



Newsletter of The Friends of Clarendon Palace

'...that noble and pre-eminent mansion, the king's own, from its name and prominent position called Clarendon...'
(Herbert of Bosham, 1164)

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Editorial

A warm welcome to the second Friends of Clarendon Palace Newsletter with contributions on a range of topics, including from Mike Webb one of our most stalwart volunteers on the experience of volunteering at the site. Most excitingly we are looking forward to **our forthcoming conference celebrating the 850th anniversary of the Constitutions of Clarendon (19-20 September at Salisbury Museum)**. The Constitutions, considered by some to have been the first rumblings of the English Reformation, focused on relations between state and church. The dispute heightened the rift between Henry II and Archbishop Thomas Becket. The event, when perhaps 1,800 people were present at the palace, highlighted the importance of written agreements in the period of change from 'memory to written word' when Henry dramatically confronted Becket with a written document to seal in agreement, catching the Archbishop entirely off guard. The Constitutions (1164) ultimately resulted in Becket's murder at Canterbury six years later. As well as their national importance, the Constitutions bring the palace to life as a hive of activity, including chancery clerks to prepare documentation. A strange thought on a peaceful sunny afternoon's weeding! TJ.

The Corner Chair

We continue to gain new members at a pleasing rate [I met Professor Jansen one of our American Friends one her way to record a Henry III doorway at Westminster Hall in London, last week. Ed]. We have a Publicity Officer in Rosalind Johnson which is great, but it was a blow earlier this year when the hoped-for Heritage Lottery Fund grant was rejected. Never mind, better luck next time! We have had enjoyable weeding days at the palace site over this long hot summer, during which our attention focused on eliminating the nettles - on which Mary South has written an affectionate (!) piece below. Some exciting events are in the pipeline, including the promise of Professor David Carpenter giving the Annual Clarendon Lecture in November – title TBC, but probably on the Magna Carta. I hope to see you all at the conference in September, and will end by thanking you again, Patrons and Friends, for your continued support. AR



Recent strange sighting of a Pushmepullu on site?

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The King! The King! We are for the King!

My relationship with Clarendon Palace as a volunteer dates from a time when the five-year project supported by English Heritage was starting the final lap. The palace remains had risen phoenix-like from a woodland tomb and the site was being levelled for conservation. In those days a small army of Winchester students, supplemented with volunteers, would arrive, clear an area and leave it transformed within a day. Today's aims are more sedate, as befits my dotage, being concerned with holding those gains against re-invasion by thuggish vegetation and the ravages of the elements.

This all sounds rather unadventurous and unexciting doesn't it, yet I have been doing it for years. So what's the appeal? Well, I could point to my propensity for getting grubby and sweaty, which hasn't deserted me since I wore short trousers; but there's more. I admit to lots of inspiration gained from Tom Beaumont James's vision [*flattery, Mike! Ed.*] and direction; but there's still more. There's the enjoyment of listening to my learned colleagues ruminating on contentious issues of English history, amongst other matters, and joining in the colourful badinage; but there's yet more.

Clarendon Palace is a very special place. There is a benevolent presence, indefinable yet tangible. It's a personal thing, but my colleagues refer to it so I know I am not the only one to be affected. It took a long time for the cogs to whirr and for the pieces to fall into place but finally I can say that I know where it emanates from. It is from King Henry III, who visited Clarendon while still in his mother's womb in 1207.

My mind's eye sees loyal safe hands guarding Henry's meagre inheritance throughout the land and plucking French invaders from his castles until they sue for peace. Henry, the not-yet-a-man-king, having the luxury of being securely cloistered with his tutor somewhere, is unusually favoured for monarchs of his time. He is protected from, but surely not unaware of, the state of the nation, in the wake of his despotic and tyrannical father, of a neglectful absentee uncle and arching over all the dark shadow of his grandfather, who carelessly sowed the seeds of Becket's destruction within Clarendon's palace walls.

Grasping the power to rule in his own right at last, and as treasury coffers slowly re-fill, Henry gains the means to commission the designs harboured while king-in-waiting, which include raising Clarendon Palace to its greatest flowering of Gothic splendour. I have little doubt that the benevolence we feel comes to us through the sprit of King Henry III's creative energy, which inhabits us as guardians of what remains of his legacy at Clarendon Palace. Our workload scarcely gives us time to muse, but when we do catch the odd moment we reflect on our good fortune in being entrusted with the stewardship of this nationally important treasure. Given the opportunity to work on this sun-drenched eyrie in a

magnificent setting - and enjoy the favour of King Henry III into the bargain - who will say this doesn't appeal? MW



10.30 am.
11 August 2014
The lost room -
Tom and Mike
are both in
there,
somewhere.

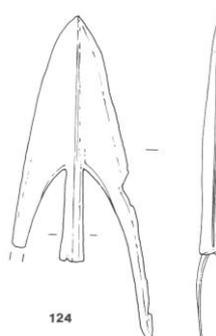
5.30pm, 11
August 2014.
The room
recovered - Tom
triumphant,
Mike still
missing...he will
return



Artefact Corner

A spectacular medieval hunting arrowhead

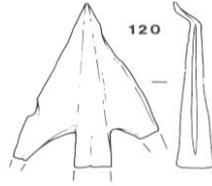
This barbed medieval iron arrowhead, c.14cm long, is from a collection unearthed at the palace site around 1838. It was specially designed to inflict very deep wounds almost certainly in the hides of fallow deer, the only deer species kept in the park from the 13th to the 17th century. The arrow's efficient design may indicate that it was used by the professional huntsmen sent around the country by order of the king to take deer, which were afterwards salted down and sent to



wherever he was at the time, presumably for consumption by the court. In December 1275, for example, Edward I ordered the warden of Clarendon Forest to admit the huntsman Henry de Candover, with several of the king's yeomen, to take 20 does, and the stipulation that he should 'aid and counsel

him in so doing' reveals the involvement of the staff of the forest and park in tracking down and flushing out the game. Sometimes numbers were much larger and in 1485 the royal huntsmen were sent to Clarendon Park to kill 100 bucks along with 200 does, prickets (yearlings) and fawns, the presence of the latter indicating that this

may have been a cull. However, hunting was not always such a workaday affair. Although Edward II is the only medieval king recorded as hunting in the park, where he took '88 great bucks and 14 sorrels (2-3 year old bucks)' in either 1320 or 1326, it can be presumed that courtly hunts often took place at Clarendon. Indeed three other hunting arrowheads (shown right) found in the park in the 1930s bore traces of copper alloy plating, presumably so that they would sparkle as they flew through the air, testifying to the noble hunt as a magnificent and ostentatious spectacle.



MR

Getting the Needle [or the nettle?!]



Next time you are thrashing through the undergrowth, to clear some new corner or prevent re-encroachment elsewhere, consider the humble nettle – surely one of Nature's most successful plants. As a word of solace, when you suffer another unprovoked attack from their vicious stinging leaves, they grow bigger and better in other parts of the world – those from East India cause a burning sensation like hot irons, which can last for hours or days and may be attended by lockjaw-like symptoms. Another, from Java, produces effects which can last a whole year and even cause death.

With its tough stems, unbeautiful flowers and those nasty stinging hairy leaves, the stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is unloved by everyone. Nonetheless it thrives almost everywhere and follows human habitation relentlessly. It is resilient in a wide range of environmental conditions, and nothing has learned to eat it apparently, apart from a few hardy caterpillars, like those of the small tortoiseshell, peacock and comma butterflies [*and llamas which will eat the stalks from the bottom up when we have pulled them up. Ed.*].

However, people have devised various ways of making the nettle palatable. Among these is nettle soup, prepared from the new young nettle tips. Less well known is 'very good' 'nettle porridge' served to Samuel Pepys one cold winter's day in 1661. The Scots have refined the idea of porridge and nettles to produce

nettle pudding: leeks, onions, oats, Brussel sprouts and nettle tops, to be served with gravy or butter. What does such a combination do to the digestive system?

Medicinally, the nettle was believed to be useful for skin complaints. This concept arose from the 'doctrine of plant signatures', when physicians and apothecaries believed that all plants had some medicinal value for humans and this was revealed by the plant's shape, colour or other characteristics. Hence nettles produced rashes, so *had* to be good for skin complaints. Its irritant properties were also made use of for rheumatism sufferers, who were advised to flog themselves with bunches of nettles; an idea based on the belief of counter irritation i.e. a new pain or irritation in another part of the body will alleviate the original problem – basically it removed the patient's concern with the first problem, by giving him another pain to worry about!

Surprisingly it was its use as a substitute for flax that provided the greatest variety of uses for the nettle. The tough fibrous stems were made use of for a wide variety of textiles, especially in Austria and Germany. Hans Christian Andersen's story of the eleven swans was obviously based on this knowledge. Some travellers to Europe reported they had slept in nettle sheets, dined off nettle tablecloths and used nettle serviettes. According to the treatment of the fibre extracted, from the stems, fine or coarse material could be produced, ranging from the fine linen already mentioned to sailcloth and German army uniforms prior to and during the 1914-18 war. In contrast the English, not quite able to bring themselves to use the plant for uniforms, collected 100 tons of nettles, to produce green dye for camouflage instead. The collection of the plant was part of the war effort during the 1940s, undertaken by the Women's Institutes around Britain.

Contrary to popular belief the stinging sensation is not produced by formic acid, but a cocktail of three chemicals; a histamine to irritate the skin, acetylcholine to produce a burning sensation and hydroxytryptamine to enhance the action of the other two. Curiously, the latter two chemicals are nerve transmitter hormones found in animals – could this indicate some primeval link to the nettle family during the evolution of animals? A good question to ponder whilst you search for the necessary dock leaf, next time you get stung – by the way, the dock leaf contains a chemical inhibitor for the hydroxytryptamine from the nettle leaf, so really does have a soothing effect.

MS

The Wheelers at Clarendon in 1933 and the Queen's Tower

In the second piece related to those signatures found in the Borenius family Visitors' Book from the 1930s, we consider R E Mortimer Wheeler and his wife Tessa Verney Wheeler. They signed the Visitors' Book at Tancred Borenius's Wiltshire home at Coombe Bissett in May 1933 just as Borenius was initiating the excavations at Clarendon Palace with the young John Charlton in charge on site. At that time Wheeler was in his early 40s, his wife Tessa three years younger. Wheeler was completing his excavations at St Albans (Verulamium) and was investigating the possibility of excavating the impressive Iron Age Hill fort at Maiden Castle in Dorset where excavations began the following year.



By 1933 Wheeler had been Director of the Museum of London since 1926 following stints as a soldier (an artilleryman in the First World War), with the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments (England) and as Director of the National Museum in Wales where he and Tessa had conducted various excavations on Roman sites. The Wheelers were at that time working towards founding the Institute of Archaeology in London which was to be established in 1934 and which opened in 1937 with the dual focus of the Near East (Flinders Petrie's bequest was contingent on the Institute housing his Near Eastern collection) and Britain.



The Wheelers who were based in London shared an interest in art with Borenius. Wheeler had attended art classes at the Slade School of Fine Art while a student at University College London before the First War: Borenius, a pioneer in the field of the History of Art succeeded his friend and mentor Roger Fry as lecturer in Fine Art at UCL in 1914. Wheeler, although five years Borenius's junior

in age was, with Tessa a highly accomplished field archaeologist in her own right, an ideal person to advise an art historian (Borenius) and a tyro archaeologist (Charlton) on where to begin digging at Clarendon. There was no established technique for excavating medieval sites at that date, that came later, so the methods of prehistoric and Roman excavation were the only option. Previous investigations of monastic sites had involved clearing demolition debris down to the last conjectured occupation layer, and that, in the end was what was done at Clarendon in the 1930s.

After discussion of written sources and entering the wooded site Borenius and the Wheelers settled on a small rectangular structure east of the Great Hall which they thought was a building known in the documents as

'the Queen's Tower', apparently containing a staircase with a newel post, as the place to begin the dig. The site had been investigated by Thomas Phillipps in 1821 but by the 1930s was overgrown and little attempt had been made to attach documentary evidence to the ruins. This was to be Borenius and Charlton's achievement and many of their identifications have stuck. Maybe the Wheelers' encouraged them by setting them off on a supposed identifiable structure?

As the excavations unfolded the initial identification of the Queen's Tower changed. It transpired that it was the base of a staircase accessing the first floor chambers known at the King's Apartments. The Queen's apartments were found further east. Excavating in the 1950s and 1960s with some focus on the Queens' Apartments, Elizabeth Eames suggested a location hard by the Queens' northern chamber as her 'Tower'. What was suggested in 1933 as a tower from which queens watched hunting in the park to the north, was more prosaically identified by Mrs Eames as a garderobe (latrine) tower. Identifying structures on the ground from documents is notoriously difficult and even today we cannot be sure of the function and location of the Queen's Tower. TBJ



The stairwell first excavated (foreground) and King's Chambers, the Great Hall is the other side of the wall.

Ten Years On from the Great Hall feast of 2004

The appearance of the Palace site today is largely down to the efforts of many people who were involved in the joint English Heritage/Clarendon Park Estate/University of Winchester Project to conserve and investigate the site and park, which finished ten years ago. I was involved with this as a student at the University from 1999, when the first group of students arrived on the site to move remains of felled trees and stare in wonder at the spoil heaps which littered the site from the 1930s work.

Over the next five years students, volunteers and staff worked with the owners of the time, the Christie-

Miller family, to improve the appearance of the site, to make it 'legible' for the public, conserve as much as possible after decades of exposure and to place the palace in the context of the park as a whole. This was a huge undertaking, and those of us who stayed the course became a focused and friendly group whose efforts were rewarded by a magnificent banquet to celebrate the end of the project in 2004.

The Great Hall had been, over the centuries, the location for some remarkable celebrations (and confrontations), and it might be thought that those days were over. But the Andrew and Barbara Christie-Miller managed to create a magical experience for us all in June 2014 by erecting a huge marquee in the Great Hall, complete with torches to light our way as night fell, and we were treated, along with special guests to a medieval banquet.

Attendees included Liam Hornsby who almost single handedly had repointed hundreds of metres of crumbling walls, workers from the university and other volunteers, for example respectively, Liz Eastlake and Mike Webb – both still valued volunteers and Friends today, Mandy our Chair, whose PhD was the medieval park and forest of Clarendon played a major part. We were also joined by other, perhaps more august figures, including Simon Thurley, now head of English Heritage, and both the Christie-Miller family and also the Hervey-Bathursts, and also the current Earl and Countess of Clarendon, whose family received the royal grant of the site in 1660, selling it on to the Bathursts in 1707. These three family groups represented three of the five families who had owned the estate since 1660 [*the others owning it for less than twenty years between them. Ed.*] Tim Tatton-Brown a Salisbury resident who, in his role as Chairman of RESCUE the archaeological charity, had raised the plight of the site in the press in 1977 was also present as well as representatives of June Osborne the Dean of Salisbury. We also welcomed the Vice Chancellor of the University of Winchester and others from the History and Archaeology departments of the University and from Southampton.

The next day, Sunday, the site was opened to other volunteers and their families, guests and visitors, and we were entertained by a falcon display by another member of staff from the University College as it then was designated. Overall it was a magnificent occasion to mark the end of the official conservation project. It was fitting that the current and previous owners of the site, officialdom and volunteers gathered to mark the occasion, and to look to the future of the site free from damaging trees roots, and exposure to rain, frost and the elements. Hopefully ten years on those involved in this celebration would be pleased of what we have achieved in maintaining this site.

But... in amongst my recollections of a magical evening, dining in the Great Hall for the first time in hundreds of years, joining friends to celebrate five years

of hard work, what else stood out for us all were the magnificent toilets provided, complete with gold taps, piped music and running water!
Never seen before or since...Ah well . . . CW

Roving Display



During May and part of June the display boards (shown left at West Winterslow) were taken around some of the local communities, with their finale at Pitton Carnival. It was surprising how many local people did not know about the palace even when only a few miles away.

However, it was also an unexpected opportunity to discover something about the more recent history of the site. Many of the tiles appear to have been 'collected' by the children of the estate workers during the late 1940s and 1950s. This seems to have been mainly due to 'dares', to crawl through the thick, prickly undergrowth, reach the ruins, and return with something to prove the achievement!

The display will be on view again at the conference on 1920 September, and we are also hoping that it will find its way to Swindon and Wiltshire Discovery Centre at some time during the next couple of years.

REMINDER! REMINDER! REMINDER!

If you haven't booked your place at the conference yet, now's your chance to do it! A booking form is attached to this Newsletter.

Friends and students get the reduced rate of £20, others £25.00.

And what do you get for your money?

- Friday evening wine reception
- Tea and coffee on Saturday
- Site visit - transport provided
- Alternative Cathedral tour if terrain will be a problem for you
- Small bookstall
- Clarendon display and model on view
- Three lectures from experts in the field
- Opportunities to find out more, direct from the experts during a workshop session

It's a snip!
See you there!!