



# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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**NEWSLETTER - MAY 2006**

## **Mike Fryatt**

It is with sorrow that we report that Mike Fryatt died from a heart attack on 20<sup>th</sup> April; the funeral was at Poole crematorium on 27<sup>th</sup> April. Mike had been an active member of EDAS since January 1990. He took part in excavations, field walking, helped analyse artefacts, organised a number of walks and had been a committee member. He was a cheerful man who never spoke ill of anyone and was friendly to all. He had a responsible job in the oil industry and since retirement had done consultancy work. His interests were wide and he was a member of several societies. He was well-travelled and had a fund of knowledge. Mike was a keen walker and to all intents and purposes a fit man. Mike had only recently had his 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday. His death was sudden, unexpected and a shock to all who knew him.

Mike was unmarried and often spoke of the enjoyment he had in Sunday dinners with his sister and her husband, and he had great regard for his nephew with whom he spent time passing on his computer skills.

We are sorry that Mike is no longer with us and we extend our condolences to his family. His sister has asked that anyone who wishes to make a gift to send it to her, Mrs Legg, at Mike's address, 73 Sherwood Avenue, Poole, BH14 8DJ, making any cheques payable to The Dorset Wildlife Trust.

John

## **EDAS MEMBERSHIP**

April is the time for membership renewal. If you do not already pay by standing order and have not yet sent me a cheque please forward one to me as soon as possible so that Peter and I can bring our finances up to date. If you decide to pay by standing order please also let me know and I will forward an application form. Della

## **\*\*\* NOTICE ABOUT THE MAY LECTURE MEETING \*\*\***

Please note that as the church require the hall on the second Wednesday of May, our **Lecture meeting** has been **put back to the third Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May.**

## **RECENT EVENTS**

### **Last EDAS Lecture**

At our last Lecture Dr Miles Russell of Bournemouth University spoke to us about the Piltdown Man Hoax. Most people know that in 1912 an amateur geologist, Charles Dawson, discovered skull sections of an 'early man' near Lewes, Sussex. Charles had been working alone in the trench, and his discovery was whisked away to a museum where it was kept in a glass case, and never available for close for inspection. Many years later, and after Charles's death, it was found to be a crude forgery that should have been spotted immediately. Who amongst Charles' group of archaeologists might have been responsible for the forgery has never definitely be proven. However, it is suspicious that Charles had an uncanny knack of always finding ancient 'missing links' with untraceable pasts: a boat that bridged the gap between ancient and modern construction; a horseshoe that was the bridge between prehistoric and modern forms (later found to be examples of the old and the new welded together); and a tooth that showed the transition between reptilian and mammalian teeth (when subsequently examined this had been shaped with modern metal working tools). Charles (or another, if he wasn't the culprit) must have hardly been able to believe his luck when the skull was accepted as genuine and then locked

away. Although the inevitable discovery of the hoax was a severe embarrassment to British Archaeology, it paved the way to a much more objective and scientific approach to archaeology, which is still serving us well.

Miles gave us a very interesting, well presented lecture which was often 'carefully phrased', or statements given 'tongue-in-cheek!'. We thank Miles for a very enjoyable and informative evening.

### **Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2006 EDAS Walk around Maiden Castle and Martinstown**

15 EDAS walkers gathered at Maiden Castle on 23 April for a walk led by Gill Broadbent. We had barely reached the first vantage point when the debate started about the function of Maiden Castle – was it defensive?, was a status symbol or part of some ancient ritual? Would it in fact have been such an imposing feature in the landscape when the whole area was forested? By the time we had reached the Roman temple, Gill had outlined the findings of various researchers, had described the evolution of the site and had placed it in the context of other hill forts. We were struck once again by the sheer scale of the place – the massive ramparts and the intricate entrances.

The debates continued as we walked south of Maiden Castle and up across the fields to Four Barrow Hill. Those whose eyes were glued to the ground were rewarded with some interesting flint finds. From the Barrows we descended into Martinstown for lunch and, for some, investigation of some of the features of the village. We returned to Maiden Castle via Clandon Barrow, one of the richest graves in Britain, dating from ca. 1800 BC.

Whatever the true history of Maiden Castle, it will undoubtedly be the subject of further speculation in EDAS and more widely for many years to come. Thank you to Gill for a very enjoyable and stimulating(!) walk and for another chance to consider one of Dorset's real treasures. Susan Adams

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Sun 21st May - Guided Walk around part of the Tarrant Valley with Phil Roberts**

Meet at 10.30am by the noticeboard at the T-junction in the centre of Tarrant Rushton Village. No special parking area, park somewhere in the village. We will view any or all of 3 churches, a moated site, several bowl barrows, a disused airfield, a deer park, a DMV, a Medieval Cross, a shrunken village, Roman road and a listed public house. No steep gradients, but wear stout footwear. Lunch at the public house, the Langton Arms, or picnic nearby.

People who don't want to do the walk (about 6 miles) but who would like to join us for lunch at the Langton Arms would be most welcome. Would anyone who wishes to lunch there, at about 12.30, please let me know so that I can advise Barbara Cossins (Landlady) accordingly, by 14<sup>th</sup> May. Phil, on 01929 400507 or [philroberts@connectfree.co.uk](mailto:philroberts@connectfree.co.uk), for bookings and information!

#### **Saturday 22 July 2006 – Walk from Corfe Castle with Peter Walker**

This walk is dedicated to Mike Fryatt, who died in April and who was to have led it. A walk of about 5 miles to Corfe Common, Kingston and Church Knowle. Meet at **10.00** at Corfe Castle Visitor Centre, just before the village, SY958825. Lunch back in Corfe. Please note that this walk is on a **Saturday**. Any queries to Peter on 01425 471326.

### **EDAS Field Trips**

For some years now we have run a annual field trip to various places in England and Scotland. They have been very successful. Members will be well informed about this year's trip in June organised by Steve Smith, which will be followed by a report in the Newsletter. Next year there are two trips, one to Spain, organised by Alan Hawkins and already well advanced. For the second (held in our usual early June slot) Graham and Susan Adams have offered to lead a trip to the area north of York.

## **Shaftesbury Abbey Lecture**

Prof. Mick Aston will give a lecture about Shaftesbury Abbey at 7:30pm on 8<sup>th</sup> November at Shaftesbury Art Centre, Ball Street. Tickets are £6 (£5 to EDAS members) and will be brought to our meetings in September and October. It is also worth knowing that the Abbey Museum now has a new and enhanced Audio tour, together with Interactive tour on a computer screen which has been devised by the University of Warwick.

## **“One Too Many Bridges”**

An interest in archaeology, history and walking inevitably leads to an interest in old roads. This quickly includes bridges. Hence I have some hundreds of slides on the subject and felt sufficiently confident to give an occasional talk.

Dorset is not so well blessed with fascinating bridges as is Cornwall and Yorkshire, nor are there any going back to the times of the Romans as on Hadrians Wall – but is that a Roman Ford at Turners Puddle. Nevertheless there are a number worth visiting. One of my favourites is Fifehead Neville Pack Horse Bridge, visited by EDAS not that long ago on a walk led by Roy and Sylvia Frith

Fifehead bridge is a medieval structure and a scheduled Ancient Monument. It crosses the River Divelish, which at this point is a mere stream. The modern road, which has all the characteristics of an ‘old roadway’ and is little more than a country lane, runs beside it. The bridge can no longer take traffic. Where the road goes over the bed of the river it is called an ‘Irish’ bridge; a name given to a ford with small pipes under it and in wet weather they do not take the rain, consequently the road floods. The original Pack Horse bridge had only low parapets so that they were not hit by the side packs of animals. The straight sided and two pointed arches give it a very picturesque look, but is unusual and gives it a structural weakness.

Not far away the site of a Roman Villa gives the area an added interest.

Cornford Bridge spanning the Caundle Brook built in 1480 is also worth visiting. In the upstream cutwaters are several vertical slits of no practical use and presumably a medieval embellishment.

Our own locality is not without its bridges, including an ‘Irish’ bridge at Tarrant Monkton, that is dry in summer and wet in winter. The bridge is a Packhorse Bridge and the three arches and approach walls are made of all sorts and sizes of stone and brick. A stone on the left of the arches has a large square hole cut in it, the origin of which is a mystery. Wallis suggests it may be part of a staddle stone.

Stanbridge is curiously some three miles from Stanbridge. It may be so called because the church at Stanbridge may have been responsible for its upkeep in medieval times. It has no cutwaters but the piers are very thin, a construction found in later brick bridges but not often in earlier stone bridges. There has been much repair work done (it is subject to frequent vehicle collisions) and at an earlier time was widened, though by no means enough for modern use. Its interest is enhanced in that it is adjacent to a medieval mill and is part of the outer boundary of the Cranborne Chase.

One of the most interesting of Dorset Bridges must be Whitemill Bridge, its interest increased by its association with the adjacent Mill. At one time it was part of the route that went along Old Road, fording the Stour at Wimborne and on to Dorchester. The building of the Bypass considerably decreased its use, hence it has not been widened.

Built about 1175 Whitemill Bridge is reputed to be the oldest in Dorset and an excellent example of Norman construction. The arches are ribbed with alternate stones of sandstone and limestone, the string course oversailed by small corbels. The majority of the coping stones are cramped together with wrought iron dogs set in lead. The parapet has a ‘Transportation’ plate. Damage by vehicles produces major problems in replacing the stone work with similar stones. The solid piers of Whitemill Bridge were built on oak rafts on top of clusters of oak piles driven into the mud, and it was only in 1964 that the rafts showed signs of deterioration. The buried piles were quite sound; the deteriorating rafts were replaced with concrete.

Whitemill Bridge is in a wonderful setting and not far from the deserted settlement of Barford.

At this point I squirm with embarrassment. It is a tale of how not to get big headed and how not to do research. I was scanning the Quarter Sessions Court Books for 1810 looking for cases of people who had failed to pay their Poor Rates, when there in bold writing was:

**Trill Bridge. That the Eastern Treasurer do pay Messr's Sandys of Horton the sum of five pounds three shillings and four pence being the amount their Bill being now delivered into this Court as Agent for Defending and Prosecuting institutions against the said County for not repairing a certain Bridge called Trill Bridge and that the same be allowed the said Treasurer.**

My mind worked overtime. East Dorset, Horton. It therefore must be a bridge in or near the Allen Valley. But, I knew all the bridges of this area and there was or had been no Trill Bridge. Straight to my favourite Bridge Book, *Dorset Bridges*, A. J. Wallis, Where it was not indexed. Excitement rose. I had discovered an as yet unknown bridge in our locality. Surely I had made my name. But, I must check it out so I asked our member Robert Heaton, who approached his colleagues in County Hall. I soon received the following e mail:

**Well what can I say, I've spent a lot of time, checking, and all of a sudden, there it was. In the Dorset Environmental Records Centre, Gazetteer of Dorset Place Names published 1984, they list Trill Bridge with a location of 790205. Checking on the map, it is in fact, in North Dorset. Trill Bridge crosses the Stour on the little unclassified road which goes from the B3092 between Todber up to Fifehead Magdalen.**

**I would imagine that Sandy's is a Building Company, than a solicitors, but is Horton the one in East Dorset? At that time I believe the Parishes had responsibility for road maintenance. Still that is for the Historians, not me.**

**Cheers. Andy**

I was annoyed beyond belief with myself. In unfounded excitement I had failed to search out my own library. There on the shelves were Volumes one and two of the Dorset Gazetteer, associating it with Trill Dairy House, Trill Farm, Trill House, Trill Quarry. Volume two records Trill in Bridport and Rhyme Intrinseca, and of course in *Good's, The Old Roads of Dorset* Good describes the medieval road system that includes TrillBridge; of course standing with these books was A.D. Mills, *Dorset Place Names*. which traced the bridge as being in Fifehead Magdalen and in 1268 was called Trul.

That though was not the end. In talking to John Milner I said it was strange that a man called Sandys of Horton had anything to do with a bridge so far away and again I have often searched the Horton Parish Registers and not seen this name. John gave me a quiet sad look and said of course there are other Hortons.

So what have I learnt? Did we visit Trill Bridge in our walk with Roy and Sylvia and I had forgotten? If you buy books read them. Don't be so easily persuaded one has discovered something. When researching keep to the subject in hand & do not wander off. As for me I shall give up research and keep to Agatha Christie. **John Day**

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

The dates for EDAS events are underlined. The monthly evening lectures start at 7.30pm. Walks and field visits usually meet at 10.30 am at the published Grid Reference. Ring the leader if the weather is doubtful or if more details are required.

### **2006**

Wed 17 May EDAS lecture: "**The Dorset Monument Management Scheme**", with Steve Wallis of Dorset Archaeological Services

Sun 21 May **Walk** with Phil Roberts in and around the Tarrant Valley. See earlier.

**Saturday** **Walk** with Peter Walker around Corfe Castle. See earlier for details

22 July

Sat 22 Jul Provisional **EDAS Summer Barbecue**. More details to follow, and **date to be confirmed**.

**Saturday** **Walk** with Peter Walker around around the Dorchester area. More details later.

19 Aug

Wed 13 Sep EDAS lecture: "**The Wreck of the Earl of Abergavenny**" with David Carter

Wed 8 Nov Lecture from Prof. Mick Aston about Shaftesbury Abbey. See earlier for details.