



# BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 35 January 2019

## Editor's Column

### Past Meetings

On 14 September 2018, the talk **Heart of Oak** was on the fascinating story of the scarcity of timber in the 18th century. It was proposed that parts of the New Forest would be sacrificed to overcome it. The speaker Gale Gould has undertaken a PhD on the subject at Southampton University. **A article from Gale is present in this edition of the newsletter on the related subject of the surprisingly violent conflicts between the New Forest authorities and its commoners in the 18th century.**

A talk on the **Development of Palace House**, Beaulieu was given on 8 October 2018 on the extensive development of the house from the 13th century to current times. It was given by Bruce Bailey, architectural historian and archivist.

On 30 November 2018 the talk **Airfields around Beaulieu** was given by aviation enthusiast Dan Oxberry on the contribution to aviation his-



tory made by the four airfields in the Beaulieu area, especially during the two world wars.

### Forthcoming Meetings

After the brief Annual General Meeting on 25 January 2019 Rupert Scott will talk about **Beaulieu's Private Utility Companies**; the story of Beaulieu's own water, gas and

electricity companies, stretching back from their nationalisation in the 1950s to at least the 18th century.

On 15 March 2019, the talk is on the **The Mitford Family's Creation of the Exbury Estate in C18th**. It will given by history society chair Emma Page who researched this subject for a doctorate at Oxford



Five of the six Mitford sisters in 1935

University. The evening is also the launch of her book on the subject, published by the New Forest Heritage Centre, which will be available for purchase.

On 3rd May 2019, a visit is arranged to Exbury Gardens for a talk by Lionel de Rothschild on **The History of Exbury Gardens** followed by a walk around the gardens.



John Pemberton

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## Dates for your Diary

Friday 25 January 2019 6:30pm  
**AGM and talk on Beaulieu's Private Utility Companies**  
presented by Rupert Scott  
at Beaulieu Village Hall

Friday 15 March 2019 6:30pm  
**The Mitford Family's Creation of the Exbury Estate in C18th**  
presented by Emma Page  
at Beaulieu Village Hall

Friday 3 May 2019 6:30pm  
**Visit and talk on The History of Exbury Gardens**  
presented by Lionel de Rothschild  
at Exbury Gardens

## Subscriptions

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

If available to you, this is a preferable alternative in cost and convenience to sending a cheque by post to the secretary Gillian Strathcarron at her address on the back page.

## The Unknown Initials HR

**Anthony Norris reports:** Recently, Lord Montagu purchased the pen and ink drawing below. It was painted in the church meadow and shows, in the background, the Beaulieu River meandering down towards the sea. It was dated by the seller as about 1780. This set me thinking. Is the date correct and who was the painter?

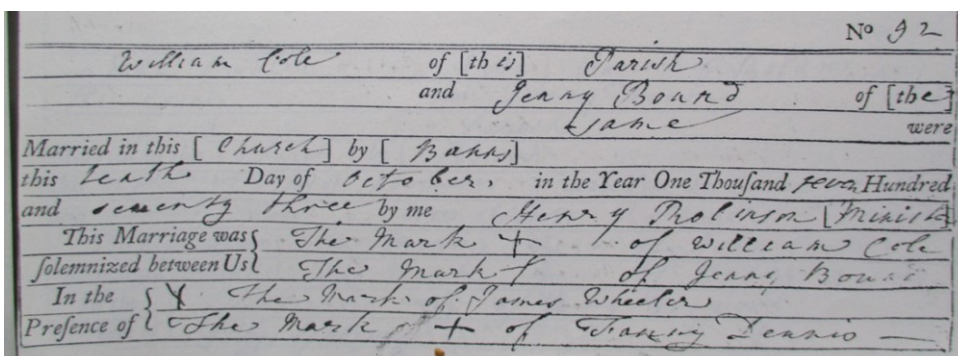


Fortunately in the bottom right hand corner were a pair of initials, almost certainly those of the painter.



The initials are HR. So the question now is, was there someone in Beaulieu with those initials? I knew that one of the priests of the Beaulieu Abbey Church in the second half of the Eighteenth Century was Rev. Henry Robinson who was priest from 1756 until his death in 1775, at the age of 45. Was there anywhere in the parish records with samples of his writing? Now, the priest did sign the wedding register, so I searched through the records of this period and discovered that of the wedding between William Cole and Jenny Bound on October 10th 1773.

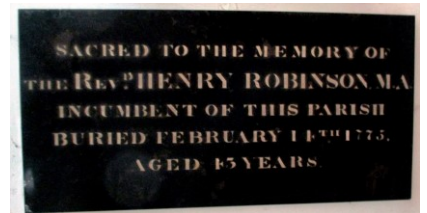
Remarkably, the initials on the record (below) are almost identical to that on the painting. Indeed, towards the end of his life the H and R of his signature began to look more and more like that on the painting. Can we find any further evidence which would point to the identity of the painter?



During the last few years of his life he lived with his wife, Alethea, and their surviving five children, in a cottage on the banks of the Beaulieu River on the site of the property now known as Parson's Mead. Indeed it is the building which appears in his painting. So what could be more natural than he doing a painting of the house where he lived.

It seems very likely then, that the painter of this view of the river was the Reverend Henry Robinson, and it was done towards the end of his life, probably somewhere around 1774.

The Reverend Henry Robinson was buried in the Chancel of Beaulieu Abbey Church on 14th January 1775 at the age of 45 years.



His family's connection with Beaulieu did not cease with his death. His widow continued to live in Parson's Mead in 1776 but thereafter the whereabouts of the Robinson family is not known completely.

We do know that Henry Robinson of the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex, married Jane Westbook of the Parish of Beaulieu on 5th April 1824. The window on the East Wall of the Abbey Church nearest the altar has this inscription .



The *New Forest Magazine* of May 1892 announces that 'This stained glass window was presented to the church by Mr Dalgarno Robinson and his sister, in memory of their mother who was a native of the village'.

Captain Widnell in *The Beaulieu Record* states that Jane was the daughter-in-law of the Rev. Henry Robinson though this would appear to be incorrect. Jane's husband, Henry, is described as 'a merchant' in the Beaulieu parish records.

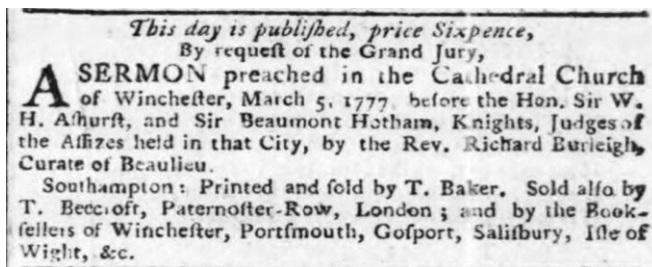
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Henry and Jane had four children: sons Henry, Dalgarno (I believe his first name to be Francis), Arthur and sister, Frances and all were quite young when their mother died. Jane Robinson's husband, Henry, was the great grandson of Rev. Henry Robinson.

The Rev. Henry Robinson was succeeded by Rev. Richard Burleigh. The Rev. Richard Burleigh officiated at the funeral of Rev. Henry Robinson and was probably the curate at Beaulieu at that time.

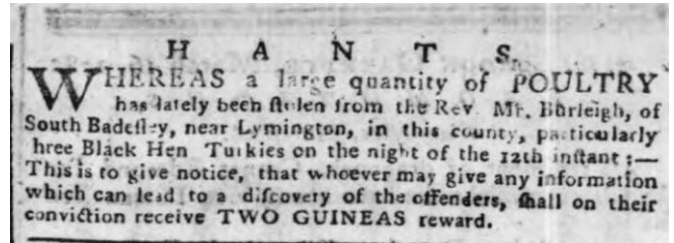
He was clearly quite an eminent person as is demonstrated by this advertisement in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of Monday April 7th 1777.



However, *The Beaulieu Record* includes little about the Rev. Richard Burleigh but many references to him and his family are to be found in contemporary newspapers.

The Rev. Richard Burleigh initially lived in Parson's Mead and on November 2nd 1779 married, by licence, Elizabeth Reeks at Boldre Church. They had three daughters Jane, Harriet and Maria and a son, Robert.

He soon bought a property at South Baddesley as is shown by this advertisement in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 25th March 1782. It is worth noting that at this time there was no church at South Baddesley.



There is no record in the Palace House archives of him occupying a property on the Beaulieu Estate after 1782 so we must conclude that he moved completely to South Baddesley and commuted to Beaulieu where he remained priest at Beaulieu until 1790 when he retired. The *Gloucester Journal* of Monday June 6th 1796 records 'lately died at the Hotwells, the Rev. Richard Burleigh of Badesley, near Lymington'. Hotwells is a district of Bristol.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Adams who was curate, and then priest, until his death in 1839. He resided in Parson's Mead during his tenure at Beaulieu. On his death, Parson's Mead was left empty and eventually demolished.

Anthony Norris

## Conflict in C18th New Forest

On the 20th September 1748 John West, of Godshill Wood in the New Forest, discovered that 'two horses and three beasts [belonging to him, had been] stabbed so that they all died [on] the Saturday morning.'

This situation had arisen after West had given evidence in the Swainmote Court that had convicted eleven men from Woodgreen, who he accused of being 'idle people there-about in lopping, topping and cutting trees and stealing the wood'. In a letter outlining the details of the case Joseph Hinxman, the Woodward, remarked to the Lord Warden of the New Forest, John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford (1710-1771) that, 'Woodgreen is part of the Forest and every house there a trespass, and all the inhabit-

ants live by pilfering and stealing out of the Forest.' Hinxman sought permission to offer a reward for information about the perpetrators and to 'get His Majesty's pardon for any of the gang that will discover his accomplices'.

Many New Forest residents in the



A C18th cob cottage in the squatters' community of Beaulieu Rails (now East Boldre)  
Photograph by Jude James

eighteenth-century were made to suffer a bad reputation, which was not entirely deserved. They were not the 'trespassers and vagabonds, who live by depredation... and are ever ready to break out into open insurrection', as some would have preferred people to believe. Certainly, there were squatter communities that had become established in places such as Woodgreen, Castle Malwood, and East Boldre, but these encroachments were a scattering of hastily erected dwellings that joined with an established peasant-class of smallholder cottagers, who lived on the products – fuel, food, and raw materials – of the wastes and Forest, and exercised their common rights.

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However, to a large degree it served the interests of those promoting negative opinions regarding the Forest's commoning communities. Indeed, the officials broadcasting tales of villainy and pointing the finger of suspicion at the commoners were not quite so blameless themselves when it came to law breaking. Part of the reason that John West's animals had been maimed so maliciously was to punish his hypocrisy. For West had been employed by, and was acting for, one of the Forest's most corrupt officials, Joseph Hinxman; the very same Woodward who had written to complain to the Lord Warden about the men from Woodgreen.

Animal maiming involved stabbing, houghing (hamstringing), mutilating, shooting, breaking bones, or poisoning, which served as a proxy for the animal's owner. This form of brutality is generally associated with other forms of covert protest, such as poaching, threatening letters, breaking enclosures, and arson, which were generally undertaken as part of an organised campaign of community discontent.

Some historians have suggested that acts of animal maiming were conducted by a peasantry desperately fighting to prevent the erosion of their customary rights or to thwart the intensification of agricultural capitalism. Other historians regard it as an act of retaliation against parsimonious overseers or abusive employers; or committed as a type of punishment or petty revenge against collaborators or informers (as seen above).

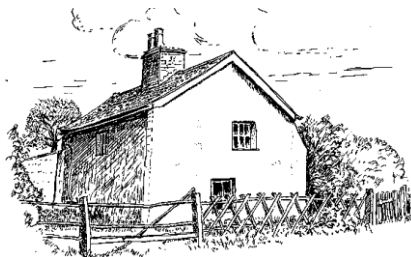
However, during the Duke of Bedford's tenure as Lord Warden of the New Forest (1745-1771) many instances of maiming were committed upon the animals of his law-abiding tenants and conscientious staff, which included the stabbing of horses, injuries to cattle, poisoning of dogs and killing of deer. These instances were accompanied by other acts of orchestrated violence and intimidation, including



John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford  
by Thomas Gainborough 1770  
*National Portrait Gallery*

death threats and attempted murder, which are documented in the correspondence with his assistants, estate managers and officials.

The trouble seems to have begun upon his appointment as Lord Warden. Bedford immediately turned his attention to improving the uneconomic operations of the Forest, curtailing the unlawful activities of the shadow economy, and reforming the widespread corruption of the Forest officials. The Deputy Surveyor General, Deputy Woodward and the Purveyor of the Navy would all be accused of corruption during Bedford's tenure. In the year following Bedford's appointment, presentments were made to the Grand Jury that stressed the issues facing the New Forest, including encroachments, a breakdown of forest law, vast numbers of colts and hogs grazing with-



A cottage in the squatters' community of  
Beaulieu Rails (now East Boldre)  
*Sketch by Jude James*

out rights, turf cutting without proper control, and tree stealing.

There is evidence that efforts to address some of these issues were perhaps taking effect, because in 1747 it was reported that a gang of deer-stealers 'that have for some years past much infested this Forest' had been 'pursued by many of the Keepers' in a concerted effort that had resulted in their arrest. In 1748 the Deputy High Steward acknowledged that 'since the Wardenship of my Lord Duke of Bedford a hundred offenders or more have been indicted and convicted of sundry offences'. However, when Forest officials, particularly Charles Coleman, the Deputy Surveyor General, became the subjects of affidavits swearing to their maladministration of the Forest, they became vindictive.

The greatest protection against acts of unrest or sabotage by the community was for the local population to believe in the benevolence and justice of their landlords and magistrates, or in this case, Lord Warden. There is little evidence that the inhabitants of the New Forest found such amiable qualities in the Duke of Bedford and his followers. Indeed, his reputation was deliberately damaged by supporters of the Deputy Surveyor General, who were 'ready to say and do anything as might reflect upon your Grace's good measures and intentions to preserve the Forest....and to cast an odium upon every good design of your Grace'. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that, rather than being a community-led campaign, high-ranking forest officials, opposed to Bedford's reforms, were responsible for orchestrating the acts of animal maiming and intimidation against Bedford's law-abiding tenants and dutiful staff. These officials were also not above blackening the reputations of the forests inhabitants to disguise their own corrupt activities and hence pass on the blame.

Gale Gould  
University of Southampton

## Admiral Cornwallis

**Barry Jolly of the Milford-on-Sea Historical Record Society writes of the association that a friend of Lord Nelson has with the area.**

The discovery of a long lost grave at All Saints Church, Milford-on-Sea has been the catalyst for a series of commemorative events being organised by Milford-on-Sea Historical Record Society and The 1805 Club. The grave is that of Admiral the Hon Sir William Cornwallis.

The grave is engraved, but the only name thereon is that of Cornwallis' friend and protégé Captain John Whitby with whom Cornwallis asked to be buried without ceremony. Whitby himself was a highly regarded Captain - he was entrusted with conveying Nelson's body to Greenwich, and also tasked with conveying the news of Nelson's death to Lady Hamilton - but succumbed to the rigours of enforcing the blockade of Brest in 1806. On the death of Whitby's widow in 1850, their daughter erected a grandiose memorial inside the church and the old grave was forgotten. It has now been conserved, and a service of rededication will be held at All Saints on 5th July 2019, the bi-centenary of Cornwallis' death.

The service, to be conducted by the Bishop of Basingstoke and attended by serving Royal Navy personnel, will also see the rededication of a memorial within the church to Rear Admiral John Peyton.

Peyton was Captain of the 74 gun *Defence* at the Battle of the Nile in 1798 – the first of Nelson's three great victories – and hence enjoys immortal fame as one of Nelson's Band of Brothers.

A third Admiral of the time, Robert Man, is also buried at All Saints, again with remarkable modesty at his own wish. Man was another subordinate of Cornwallis and later a good friend. He was the first of the three to move to the parish of Milford – actually to Pennington House – and may even have been instrumental in enticing Cornwallis



Admiral William Cornwallis after a Portrait by Daniel Gardner

there. Man was scapegoated by Jervis after the latter was forced to evacuate the Mediterranean Sea in 1797, but wiser counsels prevailed at home and he was appointed as a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty, one of the seven wise men who directed the operation of the navy during the French Revolutionary Wars.

Nonetheless, it was Cornwallis who deserved, and acquired, the greatest fame. A notable Captain at the famous and hugely significant Battle of the Saintes in 1782, he achieved national recognition in 1795 when he extricated his entire small squadron of five ships of the line from a French fleet of no fewer than twelve French ships of the line and eighteen smaller vessels. Cornwallis' Retreat (see below), as it became known, was later 'justly



considered one of the finest displays of united courage and coolness to be found in our naval history.'

Ultimately, Cornwallis' claim to fame lies in a long and almost unbroken period of service in the Royal Navy, culminating in the Blockade of Brest between 1803 and 1806.



It was during this period that Napoleon planned, and came close to executing, an invasion of England. It was the courage, perseverance, determination and leadership displayed by Cornwallis throughout two winters of the most dreadful sailing conditions that prevented this outcome. The achievement of preventing this major invasion stands alongside the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the Battle of Britain in 1940 in the annals of this country.

The church service in July will be followed by a dinner at South Lawn Hotel, a building which was once part of his estate, and an exhibition at St Barbe Museum will run from 4th June to 31st August. A heritage trail of places of interest reflecting local naval personnel of the period is in preparation. It will run from Milford through to Bucklers Hard.

Barry Jolly  
Milford-on-sea Historic Record Society

Research into each of the three Admirals is included in a special edition of the society's *Occasional Magazine*. Details of this and the events surrounding the bi-centenary celebrations can be found on [www.milfordhistory.org.uk](http://www.milfordhistory.org.uk)

## An Important Prehistoric Burial

During September 2018 the New Forest National Park Authority ran a small community excavation as part of their ongoing Heritage Lottery Funded *Our Past, Our Future* Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The chosen location was a tenant farmer's field on the Beaulieu Estate where the NFNPA have in the past undertaken excavations of a potential Roman Temple hinted through concentric square crop-marks and a WWII anti-aircraft (Diver) Battery. The site of interest was a circular crop mark in the corner of one field that had been noticed on Google Earth aerial images from 1999 and then drone images from 2013 when excavating the sites mentioned above. The circular feature was approximately 20 metres in diameter and after the aerial image ID was recorded in the Hampshire Historic Environment Record as a potential ploughed out Bronze Age Barrow.

Since the site has been one of interest to archaeologists from the NFNPA and has been at the back of our minds for a small evaluation project. This progressed in May 2018 when volunteers undertook a geophysical survey on the site using a magnetometer that has been made available with training to local groups free of charge by Bournemouth University (the LOCATE project). The results clearly showed the ring ditch visible in the crop marks, but also identified an anomaly within the centre of the



Volunteers excavating a deep trench. Credit: NFNPA



1999 Google Earth image of fields at Park Farm showing crop marks including circular and square features, but doesn't show the WWII Diver Battery between the two.



Aerial view of the 2018 Excavation looking towards Isle of Wight Credit: NFNPA

feature. The anomaly potentially indicated primary burial activity or secondary antiquarian activity. The results of the survey provided the confidence to push ahead for a community excavation to try and provide dating evidence for the Barrow hypothesis.

The initial excavation plan was to strip the entire circular feature in quadrants removing top soil with a mechanical excavator, hand stripping down to the archaeology and then hand excavating various sections through the ring ditch and other features revealed. The dig

was scheduled to take place over a week before the site was to be returned to the farmer for reseeded. The first quadrant to be opened was the South East one and once the top soil was removed we were elated to discover 3 cremation burial urns dating from the Bronze Age within the top of the circular ditch fill. This immediately answered our question about Bronze Age activity on the site, but as the excavation progressed the evidence also began to suggest that the site might have been an important place for even older human activity which Bronze Age settlers then adapted.



One of the volunteers carefully excavating a burial urn. Credit: NFNPA

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The important finds early in the dig resulted in only two of the quadrants being opened; the north west quadrant was opened to complement the south east one.



One of the 4 Bronze Age burial urns excavated and lifted from the site for further analysis and conservation. Credit: NFNPA

Careful excavation of the Bronze Age burial urns (known as Deverel-Rimbury urns) and the immediate area by volunteers revealed that we were looking at 4 urns which had been inverted in the top of the barrows ditch fill and a small patch of cremated material adjacent to one of the urns. In terms of the urns, one had a decorative band pattern on it that will help us to date them and another urn was made up of a smaller urn contained within a large urn. The urns were domestic pots and contain cremated human bone placed into small pits. So we know this site was a place of memorial for people in the New Forest around 3,000 years ago.

The excavation didn't find any evidence of the barrow's mound or any burial activity in the middle as one might have expected. The lack of evidence may have been the result of the barrow being ploughed out, or through it being destroyed by the later field boundary ditches that run through the middle of the feature and are also visible on the

1999 aerial image. The site was fully metal-detected as part of the archaeological investigation with the only finds being modern metal work in the topsoil. It is believed that one of the modern metal pieces found in the field boundary ditches was the anomaly originally picked up in the geophysical survey. Two sections were excavated through the field boundary ditches and dating evidence was found, which will help fix their place in the whole chronology of the site.

As the excavation progressed and the 4 sections were cut through the ring ditch evidence of human activity below the level of the urns was found including two Neolithic flints from around 5,000 years ago, one of which probably would have been attached to a wooden shaft and used as a spear. Sections though the ditch also suggested a



One of the flints found during the 2018 excavation. Credit NFNPA

double ditch with at least 4 phases of re-cutting and filling before the urns were dug into the latest ditch fill phase. Additional geophysical scans undertaken during the excavation and revised aerial photos suggested that the ring ditch might have had terminal points and entrances, leading us to believe that we might be looking at an earlier Neolithic monument that was then re-used in the Bronze Age.



Two of the volunteers enjoying the dig. Credit NFNPA

The urns were all block lifted and will now be scanned, recorded and then excavated. The soil and contents will be analysed using scientific techniques in the lab to date and conserve them due to the poor state they are in after being buried for so long in acidic soil. It is hoped that they will ultimately be displayed in the New Forest.

The interim report on the site, along with any additional information and photos from the urns and wider site, is published on the New Forest Knowledge website: [www.nfknowledge.org/contributions/park-farm-barrow](http://www.nfknowledge.org/contributions/park-farm-barrow).

Though it was great to confirm the Bronze Age activity near to Beaulieu the excavation also threw up a large number of new questions and led to various new theories being proposed throughout the progress of the excavation. We hope to return to the site with a different set of research questions to try and fully understand what might prove to be an very important part of the New Forest's prehistoric past.

James Brown  
New Forest National Park Authority

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