

## THE ORIGINS OF EDAS.

The idea of EDAS was conceived by a small group of people whilst attending a series of W.E.A (Worker's Educational Association) lectures in Wimborne.

The first years' lectures were by Bill Putnam on the Romans. I then became involved as class secretary as Tim Schadla- Hall MA gave us 6 years of memorable lectures taking us through the various ages from European Prehistory to the Anglo Saxons. David Johnston completed the series with a year on the Romans in Britain.

At this point the non-archaeological class members revolted and wanted "Antique Clocks" for the following year at which point drastic action had to be taken and UDI was declared, a group of us decided to form our own association and that was how EDAS came about.

Myself and many others were all greatly encouraged to believe, by Tim Schadla-Hall and latterly by David Johnston that we as individuals and collectively could make a real difference to the archaeological record by our research, fieldwork and excavation.

Tim not only fired us with his early lectures but led us on many fieldtrips and introduced us to the value of field walking at a time when many pastures and sites were being destroyed by deep ploughing. The field walking, incidentally forged a surviving relationship with Dr. Martin T. Green MA FSA who was then just....Farmer Green who has continued to encourage and inspire many of us over three decades.

## MARTIN GREEN HONOURED BY READING UNIVERSITY

*Dr Martin Green (left) with Prof. Richard Bradley, University of Reading.*



As a fully -fledged EDAS David Johnston was brave enough to launch us on our first dig at Batts Bed, the Roman crossroads at Badbury Rings. We learned so much from his meticulous instruction on excavation interpretation and recording although some members tools were not always parked in alignment at the end of the day!

(See Phil Coles poem Batts Bed for further indiscretions)

HAYDN EVERALL

THE BATTS BED TROWELLERS by P.G.Coles

The dig took place 20<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 1982

This is the tale of the Batts Bed trowellers who came to Badbury Rings

To dig trial sections and find the connections

Between ditches and aggers and things

And in charge of the dig was a very small man

Who directed ops with a whistle

And if you didn't look smart he'd tear you apart

And read you his latest epistle.

Epistle to The Phillipians and to John the not so Divine

The instruction about wheelbarrows is that when the barrow is full

You must always always give it a push and never give it a pull

And when your load is emptied you must promptly turn about

And grab it by the handles and always pull it out

There are certain rules to tidy tools which make sense on a site

The kind of thing you would normally do when you pack up work at night

But he did Phil scold in terms manifold and explained in detailed clarity

For a one minute break he must tidy make, his site with strict regularity

He said I clearly remember, a long time ago, it was my first assignment

A nasty chap took an aerial snap of my tools out of alignment

I had to pull strings, do embarrassing things, it was a tense situation

But I did manage to halt, of that site of Sparsholt, the photographs publication.

He stopped for tea at exactly three

If the water came to the boil

If it didn't he would insist

That you carried on with your toil

He kept you busy even when you were dizzy

And it was 103 in the shade  
He charged around like Little and Large  
And expected to be obeyed  
I'd be no apologist for any phrenologist  
Who said he should have his bumps read  
And I hate to think when I went for a drink  
What was in his bumps at Batts Bed  
He'd sit up at night in his corner site  
And burn up the midnight oil  
But his workmen and wenches who dug out the trenches  
Knew the answer lay in the Zoil  
And the workmen stopped toiling when the water was boiling  
For Pam to brew up the tea  
And woe betide any man who tried  
To have a fly cup before three.

A troweller Brian, who never stopped tryin'  
He nearly drove up the wall  
It was all to do with walking east with a 2 metre ranging pole  
Take that pole away said the director DJ, yes that one at the top  
Keep walking East (Brian said beast) I'll whistle when I want you to stop!  
Four hours later in his car George Richards drove up from his farm  
He said to D J I had a telephone call which might give cause for alarm  
The telephone rang, it were one of your gang  
He'd walked ten mile at least  
Wi a ranging pole and he told I he were heading East  
He phoned I vrom a telephone box at a quarter to three

Zaid he'd phone again in half an hour when he reached Shaftesbury  
He said Cann hill were too much vor him and he baint gwine on much longer  
Bugger him and his ranging pole he zaid and he used a few words stronger  
Dear me said DJ, what can I say, what can I do for the best?  
I strictly told Brian to head out East and the silly man has gone West  
As site director I must say that things have come to a pass  
When one of my team who I esteem is unable to read the compass  
If he phones again Mr. Richards, tell him to return to the site  
Immediately and with a bit of luck he may be back tonight.

He gave Sylvia one day an awful fright when she was going for tea  
He said "You will stand fast", she was aghast, put her foot down and didn't agree.

To Len he said note, from the handbook I quote  
Carry trowels in the back pocket  
Like so....Oh dear, oh no...it's gone where did I drop it?  
It dropped on the grass the silly ass  
John whispered to his wife Della  
I'd have given it back immediately  
If he'd been a decent fellow  
Haydn pay attention! Again I must mention, do not walk on the baulk  
Take note that this section has been cleaned up for inspection and I have brushed off the chalk

The things he would say took their breath away  
He told Len not to take home his tool!  
I have records to make and if you make a mistake  
You'll make me feel such a fool

Leslie take care not to lose those nails  
In the long grass with the slugs and snails  
They cost me 6p each in the local store  
And I can't afford to buy any more  
He said to Len "From shock I reeled  
At your unofficial snaps allowed by Norman Field  
The etiquette of archaeology he should know by the letter  
And a man of Norman's reputation should know much better"  
They didn't agree with '**no photography**'  
And held up the sign '**It's forbidden**'  
And for private laughs they took photographs  
Which from official records are hidden  
Florrie did you say 'Coo it looks all chalk to me'  
The name of the soils was the question, don't you agree?  
Is that what them pegs are for, that's made my day, coo I never knew'  
Tell her Ann said the professional man, first explain the 'mix'  
'Who me' said Ann, pointing to herself, David's got me in a fix  
This is the topsoil at the top and a little further down  
Is the humus layer of decay which is darker brown  
Below are dried peas which David calls the mix  
It could be infill, backfill or Phil up to his tricks!  
At the bottom is of course a bed of solid chalk  
Thank you Ann said David for that most instructive talk  
Now, listen all of you, I don't want you to laugh  
This is how the site's prepared for the photograph  
Bear in mind what cosmetics will do for a girl's complexion  
Now I'll demonstrate what cosmetics will do to improve this section

The whole idea of cosmetics is to accentuate what's faint  
And to accentuate the solid chalk I use white Berger paint  
Non drip is best and if a soil section should be lost  
You take your little shovel and sprinkle potting compost  
And to give it the finishing touches continued the great god Pan  
Sprinkle, sprinkle, sprinkle, with your watering can

Archaeology like mankind, sees truth in black and white  
The interpretation of the greys only obscures the light  
And when by skilful application cosmetics proves our case  
The archaeological profession gains, not loses face

Dennis you will do yourself a menace dancing on that spade

The last thing I want to do is render you first aid

Leslie, you are not forking straight

Not forking likely prongs bent mate!

Now Graham that won't do!

Give me the brush and I'll show you

Chalk to chalk and dust to dust

If the trowel doesn't do it the shovel must

Barbara you committed yourself to two

And attended once, it simply will not do

We all start the hard way I'm afraid

Will you start deturfing here with that spade

Alan, when you push the barrow up the ramp

Don't tip the load on the end of the plank

Did you tell me to stick it or chuck it?

And what! Did you tell me to do with the bucket?  
Oh... what a lovely view to find  
It looks like Della from behind  
I must keep her in the trial trench section  
Bending down she is perfection!  
On this occasion I agree  
To waive the rule **“No Photography”**  
She’s standing up but I have no doubt  
She’ll bend down again when the sun comes out  
And then one Monday night they packed away their trowels  
Folded up their tents and left Batts Bed to the owls  
And not a pheasant or a partridge through them had come to grief  
And Mr. James the gamekeeper heaved a great sigh of relief  
And Mr. Richards comments were “Well never mind  
They found the marks of our deep plough but what else did they find”  
And what the Batts Bed trowellers found and what they did discover  
Everything will be revealed at sometime or another.

## **Roman Dorchester – The first project!**

If our class secretary hadn’t been so determined that our class would not switch from archaeology to the history of clocks EDAS may not have been born Instead of EDAS we might have become EDACS! (The East Dorset Antique Clock Society)

Instead of ‘old time pieces’ we got David Johnston and what a culture shock that was. We started being set homework and a class project. Less time in the pub and more time in research! Our first project was to investigate a feature of Roman history and report back to the class. A few of us got together and decided to investigate Roman Dorchester. Our group comprised John Day as he had the best camera and more importantly knew how to use it. Haydn Overall took on the amphitheatre at Poundbury and I think the Roman aqueduct. Memory is a bit vague now going back over 30 years but I remember George Tublin and I investigated the Roman walls and Colliton town house. Phil Coles researched the Roman mosaic and was of course poet laureate. We took on Roman names and

the only one I can definitely remember is that Phil was known as Philius Bilius and I think George was Georgius Porgius. There is a photo of us all somewhere wearing one large communal toga. This is probably in John Day's collection.

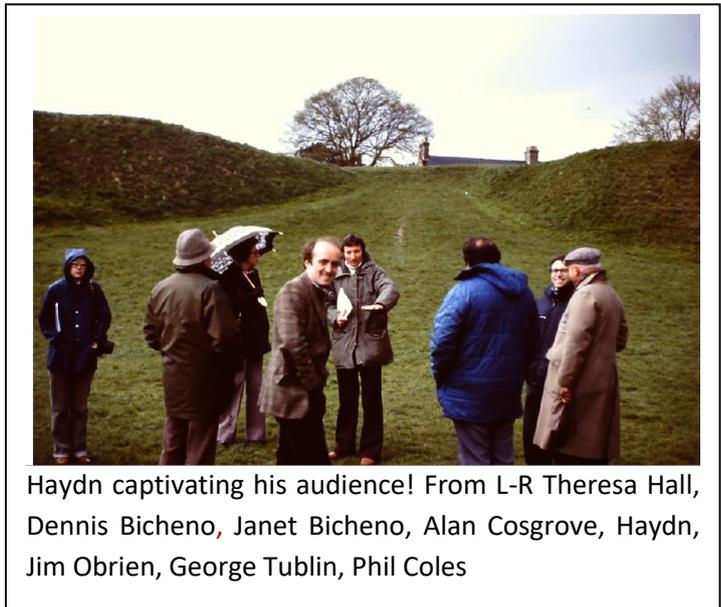
We threw ourselves heart and soul into our project with field trips to Dorchester or Durnovaria as we came to know it and practice sessions before presenting our findings to the rest of the class. This was the days before Powerpoint and epidiascopes were still in fashion!

Following the presentation we took the class on a visit to Dorchester. The weather was not kind but we did have an extremely good lunch as I recall. Our first stop was Maumbury Rings where Haydn enthralled us all describing the history. Its amphitheatre role was briefly revived in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, as a place of public execution. In 1685, at the close of the Monmouth Rebellion, Judge Jeffreys ordered eighty of the rebels to be executed here. In 1705 Mary Channing, a nineteen year old woman found guilty of poisoning her husband, was executed by strangulation and burning at the Rings. Thomas Hardy used this event in his poem *The Mock Wife*, and recorded some details of his research into the event in his personal writings.

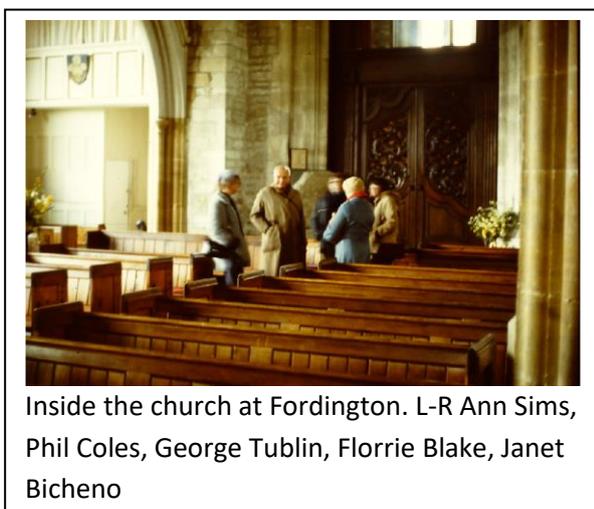
We did visit Fordington church where we saw the Tympanum over the door and Phil mentions it in one of his poems. The church stands high on a hill top, the tower is 15th century and is embattled with pinnacles. This church has a great treasure, a Roman stone, a block of Purbeck marble, engraved and the earliest inscription known in the county. A

tribute to a Roman husband and father exiled in Britain from his family and reads: -

'To Gaius Aristobulus, a Roman Citizen, aged 50. Rufinus and Marina and Avita his children. Erected by Romana his wife.'



Haydn captivating his audience! From L-R Theresa Hall, Dennis Bicheno, Janet Bicheno, Alan Cosgrove, Haydn, Jim Obrien, George Tublin, Phil Coles



Inside the church at Fordington. L-R Ann Sims, Phil Coles, George Tublin, Florrie Blake, Janet Bicheno

Following our visit to Fordington, we visited the County Museum in Dorchester where David Johnston described the stories behind the mosaics and how they were made.



David in pensive mood



Examining the mosaics

. But what is most interesting about the floors at Frampton is that they include the earliest yet known icons of Christianity to be found in Britain as well as – and in tandem with – traditional pagan motifs. At both villas the mosaics featured the popular scene of the god Bellerophon slaying the monster Chimaera, as well as other hunting scenes and the popular inclusion of the wine god Bacchus. Yet at Frampton there is also the singular appearance of the Chi-Ro monogram – so called after the first two letters of Christ’s name in Greek (a reverse “P” superimposed on an “X”.) Before setting off to look at the aqueduct and town house we had to take shelter and by pure chance found a pub! During soup and a pint we were entertained by Phil reading his latest literary gems



Lunch time literary reading

The Roman Town House in Dorchester is a Roman ruin within Colliton Park, Dorchester. Dorset County Council acquired Colliton Park in 1933 as the site for the construction of County Hall. The Town House was discovered in 1937/38 during an archaeological investigation carried out by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society prior to the construction of the new building. Plans for County Hall were modified so that the Town House could be retained on site. The Town

House has two principal ranges of rooms. The South Range comprising rooms 1–7 survives in the plan form of flint and stone walls on the grass covered site. The West Range comprising rooms 8–18 was mosaic floored.



Colliton Town House

**Thus from these small beginnings EDAS was born**

**HENRY COLE**

## The Mosaics by Phil Coles

In a meadow by the river  
Where Frome and Cerne get together  
In a field which cows have tramped on  
Lies the fine mosaic of Frampton  
George III gave the "dig" his blessing  
Where it's now has us all guessing  
A careful drawing done on site  
Gave us this slide you see tonight  
The mosaicist in this area  
Had a workshop in Durnovaria  
And they thought there was nothing odd  
In mixing up "by Jove" with God  
They lived in the wonderland of Alice  
And put the Chimera next to the Chalice  
And under the Chalice in the border below  
Observe the Christian symbol Chi Rho  
If you look hard I think you will see  
A circle and inside an X and a P  
The first two letters in the name of our Lord  
In the Greek language, that's what I am assured  
The fish symbol too if you know ichthyology  
Holds a secret in Greek of Christian theology  
And if you think this has gone "Airy Fairy"  
Take a look at this slide from Hinton St. Mary



The "dominus" there he knew how to plan it  
He took out the dolphins and put in a pomegranate  
The portrait you see in the middle is Jesus  
It's not a likeness that's likely to please us  
The dress style, the nose, the eyes and that cleft chin  
I doubt if our Lord would want that feature left in  
In the four corners the faces you gaze on  
Are the well-known Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John  
And should you have time and would like to see them  
They are always on view in the British Museum

Please forgive me, an excuse I must make  
I know little about the Durngate mosaic  
It was excavated in 1905  
A few years before most of us were alive  
When sites are cleared finds are made as a rule  
This mosaic turned up on the site of a school  
That's my last slide of Dorchester town  
I've had my share of Durnovaria so I'll now sit down

**I have a collection of Phil Cole's poetry and should any members of  
the Phil Coles Appreciation Society (or not)  
like to meet up for a rendition or two please let me know, everyone welcome!  
w.everall@btinternet.com**