



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2006

RECENT EVENTS

Last EDAS Lecture

Our last EDAS lecture was "**The Milestones of Dorset**" with John Tybjerg of the Milestone Society. This very new organisation was founded over the first few years of this century, and is already very active researching into milestones, documenting their forms and sites, and also co-operating with the different governing roadway authorities to restore and even re-erect them.

Steve Smith spoke for us all when he wrote to John: *"I would like to thank you on behalf of the committee and members of EDAS for the interesting talk you gave us last Wednesday on the Milestones of Dorset. I am sure you could tell from the number of questions asked at the end of your talk that everyone enjoyed it very much. You certainly raised my interest in the location of the milestones locally and I have spotted many of the ones you described since your talk."*

John replied:

"Many thanks for your Thank You. I am sure that you can appreciate that any chance to spread the word on subjects like this is welcome."

During the interval one gentleman was asking me if there was a book about milestones. The generally recognised 'Bible' is a book called MARKING THE MILES by Carol Haines. ISBN No.0-9538885-0-9. If you have a newsletter or something similar could you give it a mention for him if possible".

Thank you again for being an interested audience."

Many thanks again to John from EDAS for an interesting and enjoyable talk.

Sun 22 Oct – Walk around Rockbourne and Whitsbury led by Steve Smith

6 hardy souls joined Steve for a 6 miles walk. As we started off the rain began and it was still raining when we finished the walk! We first went to St Andrew's church which sits above Rockbourne. Its plan is an example of the cruciform style of the Saxon period. Next to the church sits the Manor House which is made up of a group of buildings of several periods, part of which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The main range contains a small L-shaped 14th century house with a late 17th century wing as the front entrance today. We then took a path, which runs parallel to the main street, running behind the house plots. Steve explained that the layout of the plots along the village street suggest a planned village.

Our walk then took us along various somewhat muddy paths to Whitsbury. Here we visited St Leonard's church. Its exact date of foundation is not known. However, it formed part of the endowment of the monastery at Reading, which was founded by Henry I who died in 1119. Whilst the main part of the church is stone-built, the tower is of brick.

Purely to escape the rain, we repaired to the local pub for lunch. Suitably refreshed we continued to Whitsbury Castle Ditches, a multivallate hill fort. It has 3 banks and 2 ditches, which unfortunately are mostly hidden from view being overgrown with

woodland. Our walk then took us back to our cars in Rockbourne, passing the Manor Farm in the farmyard of which are 2 listed granaries.

Despite the rain, we appreciated the efforts put in by Steve and thank him for an interesting walk.

Peter Walker

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER – by John Day

During a Christmas visit to relatives I was introduced to a pocket book printed in 1829, elaborately titled *The New Universal Letter-Writer or the Ladies & Gentleman's Polite & Useful Assistant: Containing a Series of Correspondence, Adapted to the general and various occasions of Human Life, from Childhood to Mature Age*. There were over 130 examples of letters on all sorts of subjects.

While such an outdated book would seem to have no interest this is though not true. The Grammar and florid styles alone were interesting, as the title examples. The subjects of the suggested letters were very wide, some ring bells of current interest, such as letters asking for loans and excuses for delayed payments, some not likely to be seen nowadays. They do help demonstrate the preoccupations of the early 19th. century. One such letter is::

From Mr. H.---- to his son, on his settling in one of the Inns of Court;

Dear Henry

My anxiety is once again renewed on your once more leaving the paternal roof. On the former occasion you were young and every way inexperienced: and I was instrumental to your errors, by sending you for education where my income was very inadequate to the expenditure of those with whom you were in associate. That was a great fault, on my part, for it placed your, then, unformed principles in danger, and they followed a wrong direction. We have both suffered, and I trust, shall prove ourselves the wiser for the experience. As a fundamental principal my son, I beg you to consider that every one must be answerable before two tribunals; the world and his own conscience – and that some contrive to escape the first, but that no one can escape the latter. Some people consider the profession of the law as a real mystery of iniquity; remember such complaints arise from the abuse of it – the profession, in itself, being both honourable and useful. I recommend to you to bear in mind the following rules observed by Bishop Burnett's father, during a long term of practice at the Bar:

First, Never to undertake a cause that he knew to be bad.

Secondly, Never to deny to plead for those unable to pay, And,

Thirdly, Never to ask for any fee from a clergyman when he sued in the right of his benefice.

In addition to these, mind the advice received by Lord Clarendon, when Solicitor-General to Charles I. From his father: "Son," said the old gentleman, "I have been often told, that gentlemen of your profession are as ready to engage in a bad as in a good cause; but be assured, that if ever, in order to aggrandize yourself you should become as advocate for despotism, at the expense of the liberty of your country, you may, like Sampson of old, lay hold of the pillars and demolish the fabric, but you will perish under the ruins,"

Write to me as often as your avocations will allow, and may God prosper your undertaking.

H.H.

There then followed : *"I subjoin a list of law terms to help your memory at the beginning."* Which I have not included

The following is a working man writing about his son to the Trustees of a Charity School. Obviously of a totally different social class:

To The Trustees of-----

The Humble Petition of ---

Showeth That your petitioner was brought up in the trade of a shoe-maker: that he has followed that employment in your parish these ten years, and behaved himself soberly and honestly; that your petitioner has a large family of children, and his principal desire is to see them brought up as useful members of society; that the small sum he received as wages for his work, is not sufficient for so beneficial a purpose: and knowing that your school is established for instructing

the children of the industrious poor, he humbly prays that his son, a boy of six years of age, may be admitted, in order to qualify him for some useful employment. And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

A further letter example, as sent from a Miss Lawson to her Guardian:

Dear Sir

I beg you not to think me extravagant: when I promised not to trouble you again this quarter, I had not a suspicion that my cousin was so near being married. The ceremony is fixed to take place next month; she has asked me to be Brides-maid, and it will be with difficulty that I shall get ready. My dear sir, I beg you will have the goodness to advance me one hundred pounds. I will, if you please, in order to economise go and spend the following three months in the country with you. No, I must not do that, because it will be necessary that I remain to accompany my cousin in her bridal visits; but as soon as possible after I will go to you. I shall quite enjoy the country after such racketing; and I always feel so happy when with you and your good lady. I beg my respects to her, and, and remain sir, wishing for the pleasure of hearing from you, your obliged and obedient
C. Lawson

The Guardians answer:

My Dear Ward

*It grieves me to refuse you any thing; but it is my duty to remind you, that your respected father thought proper to limit your expenses until the period of your marriage; and that I have already disobeyed his injunction in indulging you with different sums, so that you are now £500 in advance. Let me tell you, young lady, this is a serious sum, and that I can not think of adding another hundred to it. I here enclose £20, for which I wish to have your acknowledgement by return of post. My wife says that will buy some handsome ornaments; and we both think it is impossible you should be in want of gowns, having settled your dressmaker's bill so lately. We send our united remembrance,
Yours, &c. Thomas Oldfield*

But the following example letter show how to write again and not give up:

Dear Sir

I beg your pardon for saying, that the world is greatly altered since you and Mrs. Oldfield visited in it. Why, sir, if I were to appear at a wedding in an old fashioned gown, made three months ago, my cousin would be ashamed of me. If I cannot appear like other people, I must send my cousin a refusal to her request, which I fear she would take very unkind: but I am resolved to do as you please. Though I should be dreadfully disappointed. I shall not be disobedient to your wishes; only I beg, if you do not think proper to send me the money, that I could bear to remain here. Waiting your command, I am sir your obedient.
C. Lawson

How could anyone resist such appeals and Mr Oldfield replied:

My Dear Ward

Your ready compliance makes it impossible for me to refuse your request; so that I send you an order on Messrs Fry & Co for £80, which with the £20 I sent in my last letter makes the sum you desired. I agree with you, my dear young lady, that the world is altered, and not for the better, in my opinion; the rage for doing like other people induces the greater number to ruin each other; but I hope you will not follow their example. Mrs. Oldfield hopes with me that you will come to us in the summer, it will be the only way to repair your finances. Expecting your acknowledgement of the money, I am &c.

A suggested letter from a lady to her lover on a pretended suspicion of jealousy.

Sir

Believing you to be a man of honour, my credulity yielded to your professions, or I should never have admitted your addresses, had I not considered your proposals as the result of truth and probity. The supposed rectitude of your principles created an esteem; and the seeming accomplishments of your mind, not those of your person, were strong advocates in your favour; but I am sorry I have reason to recede from the good opinion I entertained of you; but I see your infidelity, and all your vows towards me are forgotten and broken, by the apparent attention

which you have lately paid to Miss---, I therefore insist, if yet a spark of honour remains, that you will either release me from an unfortunate contract, or remove my suspicions by the best authority; till then expect to hear no further from me etc

The Lovers Answer:

Madam

Nothing in this world could have surprised me more than your letter; but I too can see and hear, and your letter has restored to me the use of all my senses. You are sensible that no action of my life deserved this treatment; but I see that your treacherous heart has fond a new object of its affection in Mr. H---; and you wish to persuade the world that I gave cause for the change, or you would not surely have fixed upon a young ady whom I have never met but at your house, and to whom I am not sensible of having paid more than the usual attention. However, madam, if it be your wish that our acquaintance should terminate, I must submit; but not without knowing the ground of Mr. H---'s more fortunate pretensions. You have nearly driven me to madness

Your unhappy Edward H-----

The young ladies reply:

Your letter has greatly relieved my mind, for I did really think that this ----had given some encouragement, and so thought of my cousin; so, as affection will sometimes be doubtful, I thought there was no harm in expressing my thoughts rather strongly. With regard to myself, I can most seriously assure you, I have never entertained the slightest preference towards Mr. H--- or indeed for any one since I had the pleasure of knowing you, I shall expect you at the usual hour, when we shall laugh at each other – at least, I am inclined to do so by you, and I dare say you will do the same by your affectionate, etc.

I must admit to enjoying the style of writing.

The book has been well looked after but never-the-less shows marked signs of deterioration. Kept in a drawer severely limits its accessibility by interested people, it has therefore been passed to me and I will present it to the Dorset Records Office where it will be subject to highly skilled conservation and professional storage, and made available to everybody. As all historical documents should be.

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 8 Nov EDAS lecture: “**Hands-on Osteo-archaeology**” with Mark Maltby of Bournemouth University.

Wed 13 Dec EDAS lecture: “**Exploring the seabed of the Solent and Wight: Marine archaeology and aggregate**” with Rebecca Causer of Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology.

2007

Wed 10 Jan EDAS lecture: “**Industrial Archaeology of Wessex**” with Dr Peter Stanier of the Industrial Archaeology Society.

Wed 14 Feb EDAS lecture: “**A Mill on the Stour**”, with Colin Cope, custodian of the White Mill at Sturminster Marshall.

Wed 14 Mar EDAS lecture: “**Treasure and the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Hampshire**“ with Robert Webley, Portable antiquities officer for Hampshire.