

NEWSLETTER

Updating Hampshire's History

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Hampshire

Two members of VCH Hampshire who have passed away this year:

Barbara Applin (1936 - 2015)

The recent unexpected death of Barbara, one of the founder members of our volunteer group, and one of the most regular and productive, has been a great loss to us all. Her background and experience made her an ideal VCH contributor. An English graduate of Durham, Newcastle campus, she became interested in archaeology working on Hadrian's Wall. After working for the Museums Association in London, she came to Basingstoke as Assistant Curator at a very busy time, during town development. There was lots of archaeological work, rescuing items from buildings about to be demolished and excavating the newly discovered sites, all with the help of a group of enthusiastic volunteers. After the museum service moved its HQ to Winchester and could no longer supervise work in Basingstoke, the Basingstoke Archaeological Society was formed in 1971, with Barbara one of the founder members. It still flourishes, with Barbara taking an active part until her death.



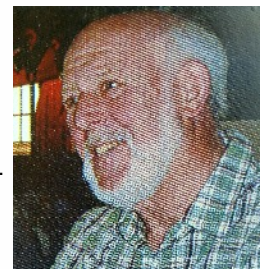
After working in the museum, Barbara had a career change, joining Macmillan's publishers where she became an editor, working on English as a foreign language and remaining with them until she retired in 1996. Her editing experience was put to good use for the Archaeological Society, for whom she edited a newsletter for over 40 years and also in producing local history books on a variety of subjects, including local health provision, the Co-op and even our famous roundabouts! For the VCH group, having quickly mastered palaeography, she cast her editorial eye over the transcripts of the wills and inventories that have been produced and other work ensuring the highest standards. She produced several articles on a variety of Basingstoke topics for the VCH Explore website. Her interest in local history grew over the years, and can be seen not only in her many books, but also in the 'Talking history' project she initiated – a series of interviews with people from many walks of life whose local experience is of value as an historical source. Barbara received a well-deserved personal achievement award from the British Association for Local History in 2009.

We shall miss her knowledge and willing help, but more than that, we shall miss her friendship, kindness and enthusiasm, her sense of fun.

Mary Oliver

Stan Waight (1928 - 2015)

Sadly one of our key members, Stan Waight died in May, aged 86. In the early 1980s Stan completed the Diploma in Local History Studies at Portsmouth University. As part of this course, Stan researched the Hampshire estates held by Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Stan was fascinated by landscape history and published his research in the *Proceedings of Hampshire Field Club*.



Stan's love of Hampshire history led him to volunteer for the New Victoria History of Hampshire project in its very early days. He made a huge contribution. In 2008 when the volunteer project began, Stan had been researching the estates held by Corpus Christi College, Oxford in Hampshire for 20 years. He delved into the College's excellent archive and in particular the wonderful Langdon maps drawn about 1616. Stan's substantial research there led to the selection of Mapledurwell as our first new published parish (*John Hare, Jean Morrin and Stan Waight, Mapledurwell, The Victoria History of Hampshire, London 2012*).

Once Mapledurwell was completed Stan researched and wrote up chapters of the parish histories of Nately Scures, Newnham and Up Nately which have been published as work in progress on the VCH website:

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

More chapters will be completed building on the sections which he had already written. Stan loved walking the countryside and led many walks in Mapledurwell explaining features of the landscape to other volunteers. Only last year he led the volunteer visit to Newnham and enjoyed passing on his knowledge and enthusiasm to the group. He was always very generous with his time and skills. He is greatly missed but his name will live on in VCH works, published and forthcoming. Jean Morrin

"Place-names of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight",

by Alfred Oscroft and edited by Professor Jim Wilkes, his grandson and a patron and generous sponsor of the VCH, is now available at the Hampshire Record Office, price £20.

VCH Hampshire Work in Progress

Hampshire VCH group is currently researching the history of Basingstoke and its surrounding parishes.

Since our last newsletter we have placed on the Hampshire section of the national VCH website material covering manors and estates in Herriard, Nately Scures and Old Basing; charities and poor relief in Upton Grey; education in Cliddesden and religious history in Old Basing: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire>.

We have also added to the Explore website, <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore>, articles about the people who lived at The Mount in Basingstoke and why the impresario who organised the balls Jane Austen attended in Basingstoke was sent to Newgate for six months; transcriptions of 32 wills and 29 inventories from Cliddesden from the 16th and 17th centuries, 20 wills and 9 inventories from Farleigh Wallop from 1521 to 1738 and 16 wills and 11 inventories from Basingstoke from 1641-50; and spreadsheets of Andwell and Nately Scures censuses.

The Explore website is used to publish short articles about interesting local people, places and themes and transcriptions of documents used for research.

Bob Clarke

UTILITIES and their FAILURES

Sanitary conditions in 1866

A series of cholera epidemics led the government to systematically investigate the public water and sewage environment. The poor law unions were responsible for this and much of the job was given to union medical officers, the men already on the ground all over the country. In Basingstoke, a detailed report was produced in 1866 for each of the 37 union parishes surrounding the town. Typical examples:



"Basing is naturally a very unhealthy place being situated in a low and swampy position and surrounded by water, the house accommodation in several parts of the villages is bad, there are not sufficient bedrooms for the size of the family, and the area of the rooms is too small, the ventilation is indifferent, and in an overcrowded state. Many of the houses have the privies close to the back door, others have no cesspools but open ditches into which everything runs, this in hot dry weather becomes very offensive... many of the inhabitants drink the river water."

Kempshott: "In cases of severe diarrhoea or cholera persons ought to be directed to mix the evacuations immediately after being passed with chloride of lime, wood ashes or anything which may be at hand at the time and then to bury them at a distance from any dwelling and cover them well with earth as dry as possible; all refuse water in which limbs soiled by the cholera patients have been washed ought to be mixed with some disinfecting fluid and also buried."

Basingstoke town was no better, exacerbated by the communal concentration of housing, animal husbandry, slaughter houses, drains and wells. None of this would improve until the arrival of universal modern plumbing more than 50 years later.

Barbara Large

Typhoid !!!

Basingstoke's Medical Officer of Health had long argued that the town's water supply from the Totterdown well was unsafe. He blamed the well for an epidemic of pustular tuberculosis which occurred in 1894-95.

In 1905 during major repairs, a contractor put a block in the sewer pipe and forgot to remove it. The block remained in place for over a month. The sewage from Reading Road, Coronation Road and Steam Mill Terrace backed up and escaped through a gap in the joints. Once free, the sewage went off on its travels, wandering through the porous chalk, until it dropped into the well and contaminated the town's water supply.



When the Borough Surveyor finally removed the block, he didn't tell the Medical Officer of Health about the sewage's great escape. It wasn't until some weeks later when people started to go down with typhoid that he remembered removing the block and told the Medical Officer that there might be something wrong with the water supply. The Medical Officer issued a series of notices advising people to boil the water. By then it was too late. Over 170 people caught the disease, 15 of whom died.

The fear of water at the time must have done wonders for beer sales. Except in the case of the *Cattle Market Inn* (now *The Bounty*) where the landlord's son caught typhoid and was being nursed at home. The landlord complained to the Council that, "as soon as it became known that I had the fever in my house, my business fell off altogether".

When the disease abated, the lawyers moved in. The *Portsmouth Evening News* commented: 'The Basingstoke Town Council have got over the typhoid visitation, only to find an epidemic of writs issued against them for damages. A burdened ratepayer asks, "Which is the most serious?"'

Bob Clarke

Clean water comes to Basingstoke

Prior to 1870 many dwellings relied on wells in their gardens often contaminated with sewage and even effluent from the slaughter houses. In 1852 the death rate was 17 per 1,000 pa., a large proportion of which was put down to the bad water supply.



The Basingstoke and Eastrop Waterworks Company Ltd was formed in 1870. The Corn Company (Raynbird, Caldecott, Bawtree, Dowling & Co Ltd.), merchants in corn, seed, manure and oil cake operated a condensing steam mill using a natural 30ft well in a former chalk pit in Totterdown, just south of the railway. They were contracted to pump their excess water to a newly constructed 315,000 gallon reservoir on high ground in Darlington Road, South View.

In 1880 the Corporation took over the water supply and in 1883, compulsorily purchased land around Brook Street, Springfield, Essex and Flaxfield Roads with the remit of maintaining wells and installing pumps.

Various new schemes were proposed from 1891 but things did not progress until 1903 when a 275ft well was sunk near Cliddesden. In 1906 a 60ft well and pumping station was built at West Ham which can still be seen near Milestones Museum. Water was pumped from here to a new 240,000 gallon reservoir at Cliddesden and then distributed to the town by gravity. This provided an ample supply for the town and for the railway station, which took one third of the total. The death rate in Basingstoke in 1906 improved to 10.8 per 1,000 pa.

Sewerage: The main sewer was laid in 1879 in stoneware pipes running through the low lying part of town to the pumping station in Basing Road. It was lifted to a tank on the sewage farm at Cowdreys Down one mile north-east between the GWR and LSWR lines. The chalk and thin soil here allowed the effluent to seep away. Six plots of four acres were irrigated in rotation with crops of mangolds and rye grass being grown during intervals of rest. A few houses at Cliddesden and cottages in South View continued to have pail closets emptied about twice weekly. Other rubbish was collected twice weekly and burnt in the destructor situated at the sewage pumping station.

Jennie Butler

Gas lighting (1)

The privately owned Basingstoke Gas & Coke Company was formed in 1834 and started supplying gas the same year at a price of 14/- per 1000 cubic foot. The first gas holder on Norderm (Norm) Hill supplied the first public lighting at the Wheatsheaf Inn, and for 150 consumers. Public lighting costs were met by the Commissioners of Pavement and the Turnpike Trustees. A close watch was made on public lighting and it was only used on clouded evenings and never when there was a full moon! The company controlled the use of gas as their lamplighter lit and extinguished the lamps.



Congratulations were offered to those responsible for bringing gas to Basingstoke, in particular because it was felt that 'it tends materially to the ornament, security and respectability of the town' with an improvement in moral delinquency!

During the first one hundred years it was recorded that no serious accident to life or property had occurred.

Joan Wilson

Gas lighting (2)

A letter from The Basingstoke Gas Company to the Borough Surveyor, W Budden, in March 1890, complained that the mains-supplied lamp outside the Town Hall was often in use even when the 'Large Cubic Lamp in the Square' was lit, hence wasting gas. It is only to be used if said Lamp is 'fractured', when it then becomes 'very useful', having been 'installed for this very purpose'.

Bob Applin