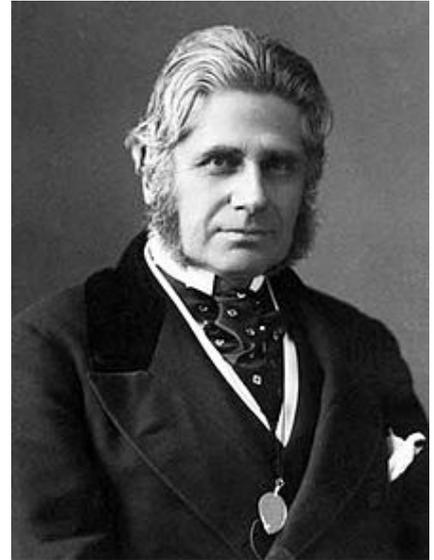


# Redlynch & District Local History Society

## Finding Pitt Rivers

by Adrian Green - Director Salisbury Museum

The Society was treated to the fascinating life story of one of the country's most interesting early archaeologists, General Augustus Pitt Rivers (right). He is known as one of the first scientific archaeologists although many of his theories have now been refuted by modern archaeology.



He started life as Augustus Lane Fox, and was an army officer for most of his life, and introduced the rifle into general service with the army. He became a great collector, firstly of rifles, then other weapons, pottery and jewellery. The collecting became all-consuming and by the 1880's the collection was over 20,000 objects and had to be housed in a museum, firstly in Kensington and then in Oxford. He believed he could use Darwin's theory of evolution and apply it to objects, this was known as the evolution of culture.

In 1880 he inherited the large Rushmore Estate by a convoluted line of ancestry and found himself with an income of £2 million per year in today's terms and an area of land which for many centuries had been a Royal hunting park and so had not been ploughed. This became the focus for many of his studies; he unearthed an amazing number of untouched sites ranging from the Neolithic to medieval. He painstakingly recorded his finds and work, constructing amazing cut-away models of each site to explain how they were constructed.

He died in 1900 and was one of the first people to choose to be cremated. He left an amazing archive which was probably not appreciated by his family, but part of which ended up forming the Pitt Rivers Gallery in the new home of the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum which then moved into The Kings House in the Salisbury Cathedral Close.

Our next talk is Brockenhurst Village Hospital (WW1) held at Morgan Vale and Woodfalls Village Hall at 7:30 on Tuesday 7 March.