



# *THE CHRISTCHURCH ANTIQUARIANS*

## **Newsletter, March 2018**

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### **A WORD FROM THE EDITOR**

#### **Roger Donne**

Welcome to the March 2018 issue of our occasional newsletter.

In this issue, I've showcased some of our member Steve Fox's painstaking work which he has carried out to analyse the fragments of pottery found in the 50-odd test pits we have dug at Millhams. The article is illustrated by a photograph of one of Steve's remarkable reconstructions.

David Eels has contributed an article inspired by two talks he presented following our AGMs in 2015 and 2017 concerning the Magna Carta and the historical events and battles which followed the issue of the original version after the meeting of King John with the barons at Runnymede.

Mike Tizzard has provided his usual update on excavations at Millhams. I've written up a couple of articles, one describing some home experiments in phosphate analysis, trying to derive further information from the several layers of soil through which we have been digging at Millhams while the other explores the wealth of information revealed from LIDAR data, now freely available from the Environment Agency.

New material and authors are always welcome so if you have an idea for an article in future issues please let me know.

## MILLHAMS POTTERY SHOWCASE

**Roger Donne**



Our member Steve Fox has a good eye for detail and has taken on the task of weighing, classifying and sorting the pottery fragments we have recovered from the fifty or more test pits we have excavated at Millhams. While most of the finds are of small fragments found amongst water-borne gravels, occasionally we find larger pieces. Steve's meticulous work has recognised several pieces often from adjacent pits which can actually be associated with the same pot, and he has carefully reconstructed these where possible, using conservation-quality adhesive so that they can

actually be taken apart if necessary. One of the more spectacular reconstructions is shown in the photograph above.

## TWO BATTLES IN 1217 WHICH SAVED MAGNA CARTA: LINCOLN AND SANDWICH

**David Eels**

Three years ago prior to the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, I gave a talk following the TCA AGM on Magna Carta and pointed out several myths, both national and local, associated with it. In June 2015, the country commemorated the octocentenary of the Runnymede meeting at which King John agreed to the terms of Magna Carta, so named because of its length (63 clauses) not because of its importance. However, John's reputation for bad faith surfaced again as he had no intention of keeping the agreement. The ink on the charter was barely dry before the cunning king sent envoys to Rome to persuade the pope to annul the charter as he had not granted it of his own free will. This and the events of the next two years were largely ignored in the 2015 commemorations.

When the pope's letter granting John's request arrived in England in early September the charter was effectively dead and buried. As a consequence civil war soon erupted and it was due to two important but little-known battles fought in 1217 that Magna Carta was saved and eventually reached the statute book so giving us something to commemorate. The leading men who were responsible for winning these battles on behalf of the nine-year-old Henry III had connections with Christchurch or with the lords of Christchurch. These were the aged William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, Hubert de Burgh, who in 1227 was to be created Earl of Kent, Peter des Roches, the military-minded Bishop of Winchester, Ranulph, Earl of Chester, and Fawkes de Breauté.

The wealthy Anglo-Norman family of de Redvers (earls of Devon from 1141) were lords of Christchurch from circa 1100 to 1293. **Ranulph, Earl of Chester** was the nephew of Lucy of Chester who was the second wife of Baldwin de Redvers, the 1st Earl of Devon, and she was the first witness to Baldwin's charter to the burgesses of Christchurch in the 1150s. (A simplified de Redvers family tree and details of this charter are in my booklet *The Medieval Markets and Fairs of Christchurch* which is still in print.) In January 1200 the elderly William de Redvers, the 5th Earl of Devon, had no sons but two daughters, both of whom were under the age of ten, and "at the request of the king" (King John) they were betrothed to royal favourites. A royal charter dated 28 April 1200 confirms the younger

daughter's betrothal to **Hubert de Burgh** who would have the honours of Carisbrooke and Christchurch after the earl's death provided no son was born to William's wife, the Countess Mabel. When a son was born and seen to survive Hubert withdrew from the contract. This son named Baldwin (the third of five Baldwins in the Redvers pedigree) did not inherit as he died prior to his father on 1 September 1216 and was buried in Christchurch Priory where his inscribed tombstone is under the carpet in the Great Quire. The young Baldwin had been married to Margaret the daughter and heir of Warin FitzGerold who was King John's chamberlain and listed as an adviser in the introduction to Magna Carta. Before his death the young Baldwin had fathered a son (another Baldwin) who may have been born posthumously. Within a month of her young husband's death, King John, in contravention of Clause 8 of Magna Carta, forced Margaret to marry one of his foreign favourites, the hated **Fawkes de Breauté** who was also a good military leader. The aged Earl of Devon died in 1217, and in the following year Fawkes was granted custody of the lands of the earldom which included Christchurch. In 1233 **Peter des Roches**, the Bishop of Winchester, was granted custody of Christchurch until the young Baldwin came of age. The most important of the five leaders listed above was **William Marshal**, Earl of Pembroke who was grandfather of Amicia de Clare. While still a child, Amicia was married to another child, Baldwin de Redvers (Margaret's son), the future 6th Earl of Devon. (The Countess Amicia and her son the 7th Earl of Devon feature in the last chapter of my book *The Medieval Markets and Fairs of Christchurch* as the 7th Earl gave Christchurch its St. Faith's Fair and he also gave the burgesses their second charter.)

Following the pope's annulment of Magna Carta, a force of rebel barons took control of the strategically important Rochester Castle. Since June King John had been recruiting more mercenary soldiers from the continent and he soon arrived to besiege the castle. After a seven-week siege the castle was forced to surrender due to undermining which caused the collapse of one corner of the huge keep. John then gave his mercenaries freedom to plunder further afield before ordering them to go north ravaging the lands of his opponents in East Anglia and eastern England. After Christmas he sent them further north to do likewise.

The now desperate rebels sent to France to urge Prince Louis, the Dauphin, to bring an army to depose John and take the throne. (Louis maintained that he had a claim to the English throne because his wife was the

granddaughter of Henry II.) In May 1216 Louis landed at Sandwich with a large army. Rather than confronting his enemy, the cowardly John turned and fled as he had often done in the past which had earned him the nickname of ‘Soft-sword’. On 2 June Louis entered London where he was welcomed, and had taken Winchester by the end of the month, after which he paused to consolidate his hold on the south-east.

In the middle of October King John conveniently died, leaving a nine-year-old son Henry as his heir who was hastily crowned as Henry III. The aged **William Marshal**, Earl of Pembroke, who had already been a loyal servant to four kings, was chosen as Regent. One of his first acts was to reissue Magna Carta, leaving out the more controversial clauses which had been particularly aimed at King John, and offered amnesties to those rebel barons who would return to the royal fold. During the winter lull in the fighting more rebels took advantage of this amnesty.

By the spring of 1217 Lincoln Castle was the only royal castle in eastern England still in royal hands so Louis sent some of his forces north to reinforce the rebel forces besieging the castle. **William Marshal** decided to try to break the siege, so the Battle of Lincoln was fought on 20 May. The French and rebels in the city numbered about 1,500 when Marshal approached by night with a smaller force of about 900 men. Detachments under the command of the **Earl of Chester** and **Fawkes de Breauté** made diversionary raids before the seventy-year-old **William Marshal**, with the **Bishop of Winchester** alongside him, led the charge of mounted knights into the city and was himself in the thick of the fighting. The French commander and some of the rebels were killed together with a large number of the besieging infantry, while over 400 knights were captured including some of the rebel leaders. This defeat caused the rebel baronial party to start to fracture. (I gave a detailed account of this battle and the events leading up to it in a presentation following our 2017 AGM.)

When Louis heard the news from Lincoln he recalled to London his troops besieging Dover Castle which had been gallantly defended by **Hubert de Burgh**. The now desperate Louis sent to France for reinforcements and supplies. In August a fleet of eighty slow-moving, heavily-laden French transport ships bringing these supplies and reinforcements approached the Kent coast. On the 24th it was intercepted near Sandwich by an English fleet of about forty much lighter ships under the command of **Hubert de Burgh**. Hubert led the quicker English ships upwind of the French from

where they were able to throw pots of quicklime onto the decks of the French vessels. With many of the Frenchmen blinded the English were able to board the French vessels slaughtering the soldiers. Those French ships that survived the battle returned to France. Now unable to continue his fight for the English throne Louis had to sue for peace and a month later he returned to France.

William Marshal showed his statesmanship by being lenient with the rebels and on 6 November reissued Magna Carta now reduced to 39 clauses and excluding all reference to the forests. At the same time he issued a separate Charter of the Forest consisting of sixteen clauses and containing greater and more radical reforms than there had been in John's Magna Carta. As the under-age king didn't have a seal these two charters were issued under Marshal's seal.

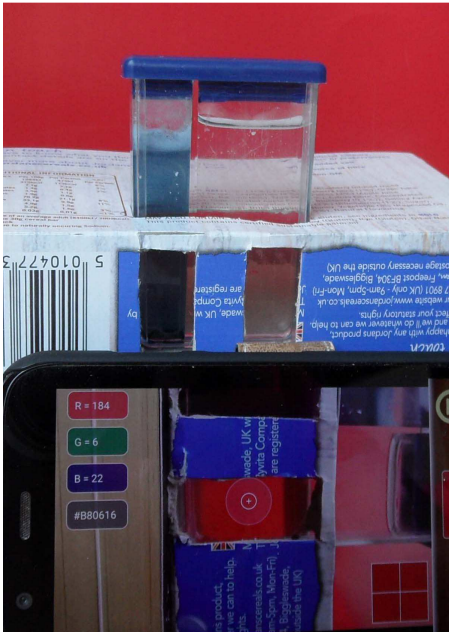
William Marshal died in 1219 and at his funeral Archbishop Langton described him as "the greatest knight in all the world". From all that I have read about him in the last sixty years I would describe him as probably the greatest Englishman of his time and one of the greatest Englishmen of the Middle Ages. After his death his work of reconciliation and good government was continued by the justiciar Hubert de Burgh who took over the reins of government. When Henry III came of age in 1225 he reissued the 1217 charter under his own seal stating that it was granted "of our own spontaneous good will" and it was this text which reached the statute book in 1297. It was due to the determination and liberal attitude of William Marshal, together with the royalist victories at Lincoln and Sandwich that there was a Magna Carta for us to commemorate in 2015. The New Forest National Park commemorated the octocentenary of Marshal's 1217 Charter of the Forest, but I haven't read of any commemorations of the battles of Lincoln and Sandwich except in Lincoln itself. If it hadn't been for these two battles the rule of Norman and Angevin kings would have ended and England would have become part of France, probably under authoritarian rule as Louis does not seem to have shown any interest in the charter and quite probably the majority of the beneficiaries in the redistribution of forfeited English lands would have been his French companions as had happened in 1066.

# EXPERIMENTS IN SOIL ANALYSIS

## Roger Donne

I have often looked at the many distinct layers of soil through which we excavate to reveal the medieval landscape and wonder what information they may hold if only we had the knowledge and techniques to analyse them in the correct detail.

My attention was engaged by the technique of phosphate analysis which I had read had been used by archaeologists as an indicator of human



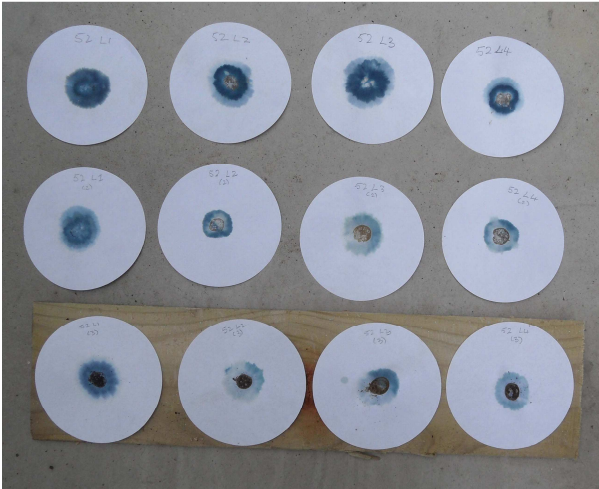
*Makeshift mobile phone colorimeter measuring red light transmission through the sample of blue-tinted liquid using a test chamber from a soil test kit*

occupation. A powdered reagent is then added and the resulting blue colouring is compared with a colour chart to obtain a qualitative estimate of amount of phosphate in the soil. I tried to refine that further by using a colorimeter app on my mobile phone to quantify the phosphate concentration by measuring the transmission of light reflected from a red card through the blue solution. Unfortunately my experiments came to naught when the test samples all reacted with the reagent to form not a translucent coloured

Not to put too fine a point on it, phosphate is a large component of human and animal waste and is therefore found in high concentrations in the soils and middens surrounding human settlements. It seemed that there was a possibility that it would be found in the sediments on the outskirts of the medieval town of Christchurch where the river may have been used as a method of disposal. Also in our quest for a site of habitation at Little Millhams I thought that a phosphate analysis may help us to refine our search area.

My first attempt involved a garden soil test kit in which the phosphate is extracted from a soil sample by shaking with water and leaving the sediment to settle until a clear sample can be drawn

solution but rather to cast a precipitate of dark blue/black flakes which completely upset any attempt at comparison with the colour chart.



*Testing for consistency of phosphate field test results for samples from layers 1, 2, 3, 4, identified in Pit 52.*

After some googling, my second attempt involved the implementation of a technique developed for archaeological phosphate testing in the field. This proved rather more daunting to procure the chemicals used but with the help of ebay I was surprised at what could be bought on the internet including the required hydrochloric acid!

The test involves extracting the phosphate from a small sample of soil placed on a filter paper using a reagent consisting of a solution of ammonium molybdate in diluted hydrochloric acid. After waiting a short time a solution of ascorbic acid is added to the sample and the development of the blue colour on the filter paper is observed. The procedure involves giving scores for various factors including the time it takes for the colour to develop and the size of the blue rings produced. This technique was tested using samples of soil from various layers in Pit 52 (see Mike Tizzard's article on our recent excavations at Millhams) in the hope that one of these layers may show a stronger reaction than others and hence indicate an occupation layer. One attempt to determine the consistency of the test is shown in the photograph above where I carried out 3 separate tests on samples from layers 1, 2, 3, 4. As with the previous test it proved very difficult to form a view of the strength of the reaction between the various soil samples. Perhaps this would improve as familiarity with the technique increased with its continued use.

So unfortunately both of attempts at phosphate analysis came to naught. There is a wealth of information on the internet which indicates that such



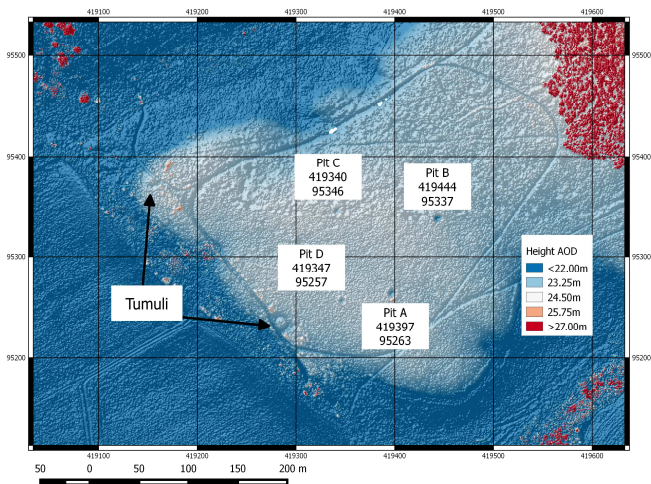
analysis has proved useful in answering certain questions about occupation. However it is possible that our site does not provide the variation in phosphate by depth or area which enables us to draw any conclusions about occupation using this technique; that could only be answered by a more systematic and experienced application of the technique.

## LIDAR REVEALS THE LANDSCAPE IN FINE DETAIL

### Roger Donne

As many of you will know, the LIDAR project in the New Forest ([http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20097/history\\_and\\_culture/267/heritage\\_mapping](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20097/history_and_culture/267/heritage_mapping)) provided a means to map the detailed topography of the ground surface, even cutting through foliage cover to reveal archaeological features. The technique is similar to radar but uses beams of light to map

the ground surface from a low flying aircraft. The laser transmitter and receiver are linked to the aircraft's navigation system, itself linked to satellite-based GPS systems, and can correct for the roll, pitch and yaw of the aircraft to determine the beam pointing to extraordinary accuracy – mapping precisions



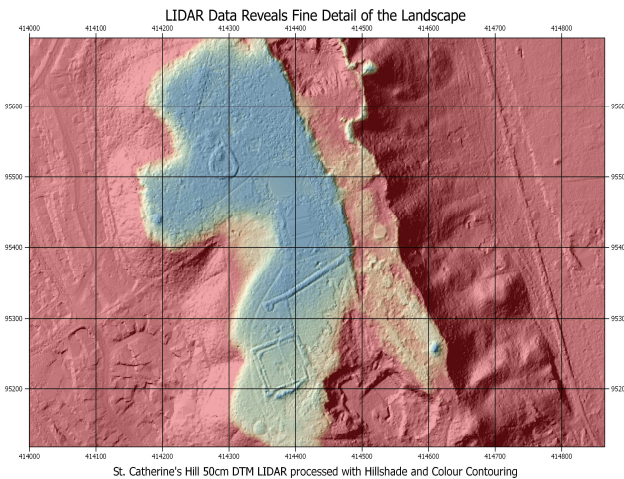
*LIDAR plot of Gus Common with colour contouring and hillshade applied – labels show OS coordinates for pits of 50cm are commonly available.*

Now the New Forest LIDAR data as well as data from a comprehensive LIDAR and photo mapping of the UK is available free of charge from the UK's Environment Agency and can be downloaded from their website at <http://environment.data.gov.uk/ds/survey/#/survey> from which the available datasets can be located via a clickable map of England, Wales and Scotland. Datasets are available at various mapping precisions from 2m

down to 50cm, and can be had as a Digital Surface Model (DSM) or a Digital Terrain Model (DTM). The DTM is derived from the DSM by using computer processing to remove the obvious surface structures such as buildings and perhaps reveal more of the ground surface which is arguably what the archaeologist needs in the discovery of earthworks and ancient features of the landscape.

The data is referenced by the 10km x 10km squares used in Ordnance Survey mapping and around Christchurch most of the sites will be contained in square denoted by SZ19 i.e. the square with its south-west corner at grid reference SZ100900. The dataset for square SZ19 contains 100 individual sets of data covering each of the 1km x 1km squares which comprise the 10,000 hectare area. Unfortunately the available data do not provide an immediately recognisable image but instead comprise an array of numbers which require further processing to make a picture which can be easily interpreted by eye. This requires the use of a piece of software known as geographical information system (GIS) but fortunately there are several such applications available as freeware – all Millhams mapping is now carried out using an excellent free GIS known as QGIS.

Once the LIDAR data has been imported into the GIS a number of procedures can be applied to it in order to enhance its interpretability.



*LIDAR plot for St. Catherine's Hill with colour contouring and hillshade*

Colour contouring can be applied to it so that the variations in level can be made apparent and this can be applied selectively to enhance the resolution in height through a particular range of elevations. Also a particularly powerful means of interpretation is by 'hillshade' in which software processing is applied to simulate

the effect of sunlight in creating shadows from surface features – we are all familiar with the dramatic effects which can sometimes be observed from the low early morning sun on a landscape.

In this article, I have reproduced two of the investigations I've carried out around Christchurch using the 50cm DSM LIDAR data available for grid square SZ19. These comprise a survey of St. Catherine's Hill and also a survey of Burton, or Gus, Common. Data for the Little Millhams excavation site have also been processed but no features of archaeological interest are discernible from the modern ground surface.

The Gus Common data was used to interpret the two tumuli which are shown on the OS map and which can also be discerned on the ground. The LIDAR data (page 9) clearly shows the tumuli and the remains of the surrounding ditches. Also rather surprising were the pits which show up on the common. These were interpreted as WWII bomb craters, previously unlisted although there are such features recorded further north on the Common.

The figure on page 10 shows a LIDAR plot of St. Catherine's Hill produced for the 2017 History Day on the Hill and intended to reveal the WWI excavations carried out by New Zealand sappers in training in the area. Although the remains of the WWI trenches cannot be seen, well-known archaeological features as well as the modern quarrying can be discerned.

## **EXCAVATIONS AT MILLHAMS 2016/ 2017**

### **Mike Tizzard**

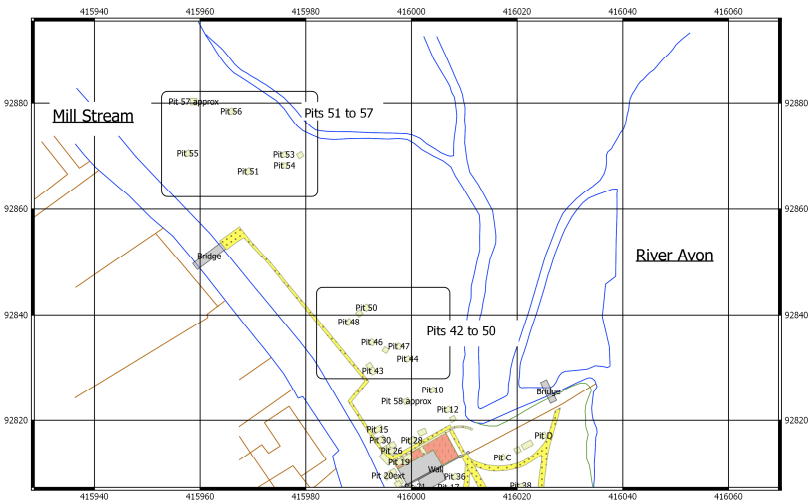
During 2017, as we had been doing during part of 2016, we moved away from the main mill site near the 'donkey shed' to investigate other parts of the north garden. After digging a number of pits (42-50) in 2016, it became apparent that there was possibly another channel running in a SE/NW direction across the garden and perhaps discharging into the little creek in the SE corner of the garden. The near end of the new channel was possibly picked up in Pit 10 but we didn't realise at the time.

The bottom of the prospective channel was approximately 2m below the present ground level with the usual fill of silt, sand and gravel. Virtually all the pits dug on the channel produced the usual range of 13th and 14th

pottery, both coarseware and glazed sherds, with a few bits of metal, mainly nails and also some small lumps and flecks of red ochre.

There was also at the bottom in some of the pits, preserved organic material similar to what we had seen before in the form of well-preserved small twigs and leaves which appeared to be mainly birch and willow.

This channel fill is very similar to the main mill channel, especially the ochre which suggests the possibility of another mill in the vicinity. One thing that became apparent when we got to the bottom of the pit was that water was still flowing (through the gravel) and had to be pumped out regularly, so the buried channel was still very active.



*Scene of operations for the 2016/2017 excavations at Millhams*

Our activities were restricted by the presence of a number of bee hives about half way up the garden. Unfortunately that made it difficult to dig near them as the bees became quite aggressive and several of our group got stung without any warning! However, we started 2017 about three quarters of the way up the garden and well clear of the beehives, to try and locate the projected line of where we thought the new channel might be. In the end we dug four pits (51-54), none of which came down on a channel as such but all went down to a similar depth of about 2m or more. This appeared to be more likely a pond perhaps feeding into the channel. All pits produce the usual finds of similarly dated pottery as before and small amounts of red ochre.

In one of the pits (52) we found a number of sharpened wooden stakes approximately 7cms in diameter; these were all lying more or less together at the bottom on the gravel bed. It was difficult to record them in situ as water was filling the pit faster than we could pump it out. It was also difficult to establish how long they were since all of them ran into the side wall of the pit and broke off very easily, but each was probably originally longer than a metre. Their age and function is not clear but possibly they were the remains of a revetment along the channel bank. There was no sign of any other structure although evidence of the pottery and other finds suggests some activity in this area in the 13th and 14th century.

We then moved even further up the garden in an area overgrown with small trees and undergrowth. After some clearing, several pits (55, 56 and 57) were dug with similar results as before. However one pit (55) was not as deep as many of the others. At a depth of about 1m there was a layer of dark grey sandy silt that contained a spread of medieval pottery, oyster shells, red ochre flecks and charcoal. Running through this layer of approximately 10cms to 25cms, there were the remains of a small sharpened stake about 20cms long, well preserved at the bottom but decayed at the top indicating that it had been exposed to the air at some time.

We had found similar layers at a similar depth elsewhere in the garden and my interpretation is that this represents the original medieval ground level with varying silt layers above. It is possible that the mill and garden area generally were abandoned somewhere around the 14th/15th century as no datable material in any subsequent layers of silt were found until the topsoil, with items from the late 18th to early 19th century.

In several pits we had also encountered the part rotted remains of small tree roots, probably no more than about 15 years maturity and all at a depth of about 1m. None of the trees showed signs of being cut down but all had rotted at the top perhaps due to the area being flooded.

The silt above the medieval layer must have been laid down by flowing water from the river Avon during prolonged flooding, perhaps due to rising sea levels and heavy rainfall from time to time washing sediment down from the Avon valley. This perhaps led to the area being rendered too wet to cultivate or graze until a later period when the ground had built-up sufficiently to be of use again. We found that in some areas of the garden, earth and gravel had been dumped to help build up the ground level, especially around the creek and along the Millstream.

During our last session at Millhams in December 2017, we dug pit 58, next to the old raised flower bed in front of the donkey shed, in an attempt to find evidence of a house that is recorded as being somewhere near the mill.

Unfortunately the ground here had been heavily disturbed in more recent times with very mixed topsoil down to a depth of almost a metre. There was however the part remains of again what I think is the original medieval ground level of dark grey sandy silt, which had been cut into in part. Under the grey sandy silt was the underlying natural bright orange silt and sand. In the grey sandy silt, there were no signs of any structure as such but there were the much rotted remains of a flat-ended wooden post approximately 10cms square and 8cms high, in situ in the remains of a post hole. There was also two very corroded nails one piece of medieval pot and a lump of ironstone with mortar attached to it possibly evidence of a structure that was once nearby. Hopefully in 2018 we might find some evidence of further structures.

## **FSCH HISTORY DAY – SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **Roger Donne**



*Open for business but waiting for customers – TCA stall at the 2017 FSCH History Day*

TCA were pleased to take up the invitation to set up our stall on the biennial Friends of St. Catherine’s Hill History Day in September 2017. This year the event benefitted from HLF funding with a World War 1 theme, celebrating the involvement of New Zealand engineers in training on the Hill.

## **SKELETONS IN THE CASTLE DITCH!**

### **Mike Tizzard**

Over the years, I’ve collected a small number of old Christchurch guide books and pamphlets. They are mainly in a similar format giving a brief

history of the Priory, Castle and Town generally with a bit about some of the present businesses around the Town. One of the little pamphlets which unfortunately has no cover, publisher or publication date, has an interesting but brief mention of an event that took place some years before.

Judging by the style of printing and a mention of the '*present vicar Z*' (believed to be the Rev. Zackary Nash, whose death is recorded on a grave in Christchurch Priory churchyard as 17 Nov 1883), the pamphlet is most probably late 19th century and the event reported may have happened some years before.

In a section under the heading 'The Keep' it makes reference to the ground formerly the bowling green and surrounding area owned by the King's Arms and says, '*The ground here is probably rich in remains of ancient work as it has remained undisturbed for centuries. In digging a foundation some years ago, many skeletons were found in the place formerly occupied by the moat, these may have been those slain in the known attack on the castle mentioned earlier in this work*'. The 'attack' mentioned previously in the pamphlet by the writer was said to have occurred during the 12th century Stephen and Matilda civil war!

I've not seen any mention of the finding of skeletons in the ditch before in any of the usual history books so the story was quite intriguing! Unfortunately no other details were given but presumably the ditch referred to must be the stretch running parallel and fronting Castle Street and the 'digging a foundation' was perhaps when the stretch of wall was being built along the entrance close to the New Forest Perfumery.

Last year a further reference to this event was found by local historian Sue Newman when looking through some old newspaper clippings in a scrapbook in the Bournemouth Natural Science Society's archive. Apparently around 1910, George Brownen had taken a party of BNSS members to Christchurch to look at places of historical interest, and while in the area of what was then the King's Arms garden, it was pointed out that '*some years ago a vast number of bones of men and horses were found buried a little below the surface of the ground*'. The article claims that the carnage resulted from a battle which took place between the followers of R. (*sic*, probably refers to Walter) de Pinckney, '*a freebooter*', and the townspeople and monks of Twynham.

Unfortunately, this is all we have so far on the finding of the skeletons. Whether they are from the historical events mentioned seems improbable.

The fact they were found just under the surface indicates a more recent event than those suggested by either of the writers, perhaps the English Civil War (1642-1651). So what happened to the finds? Were they dug up and re-buried or just covered over again? Hopefully that was the case and future archaeologists will find them again one day to tell their story!

## **BOOKSHELF**

### **‘The Lords of Christchurch 1331 to 1480s’, David Eels (Natula Publications)**

In this book, TCA member and well-known local historian David Eels has presented the results of his long-term study of the families associated with Christchurch Castle, these being the Montacute earls of Salisbury and their lineal descendants through marriage with the names of Neville and Plantagenet. This important book solves many of the mysteries and inconsistencies which have appeared in previous accounts of the succession of ownership and has been carefully researched by reference to contemporary documents. David links these family histories with local events including the mustering of troops at Christchurch for Henry V’s French campaigns which included Agincourt. Throughout the book David demonstrates how much local history can be linked to prominent people and important events in our national history.

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## **TCA CONTACT DETAILS**

If you would like to know more about The Christchurch Antiquarians or about any of the articles in this newsletter, please contact either the Chairman or the Secretary, as below.

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
Mike Tizzard 61 Jumpers Road Christchurch BH23 2JS  Tel: 01202 476242 email: m.tizzard@ntlworld.com	Roger Donne 15 Barnfield Christchurch BH23 4QY  Tel: 01425 273333 email: tca@donne.free-online.co.uk

If you would like to join TCA, please contact either of the above officers.

TCA website & blog: <http://christchurchantiquarians.wordpress.com>

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