin down the sequence of events. Following our talk a number of members have been researching the HRO and other sources to help fill documentary gaps. We will also look at a section of 'Belmont' where the grand bay windows' foundations can still be traced on the ground. We just need the 15 days' unbroken sunshine we enjoyed in 2016.

*Techer Jones & Chris Sellen*



## Julia's Jottings

### **Ancient shipwrecks**

In late 2016 we had a talk from the local Maritime Trust about shipwrecks from the Great War along the south coast, following a talk in 2013 about an ancient shipyard near the Solent. We are all aware that water, in the case of both rivers and seas, were the highways of the ancient world and that no doubt the weather was as unpredictable millennia



*Image of a medieval shipwreck (Rodrigo Pacheco-Ruiz)*

ago as it is today, but marine archaeologists from Southampton University uncovered 41 shipwrecks off the Bulgarian coast that could answer many questions about sea levels following the last Ice Age. The wrecks have been preserved in the Black Sea due to their being below 150m where the lack of oxygen prevents their complete destruction. The finding of these wrecks is an added bonus for the research since it was not actually expected to find anything but just to add to geophysical survey knowledge! The wrecks have been identified as belonging to the Ottoman and Byzantine empires, and the ships will be extensively analysed before any contents are removed.

### **Anglo-Saxon coffins**

81 extremely rare tree-trunk coffins have been found at Great Ryburgh in Norfolk. Their remarkable preservation is due the fact that they were water-logged in the river valley there. An excavation was taking place ahead of the creation of a lake and flood defence system, and these coffins are considered to be a significant discovery. Anglo-Saxon coffins are rarely found because wood decays over time so this find will help the Museum of London archaeologists to understand more about the rituals and practices of the time. The coffins were made from hollowed out oak trees and although no grave goods were found the area contained pieces of high status Anglo-Saxon pottery as well as Roman Samian ware and some coins. The experts think this might

have been the site of the forerunner of a monastic settlement which doubled as a civic community.

### **Another Stone Circle**

**D**ick and I are keen Stone Circle visitors so when we're next down in Devon we'll have to visit the recently discovered one which has been buried in the peat near Sittaford Tor – the setting for an Agatha Christie novel! Consisting of 30 stones, it was arranged in a circle with a diameter of more than 30m. This makes it one of the largest circles on Dartmoor. Although all of the stones were recumbent when found, datings and excavations indicate that they were already lying down by about 2,000 BC, which ties in date-wise with other circles in the area.

### **Don't look up, look down!**

**T**here's so much on our planet that we don't know about as it's underground, but as we all know from these jottings, things come to light in all sorts of unusual ways and nearly always very unexpectedly. 1700 or so years ago the followers of the cult of Mithras worshipped at an underground temple in Turkey's south-eastern province of Diyarbakir. Mithras was a Persian god worshipped by the Romans between the 1st and 4th centuries AD, particularly by the Roman army. There was a large temple dedicated to him in the City of London, mainly under Bucklersbury House. The new temple in Turkey, measuring around 35 metres wide and 2.5 metres high, was underground as this was a highly secretive religion. Water appears to have been an important element of the worship, and "a very nice" water basin and a pool have been discovered on the site, as well as several niches in the eastern part of the temple. Mithraism lost its importance when the Roman Emperor Constantine decreed that Christianity was to be the new religion of the Empire.



*Mithras (Gaius Cornelius Creative Commons ASA 3.0)*

And how was this temple discovered? Long term excavations

on Zerzevan Castle, a Roman military base, uncovered this very unexpected temple.

### Further afield



A reconstruction of *Diprotodon optatum* at the Australian Museum  
(Photographer: James King © Australian Museum)

Most of my jottings are about the archaeology and history of Europe and Asia, but this time I've branched out to Australia. Archaeologists and other experts now believe that humans arrived on that island 49,000 years ago (earlier than originally believed) following the discovery of burnt eggshells and stone tools in a rock shelter in the Flinders Ranges. A bone from a long-extinct wombat-like marsupial – a *diprotodon optatum* – was also found, which suggests that humans interacted with such creatures. Previously it

was believed that humans would have come from the east, the Levant or Africa, but the fine stone tools and bone technology apparently suggest that what happened was a local innovation due to a local cultural evolution. The egg shells were those of emus and another extinct large flightless bird, which possibly accounts for why the latter became extinct if its eggs were the local breakfast favourite!

### Orkney's treasures

Several of you will have visited the Orkneys like we did and been staggered at the wonders there. In more recent years an enormous "temple" complex has been excavated on the main island which may take a few years more to properly uncover and understand. However on the mainland's eastern coast part of a Pictish cross slab has been found, only the third of its kind to be found in this group of islands. Believed to date from the 8th century, it provides a glimmer of light into the early Christian period here and may help to solve some of the mystery of this period.

However what I consider to be the most important thing about this find is that the carving is not just of a cross but also of 2 dragons,

one on each side!

### **Mummies at serious risk**

**W**ars create all sorts of horrors and never so much as those of today with all their humanitarian implications, but one seldom considered problem has arisen as a result of the continuing war in Yemen. About a dozen ancient Mummies belonging to a lost civilisation from around 2.5 millennia ago – much pre-dating Islam – are withering away in their museum for lack of the electricity and preserving chemicals required to keep them in tip top condition. Either in the foetal position or swaddled in baskets, the Mummies are in glass cases at Sanaa’s main university. The Director of the museum says that the country’s political situation and war have affected the power supply as well as the supply of the chemicals needed for the 6-monthly “sanitisation” of these important relics. As a result of this and fairly constant power cuts, the Mummies are starting to decay and are being infected with bacteria.

What a sad loss to our historical knowledge and ancestors.

### **Sweet Tooth, Anyone?**

**W**e all know about the rationing during and after WW2 but may not be quite so aware that there was also rationing during the Great War. In May 1917 a proclamation, purportedly from King George VI but really from the Food Controller, enjoined UK subjects to be frugal in their use of wheaten flour – in order to defeat “the submarine devices of the enemy”. In great depth, the order prohibited the making of light fancy pastries, muffins, crumpets, fancy tea cakes and other light types of food. However cakes, buns, scones and biscuits also needed to conform to certain curtailments re their sugar and wheaten flour content. Only 15% of sugar was allowed in cakes and biscuits, 10% in buns, and scones were to be completely sugar-free. No more than 30% of wheaten flour could be used in cakes but buns and scones were allowed 50%. No chocolate was to be sold or bought retail at a cost exceeding 3d an ounce, and all other sweetmeats were not to exceed 2d per ounce. The maximum retail price of milk was to be 2d a quart over the price on the 15th day of the same month in 1914. Bread



was not allowed to be sold before it was at least 12 hours old and no currants, sultanas or milk were to be used as ingredients. I find these demands fascinating now that we live in a country where just about everything, be it sweet or savoury, has sugar as a large ingredient!

### **The World's oldest rock drawings**

A rock formation on the outskirts of a town in western Iran has engravings and drawings on them believed to be over 40,000 years old. A professor has been travelling the country for 15 years "discovering" these early art forms and claims to have found in excess of 50,000 examples. The drawings are of cups, similar to those in our own island, and a more recent depiction (only about 4000 years old) of an ibex.

### **Turkey's continuing excavations**

Having recently returned from a second visit to Turkey within two years, I can confirm that they are building like billy-o everywhere, and as a result are uncovering more and more of their ancient history. In the southern province of Mersin a huge shipyard with around 270 slipways has been uncovered, just a little smaller than one discovered last year. These date back to around the 13th century BC and confirm that the Mediterranean really was the centre of the world in those days! The story of this discovery is fascinating so here's the article for you to learn more.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/huge-ancient-shipyard-unearthed-on-turkeys-dana-island.aspx?PageID=238&NID=105120&NewsCatID=375>



In Istanbul an excavation has uncovered nearly 700 small ceramic and glass phials containing anti-depressant pills and heart drugs. Pestles and mortars were found too, and also medical tools, spatulas and a large cooker.

The pills were made from plants and are the same drugs in use today. I know that we consider the 21st century to be pretty stressful but obviously it's a case of *plus ca change!*

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ancient-antidepressants-found-in-excavations-in-istanbul.aspx?pageID=238&nID=105079&NewsCatID=375>



## Witches' Marks!

Last year Historic England requested the UK population to keep an eye out for witches' marks in attics – i.e. carvings or marks on beams that were intended to repel evil spirits or malevolent forces. A cottage in Corhampton produced the desiccated remains of a small cat from their attic, and a Chawton house produced a cat which had been stuffed with straw before being left in the attic. To my mind the question arises as to whether the cats were placed there to ward off witches or actually to scare away rats and mice! We'll never know of course but it's worth saying that Dick and I saw the remains of a cat stuffed into an attic wall in an old house in France several years ago, but I can't remember where it was!

*(Editor's note: If you are interested in this topic, Edward Robert's book Hampshire Houses 1250-1790 has several pages on the subject of apotropaic marks (the posh name for witch marks) written by Linda Hall and there are several mentions in recent articles in the Field Club's Newsletter.)*

*Jula Sandison*



## Colour Supplement

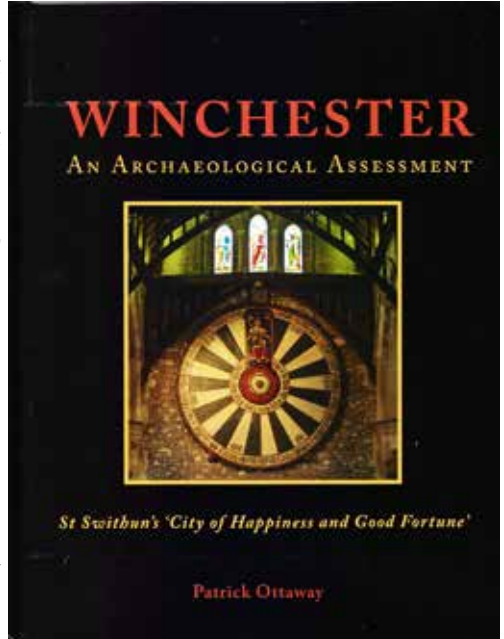
You will have noticed that this Newsletter has, for the first time, colour photos. This is because for many years now I have been frustrated by taking interesting photos and forcing them into black and white. At the same time, the laser printer that I have been using to print the Newsletter is reaching the end of its life. As going to an external printer (the wonderful Sarsen Press) was essential, your committee decided that the small extra cost of colour was well worth it, particularly as, for many people, the Newsletter is their only regular point of contact with WARG. We hope you feel the same and that it will inspire you to contribute your own articles and photos.

*Dick Selwood*

## St Swithun's 'City of Happiness and Good Fortune'

Winchester: An Archaeological Assessment by Patrick Ottoway, Oxford, Oxbow books 2017 978-1-78570-449-9 £40.

Another big black book on Winchester's archaeology - but this time not from the Winchester Excavations Committee. Instead it was funded by Historic England and is an enormous assessment of the work carried out over the years by archaeologists. It is fascinating stuff bringing together material from an enormous range of sources. There are contributions by Tracy Matthews, Dick Whinney, Ken Qualmann and Steve Teague, with additional contributions by the key players in Winchester's 20th century archaeology, including a forward by Martin Biddle. The gazeteer and index are both huge



and there is an impressive list of contributors. Despite the authors getting our name wrong, WARG is mentioned several times, in connection with St Elizabeth's college and, of course, the work at St Cross.

It only arrived as I was closing this issue and so I have not had time for more than a cursory glance through. What is missing is the recent work in Hyde - there is no mention of the human bone that got the BBC and others all a flutter recently.

With over 560 pages and a huge number of illustrations at 40 it is a relatively inexpensive work. Even better, Oxbow are offering it at £30 and it is on Amazon at £30.80 from a third party bookseller. If you are not buying it for yourself it would be a great present for the archaeologist in your life.

*Dick Selwood*

## WARG Calendar

- July 10<sup>th</sup>** Evening visit to Winchester College Treasury  
**July 22/23** Salisbury Museum Festival of Archaeology – WARG stand  
**July 29<sup>th</sup> - August 13<sup>th</sup>** Big Dig at Warnford Park  
**Aug 21<sup>st</sup>** Annual Picnic at Rockbourne Villa  
**Sept 8<sup>th</sup>** Heritage Open Day at St. Cross – WARG stand  
**Sept 11<sup>th</sup>** Martin Parsons: Kindertransport & its Associated Affects  
**Sept 18<sup>th</sup>** Day visit to Wallingford  
**Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>** St. Cross Michaelmas Fair – WARG stand  
**Oct 9<sup>th</sup>** AGM followed by  
**Alistair Dougall:** “Blood & Misery in this Sad Tragedie”  
& “Deceived People! Deluded Countreymen” - the nature  
& impact of the Civil War in Hampshire  
**Nov 13<sup>th</sup>** Tony King: Meonstoke Roman site – Villa or Temple?  
**Dec 11<sup>th</sup>** Bianca Taubert: “Les Tomettes” – Women Soldiers of the  
British Expeditionary Force 1917 – 21

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.



## From Bones to Drones CBA Wessex 2017 Conference Saturday 4th November 2017 at Winchester University

This year's CBA Wessex Conference is on Science in Archaeology. There will be talks on scientific techniques such as geo-archaeology, geophysics and drones to find and investigate new sites. Other topics will include new methods in DNA and ancient disease, children's lives in the past and chemical and isotope studies. As well as displays and interactive stalls there is a programme of activities for accompanied children.

For full information visit the CBA Wessex web-site:  
[cba-wessex.org.uk/events](http://cba-wessex.org.uk/events)

# Fancy chairing for a bit?

**W**hy not? There's no better way of getting involved, meeting some really interesting people and having people look up to you – even if they are taller than you.

What does the Chairman do exactly? In short:

- They run three committee meetings a year and try and make them end on time
- They stand up and control an AGM once a year
- Introduce our monthly speakers with a witty riposte and joke during questions
- Attend a fair few awareness events per year, like the St. Cross Fete, where they stand in the little orange tent showing people some of the artefacts we've unearthed over the years
- With the dig committee they'll talk about places to dig and how to best use the ample professional resources at our disposal, and kit we have accumulated over the years.

In other words, get all the kudos for an amazing range of interesting and successful events.

Why not indeed? Talk to Chris Sellen if you are interested.



## WARG Committee Members

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