

# BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Patron: Ailsa Montagu



No. 14 April 2011

## Editorial

This newsletter contains reports of the Annual General Meeting and the talk on 'Beaulieu before the Black Death' which followed.

Rather than articles on the History of Beaulieu, this edition has an enclosure which is a chapter from a book entitled 'The New Forest: Its History and its Scenery' written in 1863 by John Wise. It is the chapter in which he describes Beaulieu Abbey. It is a splendid, well-written book and worthy of reading.

## NEXT MEETING

### The History of Curtle House

presented by John and Anne Coles

Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup> & Friday April 15<sup>th</sup>

The last meeting this season will be at Curtle House by kind invitation of Ian and Caroline Maiden. There will be a presentation on the history of this extremely interesting house and an opportunity to see parts of it. As space is limited, Ian and Caroline have offered to host the event on two successive evenings, Thursday, 14 April and Friday, 15 April, both at 6.30.

There are no more places for the Thursday meeting but a few remain for Friday. Please inform the Secretary, Gill Hawkins, on 01590 611143 or [jr.hawkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jr.hawkins@tiscali.co.uk) First come, first served! Please park in the High Street or the Village Car Park. For those for whom it is essential to drive up to the house there will be parking spaces for about 8 -10 cars in the drive.

Minutes of the AGM  
held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Committee: Chairman Sir John Coles, Vice Chairman Mrs Rosemary Johnson, Treasurer The Hon. Emma Page, Secretary Mrs Gillian Hawkins. The Hon. Ralph Montagu, Lady Anne Coles and Mr Anthony Norris

Apologies received from: Mr & Mrs Gayner, Mrs O'Donnell, Mr & Mrs Derricks, Mr & Mrs Rostand, Mr & Mrs Tyrell, Mrs Badland, Mrs Murley, The Lady Lucy & Mr Pelham, Mrs Bigazzi, Mr & Mrs Cooke-Hurle, Mrs Sue Nicholas, Mr Hudson-Davies, Mr N. Bryant, Mr & Mrs Lester.

Chairman's report:

Sir John reported that the Society had had another good year. Membership was flourishing and the financial situation was sound.

At their last meeting the committee had discussed ways of diversifying the programme somewhat and planned to implement that in the new programme starting in the autumn. The Society would however continue to present lectures which were seen as an indispensable means of informing members about the history of the Beaulieu region.

Projects on the older houses of Beaulieu had led to some good research and some enjoyable house visits. The Society had now covered Kelham, Beufre, Drokes, Hilltop House and of course the High Street with its many houses of interest.

The Chairman hoped the Society could strengthen its research activities which were fundamental to the aim of increasing knowledge of Beaulieu's history. There had been progress in 2010. A number of members had embarked on the task of learning to read mediaeval and later documents, under the tutelage of Richard Reeves. Tony Norris's newsletter always contained the fruits of his most recent research. The various house projects had involved original research too.

The Chairman encouraged members to do more in this area. A good way to start was to visit the Hampshire Records Office in Winchester. Committee member Anne Coles was willing to assist members in getting started on research projects and would give full information on using the Records Office.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for all their efforts last year. Three members of the committee, Rosemary Johnson, Tony Norris and Gill Hawkins had arranged events for the programme. The treasurer had looked after the financial affairs with great efficiency, whilst continuing with her own historical research. All the committee helped with all the activities and then there was a kind of shadow committee of volunteer helpers who arranged the hall, served drinks, manned the entrance and cleared up. We were deeply indebted to them.

The Chairman then said that by this time next year he would be in his fifth year as Chairman. After much careful thought he had reached the view that that would be long enough. He was sure that it was good for a Society like this to change its chair from time to time. So, if re-elected for a further year this evening, *he* would stand down at the AGM next year. The Chairman thanked the members of the Society for their enthusiasm and support.

#### Secretary's report:

The Secretary reported that since the last AGM in February 2010 the Society had held four meetings and Tony Norris had produced three excellent newsletters. She then confirmed that the membership of the Society was indeed flourishing with 217 members.

A decision had been taken at the last AGM to simplify the subscription process by changing to a single subscription rate of £5 for each member. The secretary mentioned that membership cards were again being issued; the advantages of this were firstly as a receipt for payment and secondly as a reminder that payment had been made. The secretary thanked Brett Johnson for producing the cards.

The Secretary also thanked the many members who used e-mail as that helped to reduce postal costs for the Society considerably. The Secretary was able to respond to and update those members on all aspects of the Society's activities at no cost. The hand delivery of many newsletters, organised by Tony Norris, was another way of reducing postal costs.

#### Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer was happy to report that the financial situation of the Society was very sound and she referred members to the financial report.

#### Approval of the accounts for 2009:

Proposed by Sydney Jackson, seconded by John Beaumont. *Approved Annual*

#### Subscriptions:

The Chairman stated that the committee was proposing that the subscription of £5 per member not be changed.

Proposed by John Hawkins, seconded by Mary Scott - Montagu. *Approved*

#### Appointment of Auditor:

Christine Dare had been asked to continue as Auditor and was willing to do so.

Proposed by Pauline Smith, seconded by Margaret Jackson. Christine Dare was duly reappointed.

## Election of Officers:

The Chairman stated that all Committee Members and Officers of the Society were willing to stand again for re-election and no others had been proposed. The Officers standing for re-election were: John Coles as Chairman and Rosemary Johnson as Vice-Chairman. Emma Page as Treasurer and Gill Hawkins as Secretary.

Proposed by Lady Chichester, seconded by Sue Markby. *Approved*

The committee members standing for re-election were: Ralph Montagu, Anne Coles and Tony Norris.

Proposed by Mary Scott - Montagu, seconded by Jenny Graefe. *Approved.*

AOB: John Beaumont thanked the Society for its work in presenting a very interesting programme.

Mary Scott - Montagu asked if recordings & copies of minutes of Society meetings were sent to the New Forest Library & the Winchester Records Office. The Chairman responded that the New Forest Library received copies of the newsletters but that we would in future consider sending recordings and copies of the programmes to the Library and to Winchester.

Ailsa Montagu, The Society Patron, thanked the committee for an enjoyable and successful year and said she was glad that John Coles would remain as Chairman for one more year. The meeting closed at 7pm.

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that 2011 subscriptions are now due.

Membership Subscriptions are £5 per person.

Cheques should be made out to Beaulieu History Society. Please send subscriptions to the Secretary, Mrs Gill Hawkins, 11 The Hummicks, Dock Lane, Beaulieu, Hampshire S042 7YU.

### THE BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY

#### Officers and Committee:

John Coles [Chairman], Gill Hawkins [Secretary], Anthony Norris [Publicity & Newsletter editor], Emma Page [Treasurer], Rosemary Johnson [Events Secretary and Deputy Chairman], Ralph Montagu, and Ann Coles.

NEW FOREST REMEMBERS:  
UNTOLD STORIES OF WORLD WAR TWO.

The National Park Authority plans to run a project on this subject from September 2011 till August 2013 . Its aim is to address the lack of survey work, knowledge and understanding about the New Forest's role in the War and to bring alive the war years for a wide range of people, offering voluntary opportunities for those who wish to be further involved.

The Authority has succeeded in the first stage of a lottery bid to finance the project and is now seeking support from local communities, historical and archaeological societies to assist the stage two bid.

The project will involve data collection and assessment, field surveys and the collection of memory recordings and written accounts, as well as the increasing of public awareness of the New Forest's role and an outreach programme to reach all members of the community from schools to older ages.

In response the Chair of the Beaulieu History Society e-mailed the Authority as follows on 12 February:

"The Chair and the Committee of the Beaulieu History Society warmly support this project and are confident that the members of the Society will share their view.

Since the formation of the Society some four years ago the interest of its members in the local history of the Second World War has been marked by a number of meetings relevant to the subject, namely a panel discussion on Memories of the Second World War, a lecture on the role of the Special Operations Executive, a lecture on the local airfields involved in the War, and most recently an evening devoted to memories of D-Day in Beaulieu. The house owned by the Chair and his wife was lived in for a time by Jan Struther, author of the book "Mrs. Miniver" which became a film with great resonance in Britain and the United States in the early 1940's. Several of our members have direct memories of Beaulieu in wartime and have contributed to discussion at our meetings.

The Society will therefore follow this project with great interest and, though the Committee cannot commit its members to specific- activities without further consultation, we would hope to become actively engaged in the execution of the project in any way we appropriately can."

*J. Coles*

*Report of recent meeting:*

### Beaulieu before the Black Death

On 4 February the Society was addressed by Richard Reeves, Librarian at the New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst, on "Beaulieu before the Black Death", sub-titled "The Great Cistercian Land Grab".

Aiming to explain why Beaulieu is the shape it is, he began by describing the pattern of Roman roads and paths in the area. Moving from the evidence of a Jutish culture in south Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, he surveyed the evidence of the Domesday Book and argued that, contrary to popular wisdom, William the First seems to have launched a programme of afforestation in the Beaulieu River Valley. A current survey might reveal Anglo-Saxon earthworks in the forested area of the Beaulieu Estate.

He believed that William the Second had met his death in the area of Througham. Park Chapel had existed as a church or chapel well before the Abbey of Beaulieu had been founded. Througham seems to have been granted by Henry the First to Breamore Priory. Was the grant of a new religious foundation a result of guilty conscience?

The name Beaulieu (Bellus Locus Regis) predated the Abbey. King John's House, carrying that Latin name, is recorded in 1200 as being on a site which is probably beside the later Abbey. It was almost certainly a hunting lodge.

Richard then took the meeting in some detail through the succession of grants and acquisitions which first established the Abbey's lands through the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Much of the expansion occurred "without warrant" i.e. without authorisation. In 1324 there was a confrontation between the Abbot and local people with the former complaining that the latter were encroaching on and damaging Abbey property.

In 1326 the locals made a formal complaint against the Abbey, as two were claimed to have died during the confrontation, but the outcome is not recorded. Some of the land acquired by the Abbey ran well into the New Forest, taking in, for example, Pig Bush and Culverley.

The Black Death is likely to have impacted harshly on Beaulieu. There is clear evidence that the area of the nearby Cadland Estate was badly hit. Many of the Abbey's outlying lands, especially those recently acquired, were abandoned to the Forest though some, e.g. Culverley, were later re-enclosed.

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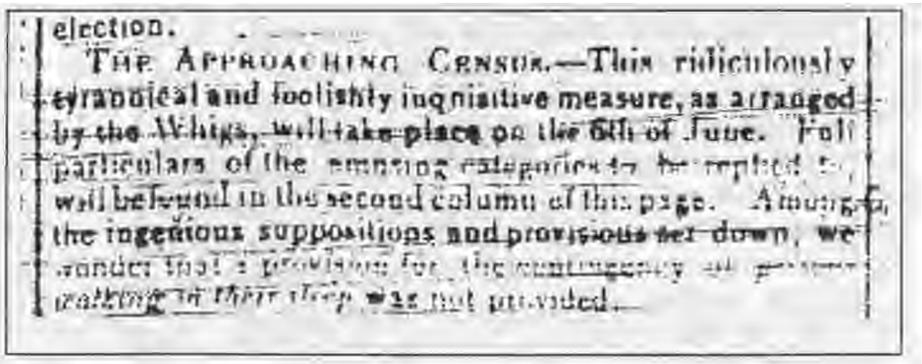
The talk concluded with observations about the nature of Beaulieu village in mediaeval times.

Following a substantial number of questions the Chair warmly thanked Richard Reeves for a highly informative talk, based on much original research, which brought into question a good deal of the received wisdom about Beaulieu's history.

*J. Coles*

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*The first Census... from the Hampshire Advertiser May 29<sup>th</sup> 1841*



The above report, due to the poor condition of the microfilm, is difficult to read. Below is the transcription...

THE APPROACHING CENSUS — This ridiculously tyrannical and foolish inquisitive measure, as arranged by the Whigs, will take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June. Full particulars of the amusing categories to be replied to, will be found in the second column of this page. Amongst the ingenious suppositions and provisions set down, we wonder that a provision for the contingency of persons *walking in their sleep* is not provided.

The Victorians certainly had a way with words!

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**EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON.**—An alarming and most uncommon flux, and reflux, of the sea took place at Plymouth on Friday morning last, commencing about three o'clock, and not finally terminating until ten. The sea fell instantaneously about four feet, and immediately rose about eight feet. In two minutes the mooring-vessels in Sutton-pool were afloat and a-ground, and a universal consternation pervaded the whole of the port. The vessels in Catwater were thrown about in the greatest confusion; many dragged their anchors, some drifted, and several left their bowsprits and yards, among which were the Busy cutter. About a quarter before seven the sea rose to the height of 11 feet, and again receded, leaving all the boats high and dry. At the flying-bridge the cables by which it is pulled over, were torn asunder exactly like pack-thread. At half-past nine the tide (half-flood) suddenly stopped; and, in a moment, ebbed six inches and a half; at ten it ebbed again in the same most extraordinary manner, and then flowed as usual to high water. Two gales from S. S. W. and E. preceded this astonishing phenomenon; but, at the time of its occurrence the wind was light at S. S. W. The winds, however, could not produce such a flux and reflux, and we fear it will speedily be accounted for by the receipt of afflictive intelligence from abroad. An occurrence of the like nature to the above is still remembered at Plymouth, and on the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, generally, as preceding the dreadful catastrophe at Lisbon.