



BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

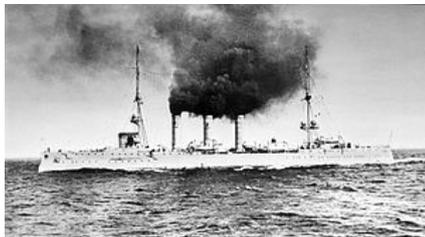
No. 24 October 2014

Editor's Column

The summer has left us and autumn colours arrived but the society has some upcoming meetings to provide recompense for the colder weather.

Future Meetings

On Friday 28th November we will hold our traditional social evening with supper and a talk. Nicholas de Rothschild of the Exbury Estate and Gardens will entertain us with **The Swan of the East** – 'an extraordinary tale involving the Exbury Parish Church's lectern, a post card and the German light cruiser SMS Emden'. We can only guess the res-



SMS Emden

olution of this puzzle. The evening is at a new venue for the society - we are being welcomed at the Gins Clubhouse of the Royal Southampton Yacht Club on the west side of the Beaulieu River approached by road past St Leonards Barn. Bookings necessary; see separate poster.

On January 30th 2015, following a brief Annual General Meeting, Rosemary Johnson and Gill Hawkins, past chairman and secretary of the History Society, will present **Recollections of Belinda Montagu** in recordings and photographs. Belinda, Lady Montagu, first wife of Lord Montagu, has lived in the New Forest all her life and has fascinating recollections from before World War II through to the present time. We hope she will be able

to join us and answer questions at the end of the evening.

Looking forward to next summer, we have kindly been invited in May by Catharina van der Vorm to visit Sowley House to hear a talk on **Sowley Ironworks**. The iron-



Percival Lewis Map of the New Forest 1811

works were completed in the 1590s and in conjunction with a subsidiary forge in Beaulieu supplied wrought iron to the naval dockyard at Portsmouth through the Napoleonic Wars before finally ceasing operation in the 1920s.

Thanks for Past Meetings

In January of this year, we received a talk by Sir John Coles on **Beaulieu in Books**. Sir John has been kind enough to record for members several of the books highlighted by his talk in an article in this newsletter (page 2).

In March, thanks go to Susan Campbell for an intriguing talk on **Walled Kitchens Gardens**; and in May a visit to and a great presentation by Ian and Gillian Strathcarron on the history of their home at **Otterwood**. In September the second visit of the year was to **Palace House** at Beaulieu with many insights into its long history revealed by Ralph and Mary Montagu.

John Pemberton

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Dates for your Diary

Friday 28th November 2014 6pm
Social Evening: Supper
followed by
The Swan of the East
by **Nicholas de Rothschild**
Royal Southampton Yacht Club,
Gins Clubhouse, St Leonards,
Beaulieu SO42 7XG

Friday 30th January 2015 6pm
Annual General Meeting
followed by
Recollections of Belinda Montagu
in recordings and photographs
Beaulieu Village Hall

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.

Beaulieu in Books

In January of this year, Sir John Coles gave a talk to the Society about "Beaulieu in Books" not, he explained, the works of historians but rather those of novelists, poets, travel writers and naturalists.

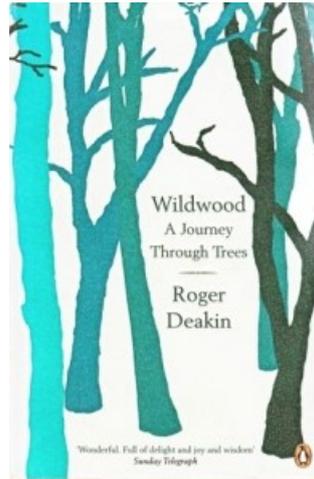
Buckler's Hard would need a talk of its own and was therefore excluded. He dealt in turn with the Abbey, the Heaths and the River.

The Abbey

From at least the 18th century writers were describing Beaulieu as a place of peace, a welcome oasis, primarily because of the Abbey and its monastic past. William Cobbett, however, in his *Rural Rides* (1830) thought the situation of St. Leonard's far finer and did not bother to investigate the Abbey ruins.

By contrast, Arthur Conan Doyle set the tone for his novel *The White Company* (1891) with fine opening paragraphs about the Abbey (read to the meeting by Tony Norris). And Edward Rutherford, in his *The Forest* (2000), devoted a chapter of over 100 pages to "Beaulieu 1294", centred on the Abbey, part of which was read by Lord Strathcarron.

In 1927 H.V. Morton published *In Search of England*, singling out Beaulieu as a place whose quietness and beauty captured his idea of Englishness.



Heaths

Roger Deakin, the writer, naturalist and film-maker tells, in *Wildwood: A Journey through Trees* (2007) how he attended school camps at Beaulieu Road in the late 1950s devoted to botany, zoology and ecology. They discovered 353 species of flowering plants, over 100 mosses, 735 ferns and much else, all recorded in two volumes called *The Beaulieu Tomes*, unpublished, indeed unlocated.

An earlier naturalist, W. H. Hudson, in *Hampshire Days* (1903), gave a lyrical account of the heath above Hilltop, with its richness of colour, acres of myrtle and abundant wildlife where he meditated on the barrows of the ancient dead around him.

Horace Hutchinson, who wrote about country life and sports in the

early 19th century, commended Beaulieu Heath as an ideal place to watch the spectacle of sunrise.

The River

The Beaulieu River attracted poets from at least the late 18th century. Gilpin, in *Remarks on Forest Scenery* (1791), describes a trip on the river. There is however no evidence for the story that Jane Austen made a similar journey. Lady Strathcarron read an extract from Nevil Shute's *Requiem for a Wren* (1955), partly set on and around the river.

Adam Mills read John Betjeman's poem *Youth and Age on Beaulieu River* (1940s), written while the poet was convalescing at Friar's Oak. In the speaker's view this is the best piece of writing about Beaulieu, capturing effectively the moods of the river as the poet meditates about mortality.

Virtually all writers about Beaulieu seem to have been captivated by its obvious beauty and its Englishness. The ruins of the Abbey were a particular magnet. There is another strong theme in the early 20th century accounts: in a period of industrialisation, urbanisation and other upheavals, the changelessness of Beaulieu attracted many. Perhaps that is why many of us, also, like it here.

Sir John Coles

Beaulieu Church 'Terrier'

It is a requirement of the Diocese that the Parochial Church Council of every Parish complete what is called a 'Terrier'.

The introduction to the document describes what it should contain. Précising, it says 'A true Note and Terrier of all the Glebes, Lands, Meadows, Gardens, Orchards, Houses, Tenements, Rent-charges in lieu of Tithes, and other Rights belonging to the Parish Church of Beaulieu, together with a true Inventory of all the Goods, Books, Ornaments, and Utensils of the said

Parish and Parish Church'. So the Terrier records everything in the possession of the Parish Church. However it mentions nothing about the history of the items in the inventory.

It was not until 1973 that a formal method of church recording was introduced. This task was begun by The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, NADFAS for short. It was not until 1987 that Beaulieu Abbey Church had compiled their own NADFAS Church Record. That it was com-

pleted was due in no short measure to the unstinting efforts of a group of church helpers led by Eileen Lappin. Such a mammoth undertaking has enabled much of the history of Beaulieu Church to be catalogued for future generations.

We were very fortunate that in Eileen Lappin we had a person with incredible drawing skills and she has included within the records detailed drawings of all the main features of the church.

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Memorial to Mary Do

I expect many of the church congregation have marvelled at the grandiose memorial in the Sanctuary, attached to the East Wall, but I expect, as it is in the Chancel which is locked when services are not taking place, few have had

opportunity to look at the memorial at close quarters and read the words engraved on it. However, as part of the Church Record, Eileen Lappin made a wonderful scale drawing of the memorial in which we are easily able to read its text.

Although this memorial is not the oldest in the church as a plaque dated 1605 exists on the West Wall of the Chancel, it does pre-date the beginning of the recording of baptisms, marriages and deaths which began in 1654. So researching into its history was somewhat more of a challenge. However a surprising quantity of information can be found.

The memorial, as one can read, was to commemorate the death of Mary Do, who died in childbirth on 18th June 1651. To be able to afford such a magnificent memorial it was evident that the family were very affluent and influential. The vertical acrostic MARY DO, together with the Elliot coat-of-arms which heads the memorial makes it even more impressive.

The Elliot Family

Mary Do was the daughter of Thomas Elliot. The Elliot family lived in Beaulieu from soon after the Dissolution. Boverly Grange (now Beufre) was held, in 1578, by Nicholas Elliot. He had five sons, Nicholas, Henry, Daniel, Thomas and John, and three daughters Elizabeth, Jane and Dorothy. Daniel went off to become, eventually, a

well-to-do merchant tailor in the City. On Nicholas' death the farm passed to Thomas. Thomas took the style of Gentleman and obtained a grant of Arms. He married Elizabeth Castell, perhaps of the Castells of Walhampton, also a member of the gentry with arms of their own. They had four sons and three daughters, including Mary (Moll). It would seem the children were under-age when their father died in 1612; it is known that Mary (who married William Do) was born only the previous year.

cupative (verbal) will, that "I do give all that I have to my poore Mother, Mary Do, yea let her have it all who else shoulde, and for God's sake pray her to be good to the Poore"

Mary died on 18th June 1651, in childbirth, aged 40.

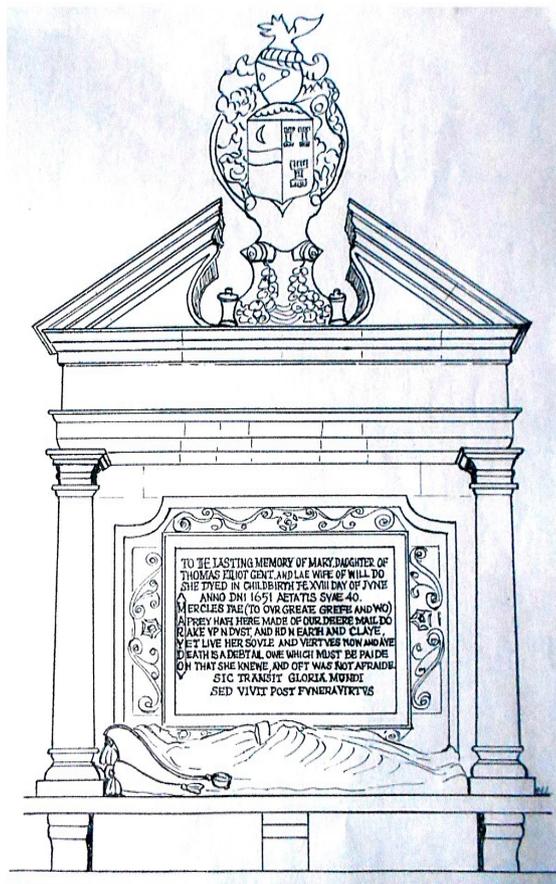
The Legacy

The name Elliot, and their legacy to the parish, remained until very recently. Daniel, son of Nicholas, died in 1628 and left money in his will to the parish which was benefitting from it until recently. His will included "...to pay twenty pounds a year thereof to one Mr. Robinson who is minister or preacher of the Parish church of Bewley during so long time as he shall live or continue Preacher of the same parish to and for the betteringe of his means of living. And after his decease or moving from the parish to anie other place... [the same £20 a year]...shall be paid to everie other succeeding minister and preacher of the same parish..." The will goes on, "...I give to the parish of Beawly where I was born, the sum of Twenty pounds to be distributed at the discretion of Mr. Robinson ye minister thereof... to and amongst the poorest aged and impotent people inhabiting the said parish ..."

It was only in the 1970s that a lump sum was paid to the church to terminate the bequest. So the church benefitted from Daniel Elliot's bequest for over 300 years, though its value gradually diminished with inflation.

Early this year, when updating the heating system, the removing of tiles under the choir stalls revealed a vault, directly in front of the memorial. It is quite likely that the Chancel was raised in the alterations of 1840 to conceal the vault, and that it contains the remains of Moll Do.

Anthony Norris



One John Do (Doe) took a lease of Curtle in 1616, which appears to have remained in the family until it passed to the Goters in the 1650s. William Do, probably son of John, was a churchwarden in 1634 and was also referred to as a Gentleman, implying status in the community.

Mary Elliot married William Do on 23rd September 1634 by licence at St Michael's, Southampton. They had a number of children, including Martha who, it is recorded in a nun-

The Honourable Rebel

Amongst the lists of names in St Katharine's of Exbury Registry of Births is The Hon Unity Valkerie Freeman-Mitford.

Unity was born on London on 8 August 1914¹, just four days after the outbreak of the First World War. Her father David, a second son who would in time succeed his father as 2nd Baron Redesdale, had married Sydney in 1904. Unity was the fourth of their six daughters – there was one son, Tom. In 1914 David was with his regiment in Newcastle: maybe a sentimental Sydney had Unity christened on the old family estate. By then the Mitfords had sold Exbury to Lord Forster.

We know about the riotous and uncontrollable upper class family mainly through the writings of Nancy, the eldest, who wrote vividly of their family dramas in the inter-war years. What started as family rivalry turned into something more sinister for three sisters. The childhood gambits of the youngest sisters Diana, Jessica and Unity developed into life-long opposing political passions. Diana married British fascist leader Oswald Mosley, Jessica ran away to Spain to marry the ardent socialist Esmond Romilly and Unity moved to Germany where her fascination with Adolf Hitler became obsessional. In her letters to her sisters Unity boasted of her collection of 340 post cards depicting the Fuhrer; she wrote in 1934 of the 'poor sweet Fuhrer² [who] is having such a dreadful time'³ and how 'I wouldn't hesitate to shoot [Esmond] if it was necessary for my cause'⁴.



When Unity came out in 1932 Jessica described her 'a huge and rather alarming debutante'. At 6ft 1in she was the tallest of the sisters but unfortunately she did not share the classic beauty of some of them or the wit of others. Several of her biographers suggests that the need to stand out in her high achieving family was behind her bold and at times outlandish behaviour. She was expelled from three boarding schools⁵, she stole Buckingham Pal-



ace's writing paper at a Court ball⁶ and she committed the biggest faux pas of all – she idealised Hitler. Her biographer Jan Dalley put it, 'When she discovered Nazism and that it was a fantastic opportunity to shock everybody in England she'd discovered the best tease of all'⁷.

It did not end well. On the day that England and France declared war on Germany, 3rd September 1939, Unity torn by her loyalty to both countries shot herself in the temple in Munich's English garden. The bullet lodged but did not kill her. Returning to England four months later she lived for another nine years being looked after by her mother Sydney. Her father departed with the parlour maid, unable to cope with Unity or the tragedy. Reverting to childhood, but with an adult body, the sisters fretted about the strain of her care on Sydney. Nonetheless when she died they all mourned her.

As an invalid Unity once asked Nancy if she, Unity, was mad. The reply was brutal 'Of course you are, darling Stony-heart,' she replied, 'but then, you always were.'⁸

Christina Dykes

1. ONDB accessed 19 September 2014
2. Mosely, Charlotte, *The Mitfords*, London: Fourth Estate 2007 pg 49
3. *ibid* pg 49
4. *ibid* pg 90
5. McGinniss, Mark, *Unity Mitford*, *The Spectator* 9 August 2014
6. Mosley Charlotte, *The Mitfords* pg 11
7. Quoted in Wikipedia, *Unity Mitford* accessed 19 September 2014
8. Quoted in McGinniss, Mark, *Unity Mitford*, *The Spectator*.

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