

NEWSLETTER

Updating Hampshire's History

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Hampshire

Wilkes Challenge - £10,000 Donation !

Since the last newsletter it is very pleasing to report that the 'Wilkes challenge' has been met. Particular thanks are due to the Hampshire Field Club's promised grant of £2,000 for professional short term help to research and write parts of Old Basing. This news reduced the final gap to reach our £10,000 target, to less than £900. A final appeal to a few generous individuals closed this, with the happy result that Professor Wilkes' promised matching cheque arrived the day before the Hampshire Archives Trust AGM. Our chairman, Felicity Hindson, was able to give everyone present the good news and to publicly thank our very generous donors, Jim and Mary Ann Wilkes in their absence. Our reserves now set us up well for our present project on Basingstoke and its surrounding parishes. More funding will be needed to extend our work.

John Isherwood

Medieval Basingstoke

Basingstoke is a town with a distinguished and often forgotten history. It was transformed in the medieval period from 1000-1600. This period saw the creation of the town, a pattern of streets that survived until the 1960s and buildings that still dominate the town like the magnificent parish church and the ruins of the chapel of the Holy Ghost, visible to all train passengers who pass through the town. Both these buildings also reflect the period of the town's peak prosperity when to its existing functions as a market town and as a stopping point on the road from London to the west, was added its role as a major centre of the expanding cloth industry. In the early 16C its tax assessments show that Basingstoke was among the top 55 towns in England. Also the town has a substantial body of documentation which for the medieval historian makes it particularly valuable. We can gradually build up a picture of some of the individuals, their families and their activities. Many were directly involved in the cloth trade as manufacturers or traders: as weavers, dyers, fullers, drapers or clothiers. Other occupations depended on the prosperity of the cloth industry: the wealthy innkeepers or the large-scale butchers. For some, success in Basingstoke was the launchpad for a career in London and beyond.

John Hare

For more, see:

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire/work-in-progress/basingstoke-medieval-history>

Wills Reading Group

This is a group of volunteers who meet fortnightly to read copies of 16C and 17C wills provided by the Hampshire Record Office. These are transcribed verbatim and subsequently modernised for the **VCH Explore** site. To date, we have uploaded 233 wills and inventories of individuals from five parishes: Basingstoke (65), Mapledurwell (72), Steventon (31), Up Nately and Andwell (55), Newnham (10). Work is still in progress in reading a further 12 for Newnham and preparing 94 Basingstoke probate documents for **VCH Explore**, which have already been transcribed.

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/themes/people-and-communities/probate-material>

Jennie Butler

Disasters on the London Road

1889. A report in the *Hants & Berks Gazette* of 12 October, tells of the sad death of Mrs Bradshaw of Audleys Wood, Cliddesden. Out riding on the London Road, her horse stumbled, throwing her head down and falling on her. Recovering his feet, the animal galloped away at full speed, dragging Mrs Bradshaw along the road, her riding habit having caught in the pommel. Eventually rescued, Mrs Bradshaw was carried into *The Hatch Inn* where she died. The runaway horse was stopped on the Mapledurwell road by the vicar of Basing, the Revd R F Hussey, who at the time was returning on his tricycle from Up Nately.

1914. February 13 saw the first fatal car accident at the *Dorchester Arms* junction, Newnham (now *The Hoggett*). Mr Lunn, employed by W J Buckland who had a shop in Wote Street, Basingstoke, collided with a car in which T E Gilchrist was a passenger. He was the 35-year-old son of W O Gilchrist of Oakley Hall. Mr Lunn was uninjured but Mr Gilchrist suffered a fatal neck wound from a large splinter of wood and was taken to the *Dorchester Arms* public house, as it was then. A doctor from Odiham attended promptly, but was unable to save the casualty's life. An inquest was held at the school in Newnham the following day.



Total Motor Roadside at Newnham

Sue Lane / Jennie Butler

DAY CONFERENCE, Hampshire Field Club, Historic Buildings Section, in association with the new **Victoria County History of Hampshire**. "**The transformation of Victorian Basingstoke**", Milestones Museum, Basingstoke, 15 November. For further information see <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire/news/transformation-victorian-basingstoke>

Newnham Parish Walk

Our second walk to Newnham on 10 September, led by Stan Waight, was a very pleasant and instructive occasion, though truthfully, it was more of a stroll and several car journeys, as there was a lot of ground to cover between the chosen stops. These ranged from the relatively recent (a memorial plaque to 6 soldiers killed during the defusing of a bomb in 1940 and a WW2 pillbox next to the railway), through to the early Norman in St Nicholas' Church, still evident within the



19C restoration. The church is in the centre of the village, close to the Green, fringed with interesting old buildings, some of which have seen several different usages, but along the road towards Hook we were shown an altogether more unexpected religious building – a former Primitive Methodist Chapel, hiding behind a modern house. We also visited the two mills, one on each of the rivers bordering the parish before the creation of Hook, and enjoyed a sociable lunch – altogether a good way to spend a sunny autumn day.

Mary Oliver



Hampshire VCH group is currently researching the history of Basingstoke and its surrounding rural parishes. When a rural chapter or urban section is completed, it is published on the Hampshire section of the national **VCH** website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire> Transcriptions of documents used for research and short articles about interesting local people, places and themes are published on the Explore section of the same national **VCH** website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/>



Soup for the Poor

Robert Cottle, who was Mayor of Basingstoke five times, had a strong sense of civic duty. This extract from a draft letter in the Hampshire Record Office shows his concern that poor families should not go hungry and that the charitable Soup Kitchen should not be misused (HRO 46M89/14/1).

My Dear Sir, I regret to hear that our excellent Soup Society is very much abused, and that Families in this Town, where the Heads are in the receipt of from 18/- to 30/- per week, all the year round, regularly send for Peas Soup, at 1d per quart, every day of the distribution, to the exclusion of families who are really poor, and I may say almost destitute. I understand that on Friday last 9 very poor families could not be served in consequence of parties who are not entitled to the benefit of the Charity having been previously served. Truly this system requires an amendment, so that those families who are really poor, may be served in preference to those who do not stand in need of such assistance. The circumstance has been raised to me by several individuals.

I beg to suggest that any Family who may be considered entitled to a supply of Soup should be supplied with a printed Card similar to the one enclosed on which the name of the Family should be written, which the Party can retain, but on application for Soup must show the Card to the person in attendance before the Soup can be delivered. The names of all the Families to whom Cards are given to be entered in an Alphabetical Book, when the cards are issued, and an alphabetical list of all the recipients be stuck up in the Soup Kitchen in order that the attendant may have ready information and so that the Charity not be imposed upon. The tickets not to be transferable. I have now discharged a duty which I felt to be incumbent upon me in the hope that some remedy for the above complained of may be devised out of hand....

Robert Cottle Basingstoke Jan 9th 1854 *Barbara Applin*

WW2 Rationing in Cliddesden School

A recently discovered file at Cliddesden School sheds light on the procurement of school meals after WW2. Basingstoke shops supplied the strictly rationed supplies, as we can see from the receipts from *Cotton's Cash Stores* at 1/2 Downsland Parade. For an eight-week period the school was allowed 1½lb bacon (weekly), 1lb 5oz tea, 36lb preserves, 25lb cooking fat, 60½lb margarine, 75lb sugar and 7lb cheese. This would be for an average of 93 children and two or three teachers.



Nearer to the school the *PO and Stores* in Cliddesden (Mr W J Reeves in 1945, Mr Laker in 1947), was also a supplier. Receipts for 28/04/46, 16/09/46 (week 41), and 14/09/47 show an average order for 1½lb tea, 4lb preserves, 27lb cooking fat, 54lb margarine, 85lb sugar, 16lb cheese.

*One recent product of the work into the rural parishes is a piece in the latest Newsletter of the **Hampshire Field Club** looking at four of the parish churches of the area: Mapledurwell, Newnham, Up Natley and Natley Scures.*

Robert Cottle, a man of many parts, is mentioned in both these articles. The **VCH Explore** article contains much more information, including a transcript of his will:

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/items/robert-cottle-postmaster-stationer-book-binder-and-printer-winchester-street-basingstoke-1788>

Four Dozen Sparrow Heads

This is the Eastrop Churchwarden's account for 1823:

		£	s	d
Feb	Sparrow heads		1	0
Feb 23	Cottle's bill for prayer books	3	3	0
Apr 6	Smith clerk his salary	3	0	0
	Smith & wife cleaning church and churchyard one year	6	6	
May 27	Church visitation day	8	5½	
	4 doz n sparrow heads	1	4	
July 18	Sparrow heads			10
	Millard's bill repairing church	1	16	10
Sept 17	Andrew James' bill repairing the churchyard fence	9	0	
	John James one day	3	0	
	Churchwarden's oath	5	0	
	Visitation expenses for sundries	12	6	
Oct 4	Pritchett's bill for repairs &c	6	2	8½
	Bottle of wine for sacrament	5	3	
Nov 6	Mr Higgins' bill for singers' dinners &c	3	16	10

In many villages in the 19C the churchwardens paid for sparrow heads from the church rates. Most of the church rates in Eastrop parish were paid by landowners and farmers, who regarded sparrows as vermin, eating their corn. In some other villages there were sparrow head clubs which would pay a bounty for sparrows' heads and rats' tails. This tradition died out towards the middle of the 19C when sparrows were beginning to be regarded as the farmers' friends, for eating caterpillars and other insects that were destroying the farmers' crops. It was also reckoned that the birds ate more seeds of weeds than they ate corn.

Bob Clarke

To benefit the poor, the long term teacher in the Sunday school, William Gauntlett (d. 1796) of Upton Grey bequeathed all scholars, whether attending or not, a shilling and a threepenny plum cake, which was to be made by a baker in Odiham.

Wills Reading Group

The Co-op in Essex Road had a Ministry of Food permit to supply liquid milk on a daily basis and meat came from the *Empire Stores* in the Market Place. A Vitamin C boost with a suggested serving portion of 1oz/child/week was provided by orange juice jelly supplied by the Ministry of Food Welfare (Foods) Scheme costing 6½d / lb.

Rationing also applied to clothing, and in 1946, the headmaster had to apply to the Ministry of Labour and National Service for supplementary clothing coupons for his canteen and cleaning staff. Both Gladys M Rolfe, the cook, and her assistant, Elsie L Newman, were each awarded 10 extra points.

The Board of Trade *CONFIDENTIAL* circular sent to School Heads instructed them to measure children who were over 5'3" tall or weighed over 7st 12lbs, or had feet 9¼" boys, 8½" girls. We have a letter from ten year old Elsie Pittard's mother in 1946 applying to the headmaster for a form to present to the Food Office to enable Elsie to get her size 4 shoes.

Joan Wilson

Too Many Clothing Coupons?

In 1946 the Ministry of Food issued instructions on how the heads of establishments could apply for supplementary clothing coupons for children. The LEAs issued more forms than the number of children born from January 1936 onwards who might be expected to qualify for these. Heads of schools were asked to return the unused forms immediately.

Joan Wilson

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