

Friends of the Willis Museum

Newsletter, February 2016

www.friendsofthewillis.org.uk/index.php

Friends of the Willis Museum
Basingstoke, Hampshire
Registered Charity No 280406

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The Friends of the Willis Museum, Basingstoke
Yesterday at 12:16am
It's great to have the Christmas tree socket in the new Market Place paving 😊
With thanks to Hampshire Cultural Trust again

CoalaWeb Traffic

This week	40
Total	2033

Saturday, 26 December 2015 17:39

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Our new website is now live – and we're on Facebook too! See inside.

‘The Friends’ was founded in 1978 to “promote, support and improve the Willis Museum.” Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month for ten months of the year, and other events are arranged from time to time. *Registered Charity no 280406.*

Annual subscription £10. Visitor for one meeting £2

Your committee: Ian Williams (Chairman), Derek Anthony (Deputy Chairman), Shelagh le Marechal (Secretary); Howard Ray (Treasurer); Janice Bridgen, Alistair Craig, (Website) John Hollands (Publicity and newsletter); Cathy Williams (Programme Secretary); Jenny Stevens (Curator, Ex officio).

Contact us c/o the museum, or by email on enquiries@friendsofthewillis.org.uk

Newsletter edited by John Hollands, and proof read, duplicated and distributed by Derek Anthony.

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Chairman’s Jottings, by Ian Williams

Welcome to the new issue of our Friends’ newsletter. As I am sure you know, Derek Anthony stepped down as Chairman at the October Annual General Meeting. The Committee is very grateful for his years of service, and I am pleased to say that he has stayed on the Committee.

The Museum is looking for Welcome Museum volunteers to help with general tasks. Shifts tend to be from 9 am to 1.15 pm and 1 pm to 5.15., so any half day you can fit in will help! Please put your hands up!



There have been launches of three new books in Basingstoke since September, all available in the Willis shop - ‘Drunkards, Thieves and Rioters and the Basingstoke Police 1836-1889’ by Bob Clarke; The Basingstoke Scene in the ‘60s by Raz Razzle; Civil War in Wessex by Alan Turton. Something for everyone in such a wide range!

Thinking of publications, do please take a look at the Friends’ (friendly!) new website, and let us know what you think. Find it by entering into Google <http://www.friendsofthewillis.org.uk/>. In the right-hand column you will find pictures and stories that change every week or so.

October saw the first anniversary of the Hampshire Cultural Trust “going live”. Their website has a full explanation of the progress to date and the plans for the future “CREATING A WORLD-CLASS COUNTY BY 2025”.

We hope that you will find plenty to interest you in the 2016 Talks Programme. There is a wide range of topics from well-known speakers. Your comments and ideas are always welcome.

As ever, John Hollands is on the look-out for interesting articles and photographs to publish in the Newsletter. This is **the Friends’** newsletter, so do leave a message for him at the museum, email him at enquiries@friendsofthewillis.org.uk or call him on 01256 350764 with your ideas.

Finally, may I remind you that non-member guests wishing to join us at one of our monthly meetings should book a place at least 48 hours ahead of the meeting by telephoning the Museum on 01256 465902 or risk finding that all seats are taken. Also, as a courtesy to our speakers and to avoid interruptions, the doors to the Museum will be closed at 7.30 pm.

Membership update, by Howard Ray, Membership Secretary

2015 was another positive year for The Friends in terms of Membership numbers. Despite losing eleven supporters during the year we were able to maintain our membership at 94.

A warm welcome to the following Friends who joined us in 2015:

Susan Wells, John White, Derick Mirfin, Laurie Hopgood, Debbie Reavell, Nicola Turton, Alan Turton, Sandra Kinge, Fred Kinge, Ray Cook and Helen Atkins.

Sadly however we had to say farewell to:

Barbara Applin, Neil Hatt, Lesley Anne Hatt, George Porter, Malcolm Ferguson, Erica Webb, Peter Claxton, Pauline Williams, Edward Dawson, John Hopkins and Anne Powell.

Our success as Friends, whose primary object is to support the Willis Museum in every way possible, is very much dependent on the strength of our Membership so your Committee remains keen to top the magic 100 mark as soon as possible. Do you perhaps know someone who could be keen to support their local Museum and would enjoy our attractive programme of talks? Don't forget that those joining during the January to June period are eligible for attractive first year membership fee discounts.

Given the increasing financial pressures across every element of society our Museum will be increasingly dependent on our support, not just financially but in more practical ways. Your Committee is currently considering some options for helping our Museum team increase visitor numbers and provide the supporting services. A large, active and enthusiastic membership is therefore essential.

Your "favourite exhibits", by John Hollands

If you were at our Christmas social you may remember that I handed out forms asking you to note down three exhibits in the museum that you regarded as your favourites or which you considered particularly important. A report on your answers was promised; this is it.

Just 13 replies were handed in, but the responses were nevertheless very interesting. In alphabetical order this is a combined list of the items you mentioned. Unless otherwise noted each item was mentioned once only. *Aeolipyle figure (rather rude bronze figure of boy discovered by the canal builders); archaeology exhibits discovered on BAHS digs; Archaeology Gallery as a whole, (mentioned twice); Basing House Embroidery, (mentioned six times); boundary stone*; Deane Cup (mentioned twice); Diana Stanley paintings; George Willis's motor cycle (mentioned twice); "Grapes" pub sign; horse racing on Basingstoke Down exhibit*; mammoth tusk (mentioned twice); maps of Basingstoke (mentioned twice); "punch pot" found by the respondent*; Ming china (reference to the special exhibition?); resources room collection; "Pickaxe" story; Roman coffin (mentioned five times); shells and money to pay the ferryman across the River Styx*; Tichborne spoons; Time Tunnel as a whole (mentioned twice); William Sandys door (mentioned twice); Willis clock display; world's oldest wedding cake (mentioned twice).*

In some cases I was not sure which items were being referred to; I have marked these with an asterisk.

This was meant to be a light hearted diversion but there was a serious motive. We are anticipating that in due course the Time Tunnel will be substantially revamped, and expect to be able to exert a strong influence on how

this will be done. It therefore behoves us ALL to know what current exhibits we want to see retained and highlighted.

As a follow-up – I am wearing my newsletter editor’s hat now – I’d like to start a *new series of articles* in the May newsletter called “I’d like to draw your attention to...” For this series you, the Friends, are asked to write *short* pieces about a permanent exhibit in the Willis of your own choice, explaining what is significant about it, and what makes it meaningful for you – no maximum or minimum number of words, but perhaps about hundred words might suit. It will be particularly good to get contributions from Friends who have not written for the newsletter before - and I am hoping for some really great surprises!

Introducing our new website, by *Howard Ray*

At the end of last year the Friends launched their brand new web site to replace the previous site which had served us well for seven years, but was becoming rather tired and dated. Your committee had for some time recognised the need for a new website which would offer more capacity and scope and would also be easier to update and maintain. However the priority suddenly changed with the announcement that Hampshire County Council, who had provided the web space for the old site, would be withdrawing the facility by the middle of this year.

A Friends’ sub-committee spent much of last year designing and building the new web site. We were extremely fortunate to have one of our Committee Members, Alistair Craig, who had the technical skills, time and patience to take on the site construction. Alistair has kindly agreed to act as Webmaster for the foreseeable future.

As a result we now have our new web site with a new domain name, detailed below. For those of you who have our web site stored in your favourites you will need to find the new web site and replace the old site with the new.

Whilst providing much of the essential information which existed on the previous web site you will find that it is presented in a far more eye-catching and lavishly illustrated manner. The site is aimed at satisfying not only your needs for information as members but also those of the general public who want to know what we do and offer.

The website can be navigated by clicking on the front page icons or the items in the menu bar. In addition to the material available on the old web site (such as our Constitution, our Programme, our Publications, a Membership Application Form and relevant Articles written by Friends), there is a **snapshot of the new Facebook page**, set up and regularly maintained by Cathy Williams, and twenty-three pages accessible from the drop down menus, including:

- A complete library of Newsletters from 2009 and a subject index of all our newsletters from 1982.
- Under a “What’s on” menu, full details of the next Friends’ meeting, any forthcoming Friends’ outings and events, plus what is currently on offer at the Willis Museum and the other Hampshire Cultural Trust sites.
- Fascinating fully updated histories of both the Museum and the Friends, presented as chronologies.
- A brief history of the building in which our Museum is currently located.
- Easy-to-use links, not only to material available elsewhere on the site, but also externally to the Hampshire Cultural Trust, Willis Museum and the British Association of Friends of Museums web sites.
- Links to various sources for more information regarding the history of our town, including the web sites of our kindred bodies.
- An internet based “Contact Us” facility.

Do please take a look at the new website which can be found at: <http://www.friendsofthewillis.org.uk>
Hopefully you will find it an easy to use and helpful facility for satisfying your information needs about the Friends and our Museum.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding the new website I am sure that Alistair will be pleased to hear from you either using the Contacts page or directly at <mailto:alistair@friendsofthewillis.org.uk>.

Drunkards, thieves and rioters and the Basingstoke Borough Police, 1836-1889, by Bob Clark. *Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society, 2015. £10, reviewed by Geoff Palmer*

The back cover blurb of Bob Clarke's latest book says how the author is fascinated by Basingstoke's social history. As one reads this well-researched book this fascination becomes infectious. Bob has managed to compile an immensely readable, amusing and scholarly history of the fifty years of Basingstoke's own law enforcers in just two hundred pages.

The book contains many, often bizarre, tales of the town, its civic dignitaries, traders, criminals and itinerant travellers. It also gives the reader interesting glimpses into life in a nineteenth century market town. There are eleven narrative chapters and three very thorough appendices which are annotated with footnotes, quotes from contemporary newspaper reports, peppered with Bob's amusing side remarks: reporting on the appointment of William Trodd from Odiham to the Basingstoke Force in October 1871 Bob comments:

'It was P.C. Trodd's good fortune that he predated Enid Blyton's Noddy books by the best part of a century.'

The first appendix is a transcript of Superintendent Stephen Franklin's diary from 1853 to 1857. I was surprised to read how much he travelled in the execution of his duties: he made regular trips to Winchester to take offenders to Winchester Gaol, and to Reading, and Southampton and even on 11th September 1856 to Stoke upon Trent returning the next day.

The other appendices tabulate the service records of members of the Basingstoke Force. The drunkards in the book's title refer in part to the police themselves: thirteen of the permanent officers of the force, 29% of the total, were dismissed for drunkenness.

Other reasons for officers leaving the force were bizarre and sometimes tragic. After 25 years service Superintendent Franklin was dismissed for refusing to be measured for a new uniform. Sergeant James Waldren, known as 'Long Jimmy' because he was over 6 ft tall, was killed on duty on 12th October 1882 by falling from a train at Basingstoke Station which cut him in two.

There are several tales in the book of how Basingstoke's police used the technology available to them to detect crime and catch villains. The telegraph was used extensively to inform other forces of criminals on the run. Many were caught and brought to justice because this early form of communication was usually faster than the steam trains in which they attempted to avoid capture.

I was fortunate to receive this book as a Christmas present. I would recommend it as a bargain for £10.

A footnote: In January I was doing some research at the

Hampshire Record Office. I looked up from my work and noticed a familiar face opposite me. It was Bob Clarke. He was waiting for his latest search to be brought up from the storerooms. I told him, in whispers, how I was enjoying his latest book and that I had it in the outside locker. We both went out to the foyer where Bob signed my copy.

DRUNKARDS, THIEVES AND RIOTERS

and the Basingstoke Borough Police 1836 - 1889



Bob Clarke

Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society

John May's mistress: a jailbird and prostitute, by Bob Clarke

I enjoyed Ken Smallbone's excellent article in the September 2015 Newsletter about Julia Nobes, John May's mystery "wife". Julia was a fascinating person with quite a colourful past.

Isabella, one of Julia's sisters, had been in service as a cook with Henry Castell and his family since 21 March 1860. Mr Castell was a jeweller, living above his shop in the High Street, Portsmouth. Isabella left his service on 21 August 1860 to get married to Joseph Page, a sergeant in the Bedfordshire Militia. Although Isabella had not been with the family for more than a few months, Henry Castell gave her a wedding present of half a dozen of the best plated teaspoons worth about 12s 6d, believing her to have been a good and faithful servant.

Before Isabella left she recommended that Emily, another sister, should take her place, and that Julia should also enter the service as a housemaid. Julia joined the Castell's household on 13 August and Emily on the 21st.

After the sisters had entered their service Mr and Mrs Castell noticed that several items of jewellery and other articles had gone missing. A month after she had been in their service, Mrs Castell gave Julia notice to leave. She left on 15 October 1860.

A few days later Emily was caught stealing 1 ¾ ounces of tea which she had secreted in her handkerchief. Mrs Castell and Emma Jones, another servant, searched Emily's box and found two gold rings, two gold ear rings, a silver-gilt brooch and other articles she had stolen, as well as a pawn ticket for a gold brooch which turned out to be a brooch Mr Castell had given his wife 15 years earlier. It had her name scratched on the back.

After Mr Castell had given Emily into custody, he went with Police Constable Dowsett to her parents' home at 13 Union Place, Forton, a suburb of Gosport. After speaking with Dowsett, Victoria Nobes, the sisters' mother, brought down a bag for him to look at. She also produced other articles that Julia had brought home. Victoria explained the presence of stolen goods in the house by saying that when Julia was at Mr Castell's, she occasionally came back to see them and often brought some little things home with her. She said Julia had told her that her master had had the place cleared, and said that if there was anything in the rubbish that she wanted, she could have it.

Mr Castell identified a gold ring, a small seal with an anchor engraved upon it, a gold pistol tooth pick, a gold pin with a stone, a silver horseshoe pin, a silver arrow, a gold turquoise ring, a gold brooch, a pair of scissors, a pair of shell combs, a velvet bag, a quantity of silver fringe, a black silk apron, a silk handkerchief, a pair of ladies' wool gauntlets, a pair of cotton gloves, eight pieces of wool-work, several reels of cotton, and a card of buttons as his property. The value of the items that Julia had stolen was about £3.

Mr Castell identified a number of other items that were his property, some of which had gone missing since before Julia and Emily started working for him. Victoria confirmed that Isabella had brought them home. At Portsmouth Police Court on 22 October 1860 the three sisters were committed for trial at the next sessions. When they appeared at the Portsmouth Borough Michaelmas Quarter Sessions on 26 October 1860, Julia was sentenced to five months' imprisonment in Portsmouth Gaol, and her two elder sisters to nine months' each.

In February 1862, Julia and Emily, "two respectably attired young girls," appeared at Southampton Police Court charged with stealing £1 3s, "the property of John Nobes, of Forton, near Gosport." Policeman Davidge told the court that the two prisoners had "ran away from home some time since, taking the money with them, and that they were now living in Southampton in a state of prostitution."

As the prosecutor did not appear, Julia and Emily were discharged.

John Nobes was Julia's brother. On the night of the census in 1861 he and his brother-in-law Joseph Page (while Isabella was still in gaol) were lodging at the home of another brother-in-law, William Reeves and his wife Louisa (née Nobes, another of Julia's sisters) at 58 York Row, Portsmouth. As the victim of the theft was from Forton, it is possible that the court got the name wrong, and the victim was actually Julia's father, Richard.

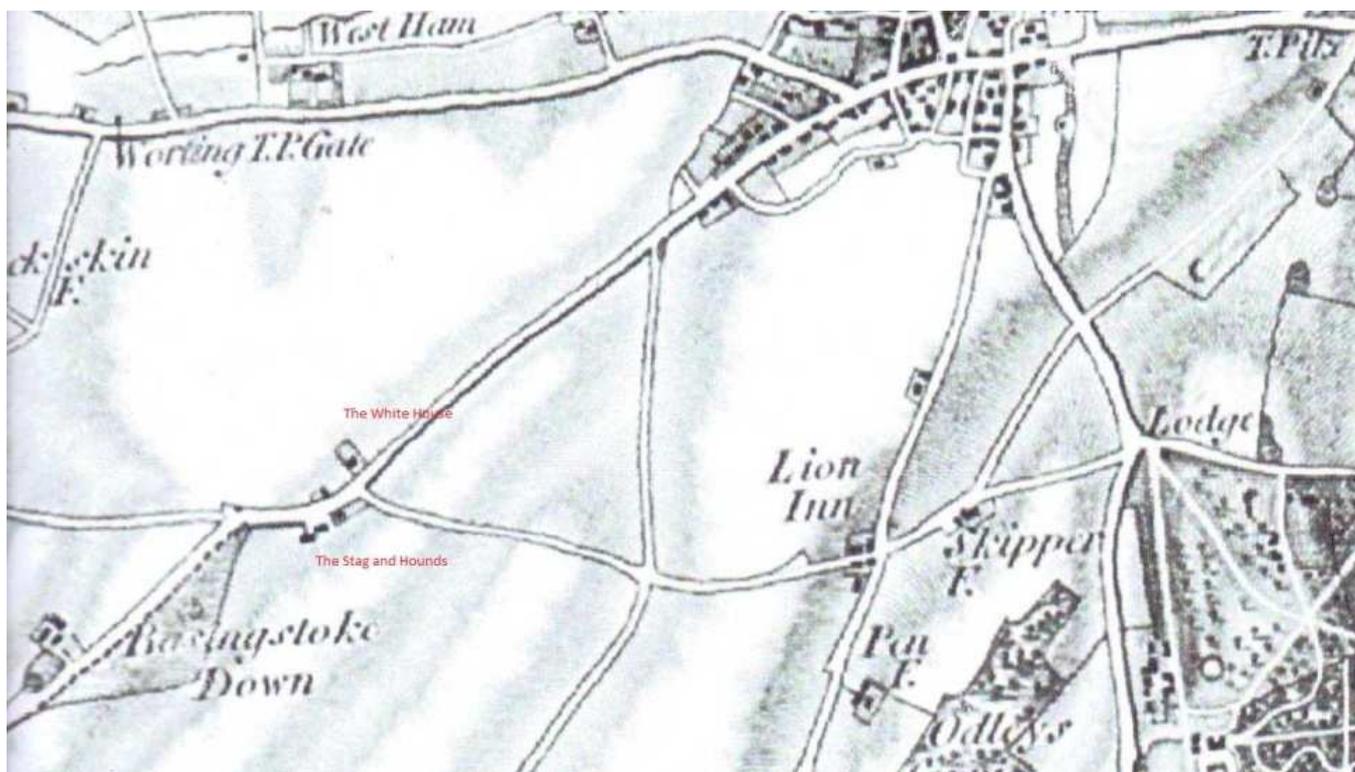
It is not known how Julia and John May met. But if she was working as a prostitute, it could be that she met John in her professional capacity.

Sources: Hampshire Advertiser, October 27, 1860, November 3, 1860 and March 1, 1862; Hampshire Chronicle, November 3, 1860; Hampshire Telegraph, October 27, 1860 and November 3, 1860. TNA, HO107/388/30/9, HO107/1660/12/17, RG9/639/59/1, RG9/643/208/22, HO27/125/230.

At the White House: the people before the pizzas, pt 1, by Geoff Palmer



The White House Winchester Road Basingstoke, which has been a branch of Pizza Express for over thirty years, is one of the oldest buildings in the area. It was occupied for at least 150 years by families and individuals who have represented a cross section of Basingstoke's Social History. There have been connections with prominent Hampshire land owners, agricultural entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, Empire builders, engineers, sportsmen and aristocracy. There have been financial and human losses and family tragedies. At times there have been large families filling the house, and at other times people on their own. I have been researching the social history of this house for some time. It is an ongoing project which is far from complete.



The 1816 map shows but does not name The White House. It was well placed on the junction of The Harrow Way and Winchester Road. As the map shows it was almost isolated, a mile out of Basingstoke on the road to Winchester with just The Stag and Hounds Public House as a near neighbour.

I begin my story with evidence from the 1841 Census and the **LAVINGTON** brothers: **Francis Hockley LAVINGTON** who was baptised at Chilcomb on 26th September 1786; and his younger brother, **Harry LAVINGTON** who was baptised in the same church on 10th August 1788. The 1841 census records that they had two servants looking after them at The White House: **Elizabeth PLANK** who was born in Chilcomb in 1799; and **Ann BUTLER** who was born about 1816. Both brothers were recorded on the census as having independent means. In fact they were from a wealthy, well-connected farming family.

Their grandfather, **Francis LAVINGTON** married **Sophia HOCKLEY** in Twyford Parish Church on 21st April 1755. This marriage united two wealthy farming families: The Hockley family had been farming in the Twyford area for nearly two hundred years. The Lavingtons owned and leased several hundred acres in the neighbouring parish of Chilcomb. Francis and Sophia had two daughters and one son: **Anna Maria LAVINGTON** born 1756, **Sarah Sophia LAVINGTON**, born 1757, and **Richard Hockley LAVINGTON** born 1758. There were no more children as Sophia died aged 33 in 1763.

Anna Maria married **William MOTH** on 20th May 1776 and went to live in Chilton Candover. She had several children and lived until she was 75.

Sarah Sophia married **Harry EASTON** on 15th July 1776 and stayed in Chilcomb. Unfortunately she died childless less than two years later at the age of 21.

Richard Hockley Lavington also made a good marriage on New Year's Day 1783 with **Henrietta EYLES**: She was related to the deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and may have been Richard's cousin. They had two sons and a daughter: Francis, Harry and Mary. **Mary LAVINGTON** died aged 24 and was buried at Chilcomb on 18th September 1820.

There is further evidence that the Lavington family was well-connected in the Hampshire Society of the early nineteenth century. Richard and Francis Lavington of Twyford are included in the *Games Duty List* published by *The Hampshire Chronicle* in September 1819. This confirmed that they, along with Lord Palmerston and Lord Titchborne, had paid the £3 13s.6d. annual duty to enable them to shoot game on their estates.

When Francis and Harry were just children, their father Francis had arranged a very good deal with a wealthy neighbour, which further advanced the family's fortunes. The neighbour, George Hoar, had returned from India where he was paymaster to the British Army, and retired to Twyford Manor. He set about improving the estate and employed Humphrey Repton to redesign the park. The ancient watermill on The Itchen spoilt the view so he made financial arrangements with Francis Lavington to have a new mill built on the other side of the river. There was land available for Francis Hockley to build a very large barn beside the mill. This has since been converted into four large houses. Hockley Mill features on the website of The Hampshire Mill Society and is open for visits on certain days.

There are over eighty documents in The Hampshire Record Office relating to the land dealings of the Lavingtons. On the last day of 1816 the details of Francis Lavington's will were published in a land release document: His widow, Henrietta received an annuity of £200. His sons, Francis and Harry received £3000 each. His daughter, Mary received £2000. The document gives Harry's address as Buckham Farm Bentworth.

A similar document of September 1829 records Harry living at Southwood Farm Wootton St Lawrence. In March 1828 the 500 acre farm, house and barns at Twyford, property of the late R H Lavington were sold for £21,000.

The Lavington brothers and their housekeeper, Elizabeth Plank, probably moved into The White House in the late 1830s. Francis died, aged 63, in the last quarter of 1849. The censuses of 1851 and 1861 record that just Harry and Elizabeth were living there.

In 1851 Harry is described as 'Landholder and Annuitant' and in 1861 as 'Fundholder retired'.

On 11 November 1865 *The Hampshire Chronicle* published the following notice in its 'Deaths column':

Died; On Tuesday [2 November 1865] Mrs Elizabeth Plank age 66 for 25 years valued and respected housekeeper of Harry Lavington, The White House Basingstoke.

Elizabeth left a will. A copy of it is in The Hampshire Record Office.

Just over three years later on 6th December 1865 Harry Lavington died. On 30th January 1869 *The Hampshire Chronicle* published a notice asking anyone who had a claim on the estate of Harry Lavington to come forward. Administration of Harry Lavington's estate, valued at under £600 was granted on 6th April 1869 to Joseph

THE WHITE HOUSE, WINCHESTER ROAD,
BASINGSTOKE.

CAPITAL HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE,
Superior Bedding, 160oz. of Silver Plate,
Plated Articles, Services of Glass and China, Books,
Oil Paintings, Engravings, & Miscellaneous Effects.

MESSRS. HENRY DOWNS and FRANCIS D.
MAWBERY are favoured with instructions from the
Executors of the late Mr. Harry Lavington, to SELL by
AUCTION, on the premises, on Thursday the 17th of
June, 1869, at twelve o'clock,—

THE WHOLE OF THE FURNITURE
of the above Residence;

Comprising large Brussels carpets and sundry others,
hearth rugs, window curtains, easy chairs, sets of chairs
in hair seating, capital secretaire bookcase, oak bureau,
mahogany, dining, Pembroke, and occasional tables, oil
paintings and engravings, and about 150 vols. of Books,
various, sundry ornaments, &c.; four-post and tent bed-
steads, with furnitures, wool and flock mattresses, nine
superior feather beds, blankets and quilts, mahogany and
oak chests of drawers, painted winged wardrobe, wash-
stands and ware, toilet tables and glasses, and the usual
chamber appointments; also, a variety of culinary uten-
sils, a large service of blue and white dinner ware, antique
china, about 160 ounces of Silver Plate, comprising large
covered tankard, two smaller ditto, goblet, sets of gravy,
table, dessert, and tea spoons, forks, fish slice, cream
ewers, salts, sugar tongs, and a cruet frame, &c.; plated
articles, a small quantity of linen, and various effects.

May be viewed the day preceding the sale, and cata-
logues obtained at the place of sale, and of the Auc-
tioneers, Winchester-road, Basingstoke.

Goldfinch his 'cousin German' and one of his next of kin of West Brompton Middlesex. On 17 June 1869 *The Hampshire Chronicle* published an announcement on its front page advertising the sale of the entire contents of The White House (*To be continued*)

Repeated by request: excerpts from the 2009 survey report.

During a discussion at our AGM of future plans for the part of the museum now known as The Time Tunnel, reference was made to how the 2009 members' survey revealed how the Friends would like to see this re-developed. This led to a request that the survey report printed in the January 2010 Newsletter, (actually a shortened version of a longer report) should be re-printed. What follows is a reprint of the part of the shortened report that focused on the Time Tunnel, with some extra detail from the full report inserted for clarity

Thirty-nine of you returned a completed survey, more like a 45% response than the 100% hoped for. However the sample was enough to form a picture of what you, The Friends, really think of the Willis Museum and what you would like to see done there in the future ...

...Regarding the Time Tunnel there was widespread agreement with the view that it was "well overdue for a make-over". Many of the items on show here are not specific to the history of Basingstoke; it was recognised that many museum visitors like to see social history exhibits of a more general character – these often have a nostalgic appeal - but the message came across very clearly that, to most Friends, "Basingstoke-specific" items were more deserving of the space. There was limited support however for the suggestion that the Willis should concern itself with the whole area administered by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council; this was seen to be "too large and too disparate to be covered in one small museum", with some parts historically more orientated towards other towns.

There was also a feeling that the current displays are not seen to the best advantage, with poor lighting in places and a lack of captions. A review of the signposting was called for. Which end of the Time Tunnel are you meant to start at? Should visitors be clearly offered the choice of either a past-to-present or a present-to-past route? And why, some asked, did the Time Tunnel purport to concern itself only with the last 200 years when the town has such a long history? (In fact a number of key exhibits are much older.) We seem to have a case for better coverage of the town's earlier history, with more timeline panels, and closer linkage with the archaeology exhibits.

Some members thought that any re-planning of the Willis should be done with an eye to Milestones where it seems more appropriate to have social history exhibits. Several thought our 1950s kitchen exhibit should go there and join that museum's other kitchen exhibits, thus making more room at the Willis for items that really told the story of Basingstoke. Remember that when the Time Tunnel was created, Milestones had not yet come into being.

There was support for seeing what items collected by Mr Willis and subsequently removed to Chilcomb or elsewhere might reasonably be brought back*, and also for the greater use of documents removed from the museum to the Record Office, or in the keeping of the council. (Mr Willis made considerable use of displays of documents.) However there was also a feeling that their use should not be overdone, and that good copies should be used rather than original documents, which were best kept by the experts in conserving them. In fact the council has just sent a number of historic documents to the Record Office.

***Since the survey was carried out two display cases devoted to Mr Willis were in fact added to the Archaeology Gallery.**

In section 13 you were asked if you thought nine suggested themes specific to Basingstoke deserved greater coverage. In every case there was more agreement than disagreement, though the strength of the support varied considerably. From what proved to be the most popular to the least popular theme these were:

- c. Basingstoke as a communications centre for road, canal and rail
- d. The gradual industrialisation of the town
- f. Local buildings whether old, recent or destroyed, e.g. The Holy Ghost Chapel, local churches, Church Cottage, The Vyne, Goldings, almshouses, The Anvil Concert Hall (and many more!)
- a. The life and achievements of George Willis
- i. Local persons of note, e.g. the Paulets, William Sandys, Walter de Merton, James Lancaster, the Chutes, Richard Aldworth, Sir James Deane, Jane Austen, Thomas Burberry, the May family, John Arlott, Arthur Attwood.
- b. The geology, climate and agriculture of the area
- g. Basingstoke as a recreational centre: public parks, Haymarket Theatre, Down Grange, the Leisure Park, The Anvil, clubs and societies of note.
- e. Basingstoke as an administrative and commercial centre, e.g. Milwards, Barclays, the AA
- h. Basingstoke as “ a town of the motor car age”

Regarding theme “c”, the most popular one, twenty-two Friends agreed strongly that it deserved more coverage, and another thirteen agreed, whilst two disagreed, one of them strongly. In the case of theme “h”, the least popular, six agreed strongly, twenty-one more also agreed, and seven disagreed, two of them strongly. “Housing, education, public art”, recurring topics in the “Talking History” recordings produced by BAHS, and “major events in the town” were also proposed as themes that deserved better coverage, and thought was given to ways of squeezing this quart of additional topics into the pint pot that is the Willis Museum. As noted above, removing some items to Milestones is one way some of you would be happy to see. Other ways suggested were “building up the existing folders and providing comfortable accommodation for their perusal”, and the use of touch screen display units. Existing printed material that could be adapted for a touch screen unit might include the Town Trail, the booklet on public art in Basingstoke, and the recent material produced for the Heritage Day event at the Holy Ghost cemetery. Such equipment could also be used to put people in contact with the valuable and currently under used collection of recordings deposited in the museum by the BAHS “Talking History Project”.

If you would like a copy of the full report or the complete shortened report (entitled “The Willis Museum and You”) please let the editor know.

What’s on at the Willis

All advanced bookings can be taken at the museum (01256 465902). You can also book some courses and workshops on-line. See the museum’s website for details. Please remember that non-members attending Friends’ Association events, including your personal guests, must reserve seats in advance.

Now until Saturday February 20, **FINISHES THIS SATURDAY, Introducing Austen 200: a preview..** *Jane Austen’s writing desk and an original manuscript feature in this exhibition to prepare you for the bi-centenary next year of her death.* Sainsbury Gallery

Now until Saturday February 27: **World War 1: from poems to pictures, an exhibition by J J Howson.** *Evocative pen and ink drawings by a local artist matched to poetry of the Great War.* Basingstoke Gallery

Saturday February 27 to April 16. **Defining moments: a journey through British Modern Art.** *This unique selection on loan from Southampton City Art Gallery illustrates the most influential movements to have shaped 20th century British art.* Sainsbury Gallery.

Thursday March 3, time TBA: **Defining moments in British Modern art**, by artist Ronnie Ireland. *Guiding you through the different styles and art forms in evidence in the Sainsbury Gallery Exhibition. £5.00 fee. Must be pre-booked.*

Saturday March 5 to April 16: **Faith, hope and fantasy, artwork by Karen J Jones.** *Work by a Basingstoke artist in a variety of media and encompassing a wide range of subject matter ranging from Christian imagery through flora and fauna to the abstract and contemporary.* Basingstoke Gallery

Wednesday March 16: **Defining moments in British Modern art: a talk on the exhibition by its curator Tim Craven. £5.00 fee. Must be pre-booked.**

Thursday March 17, 7.30 pm. Friends' event: **Corbett National Park in Northern India, then and now, by Bill Fergie.** *A presentation by our Friend, Bill on his visit to India's oldest National Park which was established to protect the Bengal tiger.* Archaeology Gallery.

Saturday March 19: **Defining moments in British Modern Art, a masterclass. Fee £25 plus an additional charge if booked on-line. Must be pre-booked.**

Thursday April 21, 7.30 pm, Friends' event: **The secret gardens of Hampshire, by Patricia Elkington.** *Most of these very varied gardens are private and opened for only one or two days a year. This will be a good opportunity to plan summer visits.* Archaeology Gallery.

Thursday May 19, 7.30 pm Friends' event: **The venerable Bede, maker of a nation, by Chris Grocock.** *Always an entertaining speaker, Chris makes a welcome return with a presentation on the subject of his recently published book.* Archaeology Gallery.

What's on at the BAHS

There will be meetings of the Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society at Church Cottage on the following dates. Admission is free to BAHS members, and for non-members, the charge is £3.

Thursday March 10, 7.30 pm: **The Barbara Applin Memorial Lecture: Silchester, Iron Age and Roman – 500 years of urban life, by Prof Mike Fulford.**

Thursday, April 14. 7.30 pm: **Almanacs, astrology and popular medicine in early modern England, by Dr Louise Curth.**

Thursday May 12, 7.30 pm: **Rebuilding the past, by Luke Winter, Centre for Ancient Technology.**

Further information may be obtained from www.bahsoc.org.uk or from the secretary Penny Martin, tel : 01256 321423 secretary@bahsoc.org.uk

News from Basingstoke Heritage Society

The Heritage Society's AGM will be held at Church Cottage on Tuesday April 19th at 7.30 pm and followed by a presentation on a local topic. Admission is free to BHS members; for non-members there is a charge of £2 payable at the door.

During the Basingstoke Festival (Friday 17th June to Sunday 10th July) the Heritage Society will be conducting guided walks, and it will be represented at the Family History Day at the Discovery Centre on Saturday, October 1st