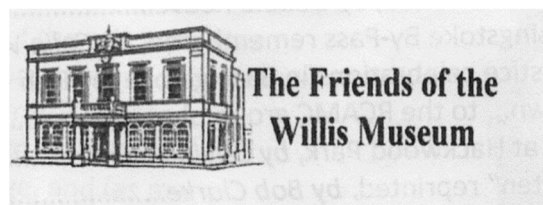


Friends of the Willis Museum Newsletter, September 2023



Seen on this year's group visit to Shaw House, Newbury. William Dolman II and his wife for whom the house was built in the 1570s could have worn clothes like this. Ruffs were very expensive and only worn by the wealthy, whilst garments one could not move in easily were seen as a mark of high status.

'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 £12. Visitor for one meeting £3

Your committee: Derek Anthony (Chairman), David Wickens (Deputy Chairman and Programme Secretary); Ian Scott (Treasurer); Isobel Archer (Minutes Secretary), Steve Crudge (Publicity) John Hollands (Publicity and Newsletter); Barbara Johnson (Membership Secretary); Jenny Stevens (Venue Manager, ex officio).

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

Newsletter compiled and edited by John Hollands, and proof read, printed and distributed by Derek Anthony

In this issue

From the Chairman, by Derek Anthony.....	2
From the Venue Manager, Jenny Stevens.....	2
The Friends visit Shaw House, by Derek Anthony.....	3
More memories of Mr Littlefair, by David Buckland.....	5
Where is Moth's Grave? by Bob Clarke.....	5
Basingstoke High School for Girls revisited, introduced by Judy Melliush.....	7
Your attention is drawn to the Basingstoke Boundary stone plate, by Colin Williams.....	8
A High School period piece, photos from Debbie Reavell.....	9
What's on at the Willis.....	10
What's on elsewhere.....	12

From the Chairman, Derek Anthony

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 issue of our Newsletter. I do hope that you have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Your committee invites you to join them for a very interesting programme of monthly meetings in the Museum organised by our Programme Secretary, David Wickens. After many years of service, Sarah Baker has retired from the role of providing refreshments at these meetings. If there is anyone willing to take over from Sarah, working with Shelagh Le Marechal would they please have a word with myself or another committee member.

Please do be sure to put the date of this year's Annual General Meeting into your diary – Thursday 19th October at 7.30pm in the Willis Museum. All related documents will be sent to members ahead of the meeting. The AGM is an important opportunity for us to look back over the past 12 months and into the future.

We are always looking to add new blood and to strengthen our committee. If you think that you might be able to help please do contact me and I will be happy to explain what is involved. My phone number is 01256 322073 and my email address is derekganthony@btinternet.com

Finally, on behalf of the committee, may I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has renewed their membership for another year. At the last count we had 97 members, more than at any time since the beginnings of the pandemic. Members of the committee and in particular our Programme Secretary David Wickens have worked hard putting together an interesting programme of events for the coming 12 months.

For anyone who has not yet renewed their membership, it is not too late. Send your form and subscription to Barbara Johnson, Membership Secretary, before the end of September and she will be delighted to add you to the list of this year's members. Barbara's contact details are as follows:- 3 Hillstead Court, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke RG21 3PT. Phone 01256 326191. Email edandbarbjohnson@gmail.com

From the Venue Manager, Jenny Stevens

Dear All,

We hope you have enjoyed the summer months, despite the very strange weather we have been experiencing.

The Willis's year starts with the new financial year at the beginning of April and so far it has been very good. Our visitor figures are well above the target (just shy of 3000) set for us by the Trust. Income generation is also doing well across our different streams (café, shop and donations being the main three). Hopefully things are beginning to return to pre-Covid levels, but we still have some way to go.

We have had a run of three excellent exhibitions so far this year: *Shoes, inside out*, *Our Windrush Story*, and now *Gizmobots*. All very different, but each one has proven very popular for different reasons. *Our Windrush Story* was an

incredibly important story to tell, and work has now started on a legacy project to delve further into stories of immigration to Basingstoke.

As you will see from the *What's on* section of this newsletter we have a busy autumn/winter ahead of us with two interesting exhibitions in the Sainsbury Gallery ahead of us and an assortment of workshops and talks. Artist David Remfry RA was one of the judges for this year's Royal Academy Exhibition and we look forward to working with him over the autumn.

As an alumnus of Reading University's Archaeology Department – I spent a month excavating the North Gate back in 1991 – like many of you I am looking forward to the exhibition that will be coming to the Gallery from early February.

Further events may be added over the coming weeks, so please keep an eye on our website/special media, and I am sure John and Steve will send you their usual email updates.

The Friends visit Shaw House, by Derek Anthony, (photos by Briony and John Hollands)

On Thursday 10th August fifteen members and guests assembled at Shaw House on the Northern outskirts of Newbury for this year's summer outing. Once again the weather was kind to us with warm sunshine and a gentle breeze.

After an introductory talk by Nik Stewart the House Manager, members and guests toured the house and grounds before meeting together in the café for refreshments.

The house was built in 1581 and the exterior remains an

Mr Stewart started his talk in the Chandos Dining Room. On the left is a reproduction silk wallpaper with a Chinoiserie design reproduced from originals hanging at Carton House in Ireland. The Duke of Chandos who owned Shaw House from 1728 to 1751 replaced the

impressive example of Elizabethan architecture. The interior, although unfurnished, retains many original features which are explained on colourful "self-read" panels, and there were cupboard-like doors in some places that could be opened to reveal the original Elizabethan walls. One room contained an of costumes that were or could have been worn by persons

associated with the house throughout its history from 1581 to the present day, and another accommodated an exhibition of artefacts associated with the house. Easy to use audio-guides are also available.

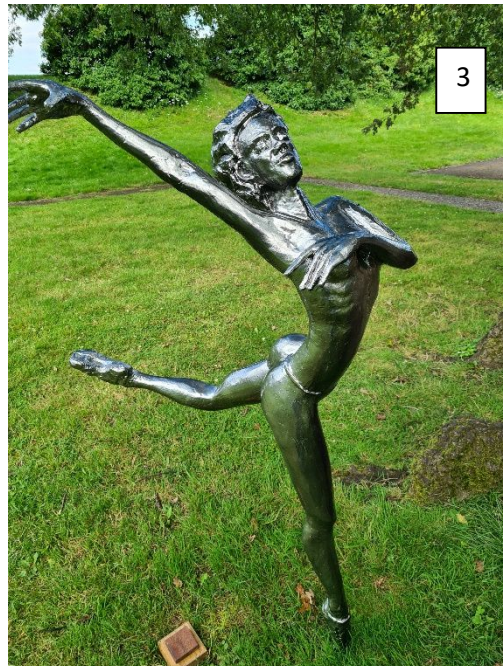
Visitors learn about the house's chequered history - its royal visitors, its part in the second battle of Newbury, requisitioning in WW2 and its time as a school. After standing empty for many years the house and grounds were finally restored by West Berkshire District Council and opened to the public and as a conference venue in 2006.

An added attraction this August was an outdoor sculpture exhibition in the grounds.

I can assure anyone thinking of visiting Shaw House that the house and the grounds are well worth the journey, especially on a fine day when the grounds make an ideal spot for a picnic. They are open to the public every weekend and school holiday from mid-February to late September. There is no entry charge although as you might imagine donations are very welcome.

Further information can be found on-line at www.westberkshireheritage.org/shaw.house. Below are some photos taken during the visit by Briony and John Hollands.





A general view of the costume display. 2. During the major restoration of the house in 2005-2008, some of the 18th century panelling installed by the Duke of Chandos was hinged to allow visitors to see the Elizabethan fabric beneath. 3.4. Two of the 61 sculptures on exhibition in the grounds (until September 24). 5. View of the exterior.



More memories of Mr Littlefair, by David Buckland

An interesting article in the May newsletter that really caught my eye was written by Simon Downham. What he wrote about Fairfield's School and Mr Littlefair brought back memories of long ago. Like Simon I didn't pass my 11 Plus and spent my school days at Fairfield's Junior, the Shrubbery Annex and The Senior School.

I got to know Mr Littlefair very well during my days at the Senior School and I believe no other boy at Fairfield's knew him better than me as I was the Stock Prefect during my final term before leaving school in 1953. My stockroom was in his office which he shared with his secretary Mrs Perry. Simon is quite right in all he says about Johnny. He never wore socks. He walked to school and home again every day from Worting, I believe. He established the school motto which was "To see and admire, not harm or destroy," and he made sure that we all knew the words of his favourite poem, "There is a rabbit in a snare" (See below). It is also true that he walked into classrooms and picked on someone to recite a poem. He did have his favourites. He was a great believer in corporal punishment and often caned boys across our hands. You knew you were for it when he said the dreaded words, "Get to the foot of my stairs, boy!"

However, he did have a fun side sometimes. One afternoon I was preparing my stock to deliver to the classrooms, ink powder, chalk, dusters, Mansion Polish, etc, when he suddenly entered the room uttering, "Ha! Burglars, eh! and chased me round the room before flopping at his desk with a little chuckle. I think I got on with him pretty well on the whole and I had, and still have, a great respect for him. Teachers always addressed him as "Headmaster", which I thought was nice. I will never forget him.

My nephew told me that whilst he was at Charles Chute School when Mr Littlefair was Headmaster, one of his teachers told him that John Littlefair preferred to walk everywhere because he was involved in a car accident in which his wife was killed and that he grew his bushy beard and moustache to cover scars on his face sustained in the same accident,. I have no way of confirming that this was true, but believe it was so as it came from a respected teacher.

Mr Littlefair's favourite poem: *The snare*, by James Stephens, (1915)

*I hear a sudden cry of pain!
There is a rabbit in a snare;
Now I hear that cry again,
But I cannot tell from where.*

*But I cannot tell from where
He is calling out for aid!
Crying on the frightened air,
Making everything afraid!*

*Making everything afraid!
Wrinkling up his little face;
And he cries again for aid;
And I cannot find the place!*

*And I cannot find the place
Where his paw is in the snare!
Little One! Oh, Little One!
I am searching everywhere!*

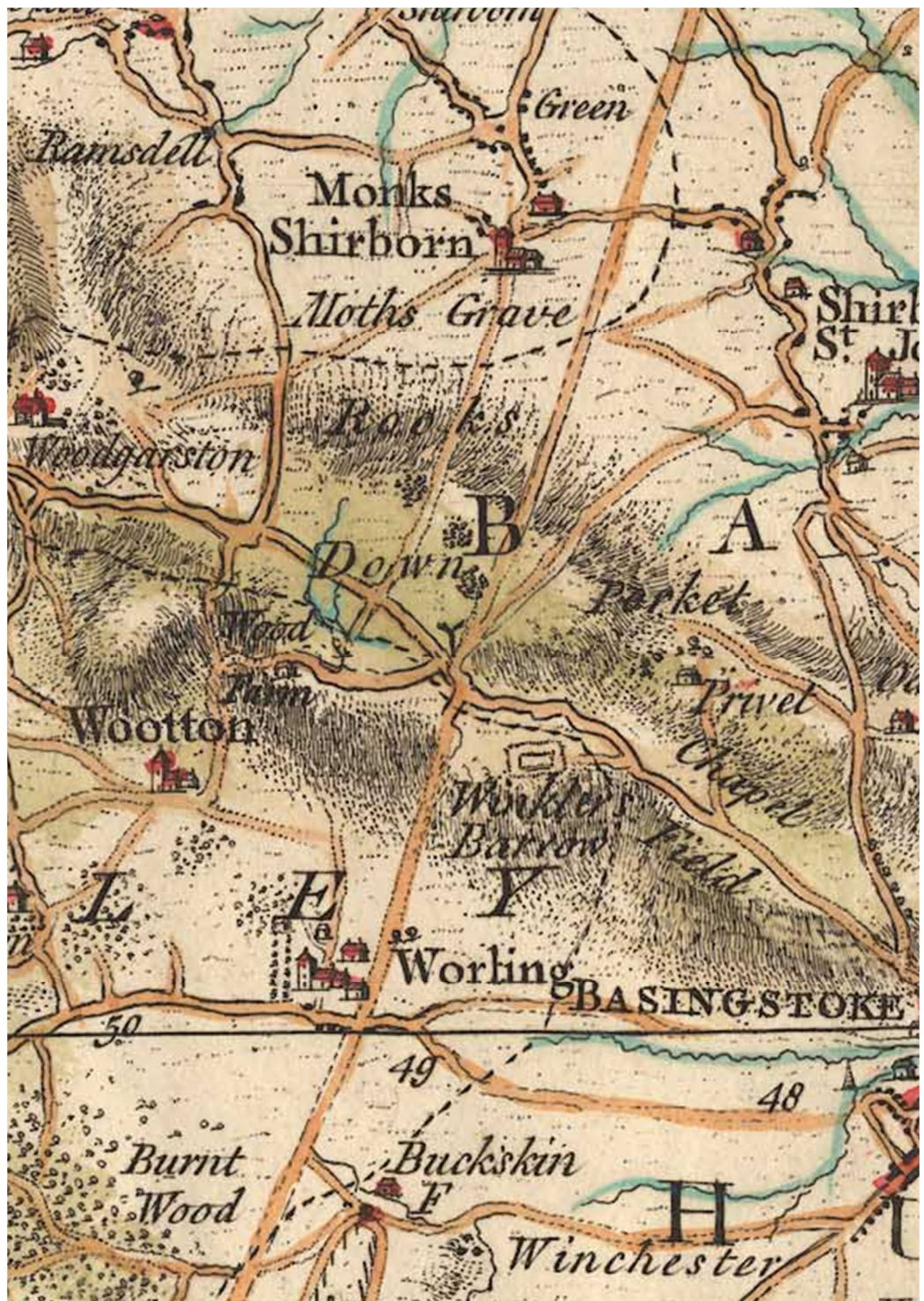
Where is Moth's grave? By Bob Clark

In my collection of old newspapers I found a report in the London Evening-Post for 7 September 1738 that William Moth of Sherborne St John died on 24 August that year and after his corpse was taken to St Andrew's Church, presumably for his funeral service, it was "deposited ... in a Piddle of Ground, the Property of the Deceased, near Rooksdown".

A further account in my copy of the Weekly Worcester Journal for 15 September 1738 described Moth as "an Eminent Attorney at Law, remarkable for his close penurious way of Living [that] notwithstanding he died worth 30,000 Pound, there was only One Shilling and Six-pence in Money found in his House, which gave occasion for some People to say, if he had liv'd much longer, he must have been kept by the Parish. So that it may be justly observ'd, he has done more good by dying, than he would have done if he had liv'd ever so long ... He order'd his Corpse to be laid in a Grave about six Feet deep in a publick Field, which he purchased near Rooksdown, and gave his Tenant Fifty Pound that it should never be dug or plough'd up."

His will and inventory in the National Archives confirm that he was certainly a very wealthy man. Apart from the many gifts of money in his will to relatives and other individuals, his bequests including:

His Messuages lands Tenements and hereditaments in Sherborne Saint John which included three orchards;
His Messuages lands Tenements and hereditaments in Alton; A messuage, barn and stable and thirteen closes of land in Pamber, which land and timber he valued at £700; Two messuages, a stable, chamber, well and garden and appurtenances in Basingstoke; Several parcels of field land in Basingstoke of about five pounds value by the year; Oakridge Farm in Eastrop; His moiety of the manor or farm called Sherfield Court; His messuage lands and premises in Mortimer (Hants) called Castle Place; an acre of meadow in Padworth; the messuage or tenement called Combe House with the buildings and windmill and with the appurtenances in Tadley; His messuage, barn, stable, backside, four closes of land and three meadows with the appurtenances in Tadley called Goslings; A little plot of meadow land in Tadley; His messuages lands tenements and hereditaments including a meadow in Ufton (Nervet); His messuage and lands and hereditaments in Silchester; His freehold estate in West Sherborne (Monk Sherborne); A messuage or tenement and other little tenement in Reading; Three closes in Baughurst; £50 to the poor of Alton; £50 to the poor people of Sherfield; £50 to the poor of Winchester; £50 to the poor of Mortimer (Hants); Twenty shillings a year to the poor of Ufton (Nervet) and twenty shillings a year to the poor of Mortimer (Hants) for twelve years; £50 to the poor of Silchester; £20 a year to be given on his birthday to the poor of Sherborne St John for ten years.





I don't know where his house at Sherborne St John was, but according to his inventory it appears to have been a substantial building comprising the hall, parlour, inner room, butteries (storerooms for food and drink and kitchen equipment), four chambers (bedrooms) and garrets. In addition, the property had a brewhouse, a malthouse, a stable and a barn.

I also don't know where his grave is. In his will he ordered his body "to be buried in my Close adjoining unto Rooksdown and b[o]unded therewith on the East and South parts and be carried thither by John May, King Pitman, Rouland Pronen (?) and Robert Crocker".

The only reference to Moth's grave on a map is the vague entry on Taylor's inaccurate map of 1759, (figure 1) which seems to place it in Monk Sherborne rather than Sherborne St John, which I'm sure is wrong. I wonder whether it is the tumulus shown on the 1912 Ordnance Survey map (figure 2). For ease of reference I've included a modern map (figure 3) with an arrow showing the approximate area of the tumulus.

Basingstoke High School for Girls revisited, *introduced by Judy Melliush*

Our member Judy Melliush, a former pupil at the High School has loaned the editor two news cuttings about the school, one from 1958, and the other from 1990.

The first a whole front page from the "Hants and Berks Gazette" of April 3rd 1958, contains an article entitled "High School celebrates its Golden Jubilee" and shares a page with another entitled "Sudden death of Archdeacon AW Chute, MA, twenty-two years Vicar of Basingstoke

About this Judy writes: *The reason I have the cutting from 1958 is that my aunt, Evelyn Bailey was in service to the Rev Chute, for 20 years until his death, and its was amongst her memorabilia. It is a co-incidence that the item about the High School is also on the front page.*

The Gazette reported that among the guests at a celebration for the staff and pupils in the school gym was a Miss ED Canning of Rayleigh Road who had been one of the 41 original pupils at the school in its first home, Brook House, and brought with her a hatband saved from her schooldays. (The removal to Crossborough Hill took place in 1912.) Another former pupil, a Mrs MacDonald from Haslemere, who had started school in September 1910 recalled that at prize-givings all the pupils had to be dressed in white, whilst Miss P Carr who taught at the school from 1916 to 1955 recalled that the white dresses were delightful and made even the little horrors look like angels. She also recalled how the roof of a music hut had been blown off in a gale, and how the tapioca served in school lunches was popularly known as "frog spawn".

Also in attendance was the Chairman of the Governors, none other than our Mr GW Willis. He had been a governor from 1917 and chairman from 1924. He expressed the hope that the school would continue "to prosper during the

next 50 years so that all the hospitals may be staffed, the schools may have teachers, and for the general well-being of Basingstoke.” (The school did not of course survive for another 50 years in its original form having become the Harriet Costello Comprehensive School in 1971).

An accompanying photo (not reproduced) shows the Headmistress, Miss HJ Wood and the Head Girl, Ruth Phillips cutting a huge three-tiered cake made and given by the school staff and large enough for each of the school’s 350 pupils to have a piece.



Judy’s second news cutting dates from the Gazette of Friday July 13 1990. It reports on a school re-union and is accompanied by a photo (above) showing from left to right Joan Peachey, a former teacher, Hilda Wood, the Headmistress from 1945 to 1965, Ursula Everest, the Head from 1965 to 1985, Joan Baulch, the oldest ex-pupil present, at the school from 1925 to 1928, and Duncan Wood, the youngest ex-pupil present (1974 to 1979)

About this Judy writes:

The reason I kept the cutting from 1990 is that I had attended the High School from 1964 to 1969. Miss Wood was my Headmistress for the first year until she retired but she later took me for my spoken English exam which was an element of the English Grammar GCE. She was very good at putting you at your ease. I remember Miss Everest was the Head for the rest of my time and was a little sterner.

Miss Peachey took PE and games for the entire five years. I still have her words: “Stand up straight, girls. Shoulders back.” ringing in my ears, but in a nice way.

My sister Carolyn has remembered that our Mum (Lois Bailey) had attended keep fit classes run by Miss Peachey which was probably in the mid to late 1940s.

Carolyn also remembers attending a talk given by Miss Peachey to the Mothers’ Union at St Peter’s Church, South Ham in the early 80s.

Your attention is drawn – to the Basingstoke boundary stone plate ... and the Town Council meeting of 5 August 1856, by Colin Williams

Why this meeting ? Because, on that date, the Council’s Minute Book records a decision that 150 years later would explain a discovery:-

‘The Town Clerk laid before the Meeting the engrossed description of the Basingstoke (1) and Nately Manors (2) and the progress of the Perambulations (3). Resolved that Stones be erected to mark the boundaries of the Manors under the direction of those gentlemen who went to the boundaries.’

(1) This is pre-the 1894 Local Government Act when the borough boundary was extended.

(2) The Town Council was Lord of the Manor of Nately

- (3) This refers to the centuries old annual practice of beating the bounds to demonstrate the areas under the Town's jurisdiction; it would continue till the end of the 19thC – OS maps removed the need.

Now jump forward 150 years when two local residents rummaging through an antiques shop in Honiton found a metal plate bearing the Town's badge of St Michael. That find resulted in an examination of 19thC OS maps where the sites of 29 boundary stones each of which would have had one of these plates attached were identified in Basingstoke and 10 in Nateley but a survey found no stones! However, publicity produced from a local estate a stone with plate attached; this is now displayed at Milestones. The Honiton find is in the Willis's *Story of Basingstoke Gallery*.



A High School Period Piece: *photos supplied by Debbie Reavell*

Debbie Reavell has a somewhat damaged copy of one of those very long school group photographs and copied it in parts for us. It's of the staff and pupils of Basingstoke High School for Girls taken about 1938. Yes, if you are an ex-pupil we know you don't date back that far (!) but you might recognise some of your teachers as their younger selves or some of the girls as older family members of your family etc, and it's a great period photo, isn't it? The editor would like to hear from you if you do recognise anyone in the photo.

Debbie's mother, born Hazel Grover in 1922 is "framed" in the fourth photo below.





What's on at the Willis

Now until Oct 17: Gizmobots & Mural artists: *Gizmobots* (as seen on the BBC's Money for Nothing programme) are robot artworks that start life as finds from car **boot** sales, skips and scrap yards. Each robot is carefully crafted by Mark Haig so that all the parts come together to create a desirable, quirky robot sculpture, each with its own personality. A family-friendly selling exhibition. **Sainsbury Gallery**

Now until Oct 1: The Robot Factory: Inspired by *Gizmobots* the Basingstoke Gallery has been transformed into a robot factory – a chance for all the family to go mad with arts and crafts. Includes facilitated sessions.

Sept 21 (7.30 pm) Friends' talk: The wit and satire of Gilbert and Sullivan, by Dr Stephen Goss.
Archaeology Gallery

Sept 24 (2pm – 3.30 pm) : Sunday afternoon tea and talk: 'The Peregrine Falcon' by Keith Betton
Having worked on the conservation of The Peregrine Falcon, Keith is more than well equipped to talk about this species. He will share his experiences of liaising with landowners to ensure that the birds have the greatest success in life.
Archaeology Gallery. £6.00 To book visit www.hampshireculture.org.uk/willis-museum-and-sainsbury-gallery and book on-line. Otherwise call in or phone 01256 465902

Oct 7 - Nov 5: My internal reality – dementia voices: *Poetry from residents of Homefield House. Celebrates the talents of people living with dementia and memory loss. An associated book will be available to purchase.* **Basingstoke Gallery**

Oct 19, (7.30pm) Friends' AGM for all members, followed by More photos from the past. **Archaeology Gallery**

Oct 21 – 29, Half term family activity: All things dog related, “make and takes” with a canine theme inspired by the new exhibition.

Oct 25-29, Halloween Pumpkin Trail: *a naughty witch has hidden her pumpkins in the museum. Help to find them and take home a prize. £2 per trail sheet. Suitable for 3+. No need to book.*

Oct 25-Jan 28: We think the world of you: an art exhibition by David Remfry, RA. *Evocative pencil and watercolour portraits exploring the connection between people (including celebrities) and their canine companions.* **Sainsbury Gallery. Look out for exhibition-based art classes and talks.**

Oct 26: Family activity: Paper bag Puppy Puppets, *be inspired by the Sainsbury Gallery Exhibition and create your own puppy puppets. £3 per child (accompanying adults free) recommended age 5+. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Please pre-book, on line, phone, or call in.*

Oct 29 (2pm-3.30pm): Sunday afternoon tea and talk: Discovering astronomy, by Dr Tony Hersh. *Tony Hersh is a man with many hats. Not only has he been a magistrate for North Hampshire and has run clinical trials, but he is also an Astronomer! Here he will be discussing the wonders of the universe and some of the unexplained phenomena that have been observed.* **Archaeology Gallery, £6.00.** *Book as for Sept 24*

Nov 11 – Dec 9, What I did on holiday: *this year's exhibition by Basingstoke Art Club.* **Basingstoke Gallery**

Nov 16 (7.30pm) Friends' talk: The history of shopping in Basingstoke, by Bob Clark. **Archaeology Gallery**

Nov 26 (2pm-3.30pm) Sunday afternoon tea and talk: Country mouse, town mouse, by Dr Steven Havers *A fun and informative talk on rodents including a study of wood mice on farmland and the effect of agricultural practices on them, plus the behaviour of House Mice in inner city areas.* **Archaeology Gallery, £6.** *Book as for Sept 24*

Dec 16 – Jan 13, Christmas Doodle Room: *the Basingstoke Gallery will be given over to Christmas crafts, make and takes and stories. Feel free to draw on the walls!*

Dec 17 (2 pm -3.30 pm) Sunday afternoon tea and talk: Jane Austen and the women of her time, by Terri Reid *To celebrate Jane Austen's birthday, Terri Reid will be providing a talk looking at the local women of the Georgian era. Terri Reid is an actor/historian well-known in the community for her Pedlars and Petticoats Tours around Basingstoke.* **Archaeology Gallery, £6.00.** *Book as for Sept 24*

School Christmas Holiday period: *Lots of activities and events are being planned. Watch the museum website for more details.*

Jan - Feb (exact dates TBC), Exhibition by local artist Goyara.

Jan 18 (7.30 pm) Friends' talk: The history of Kingsclere, by Richard Croft. **Archaeology Gallery**

Feb 10-Apr 28, Silchester: *a retrospective of archaeological excavations carried out on the Roman town by the University of Reading. Curated by Prof. Mike Fulford.* **Sainsbury Gallery.**

What's on elsewhere

Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society (BAHS) www.bahsoc.org.uk

Meetings will take place at Church Cottage starting at 7.30 pm. Admission is free for BAHS members. There is a £3 charge for non-members payable on entry.

Oct 12: Tahaiqa: Egypt's black hero, by Hilary Wilson, MA, Southampton Ancient Egypt Society. *Learn about the only Egyptian king named in the Bible.*

Nov 9: Stanchester discoveries: results of fieldwork at a Romano-British villa near Chilton Candover, by Mark Peryer. *The BAHS has been actively involved with this excavation for a number of years.*

Dec 14: Tools of the Stone Age: an introduction to the world of flint and stone tools, by Henning Wilkens

Jan 14: Everyday life and accidental death in sixteenth century Hampshire, by Prof. Steven Gunn, Merton College, Oxford. *A unique study based on some 9000 coroners' inquests into accidental death.*

Tadley and District History Society (TADS) www.tadshistory.com

Meeting on the second Monday of the month at Baughurst and Heath End Hall, Heath End Road RG26 5LU at 8.00 pm. Free to members. Non-members £3.00.

Oct 9: The Windsor Chair, by Stewart Lindford. *Having established a high-profile furniture making business in the historic furniture making town of High Wycombe, Stewart Lindford now divides his time between teaching furniture making skills and a unique design consultancy.*

Nov 13: Building Spitfires without a factory, by Alan Matlock, Spitfire Makers' Charitable Trust: *After the Woolston Supermarine Spitfire factory was destroyed by the Luftwaffe, 30 secret sites in Southampton and the New Forest were used to continue the aircraft's development.*

Curtis Museum (open Tue-Sun 1000-1630) and Allen Gallery, (Tue-Sun 1030-1600), Alton

Sep 23: 6.30 pm film: Love and Friendship: Adaptation of Jane Austen's novella Lady Susan, starring Kate Beckinsale. *Drinks in the café or garden followed by a short talk and the film. £7.50/£6.00 . book on line at www.hampshireculture.org.uk/film-love-friendship or call 01420 82802.*

Oct 24 – 31: Halloween Pumpkin Trail: *A naughty witch has hidden her pumpkins around the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery. Help to find them and take home a prize. Trail sheet £2. No need to book.*

Friends of the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery

Meeting 7.30 pm at the Allen Gallery, Alton GU34 2BW. No charge for non-members but donations are welcome. Further information: Jane Hurst, janehurst1@gmail.com 01420 86701

Oct 12: The Binsted Slides, by Andrew Croom-Johnson

Nov 9: The Palaeolithic of Dickett's Field, by Julie Scott-Jackson and Dr Patick Cuthbertson

Devil's Dyke and its environs. by Guest Contributor, Graham Bennett,

1. My article in the September '22 Newsletter explained the formation of dry valleys in Chalk terrain and referred in passing to Devil's Dyke, the impressive dry valley on the South Downs behind Brighton. This present article not only enlarged briefly on that dry valley but also on other nearby geomorphological features such as the scarp slope, dip slope and crest of (primary) escarpment for the Chalk.

You can find Devil's Dyke and its environs on an on-line map on the website: <https://www.streetmap.co.uk>.

2. This website provides electronic replication of Ordnance Survey maps for private study. By entering 'Devil's Dyke' in the search engine box as well as activating the option for 'Place', you should then be presented with a short list of entries but the entry for 'Devil's Dyke, West Sussex' should be selected before activating the 'Go' option. The above procedure will work for the possessive form of Devil's Dyke but not for "Devils Dyke" without the apostrophe.

3. Initially, you will be looking at an electronic map for Devil's Dyke at a default scale of 1:50,000 for Zoom Level 4; however, the regional setting for Devil's Dyke is not conveniently presented at this default scale. I recommend a switch to the scale of 1:100,000 for Zoom Level 5. Devil's Dyke is indicated by the orange-coloured arrow but the only means of access by public road (Dyke Road) from Brighton is to the northwest of that city centre. The South Downs Way is generally located along the highest crest of the Downs at an elevation of 200 metres OD (Ordnance Datum) or more; the villages immediately to the north (such as Fulking and Poynings) are at a considerably lower elevation.

4. By reverting to the default scale of 1:50,000 for Zoom Level 4, you will find the geographical setting for Devil's Dyke and its environs better presented. The villages of Fulking and Poynings are seen to be at an altitude of just 60 metres OD. Those light brown coloured lines are, in fact, topographic contours (at a frequency of 10 metres above Ordnance Datum).

5. If the magnification is increased to a scale of 1:25,000 for Zoom Level 3; the topographic contours are depicted with an increased frequency of 5 metres above Ordnance Datum. Furthermore, the steep-sided nature of Devil's Dyke becomes more obvious by virtue of the numerous close-spaced topographic contours. By using the directional arrows, you can follow the course of this dry valley "downstream" towards Poynings.

6. The "upstream" section (of this former water-bearing valley) is seen to be incised into the very top of the dip slope of the Chalk escarpment whilst the "downstream" section is seen to be incised into the nearby crest of the escarpment and the associated scarp slope. The closely spaced topographic contours represent the steep slopes of this very impressive dry valley and the nearby quasi-north facing scarp slope.

7. Definitions of the geomorphological terminology used so far can be found in this on-line video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onPYWbjfZl0> Paragraph 10 below accounts for these geomorphological terms in the context of the specific local geology with the aid of the Geological Map of the area.

8. Strictly speaking, the term 'escarpment' pertains only to a continuous scarp slope. On the other hand, this term is commonly used in the literature (for at least the Chalk Downs in southern England) and taken to implicitly include the dip slope. As such, the term 'cuesta' would be more correctly used on the basis of explicitly including the dip slope; (Chambers Dictionary defines this as "a steep scarp one side and a gradual

slope on the other caused by denudation of gently dipping hard rock. " However, this term is seldom used in the literature.)

9. The dip slope approximates to the dip (or tilt) of the Chalk stratum.

10. As much as the relevant geological map is Sheet 318/333 Brighton and Worthing, you will be able to view an electronic version on the webpage <https://largeimages.bgs.ac.uk/iip/mapsportal.html?id=1001808> for private study. You should locate the above-mentioned villages of Fulking and Poynings to the northwest of Brighton city centre. The blue-coloured outcrop is for the Gault Formation but these villages, as well as Edburton to the west, are situated essentially on the outcrop of the Upper Greensand Formation. Although the topographic contours are 'greyed out' to some extent as part of the background detail for the OS map, you will still be able to see that the topographic contours become noticeably closely spaced with the outcrop of the Zig Zag Chalk Formation. The underlying West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation is comparatively erosion-susceptible by virtue of its clay content and thus does not form the steepest part of the scarp slope. Fortunately, section 2 on the geological map passes through Fulking, so you will be able to relate the above text to the geological cross-section. The Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation is seen to cap the (primary) escarpment and thus forms the highest point of the dip slope.

11. By referring to the key on the geological map, the Upper Greensand Formation is depicted as tapering in thickness. As much as this Formation outcrops in the Devil's Dyke area, it ceases to be a mappable Formation (at the scale of 1:50,000) to the east in the Ditchling area. Notice that in the on-line video I have referred you to in my seventh paragraph above, Mr Copeman makes no reference to the existence of the Upper Greensand between the Chalk and the Gault Clay; the geological details for the Wealden Anticline arguably pertain to the Lewes/Eastbourne area of East Sussex and, northwards, to the Sevenoaks area of west Kent.

12. Devil's Dyke is not identified as such on the geological map, but it is that steep-sided dry valley that is aligned in a north easterly direction from Devil's Dyke Farm towards Saddlescombe.

13. Should you have found Mr Copeman's video (see para 7) somewhat daunting you might like to initially refer to the first two maps on the webpage https://fulking.net/local_geology/ for private study. This will help you to use the official geological map from the British Geological Survey (see para 10) with greater confidence.

14. I am planning further articles that will separately account for the individual geomorphological features in the Devil's Dyke area. This well-documented area comes complete with a significant quantity of evidence. For example, the National Trust has produced a very informative website about the various features on their land at this location; I will also use electronic links to 'local' websites in order to locate supplementary evidence.

Shaped by Geology: a Victorian adventure park, by John Hollands

In our September 2022 newsletter, Graham Bennett wrote about *Dry Valleys in Chalk Terrain*. Explaining how such valleys were formed, he referred to Devil's Dyke, near Brighton, the longest and deepest dry valley in England. This inspired me to re-examine some picture postcards of the area in my collection of early 20th century postcards mostly of railway subjects – yes, improbable as it may seem, there really are postcards of railway subjects relating to Devil's Dyke - and to think about what these images have to do with geology.

Devil's Dyke has been a major tourist attraction since nearby Brighton itself became a fashionable seaside resort in the days of the Prince Regent. The relatively few tourists able to get to Devil's Dyke then (by wagonette) went to marvel at the Dyke itself and to see for themselves what John Constable called the "grandest view in the world". Looking to the left and the right the view includes a long vista of the South Downs with their exquisitely smoothed and rounded convex hill tops and concave valleys, described by Peter Brandon "as subtle as those of a classical nude" a feature he attributes to the porosity of the chalk and the action of a microscopic inter-connected pore system that becomes saturated like a sponge during the winter as it drains down to the water table hundreds of feet below.

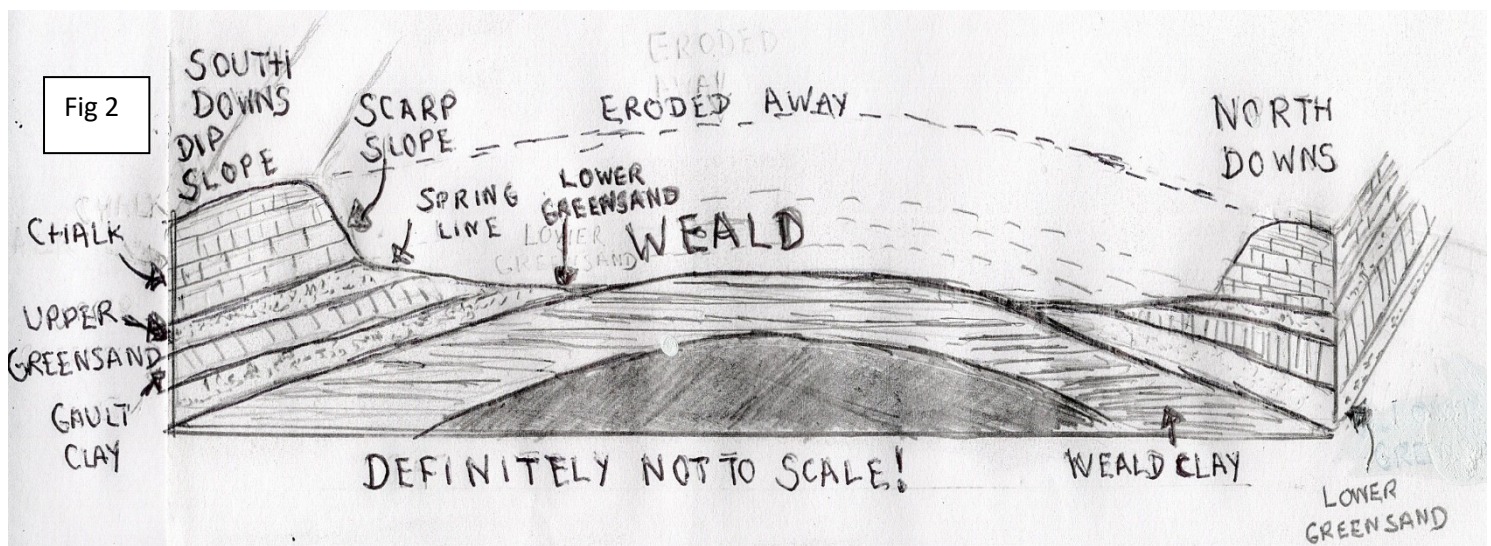
Added to this is the view from the steep *north facing* slope of these downs far across the Weald to the steep *south* facing slopes of the distant North Downs. This reminds us that viewers from the Dyke are standing on the eroded away remains of a huge dome of chalk (See figs 1 and 2) that once rose high above the Weald to link these two downlands,



and that the steep slope down which they are looking is a *scarp* slope, its steepness caused by erosion that has cut away the chalk down to the stratum of upper greensand at its base on which can be seen the village of Poynings. This is the nearest in a line of "scarpfoot" villages, watered by springs of pure water that has been filtered through the chalk to bubble up on the spring line where the chalk and the greensand meet. A little further on the greensand gives way to impermeable gault clay, beyond which is a band of permeable *lower* greensand, and beyond that, a wide region of weald clay - *impermeable again*- and rising to form the High Weald, a kind of inner dome., On the far side of this dome the same strata are repeated in reverse order until the North Downs are

reached. These can be seen in the distance on this postcard view above; it dates from about 1930.

Looking the opposite way, you can see the sea and on a clear day the Isle of Wight. In this direction the ground slopes away more gradually, following the inclination of the stratum of chalk itself, so this is a *dip* slope. This was gradual



enough for the Victorians to build a three-mile branch railway from Hove to a spot within walking distance of the highest part of the Dyke. With a gradient of 1 in 40, tough enough for a train on an ordinary railway line, it made the Dyke accessible to hordes of Victorian trippers for a return fare of 5d third class.

Fig 3

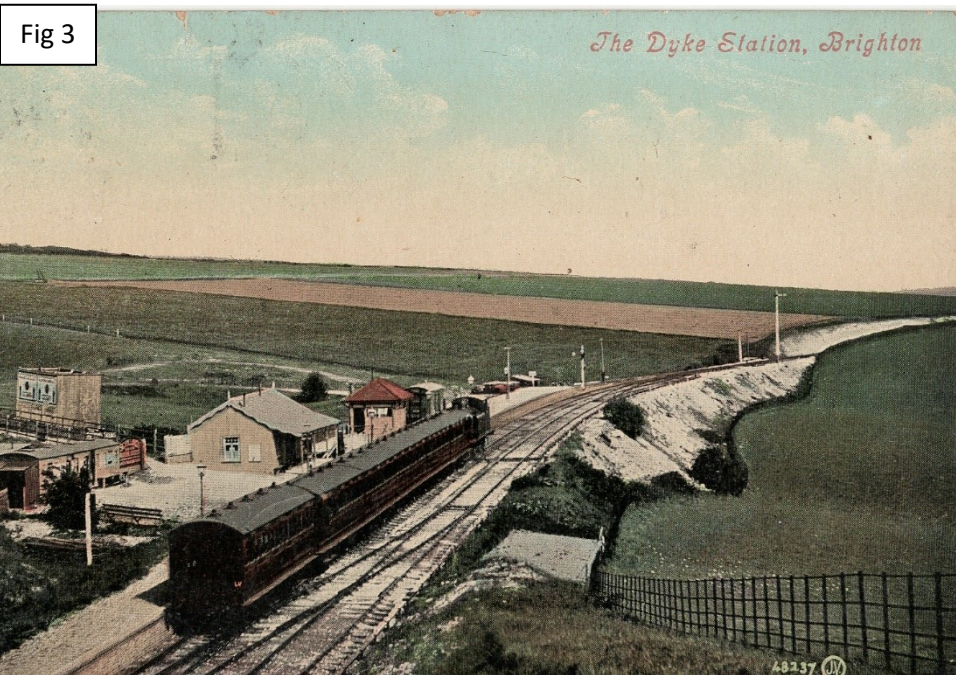


Figure 3 reproduces a picture postcard posted in 1909 shows the Dyke station with a train ready to take trippers back to Brighton, and giving some idea of the dip slope that has brought it to this spot. An early victim of competition from the motor car and the Southdown bus, both of which could take visitors to the very top of the Downs here, the line was closed in 1938, but a part of its route has been turned into a popular foot and cycle path and the site of the station is still easy to see.

Five years after the railway opened the area was purchased by the Victorian entrepreneur Mr HJ Hubbard, who turned it into a what might be called a pioneer adventure park, featuring merry go rounds, a “switchback railway” a “bicycle

railway” and of course a hotel.

In 1894 Mr Hubbard introduced a 300m cable car ride, the first of its kind in England, across the spectacular dry valley itself. On this postcard (fig 4) the young lady seated on the ground near the rim of the dry valley is watching the cable car making its way across. It was withdrawn and dismantled in 1909 though the bases of its two pylons survive to show present day visitors where it was.



Fig 4

A “steep grade” funicular railway down the scarp slope followed in 1897 (Fig 5) From the bottom end of this line trippers could walk into Poynings for a cream tea, and then use it again as the first stage of a return journey to Brighton. (The local spring water must have made a very nice cup of tea.) This railway, too, was closed in 1909. The foundations of the top station can still be seen, as can a scar on the hillside where the track had been laid.



Fig 5

Today there is no hilltop funfair, but the busy *Dyke Pub* stands where Mr Hubbard built his hotel, and the whole site is now owned and managed by the National Trust as part of the South Downs National Park, Britain's newest – it was designated in 2010. Among its 800,000 visitors a year are hang- and para gliders and kite flyers, taking advantage of an updraught up the scarp slope (geology again!) and walkers, horse riders and cyclists along the South Downs Way, as well as those who just for “the grandest view in the world,” making the journey by car or by bus, both of which can take them almost to the highest point on the downs hereabouts (or as geologists put it “the crest of the escarpment”). I liked to go there often when I lived not far away Lewes.

My thanks to Graham for reading and commenting on a draft of this article
Ref: Brandon, Peter, *The South Downs*, Phillimore, 1998

Shaped by Geology: a Technical Addendum (Part 1), by Guest Contributor, Graham Bennett

As such, John's article is concerned with the geomorphological features of the Devil's Dyke area. Geomorphology is the study of landforms. Perhaps obviously, the geomorphological features are directly associated with the underlying geology. My accompanying main article is just a technical overview of the geomorphological features in this area of the South Downs. Separate forthcoming articles from me will individually account for the various geomorphological features.

As much as John lived in Lewes for the greater part of his life, my school years were spent along the Sussex coast in the Worthing area. My early childhood years, including my birth, were in Brighton. Thus, I ought to know some details about the Devil's Dyke area.

The photographic image in Figure 1 of John's article is to the north-north-east of the 'Viewpoint' along the landward edge of the car park for the Devil's Dyke area. As such, the Devil's Dyke dry valley is out of sight and thus a more technically correct title for the picture postcard would be 'Poynings from the top of the Fulking Escarpment'. This distinction seemingly wasn't made in the bygone years of black and white photography and, furthermore, is not always observed in the modern world. The Chalk escarpment in the far distance pertains to Newtimber Hill; this photographic image is effectively on the right-hand side of Constable's 'grandest view in the world'. A somewhat similar photographic image, but taken to the west from Fulking Hill, is on the website <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/devils-dyke> (for only viewing purposes). Modern technology, including colour photography, significantly enhances the image; you may need to electronically enlarge the image. The village of Poynings is seen in the middle distance and the white scar on the landscape in the far distance is a large former quarry at the base of Wolstonbury Hill beyond, in fact, Newtimber Hill. The above details are to be seen on the website <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/495564> for only viewing purposes. Unfortunately, specific reasons exist for modern photography having to be practically based from an offset location on Fulking Hill, namely the unsightly clutter of parked vehicles in the car park. On the other hand, all is not lost thanks to the use of modern technology, as explained in the forthcoming Part 2 of this article.

If you are not entirely clear about the location of the various landmarks and local villages, you should activate the link for the website <https://www.streetmap.co.uk> for your private study; further guidance is provided in the third and fourth paragraphs of my accompanying main article. Both Zoom Level 4 (for a 1:50,000 scale) and Zoom Level 3 (for a 1:25,000 scale) depict the symbol for a 'Viewpoint' at the edge of the car park for the Devil's Dyke area.

Whichever scale is used, you will soon realise the existence of a group of closely spaced topographic contours between 70 metres OD (Ordnance Datum) and 200 metres OD or thereabouts to the west of the 'Viewpoint' (reference third paragraph of this article) and even beyond in a quasi-northerly direction. The Chalk escarpment effectively curves around the village of Poynings so that the escarpment is offset to the north as from Wolstonbury Hill eastwards. The 'Viewpoint' is seen to be located in a 'bevelled' corner with scenic views of the escarpment in both westerly and northerly directions. Geological reasons prevail for the varied orientations of the Chalk escarpment, as explained in the forthcoming Part 2 of this article.

By now, you have probably deduced the positioning of the left-hand side of Constable's 'grandest view in the world' on the landscape; even so, you are probably keen to view a photographic image. How about activating the link for the webpage <https://geographical.co.uk/culture/devils-dyke> for the sole purpose of private study?. The view is to the west (of the car park for the Devil's Dyke Hotel) and the middle distance sees the upstream end of the river gap for the Adur. The far side of the river gap sees the crest of the Chalk escarpment at Chanctonbury Ring (with its cluster of tall trees) whilst the near side sees the crest of the escarpment at Truleigh Hill; that's where a number of radio and telecommunication masts are located.

A similar photographic image is available on the website <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6382361> for the purpose of private study. Never mind the paragliders in the sky, my comments will be restricted to the geomorphology and the underlying geology. The very significant scarp slope sees a break of slope towards its base; the moderately sloping terrain (in front of the steepest part of the slope) is devoid of trees for undoubted agricultural purposes; that break of slope marks the boundary between the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation (at the base of the Chalk succession) and the overlying Zig Zag Formation. Now I shall take you a stage further. Firstly, you should focus on the man who is standing up in the foreground; to his right but towards the middle distance, you should see an electricity pylon. Beyond the top of the pylon but in the middle distance, you should be able to detect the scarp slope for a comparatively minor escarpment that is associated with the Upper Greensand Formation; how about focusing on the inclination of the boundary hedge over a relatively short distance? As much as the software on your home computer might allow you to marginally enlarge the image, you might start to notice some loss of resolution/definition of the image as a result. The corresponding dip slope is in the opposite direction past the farm buildings and towards the unclassified country road. Perhaps you will realise why such places as Poynings, Fulking and Edburton are regarded as "scarpfoot villages", even though they are away from the outcrop of the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation and on the outcrop of the underlying Upper Greensand Formation.

So far, I have provided commentaries of the margins of Constable's 'grandest view in the world;' what about the central part?. Visitors to the area are freely able to view at least one information plaque that is situated near the landward edge of the car park, as is depicted on the self-explanatory website <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6940823> for your private study. The original photograph was obviously taken at the top of the Fulking Escarpment and, in my opinion, any reference to the nearby Devil's Dyke dry valley creates confusion. This matter has been already discussed in the third paragraph of this article. To my knowledge, three information plaques (in different orientations) are provided on site as well as a centrally placed double-sided bench.

'The grandest view in the world' can also be seen in the virtual world via the use of Street View on Google maps; you will also be able to see the significantly extensive views of the Weald. As previously explained,

the escarpment for the Upper Greensand Formation is a comparatively minor topographic feature on the landscape; a similar notion prevails for the Hythe Formation (of the Lower Greensand Group) towards the eastern end of the southern limb of the Wealden Anticline. That is the reason for the significantly extensive views of the Weald being so unique towards the eastern end of the South Downs.

As an aside, the western end of the Wealden Anticline is not associated with such significantly extensive views of the Weald, apart from the innermost escarpment (for the Hythe Formation) around Hindhead Common, for example. The Upper Greensand Formation significantly increases in thickness in a westerly direction as do the various Formations (including the Hythe Formation) of the Lower Greensand Group. So, three prominent escarpments exist at the western end of the Wealden Anticline (in the southeastern part of Hampshire and the adjoining part of Surrey); namely the (primary) escarpment for the Chalk Group, that for the Upper Greensand Formation as well as that for the Hythe Formation.

If you are still anxious to view the significantly extensive views of the Weald in the virtual world from the top of the Fulking Escarpment, you will have read Part 2 of this article. This Part 1 is already sufficiently lengthy in nature.

Any Questions?

If you have any queries about the content of these articles, please reply to John Hollands's email. Where appropriate he will pass them on to Graham. Any comments on the article will also be welcome.

Geological maps

Graham has very kindly donated some British Geological Survey maps of our local area, plus a geological time chart. Available in the Archaeology Gallery for you to look at, and are well worth studying by anyone interested in the geography and history of where we live.

I will show you them personally if you would like to call in at the museum any Wednesday afternoon and ask for me. And if you get really absorbed in them, and would like to discuss them with an expert, I could arrange for Graham to come and meet you there.

John Hollands