



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2006



We wish all our members and their families a VERY Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



PERSONALIA

Best Wishes to Emma Ayling, Curator of Priest House Museum, who has obtained entry to a three year part time course at Bournemouth University. She is studying for her Masters Degree in Museum and Galleries Studies, specialising in Collections Management. We look forward to her passing with flying colours.

RECENT EVENTS

Last EDAS Lecture

At our last evening lecture Mark Maltby, of Bournemouth University, gave us a talk entitled "Hands-on Osteo-archaeology". Mark is a lecturer with a special interest in the archaeological remains of animals. The talk started with Mark with giving us a (much summarised) presentation of how evidence on animal bones could provide many clues about why they might have been killed. We learned that the patterns of butchery marks tends to be quite consistent across different farmed animal species (e.g horse, cow), different prevailing technologies (e.g. flint, bronze, iron) and also different ages (prehistoric to present day). Careful examination and an understanding of the evidence can often help to distinguish between a ritual or a culinary purpose for the animals death. (This might, however, prevent many interesting and hitherto unresolvable discussions about animals thrown into Iron Age ditches!) In the second half Mark set out a number of tables covered with prehistoric animal bones, and asked us to discover these by ourselves, and recognise them in future digs. We will certainly be more aware of them in the future!

Many thanks to Mark for a very interesting, informative, and enjoyable talk.

Dorset Churches

How many Church of England churches and former churches do you think there are in Dorset? 100? 200? 300? Well our Treasurer, Peter Walker, has so far photographed 385, plus 249 interiors. So, if you are interested in churches, have a look at Peter's web site at www.peterwalker.info Peter will be gradually adding further information for each church to the web site including map and grid references and bibliography. Peter can be contacted at peter@peterwalker.info

Forthcoming Events

New Study Days

CBA Wessex is launching a new series of study days run in partnership with Wessex Archaeology. These events provide a rare opportunity to spend a day with experts in their chosen field and will involve the practical application of new skills learned. The cost of these events is modest, to prevent exclusion on financial grounds, though for practical reasons the number of places may have to be limited.

As a consequence, prompt booking is likely to be essential. ***There are a limited number of places so it is on a first come first served basis.***

- **Historic Standing Buildings**

The day will start with an illustrated morning lecture on the common and not so common types of Historic buildings, how to recognise them and their architectural features.

After lunch, there will be a guided walking tour of the Medieval Chequers quarter of Salisbury, which will explore the early origins of Salisbury and how the town has developed. Salisbury will never seem the same again.

Tutor: Bob Hill MRICS, MIFA (Wessex Archaeology)

Date: Sat 13th January 2007, 10am to 4.30pm

Venue: AM-Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salis. SP4 6EB
PM- Salisbury town centre

Cost: £15 (includes tea and coffee, but not lunch)

ALSO AVAILABLE

- **Understanding the evidence of environmental archaeology**

How can archaeologists contemplate understanding prehistoric farming communities without knowing the nature of the landscape in which they were set, or the areas that were tilled? It is largely environmental archaeology that 'paints the landscape picture' into which archaeologists place specific activities and events. This day will introduce you to the microscopic data that environmental archaeologists deal with and demonstrates its archaeological value and uses. We will show that prehistoric communities unwittingly irreversibly altered the countryside they inhabited and what we see today is an entirely man-made environment. The day will include illustrated lectures, a visit to Wessex Archaeology's Archaeo-environmental laboratories and processing areas, an opportunity to view some of the microscopic remains (snails, charred seeds) and soils, and will also involve a trip into the countryside to do some limited geoarchaeology (weather permitting).

Tutor: Dr Mike Allen MIFA FSA

Date: Sat 17th February 2007, 10am-4pm

Venue: Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury SP4 6EB

Cost: £15 (includes tea and coffee, but not lunch)

DORSET COUNTY BOUNDARY SURVEY

A major educational and research project has begun to research the history, archaeological interest and natural history of the County's boundaries. The project will include a considerable amount of research, looking at old maps and documents as well as field work. In 2006 the group conducted a number of field surveys based on Sixpenny Handley Parish and its border, and Wiltshire members of the group have also searched many historical documents relating to the Rushmore Estate. These give a valuable historic interpretation of the modern landscape. Initial results were presented as posters at The Cranborne Chase AONB conference The Chase, the Hart and the Park on November 4th. organised by D. K. Barker.

2007 Programme:

Thursday May 24 2007 10.00a.m. – 4.00p.m. Bockerly Dyke, Meet at the Martin Down NNR car park signed off the A354 Blandford-Salisbury Road one mile beyond Woodyates at GR SU037202. Peter Hatherly, our leader, warns to take extreme care when making the turn. We will be working south-east looking at the Hampshire Border, bring lunch.

Wednesday June 6 2007 Bockerly Dyke: Meet at the Martin Down NNR car park as above at 10am. This time we will explore the boundary to the north-west, to see the Wiltshire Boundary at Vernditch. Local leader Peter Hatherly.

Additional meetings will be notified through our e mail group.

New members are welcome to join the project. Full training will be given at both the History Centre and in the field. Full details from Dr. Katherine Barker 01935 816714 or e-mail Katherinebarker@lanprobi.freeserve.co.uk or John Newbold 01305 837384 or Peter Hatherly 01202 882861 before travelling, especially in adverse weather conditions. Due to the high price of petrol, leaders will not attend in adverse weather conditions.

To join the project, please book via the Museum Secretary, Dorset County Museum, enclosing a cheque for £20 (payable to Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society) to cover material and room hire.

GREETINGS

Christmas is the time of exchange of greetings; surprisingly perhaps the exchange of Christmas cards is a relatively common practice.

Exchange of seasonal greetings can be traced back to pagan times, especially at the New Year. The Christmas card was preceded by the Valentine card and many publishers of the Valentine card later turned to printing Christmas cards using the same basic designs. The British Christmas card had its origins in several different customs. In the 18thC. children at school worked their 'Christmas Pieces' for their parents which showed examples of their handwriting on paper with engraved borders. This continued well into the 19thC and about 1820 the pieces became more decorative. By the 1830s pictorial headed notepaper was for sale in all major cities and seaside resorts, used especially at Christmas to send to friends and relatives. People dressed up their visiting cards at the festive season. Another form of card that was adapted at Christmas was the Reward Card. These were printed with religious quotations and given to children who attended Sunday School regularly.

There is dispute as to the first Christmas card but it seems likely that it was produced in 1843 shortly after Dickens '*Christmas Carol*' was written. It was commissioned by Sir Henry Cole for his friends, and designed by John Calcot a member of the Royal Academy. The card was lithographically printed and each card hand painted by a professional colourer named William Mason. They cost one shilling each, which was a lot of money those days. This Christmas Card was an attempt to produce a form of good-quality, mass produced art that would appeal to the general public. The design showed revellers raising their glasses in a toast and eating plum pudding but was criticised for encouraging drunkenness and some years passed before Christmas Cards were widely adopted. They were too expensive for general use until the licensing of improved colour printing in the 1870s, and delivery more regular by Post Office reorganisation.

An important event in the use of Christmas Cards was the invention of the envelope in 1820, designs by a Mr. Brewer who owned a shop in Brighton. They had general use after the Great Exhibition of 1851; a machine in the exhibition folded and gummed 2700 in an hour. Many of these early envelopes were highly colourfully decorated..

Up to the 1860s sending cards by post was a rare practice; but with the use of envelopes, creation of the Penny Post ($\frac{1}{2}$ d for cards) and delivery for the first time being paid for by the sender and not the recipient, in the 80s postal delivery became popular.

These early cards were usually cards with a moral meaning, often with religious designs or pictures of groups of poor families and children. Some were highly decorative with floral designs but as the Victorian era progressed so more comic cards became

available. Between the two world wars there was a significant change in the style of Christmas Cards and coloured geometric patterns became the vogue. There was a growing tendency to supplement cards with artistic calendars.

Throughout the hundred years since the first Christmas Card, designs reflected the changes in the taste of the public and artistic movements of the day. Despite the challenges of mass production it is still possible to buy high quality cards. The tradition of sending Christmas Cards is now well established and, except during the two world wars, has not wanted in popularity.

John W. Day

EDAS Member Geoffrey Brown tells us more about his recent book

Having spent about three years researching for my book "To Partake of Tea" (also known by it's initial letters TPoT) I felt it was about time I should hit the Lecture circuit to promote the forthcoming publication, become very famous and, in doing so, make a fortune.

The "World Premier" was held in the Pamphill Village Hall in aid of St. Stephen's Church one hundred years and one week after the death of Walter Bankes. The Hall had already been booked for another event on the actual Centenary. The evening was a complete sellout and a very smooth running success with many words of appreciation and thanks. I left the Hall with a warm inner glow and a somewhat self righteous spring in my step.

Having donated the proceeds of the evening to St. Stephen's I felt that the least I could do was to make a similar offer to St. Bartholomew's Church in Shapwick, both Churches being on the Bankes' Estate. Sadly the good folk of Shapwick do not have access to a hall so any social functions such as talks etc are held in the Church which meant delivering the talk from the pulpit.

Unfortunately a few days before the occasion, a small bird had managed to get into the Church and no one had been able to coax it out again. Within five minutes of the start of the talk it, the little bird, decided that the event needed livening up and so started to "buzz" me from the back of the Church (fortunately not "dive bombing" me). After about three runs it considered that perhaps it should settle down and listen to the rest of the talk. The presentation continued uninterrupted, again ending with more words of appreciation from the audience and the organizers.

However, the "buzzing" incident made me realize that the whole business of this sort of public speaking was not the lucrative push-over that I had, rather foolishly, considered it to be. I then started to worry about all the other things that could go wrong.

The next couple of talks were uneventful so it was with renewed confidence that I set off to deliver the talk to a local Learned Society. I received a warm welcome from a number of the members who helped me set up the projector, each one of them most anxious that I should be happy with the arrangements. On this occasion there was to be an interval for tea so I spoke to the ladies organizing the refreshments to ask of them what time I should break for tea. "Whenever is convenient for you" came the cheery reply. The talk got underway promptly and was going well. One or two of the slides for some reason do require me to adjust the focus and it was just as I had my thumb poised above the appropriate button that a piercing voice from the front row demanded that I should "*sharpen up the image*". This rather took me aback but probably prepared me for what was to come later.

I was within about two or three sentences of announcing that it was an appropriate time to break and "partake of tea" when "piercing voice" stood up and announced that "*we will break for tea now*" To my amazement I quickly responded very positively by stating that "*we will, in just a minute*". No more was heard of "piercing voice".

Being a member of a number of National Trust Associations I was, on one occasion visiting the Golden Cap Association to hear Helen Mann, Property Manager, West Dorset, give an update on events etc. The meetings are held in a very large Church hall in Bridport with anything up to about one hundred members attending. With just a few minutes before the start of the talk, Helen Mann, all “miked up” was quietly talking to the Chairman as the last few members took their place. Suddenly the whole of the vast hall was filled with a lady’s voice loudly telling us to put our “*hands together above your head, step to the left and step to the right, hands together above your head, step....*” etc, etc.

Helen Mann looked aghast, and the Chairman turned a strange colour. The sound engineer moved with the speed of summer lightening, and, flicking a few switches peace was restored. But it took some time for many of us to recover from the thought that the whole startling episode might be a ploy by The National Trust, to promote a more *active* membership.

So it was with some concern that I found myself, a few weeks later being “miked up” to give my talk to the same Association in the same hall and I reminded the sound engineer of the incident, who assured me that they had still not worked out where the voice came from as there were no other rooms connected with the Church. By now he had clipped the microphone on my shirt and hooked the “transmitter” onto my belt explaining how I should switch it on and off. He then suggested that I should remember to switch the mic. off during the tea interval particularly if I needed to go to the toilet. Apparently on one occasion a visiting speaker did have a need and did forget to switch the microphone off with the result that the hall was filled with the sounds of running water which in turn had a disturbing effect on a number of elderly gentlemen!

I waited until the end of my talk before going to the “Gents”.

One may get the impression from the foregoing that all my talks teeter on the chaotic but in reality most of them are uneventful to the point that on some occasions one gets the feeling that you are only there to provide a short entertainment, with the time spent setting up and dismantling the equipment being longer than is allowed for the talk!

This brings me to the serious point I wish to make.

There is no doubt in my mind that the welcome, support and appreciation offered to speakers by EDAS is second to none with everyone going out of their way to ensure that the speaker feels at home and is happy with the arrangements.

Finally, one must not forget the very important “vote of thanks” always very sincerely proposed which is so important, as it creates a good lasting impression of EDAS in the mind of the visitor.

Thank you to the entire team who provides us with such a varied and interesting series of Lectures smoothly run which in turn can only enhance the reputation of EDAS.

CHRISTMAS READING – Review by Martin Green

“INSCRIBED ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE - THE CURSUS ENIGMA”

by Roy Loveday Tempus Publishing £19:19.

For those of us with a more than a passing interest in the extraordinary achievements of our Neolithic forbears the arrival of Roy Loveday’s book on the Cursus enigma is like Christmas coming early. His long research on the subject is well known and his PhD thesis must be one of the most widely quoted unpublished sources of information on any aspect of British Prehistory.

After a short introduction and historical background the early chapters deal with definition and classification which are as the author states ‘simply tools to be used in the

search for commonality as an initial, secure step towards explanation'. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the sites is impressive and provides a sound base to the subsequent lucid discussions on origins, layout, alignments and allied monuments. Perhaps at last the term 'long mortuary enclosure' may be dropped from the literature following the author's eloquent re-appraisal of the evidence?

Constructed in the Middle Neolithic at 'a crucial point in the development of society in prehistoric Britain' his latest discussions place cursuses as theatres of power within increasing complex sacred landscapes which became major centres of pilgrimage. The expansive use of comparison with world wide cult-centres is particularly rewarding.

Finally in 'Cursus Afterglow' the gradual demise of these monuments is chronicled but not all forgotten. A number of cursus locations are cited where much later ceremonial centres also developed. It would seem a sacred aura may have long persisted in many of those areas first transformed by these striking earthworks.

In short, Roy Loveday's book represents a triumph of scholarly dissection and compilation of the scattered evidence, combined with a masterly wide ranging interpretive discussion. Get it for your Christmas stocking.

Martin Green

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 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.

Sat 13 Jan CBA Study Day: **Historic Standing Buildings**. See earlier for details.

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

Sat 17 Feb CBA Study Day on **Environmental Archaeology**. See earlier for details.

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

Wed 28 Mar **EDAS AGM** followed by a talk by an EDAS member. More details to follow.

Wed 12 Apr EDAS lecture: "**The Culver Well Mesolithic site, Portland**" with Susanne Palmer of The Association For Portland Archaeology.

Wed 9 May EDAS lecture: "**The Villages of East Dorset**" with Emma Ayling, curator of the Priests' House Museum, Wimborne.