



BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 42 May 2023

Editor's Column

Belinda, Lady Montagu was first wife of Edward, Lord Montagu. Her passing in December of last year leaves a son Ralph, the present Lord Montagu, and a daughter Mary Montagu-Scott. Both have been very active in the Beaulieu History Society.

An obituary reproduced from the Times newspaper is present on page 2.



Past Meetings

This year so far, we have had two talks. The first following the AGM on 27 January was about the *History of the Beaulieu River* given by Mary Montagu-Scott. Mary has an in depth knowledge of the Beaulieu River spanning its use from the 13th century by the monks of Beaulieu Abbey for transport and fishing, the wooden warships built in the 18th and 19th centuries at Buckler's Hard, to the construction of WWII naval vessels in the 20th century. Some of the intriguing topics she spoke about are included in this newsletter on page 4.



The second talk on 13 April was titled *Hidden in Plain Sight: Reminders of WW2 in the New Forest*, given by Marc Heighway. Among other topics, Marc has a strong interest in things WW2 and gave an talk about many surprising objects in the Forest that are rarely seen. More of his researches can be found on two websites he curates *New Forest and Hampshire Wartime Association* www.nfhwa.org and *RAF Beaulieu* www.rafbeaulieu.co.uk.

Forthcoming Meetings

The next talk on 25 May will be on *New Forest Commoners: Life in the 19th Century* by Dr Christina Dykes and the difficult lives they led over the centuries. She focusses particularly on the 19th century when their livelihoods were threatened by the demand for New Forest timber causing the desire to enclose vast tracts of New Forest land.



On 22 June, the last of the spring/summer series of talks is on the *Special Operations Executive* by Peter Power. Peter looks behind this WW2 agency into the exceptional characters it attracted, the courageous men and women who served in it, and the connections between them, including Beaulieu's role in their training.

John Pemberton

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Dates for your Diary

Thursday 25 May 2023 6:30pm
New Forest Commoners: Life in the 19th Century
presented by Dr Christina Dykes
Beaulieu Village Hall

Thursday 22 June 2023 6:30pm
Special Operations Executive: Characters, Courage, and Connections
presented by Peter Power
Beaulieu Village Hall

Subscriptions

Membership fees of £5 per member are due at the start of the calendar year. If you have not yet paid, you are encouraged to make an electronic bank transfer to Beaulieu History Society, sort code 20-53-53, account number 90157031. In the Reference box, please put your surname and what is being paid (membership, book, name of event), otherwise we may not know what the payment is for.

Belinda, Lady Montagu obituary

The Times, Monday 19 December 2022

Chatelaine of the Hampshire estate and expert embroiderer who offered sanctuary to David Cassidy at the height of his fame



She created a large-scale embroidered appliqué to illustrate 900 years of local history

When Belinda Crossley married Edward, Lord Montagu in 1958, one of the trickiest questions in planning the wedding was how to transport her to the church.

Should it be the antique 1909 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, the vintage Bentley cabriolet or perhaps the iconic Bugatti racer from his famous motor museum at Beaulieu? In the end, to collect his bride-to-be from her family home at Fawley on the edge of the New Forest, Montagu chose a 1906 Renault with brass carriage lamps and a regal, high-build carriage modelled on a belle époque French first-class railway carriage.

Although it was only a few miles, it was raining and he later noted in his autobiography *Wheels Within Wheels* that the vehicle arrived “agonisingly late”. Nevertheless, he recorded that the wedding “went well” and the new Lady Montagu went on to spend 16 years as the chatelaine of Palace House at Beaulieu, home of the Montagu family since 1538, where she supervised a staff of 30.

In addition to the motor museum on the 9,000-acre estate, in the first years of the marriage she also presided over the annual Beaulieu Jazz Festival, one of Britain’s first such musical events with overnight camping and which gained notoriety, several years before mods and rockers stole the headlines, when rival groups of modern and trad jazz fans fought what became known as “the Battle of Beaulieu” at the 1960 festival.

Belinda knew from the outset that there was a certain risk involved in the marriage. Edward, who had succeeded to the title at the age of three, had once been regarded as Britain’s most eligible bachelor and a possible suitor to Princess Margaret.

However, he had realised in his student days at Oxford that he was bisexual and in 1954 was imprisoned for 12 months for “conspiracy to incite certain male persons to commit serious offences with male persons”. The alleged offences took place during a weekend party at a beach hut on the Beaulieu estate and the case became a cause célèbre, leading to the setting up of the Wolfenden Committee, which in its 1957 report recommended the decriminalisation of homosexual activity in private between consenting adults.

However, she had known Montagu since her school days and had spent many happy days at Palace House in her youth. “One great advantage was that Belinda knew Beaulieu well, having been brought up there, and our families were old friends,” her husband wrote in his memoir. “She was therefore able to involve herself in local activities without problems, I was much aided by her cultivated tastes in redecorating the house and she was enormously supportive in the early days of the museum.”

She took a prominent place at the ceremony in 1972, when the Duke of Kent opened a purpose-built building for the museum in the grounds of the estate on the occasion of its upgrade from a private collection to become the National Motor Museum.



David Cassidy was guest of Lord and Lady Montagu at Palace House in 1973

The following year she hosted the American pop star David Cassidy at the height of his fame when he stayed at Palace House. She took him for a ride in one of the museum’s vintage cars and then showed him how to fish in the Beaulieu river. An information board on the riverbank commemorates the event, noting that Cassidy stayed at Beaulieu “to escape the clamour of adoring fans”.

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The couple divorced in 1974. She never remarried and is survived by their son, Ralph Douglas-Scott-Montagu, born in 1961 and who succeeded as 4th Baron Montagu of Beaulieu on his father's death in 2015; and their daughter the Hon Mary Montagu-Scott, who was born in 1964.

After the divorce Edward married Fiona Herbert, the second Lady Montagu, who took care of the two children from his first marriage. She later observed that the husband she inherited from the first Lady Montagu "only had one bride and that was Beaulieu".

Elizabeth Belinda Crossley was born in 1932 on a farm on the Cadland estate at Fawley, Hampshire, the daughter of Sybelle (née Drummond) and Captain John Crossley. Her grandfather Savile Crossley was 1st Baron Somerleyton, although her father was a younger son and did not inherit the title.

Before she was sent off to boarding school she spent the early years of the Second World War cycling and riding her pony across the New Forest and observing at first hand the training and preparations in the vicinity for the D-Day landings, including the launching of the Mulberry harbours in the Solent.

However, she did not enjoy the evacuees from the East End who came to live on the family farm because she disapproved of their slovenliness. "They were perfectly awful and ghastly," she recalled. The family of Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham were later billeted on them and made a better impression.

After the war she moved to London to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts (now Central Saint Martins) and before her marriage worked as a commercial artist.

After her divorce she remained close friends with her former husband. They were often seen together and she continued to live nearby. An expert embroiderer, needleworker and painter with a flair for design of all kinds, she created an array of souvenirs for the estate, including the obligatory tea towels and mugs. Among her other commissions were presentation cushions for the late Queen and other members of the royal family and the kneelers for the wedding of Prince Edward and Sophie, Countess of Wessex at St George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1999.

She also created a large-scale embroidered appliqué to illustrate 900 years of local history that is on display at the New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst and a series of seven embroidered wall hangings chronicling the story of Beaulieu Abbey from its foundation in 1204 to its dissolution in 1538. The hanging can be seen on the abbey's former refectory building, which survives and now serves as a museum.

She may have relinquished her status as lady of the manor long ago, but the art and craft of Lady Montagu lives on in the estate and surrounding area.

Lady Montagu of Beaulieu, embroiderer, was born on January 11, 1932. She died of undisclosed causes on December 15, 2022, aged 90

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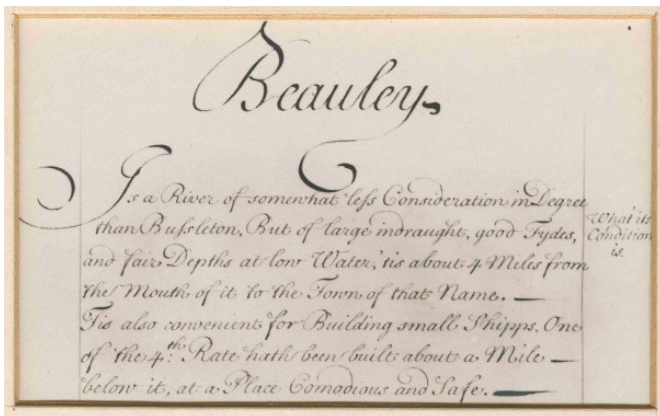
History of Beaulieu River: What you may not know about it

On 27 January this year, Mary Montagu-Scott gave a talk to the society on the history of Beaulieu River. It contained an intriguing array of facts and images. Several are included here, compiled from her notes for the talk.



Beaulieu Abbey was founded in 1204 on what had been known as the Otter River. Location was called bellus locus ('beautiful place' in Latin) translated by the French Cistercian monks into 'Beaulieu'. Hence Beaulieu River today.

The monks were gifted the bed of the river by Royal Charter, giving them exclusive rights to wrecks, debris in the river, and fishing.



The Navy Commissioner's report of 1698 by Surveyor Edward Dummer. He was asked to survey 18 rivers for use for shipbuilding in only 2 months along the whole south coast. The Navy needed to expand its shipbuilding capacity quickly. He wrote of Beaulieu:

"Is a River of somewhat less Consideration in Degree than Bursleton, But of large indraught, good Tydes, and fair Depths at Low Water, tis about 4 Miles from the Mouth of it to the Town of that Name. Tis also convenient for Building small Shippes. One of the 4th Rate hath been built about a Mile below it, at a Place Commodious and Safe."



On 1722 John Duke of Montagu proposed a freeport named MONTAGU TOWN for import and export of sugar from the West Indies.

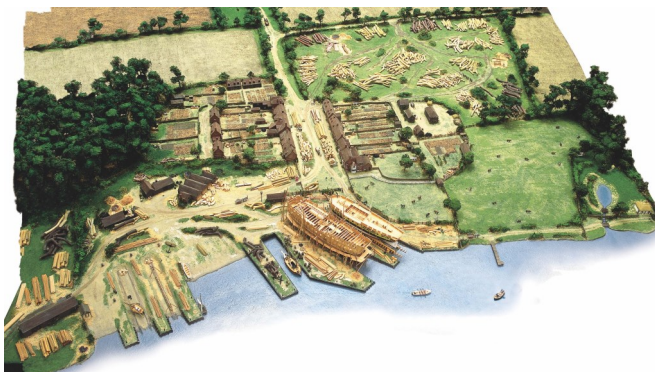
A prospectus was drawn up to promote the project. It was issued in 1724 to attract merchants to settle there. It stated Buckler's Hard had a quay 100ft long, 80ft wide, depth of 18ft. More advantageous for trade than Bristol and London: cheap rent, free timber, local bricks, tiles and 99 year leases.

20 acres of woods were cleared, the quay built but to a poor standard. By 1731 only 7 houses had been built.

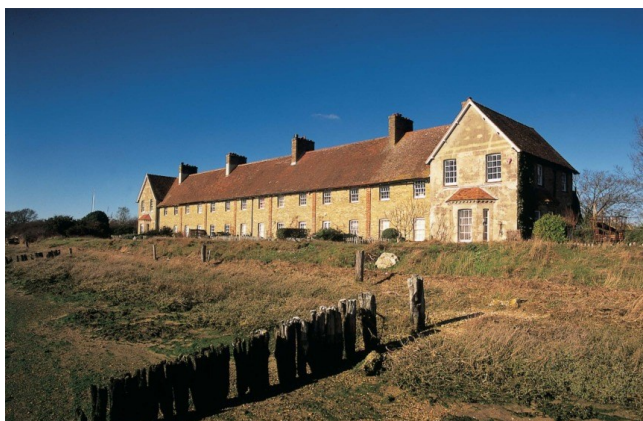


A new Brickyard was built in 1790 where White Bricks (yellow in colour) were made just upstream of Buckler's Hard. Another brickworks on the river at Gilbury on the Lower Exbury side. The bricks were used in Southampton, Portsmouth, London and even Newcastle.

These two brickyards added to the river traffic as chalk was imported from Fareham and Littlehampton for brickmaking. Large quantities of local New Forest clay was used and you see many clay pits around the local area. They also made tiles, drains, pipes and flower-pots, all exported by river.



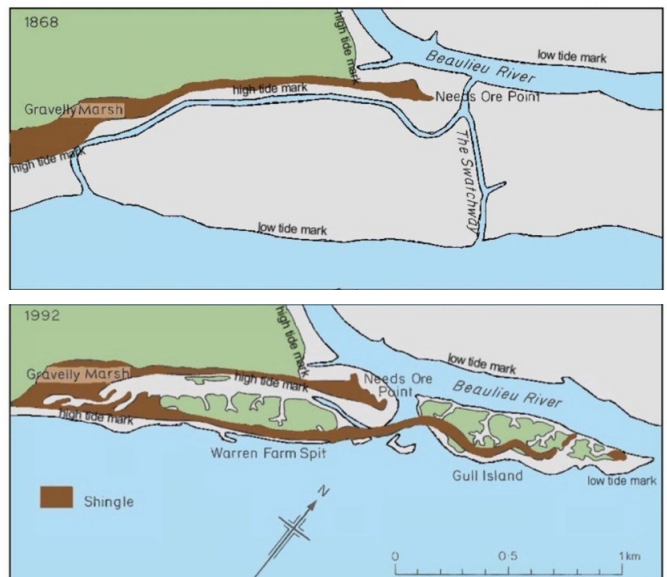
A model of Buckler's Hard village on 3rd June 1803, 3 days before the launch of the Euryalas, a 36 gun ship, with Swiftsure, a larger 74 gun ship half-built. Both were at battle of Trafalgar.



The first Preventative Service (coastguard) presence was built at Lepe in 1828 on the east side of the river entrance and later at Needs Ore in 1860. A boat HM Brig Icarus also patrolled the river. The service closed in 1922.

Written in January 1836:

"On the 16th instant, a seizure of two hundred and twenty-five gallons of contraband spirits was made on Beaulieu Beach and on the mud adjacent, by the Preventive Men on that station. A gang (supposed about fifty), being seen near the spot, armed with bludgeons, caused suspicion that something was moving. One of the Preventive men, named Carter, fired; the party immediately took alarm, but soon rallied, pursued Carter, and threatened to kill him. Other officers came to his assistance, drove the Smugglers off, and found in different places seventy-six tubs and four flagons, containing the above quantity. A man, named Jacob Bull, was overtaken, made prisoner, and since convicted in the penalty of £100; and in default of payment, sentenced to six months' imprisonment."



The upper map from 1868 shows where Charles Bull created his 'Bull's Run' (labelled The Swatchway) in 1726-27 as a shortcut into the river from the Solent.

Over time the channel widened and put the whole river entrance at risk of erosion. It was closed by a Special Act of Parliament in 1986 (see lower map from 1992). Needs Ore is the base of the Beaulieu River Sailing Club whose dinghy races take place in this part of the river. Gull Island is a National Nature Reserve and should not be entered at any time of the year. Once home to 20,000 nesting gulls.



A basin was dredged at Clobb Copse for constructing concrete floats (shown left in the photo) to support roadways across water. 470 of the floats, known as Beetles, 50 from Beaulieu River, were towed to the coast of France. They supported roadways over the sea to Mulberry Harbours used for the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944.

Mary Montagu-Scott
 Edited by John Pemberton

King Charles visits Beaulieu

Following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, this newsletter published (No. 41 October 2022) an article on the association of Beaulieu with the Queen. In 1949, then as Princess Elizabeth, she sailed with her husband the Duke of Edinburgh up the Beaulieu River in the racing yacht Bluebottle given to them as a wedding gift.

Wondering if Queen Elizabeth's son and successor His Majesty King Charles III had ever visited Beaulieu, it turns out as Prince Charles he did, in fact three times, all visits being to the National Motor Museum.

The Beaulieu Archives show he made a private visit in 1965 and another with his great-uncle Lord



Lord Montagu with Prince Charles and Lord Mountbatten, 1974

Courtesy of National Motor Museum

Mountbatten in 1974. In 1985 he made an official visit to open the *Wheels* exhibit.

Prince Charles' interest in cars included those with royal connections, such as the Daimler in which King Edward VII, as Prince of



Prince Charles riding in a 1899 Daimler after opening the *Wheels* exhibit, 1985

Courtesy of National Motor Museum

Wales, had one of royalty's first motor car rides in August 1899. The image above shows Prince Charles being driven in this car by Edward, Lord Montagu in 1985.

John Pemberton

Waterside Heritage

Sadly, we must announce the passing of Graham Parkes, chairman of Waterside Heritage. This local history group covers the Waterside area between Beaulieu and Southampton Water, stretching from Marchwood in the north to Fawley in the south.



Graham was a larger-than-life character who had in his day been a Parish and District Councillor, a School Governor, and chairman and chief executive of the Hythe and Dibden Community Association engaged over a twenty-year period in building and then extending the Community Centre in Hythe. At the same

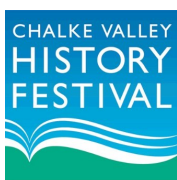
time, he was applying his drive and energy to opening

the old Hythe Railway Station as a centre for Waterside Heritage. He authored or co-authored several history books on the area. After his passing, Waterside Heritage while acknowledging his enormous contribution, is taking stock and making plans for a new era.

If you have any queries about the history of the Waterside, the Waterside Heritage Centre welcomes visitors. It is located in the railway station at Dominy Close, off Shore Lane, Hythe SO45 6HA. Currently it opens for visitors Tuesdays 10am to 12 noon, Thursday and Saturday same times if staff are available. Phone 02380 844074 to check. Its email address for enquiries is centre@watersideheritage.org.uk.

John Pemberton

Chalke Valley History Festival



We don't normally publicise events other than our own, but a number of our members over the years have said how much they enjoyed this history festival, and it has become well-respected nationally.

It takes place at Broad Chalke just west of Salisbury between 26th June and 2nd July this year. It has many notable speakers and their talks are very popular, so have to be booked. Find out more from its website www.cvhf.org.uk.



Reverend Baker and the Ball that Killed Nelson

Frederick Walter Baker graduated from Caius College Cambridge and was ordained a deacon by the Lord Bishop of Gloucestershire on 21st May 1837. After a period of time as curate of St. Mary's, Bathwick, Somerset, it was reported in the *Morning Post* of July 26th 1847 that:

'Lord Montagu has presented the Reverend Frederick W. Baker to the living of Beaulieu, Hampshire, value £145 per annum'.

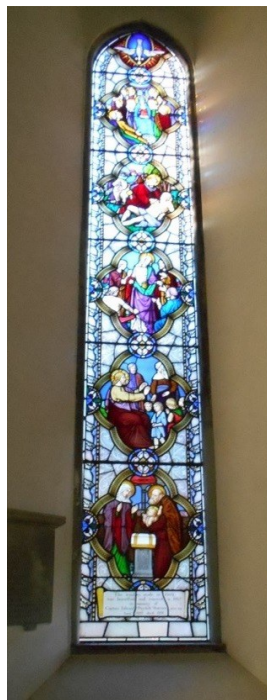
The new reverend of Beaulieu parish had married Lucy Woodward in October 1841 but the marriage did not produce any children. Lucy Baker died on the 30th March 1858 and her loss was reflected in the following report in the *Hampshire Advertiser* of April 3rd 1858:

'On the 30th ult. at Beaulieu Rectory; after a short illness wife of the Rev. F. W. Baker. Her uniform kindness to the poor; her indefatigable exertions for the general good of the parish; and the very lively interest which she always took in the schools, will cause her loss to be long and deeply lamented.'

In memory of Lucy, Rev. Baker commissioned what is the oldest stained glass window in Beaulieu Abbey Church. It is the most southerly window on the west wall, unfortunately only visible from the Chancel. It depicts a number of scenes from the New Testament and was made in 1860.

He was to marry again, in June 1860, to Charlotte Willcock. In the next nine years they had five children Frederick, Walter, George, Charlotte and Arthur.

In 1863 Rev. Baker oversaw the excavations and restorations of the Abbey under the direction of the 5th Duke of Buccleuch when all the foundations of the old Abbey were traced and preserved.



The mounted ball that killed Nelson

Rev. Baker's mother was the sister of Sir William Beatty, the surgeon of Lord Nelson on the *Victory*. It is recorded that following the death of Nelson, Sir William retained the fatal bullet and had it mounted.

On his death the bullet passed into the ownership of Frederick Baker who presented it to Queen Victoria.

The *Sussex Advertiser* of May 17th 1842 provides us with a report:

THE BALL THAT KILLED NELSON.—The musket-ball which robbed England of her great naval commander, the immortal Nelson (says the *Bath Herald*,) is now in possession of the Rev. F. W. Baker, of Bathwick. It was fired, it seems (contrary to the received account) at random from the top of the *Redoubtable*, by a French soldier named Robert Guillemarde, who escaped un wounded, and when his ship struck was taken on board the *Victory*. The fatal bullet was not discovered till the *Victory* arrived at Spithead. It had struck the fore part of the hero's epaulette, and entered his left shoulder. It then descended obliquely into the thorax, fracturing the second and third ribs, and after penetrating the left lobe of the lungs and dividing a large branch of the pulmonary artery, it entered the left side of the spine, passed thro' the muscles of the back, and lodged therein. A considerable portion of the gold lace, pad, and silk cord of the epaulette, with a piece of coat, were found attached to it; the gold lace was as firmly fixed as if it had been inserted into the metal while in a state of fusion. The ball, together with the lace, &c. was mounted in crystal and silver, and presented by Captain Hardy to Mr. [afterwards Sir W.] Beattie, the surgeon of the *Victory*, whose death we announced some time since.

Rev. Baker retired in 1869 and moved to Hove though kept in contact and returned many times.

Anthony Norris

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