

# WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## 16 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A MEMBER ...

1. The Society aims to foster interest in the archaeology, art, history and natural history of Wiltshire and to explore, research and publish information on these subjects for the education and benefit of the public. Founded in 1853 the Society celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2003.

2. The Society has a long association with Stonehenge. In 1883 when two railway lines were planned to run across Stonehenge Down the Society led a successful campaign against them. A few years later the Society was involved in gaining protection for the stones under the Ancient Monuments Act. In the 1920s leading members of the Society purchased 1,500 acres of land around Stonehenge as part of a national appeal to protect the landscape. All this land is now in the care of the National Trust.

Today the Society is involved in discussions on the proposed visitor centre for Stonehenge and also on the improvements to the A303 main road which runs past the site. We are actively campaigning for solutions which will minimise the impact on the area's archaeology.

3. The Society, which is also a registered charity, is active throughout the county, working closely with the National Trust, English Heritage, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and local interest groups for the benefit of Wiltshire's heritage.

4. The internationally important Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes is run by the Society.

The Museum's collection includes the gold and other grave goods from Bush Barrow, which is one of a number of barrows around Stonehenge.

The Museum holds some of the finest prehistoric finds in the country outside the British Museum. Other periods are catered for with exhibits from Neolithic, Bronze, Roman, Medieval and more recent periods.

The Government has designated the Museum, including the Art, Library and Natural History collections, as an 'outstanding collection'. There are only 62 such designated collections in the whole of Britain.

5. The extensive collection of Wiltshire Art includes 691 paintings commissioned by Sir Richard Colt Hoare and executed by John Buckler. These provide a unique record of Wiltshire's churches before Victorian 'restoration', as well as the great houses in the county and the main monuments.

6. The Library is a major source of reference for those researching Wiltshire's history or family history and contains much rare material not obtainable elsewhere. Members have free access to the Library which has a comprehensive selection of books, manuscripts, newspapers, maps and photographs. New members may take advantage of a special introductory visit to the Library when

the resources available are explained and there is the opportunity to see some of the rarer items.

7. Members have free admission to the Museum and Library and also to the Salisbury & South Wilts Museum in Salisbury.
8. Members also receive the major academic annual publication 'Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine: *Wiltshire Studies*' which contains articles on Wiltshire's archaeology, history and natural history. Bi-annual newsletters are circulated to all members.
9. Each year temporary exhibitions and displays are staged in the Museum and art gallery.
10. The Archaeology Field Group organises field walking, training workshops and talks on the more practical side of archaeology. Opportunities usually arise each year for members to take part in excavations in the county.
11. During the winter months a lecture programme is run with leading speakers. In the summer there are archaeological walks, tours of geological sites and visits to villages in Wiltshire and elsewhere. Members have priority booking for these events which are often oversubscribed.
12. For those interested in industrial archaeology the Society acts as a focal point in the county. Its biennial symposium attracts leading speakers and visitors from all over the South West and Wales.
13. The Wiltshire record of milestones is held in the library and we are county co-ordinators for the National Milestone Society.
14. The Society's Outreach Service provides a comprehensive range of talks, workshops and handling sessions for all age groups, covering the National Curriculum.
15. For younger people special events are held during the holidays and a 'Young WANHS' club for 7 to 15 year olds meets every month in term time. Youngsters also have an opportunity to take part in various activities centred on the Museum and its collections.
16. Bound copies of the Devizes Gazette (1819-1980) and Wiltshire Advertiser (1879-1933) are available in the Library – a valuable research aid for all historians.

**If you are interested in Wiltshire, its archaeology, natural, industrial, local or recent history then you should belong to the Society.  
By joining you will contribute to the preservation and presentation of our important collections.**

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