



BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 23 April 2014

Editor's Column

Many of you will know at the recent Annual General Meeting the Society had a change of committee members. **Rosemary Johnson** retired after several years on the committee, the last few as Chairman, and **Gill Hawkins** retired as Secretary. Copious thanks are due for contributing many hours to the Society including organising speakers, evening talks, meeting rooms, site visits, subscriptions, tickets, and recording and documenting recollections of local residents.

In their place, we welcome **Emma Page** as Chairman, **Gillian Strathcarron** as Secretary and **Peter Marling-Roberts** as Treasurer. Emma was previously treasurer and has lived in the area, at Lepe, at the mouth of the Beaulieu River, all her life. Now retired, she is researching the New Forest in the 18th century at Oxford University. Gillian and Peter, new to the committee, are long term residents of the area also with a passion for its history.

At our AGM meeting earlier this year, we had a talk from **Susan Campbell**. The subject, the history of **Walled Kitchen Gardens**, was not about the famous battles of modern history or about kings and kaisers, all of which we have heard recently. However, Susan made the subject intriguing with her expose of the exotic plants with which owners stocked such gardens in earlier centuries and the intricate heating systems they used in conservatories to keep them at tropical temperatures in cold British weather. Some revealing extracts from her book are included later in this newsletter.

Our next meeting, on **Friday 23rd May**, is a **Visit to Otterwood**, by kind invitation of **Ian and Gillian Strathcarron**. Otterwood sits on

the eastern slope leading down to the Beaulieu River, and readers may know that the name of Beaulieu River before the monks founded Beaulieu Abbey in 1204, was at some time Otter River, indicating the age of the Otter name in the area of which the visit will reveal more. In our series of articles on researching the Beaulieu area, Gillian writes in this newsletter of her exploits in researching Otterwood.

Later in the year, on **Friday 12th September**, we plan to visit a famous local historic house, this time already well researched. It is **Palace House** at Beaulieu Abbey, the home of Lord Montagu, by kind invitation of **Ralph Montagu** and **Mary Montagu-Scott**. The history of this house spans from the founding the abbey by Cistercian monks in the 13th century, through the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII in the 16th century and the succession of the abbey's lands to the king's courtier Thomas Wriothesley, down through generations of the Montagu family to modern times.



In late **November**, the final planned meeting of the year is our regular pre-Xmas social evening with supper and a talk at the Master Builder's Hotel at Buckler's Hard.

Now the storms and floods of the winter have given way to blue skies and sunshine, it only remains to wish you a historic summer.

John Pemberton

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Dates for your Diary

- Friday 23rd May 2014 6pm
Visit to Otterwood
By kind invitation of
Ian and Gillian Strathcarron
Otterwood House, Exbury Road,
Beaulieu SO42 7YS
- Friday 12th September 2014 6pm
Visit to Palace House, Beaulieu
By kind invitation of Ralph
Montagu and Mary Montagu-Scott
- To be announced, November 2014
Supper and Talk
Master Builder's Hotel, Buckler's
Hard

Subscriptions

Membership fees were due at the start of the year. If you have not yet paid, please send a cheque for £5 per member payable to 'Beaulieu History Society' to: Gillian Strathcarron, Membership Secretary at her address on the back page.

Researching Otterwood

One in a series of articles about researching the history of Beaulieu

The History Society's visit in May is to Otterwood, a historic Beaulieu house. This is Gillian Strathcarron's account of researching the house she lives in.

I began by looking for references to Otterwood Grange and Farm in three popular local history books, Captain H. E. R. Widnell's *The Beaulieu Record*, Dom Frederick Hockey's *Beaulieu, King John's Abbey* and Sir James Fowler's *The History of Beaulieu Abbey*. I then tried online at the English Heritage Archive www.english-heritage.org.uk/archive to investigate the Otterwood mention (as Otreorde) in the Domesday Book, and some clues to the origin of the old ruined barn. *Beaulieu in Tudor and Stuart Times* is a very useful unpublished manuscript kept in the Lyndhurst Library and in the Palace House archive, written by Alan Bartlett, formerly the Beaulieu archivist.

I spent many days in the Christopher Tower Reference Library in the New Forest Centre at Lyndhurst. The librarian, Richard Reeves, is extremely well informed about the history of this part of Hampshire from the earliest times. He suggested I carried on my research by recording the names of the tenants from documents he has downloaded from the Palace House archive, including details of the Poor Rate Tax collected from 1655-1804 and the Land Tax from 1799-1829. From these records, I compiled a list of the tenants of the farm(s) from the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries until the middle of the nineteenth century. The tenants were usually yeoman farmers, some for many successive generations but others for shorter periods when the farm was divided into parcels.

To bring the record up to date there are the censuses, available to the public online from 1841-1911

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, and the Electoral Register, available at the Hampshire Records Office.

The Records Office in Winchester is also where the Wriothesley Deeds are stored. Original deeds can be ordered from the store room, wrapped in neat parchment packets. Court rolls, wills and invento-



The barn at Otterwood

ries can be looked at on micro-fiche and copied. The Records Office also has Tithe and Ordnance Survey maps.

Sue Tompkins, archivist at Palace House was very helpful with information and maps, especially filling in the gaps from the beginning of the 18th Century until the 1950's. We found a plan of the house prepared before renovation was carried out by my husband Ian's parents in 1959, when the house resembled an inventory I had found from the 17th Century. At home I found some grainy black and white photographs of the interior taken before this restoration; very rustic and primitive with some beautiful exposed tim-

bers and windows, a long curved beam, a stone sink and other atmospheric details. By 1961 it had been restored into the house we see today, with an added garage and stables.

A great bonus has been talking to local residents Alan Humby and Charlie Knight who remember the house in the 1950's when it was two carters' cottages. Even the barn had a resident family.

Ednyfed Hudson-Davis, given his long association with the New Forest Centre, sent some transcripts, helpfully translated into modern English, of deeds for the tenancy of Otterwood farm from the early days of the Wriothesley period, 1538/39. John Beaumont, first honorary secretary of the History Society, also gave some

copies of very interesting deeds and maps.

Once I had the basic information, Anne Coles, research specialist of the History Society, arranged a visit to Otterwood by Frank Green, archaeologist at the New Forest Authority and expert in dating New Forest houses. He found traces of wattle and daub construction beneath a timber-framed house of the late 16th Century, which was enlarged with brick in the early 18th Century.

Local historian Tony Norris has provided details from Captain Widnell's unpublished *Widnell's Walks* about the house and farm in 1578, and is looking for relevant information in the Parish Records. His articles in the BHS Newsletters have also been very helpful.

Research is still continuing, and we look forward to welcoming Society members to the presentation to the in May.

Gillian Strathcarron

Research Tip

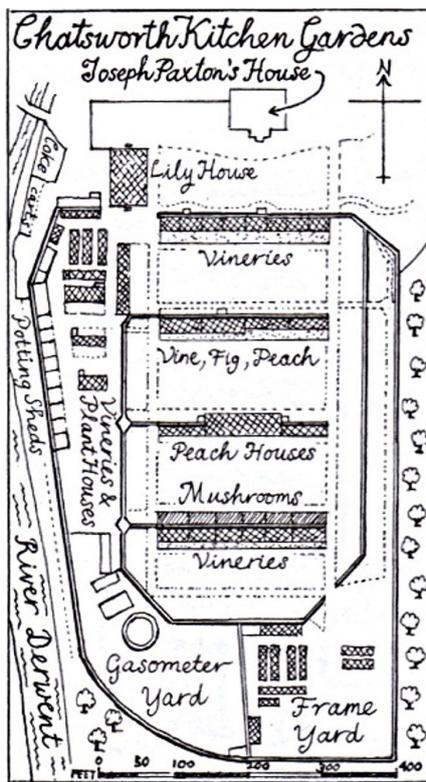
It is absorbing researching a local house and if you are interested please discuss it with any member of the committee (see bottom of back page). Anne Coles, our research specialist, offers her services to assist.

Walled Kitchen Gardens

Susan Campbell's talk to the History Society in January 2014 was focussed on the kitchen gardens at Pylewell in the New Forest. It revealed surprising facts about the exotic plants kept in kitchen gardens in earlier centuries and the heating systems that kept them alive.

Heated Walls and Other Embellishments

"The designers of the earliest heated walls attempted, at first, to combine artificial heat (as supplied by stoves behind the walls sending smoke and hot air up angled flues) with the debatable advantages of niched or alcove walls and sloping walls ... They placed moveable glass casements in front of the fruit for good measure, but by the mid eighteenth century the 'hott wall' or 'fire-wall', as it was now known, had become relatively simplified. It was built tall and straight with stoves, ovens or fireplaces placed, usually in pairs but sometimes singly, in little sheds or 'fire-houses' at the back." (p60)



gan to be used for forcing a greater variety of plants into early growth and fruiting, the melonry became 'the forcing ground'."

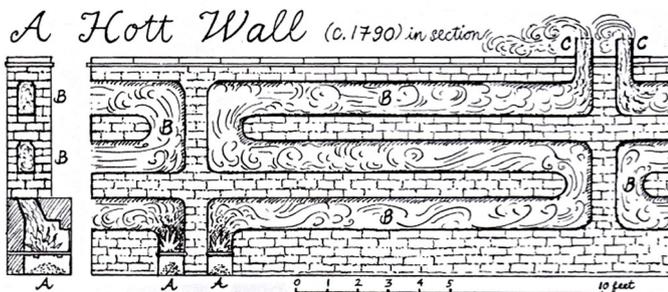
"The heat of the beds was prevented from escaping by straw mats supported on wooden frames or by glass casements ... supported by wooden frames ... The whole structure, bed included, gradually became known as a frame, and eventually gave the forcing ground its final name - 'the frameyard'." (p119)

The Origins of the Hotbed

"Hotbeds, like today's heated frames, were used to force all kinds of crops, from salads to strawberries, as well as melons and cucumbers ... Moorish Arab gardeners were using them in Andalusia in Southern Spain over a thousand years ago."

"The use of fermenting dung as a source of heat is almost as old as the

kitchen garden itself. Fermentation occurs quite naturally within a heap of any vegetable waste such as grass mowing, dead leaves or even ordinary garden rubbish, as well as farmyard manure ... but the greatest heat, according to the Arab authorities, was provided by droppings fresh from the stables of horses, mules or donkeys ... The best horses were given a rich diet of barley, beans and alfalfa, which made the most superior manure for heating, being highly nitrogenous." (p123)



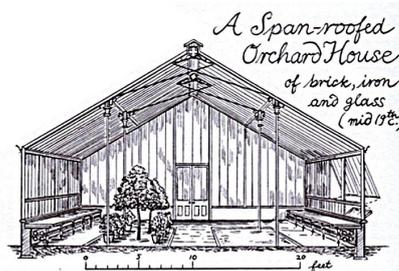
A = furnaces; B = the flues (which may be up to 75 ft. long); C = chimneys

The Frameyard

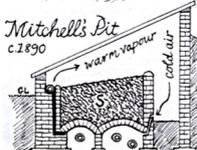
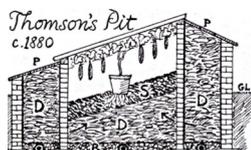
"The frameyard evolved from a fenced-in portion of the open ground set aside originally for growing melons and cucumbers on heated beds. In seventeenth century France it was known as the meloniere: this was anglicised to the 'melonry' ... Later, as heated beds be-

The Earliest Glass-houses

"Three fruits may be said to have influenced the evolution of the kitchen-garden glasshouse more than any others: the orange, the pineapple and the grape. The peach and the fig have done so to a lesser extent; the cultivation melons and cucumbers had more influence in the development of pits and frames. The orange had its heyday in the seventeenth century; the pineapple dominated the eighteenth; the grape, the melon, the fig and the peach shared the limelight in the nineteenth." (p151)



Forcing Pits
designed to maintain heat without disturbing the crop
D = dung (fresh); S = soil or mould; R = rubble:
⊙ = drains; ⊕ = hot water pipes; P = planks;
GL = ground level: 1 2 3 4 5 ft.



Extracted from: Susan Campbell
A History of Kitchen Gardening
Francis Lincoln 2005

World War II on Record

Home Guard Scrapbook

A scrapbook of top secret orders, letters and hand drawn maps by a war-time Home Guard commander reveals insights into the real 'Dad's Army' of the New Forest.

The scrapbook, compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Sir Morgan Crofton, has been brought to light by his son Major Edward Crofton, as part of the New Forest Remembers World War II Project run by the New Forest National Park Authority.

One of the book's most detailed plans is a hand drawn map showing how the village of Beaulieu was turned into a defensive garrison of 44 men, five pillboxes, roadblocks and numerous firing positions from local buildings such as the Montagu Arms and a loopholed wall at Beaulieu Abbey.



A World War II re-enactor with the scrapbook at the Montagu Arms Hotel in Beaulieu

For more details of the book, see www.newforestww2.org/home-guard-crofton-collection

D-Day at Hurst Castle

When you visit Hurst Castle, you can now see a display of life in Beaulieu Village during World War II in the castle's D-Day Room. It has

been prepared by History Society member Gill Hawkins. Among those who have submitted other material to the exhibition are the Beaulieu Estate, Buckler's Hard, the Exbury Estate and the Friends of New Forest Airfields.

John Pemberton

Timber Construction returns to Buckler's Hard

A replica 18th century timber-frame workshop is being built at Buckler's Hard using traditional methods of carpentry and oak timber sourced from the New Forest.

Once built, the workshop will from house the Buckler's Hard Shipwright School, teaching and studying traditional ship building and run in partnership with the International Boatbuilding Training College newly located in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard. This will result



in the production of timber components to be used in the construction and repair of traditional timber vessels.

Visitors to Buckler's Hard are being encouraged to visit the workshop building as it is constructed. Specific events are:

From 7th July 2014

Timber Framing Courses - Week-long courses at £300 and specialist day courses at £60.

1st-3rd August 2014

Raising of the Workshop's Timber Frame - You can join in the traditional hand raising of the timber frame. A free community event for all those who participate with a celebration party on completion. The public will be able to watch and enjoy the raising of the frame as it is lifted into position.



Operations are supervised by expert historic timber framer Henry Russell, and are part-funded by the New Forest National Park's Sustainable Development Fund.

For details or to participate, visit: www.bucklershard.co.uk/attractions/shipwright-school/courses, or phone Jane Mills on 01590 616250.

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