



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2007

*** Changes to the published Programme ***

- Dr Jenny Chambers of the National Ice Age Network will speak on the 14th March 2007 on "*Big Chill? Environments and Inhabitants of England during the Ice Age.*"
- Susanne Palmer who was to speak in April has cancelled. The March lecture with Robert Webley has been changed to the 11th April 2007.

RECENT EVENTS

Last EDAS Lecture

At our last evening lecture Dr Peter Stanier of the Industrial Archaeology Society talked to us about "The Industrial Archaeology of Wessex". This part of the world does not immediately conjure up images of widespread industry, but Peter was able to demonstrate otherwise. He gave numerous recent examples, including glove and lace making, brewing, brickmaking, and stone quarrying. There were also, until quite recently, examples of industries that had been active over a few millennia, such as lead, clay and coal mining. Now isolated rows of industrial cottages were often evidence of nearby heavy industry, such as large blast furnaces and glassworks. Other common traces are bridge piers for transport routes, artificial water courses, and the humps and bumps of mining spoil and puddling pools. Although today Wessex looks like a bit of a rural backwater, Peter opened our eyes to the heavy industries that have been here, and some of the ways of recognising them.

Peter is an expert in this area who has written three books on the subject. We thank him for giving us a very knowledgeable and interesting lecture.

Book Review - A NEW HISTORY OF BROADSTONE

Margaret Roebuck and Julia Wenham. Minster Press. Wimborne 2006. £10

Margaret is a member of EDAS, has chaired a group of us in researching the early history of villages of the Allan Valley and has written a monograph on Dr. Augustus Place of Wimborne. She has now co-authored a history of Broadstone. This is 155 pages of worthwhile text and a collection of interesting maps and photographs.

I warmed to it immediately because there was no pretence of things not proven, particularly the origin of the village. I have always suspected the large stone outside the Stepping Stone Pub as being from where the name originated, and the authors have demonstrated the name was in existence at a much earlier date than the use of the alleged stepping stone. Nevertheless, the first use of the name remains a mystery. It is a name that has come and gone over the years, not even the Ordnance Survey maps always recording it.

Because there is no really early history of Broadstone, the Roman Road used in AD43 being the most definite, the history does not really start until the early 19th. century. Since then it has changed from a small rural community, with farm owners living away from the area, to a modern busy suburb of Poole. The authors have marked every inch of the way. Turf cutting, extraction of sand, gravel and clay from the heathland, to brick kilns, the building of the railway and in the late 19th. century the growth of shops and houses, culminating in the early 20th.

century in a surge of building. It all started as part of Canford Heath and finished up as part of Poole.

The various elements of the growth are treated by their own chapters, such as Business and Commerce, Services, Local Government, Medical Services, Churches, Sport, to name but a few. In the journey we are treated to the various changes that have taken place right up to the present time. This will be of particular interest to those living in the village and who have seen some of these changes and will be invaluable to future historians, amateur or professional.

The appendices include lists of roads with their inhabitants and dates of houses. There is a short glossary of some of the more unusual words, such as a col porteur – one who sells religious tracts and books.

My only disappointment was the cursory attention given to Alfred Wallace. He is mentioned, as “with Charles Darwin expounded the theory of evolution”. This slightly underrates him as he expounded it independently; unusually for this sort of situation the two great men were on good terms. He formed part of a spiritualist group in Dunyeats Road. The difficulty in writing a book is of course having to leave things out, a biography of Wallace is referred to, but why not mention the remarkable monument to him in Broadstone Cemetery?

I enjoyed reading this book and learnt a lot about Broadstone, which as with many others I had seen just as a good shopping centre and where I go to the dentist.

Margaret has given a copy of this book to the EDAS library, for which we thank her warmly.

John Day

County Boundary Research

Katherine Barker of the Dorset County Museum is researching the Dorset County Boundary and we are in discussion with her as to the possibility of EDAS participation. In May 2007 she will be organising a trip to Bokerly Dyke, the Hampshire border, and in June to Vernditch, the Wiltshire border. Those of us who attended the Day Conference at Sixpenny Handley will know something of this interesting project. As soon as we have more details we will inform members.

John

A Bestwall Mystery

2002 was an extremely exciting year at Bestwall Quarry and the emphasis was definitely on Roman archaeology. Late summer saw the excavation of many Black Burnished Ware pottery kilns and associated features with an almost unimaginably huge assemblage of pottery. However, earlier in the season, about 100 metres north of the kiln site, the diggers had recorded a couple of cremations and in the near vicinity two Late Roman graves. In true archaeological tradition, these latter features were not initially identified as such.

A black ‘splodge,’ about three metres in diameter, hinted at a rather large feature. It was definitely a job for two people so John Bithell and Corinne Bungay tackled this by setting an east-west section line across the middle of the dark area and then proceeding to cautiously excavate from each end. As the soil was removed it became apparent that complicated archaeology lay beneath. Corinne excavated a circular pit consisting of several layers all of which contained horrible ‘corky’ pottery. Definitely not Roman! It was later identified by our medieval specialist, Duncan Brown as mid-Saxon with a date in the 800s AD. The pit overlay John’s feature which was obviously earlier and caused much head (and beard) scratching as it proved rather difficult to excavate. It was about half-a-metre wide on the section line, the sides were (unusually) vertical and the base was suspiciously flat. I’m ashamed to say that I suspected that John (an ex-naval man with a liking for straight lines) had overcut the sides and manufactured the un-naturally flat base. Not only that, but the southern extent of the feature had almost square corners.

The finds started appearing as soon as the trowel hit the soil. There was an occasional piece of Roman pottery but the finds tray soon filled up with corroded nails. At first we thought that a gate had rotted *in-situ* leaving behind the ironwork which had held it together. Then, a cluster of what seemed to be little tacks was uncovered, perhaps the remains of a box? The feature needed more hands and Sue Churchill offered to help out. She had not been working long when she gave out a little squeal – she had uncovered a tiny ceramic doll's head, with inscrutable features neatly painted on its face - it had china blue eyes and a Mona Lisa smile. Eventually, the feature was completely excavated; all in all it was two metres long and the surviving depth was about 25 centimetres. However, I still wasn't too happy about the straight sides and flat base! How wrong I was!



1. Ceramic doll's head, about 2cm long

Peter Cox paid us one of his regular site visits as John was tidying the feature before it was photographed. We all gave him our opinions about what we thought it was, Peter looked at the rectangular hole in the ground and said to Sue and John 'Can you give the base a hard clean?'. This they did, and we stood back in amazement when a dark shape materialised in the pale brown sand. First two legs, then a torso but despite incredibly careful cleaning, no head! What we had of course was a grave and the stain in the sand was the result of the body rotting. No bones survived - the acidic soils at Bestwall Quarry would have eaten them away.



2. John Bithell and Sue Churchill looking for 'the head'



Further excavation confirmed that the grave was surrounded by a narrow gully. A second grave also with an enclosing gully lay at right angles to the first and was excavated by Sue and David Parry. A complete 'sandman' lay in this grave. The nails of course were coffin nails and the 'tacks' were hobnails from boots which had been placed at the feet ends of the graves. Footwear was needed for the journey to the underworld. The coins for the ferryman however, were conspicuous by their absence! The graves were Late Roman and can be compared to similar ones from Poundbury (Dorchester).

3. Sue Churchill and David Parry metal detecting for ironwork on the second grave

And the doll's head? Well, it was found at the head end of the first grave, where there should have been a head but there wasn't. It is Victorian in date and must have been a stray loss, but the chances of it ending up in a Roman grave were about as good as mine of winning the lottery – and I never buy a ticket!

Lilian Ladle
Bestwall Quarry Archaeology Project
Dec 13th 2006

Help Required with Steam Engines !

We have received the following letter. If any member is able to answer the query please contact Robert Cox direct - Della

Robert Cox
30 Alexandra Court
Alexandra Road,
Bridport.
DT6 5QP
01308-456680

Dear Mrs Day,

Confirming our telephone conversation last Friday, 22nd. December, I should appreciate it if you could put me in touch with any members of the East Dorset Antiquarian Society who may know something of the whereabouts of the two steam engines which used to work in the Poole area.

Both of these were horizontal compound engines, one used to drive part of J.T. Sydenham & Company's saw mills; it was made by Wren & Hopkinson, an engineering firm whose production of engines was very limited, of Manchester. The other was used to drive Charles Mitchell & Sons brickworks in Alder Road and was made by Fawcet Preston of Liverpool.

A part of one of these was exhibited for some time in what was referred to as Steam Engine Square in the shopping centre of Poole, then known as the Arndale Centre. When it was reformed to become known as the Dolphin Shopping Centre in about 1988/89 the engine had been removed.

I am a member of the Dorset Industrial Archaeological Society, the Somerset similar society and various other societies whose interests are mainly to do with engineering history.

Robert Cox.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CLAY TOBACCO PIPES

I first became interested in clay pipes many years ago during an excavation with an archaeology group in the Huntingdon area. We were not having much luck with finds but unearthed some pipe bowls which, because they were rather attractive, held my interest. When I tried to find out more about them this became difficult because there was a noticeable lack of information. What literature there was available seemed rather parochial, but pointed out that pipes could be accurately dated so I determined to find out more. Finding a society that researched clay pipes, I joined; this broadened my horizons considerably and more importantly put more literature my way. With the increased knowledge, I began to try to amass a collection for my own interest and to use as a data bank for dating purposes.

Pipes and smoking are obviously linked together so a history of one must include the other. Europeans first encountered tobacco when colonising the Americas, which leads us on to Sir Walter Raleigh who gets the blame for introducing it to this country. To the best of my knowledge he did not personally bring tobacco back to England, but it was as a result of his colonising activities in Virginia. When the first colony of 1584 failed, the returning colonists brought tobacco back with them. The habit caught on and soon every man, woman and child was puffing away contentedly. The later, more successful, colonists began to export it to England, but not everyone was in favour of this new habit and the government put a tax of 2d in the pound on tobacco, which helped to make it even more expensive. The cost led to the pipes being very small indeed with a bowl height of about ¼ inch and this caused later finders to call them 'fairy pipes', a name by which they are still known.

When James came to the throne he was an avid hater of smoking and issued his Counter Blast to Tobacco and condemned 'The Filthy Habit'. To show his disgust he increased the tax to

6s10d a pound. Other rulers also took a dislike to smoking. Some taking much more drastic steps than James, such as excommunication, pain of death, slitting of the lips and having the pipe pushed through a hole made in the smoker's nose. Now we just tax it and put a health warning on the packet - a lot less dramatic but more rewarding for the government.

In the manufacture of clay pipes the basic form has remained the same but with many changes of style and size. The first pipes were like a small ladle with a straight handle, but by the end of the 15th century the bowl had altered to a barrel shape with a forward incline. The stem was still straight and about 4 to 6 inches in length and the inside diameter was about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, therefore a tamper was needed to compress the tobacco as it was too narrow to use a finger. These tampers are an area of collection on their own. By 1640 the diameter had increased slightly to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch but the stem had remained the same. After this date both the width of the bowls and the length of the stems had increased, the stems reaching 10 to 14 inches. The earlier pipes had a flattened area at the base of the bowl, which was called a heel. This allowed the shorter pipes to sit upright on the table, provided the table was not highly polished of course. When the stems increased in length, the heel was replaced by a short spur, which allowed the smoker to rest the pipe on the table while he smoked without burning the table. The pipe bowls at this time were quite plain apart from a milled ring at the top, which was caused during manufacture. After 1700 many improvements in the craft became noticeable: a smoother finish, more regular measurements, thinner bowls and stems. Around 1850 the longer stems appeared, but found interest only with the gentry who had the time and space to smoke them. The working-man preferred his shorter stubby model called a cutty. The very long pipes known as Churchwardens, which was a name coined by Charles Dickens by the way, reached a stem length of 36 inches but these were even more fragile. To help smokers a knurled grip at the point of balance was put in at manufacture, which made smoking much more comfortable, also a carrying case was available to transport the pipe.

Moving on to the 19th century, makers were starting to decorate the bowls, using in London for example the coat of arms of the city. This meant that the moulds, which were made of metal, had to be cut to a very high standard by someone like a silversmith. Soon the trade of mould maker became recognised and they used to travel from manufacturer to manufacturer therefore pipes of similar pattern occurred over widely differing areas. The heyday of the patterned pipes, known as 'fancies', was in the latter half of the 19th century and had mostly petered out by 1914. I blame the French for this as they invented the briar, which began life about the same time as the fancy clays. These managed to hold their own in the market place because of their cheapness, but the durability of the briar eventually won the day.

Manufacture was carried out in relatively small concerns, many in back street locations as all that was needed was a furnace and a yard. The close proximity to other dwellings meant that these furnaces caused their share of town fires and subsequent loss of business, but despite these cramped conditions they managed to turn out an amazing number of pipes. One Bristol family that I have figures for produced pipes mainly for export to America and, during the months of June and August 1851, they shipped to New York 6000 gross and 7400 gross respectively. The pipe makers gross was 16 dozen not 12 dozen so that gives you an idea of the amount of pipes in circulation. The profit margin was very small as the industry was very labour intensive employing men, women and children and the clay could only be of a certain kind not always available locally.

When the clay arrived it had to be washed then kneaded to remove the air. The rough shape of the pipe was then rolled out by hand, usually by women and girls. These rolls, or carrots as they were known, were passed on to the pipe maker and placed on dozing boards to dry a little before being put into the mould. The mould was in two halves and before going into the mould the stem was pierced by a greased wire, which was left in place while in the mould. Once in the mould the whole was placed in a gin press and a lever pulled to force a conical projection down into the clay to form the bowl. The wire was moved back and forward to ensure that it pierced the bowl otherwise the smoker may burst a blood vessel trying to draw

smoke through the stem. Rough edges would now be removed using a trimming knife and the pipes left on a drying rack for the air to circulate freely around them. During this period a wire was again pushed through the pipe to ensure the airway was left open, and any curved pipes were carefully bent into shape and also left to dry. When fully dry they were further trimmed if needed, and some were burnished with a wooden burnishing tool and all were inspected for any imperfections. Finally, all was ready for firing and the pipes were placed in holders called saggars so they could be placed in the kiln. The kilns resembled giant bottles similar to the kilns in the Potteries, which meant that they could take a great number of pipes so filling a kiln was a long job. Once filled, the kiln was sealed and the firing commenced. This was a gradual process, as it had to be brought up to temperature slowly so that any remaining moisture was able to evaporate. Too quick, and the clay might explode damaging many pipes thereby losing a lot of time, money and pipes. The whole process took three days. When the kiln had cooled sufficiently and the pipes removed, the mouthpiece was treated with a substance like wax to stop the smoker pulling off the skin of his or her lips when using the pipe. This did not come into use until the 19th century, so before that smokers used to dip the mouthpiece in beer or tea to protect themselves. Once treated the pipes were packed in sawdust filled boxes for transportation.

Derek Bunting

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.

2007

- 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 an earlier Newsletter for more details.
- Wed 14 Mar EDAS lecture: Dr Jenny Chambers of the National Ice Age Network will speak on the “*Big Chill? Environments and Inhabitants of England during the Ice Age.*” * **Change from the published Programme** *.
- Wed 28 Mar **EDAS AGM** followed by a talk by an EDAS member. More details to follow.
- Wed 11 Apr EDAS lecture: “**Treasure and the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Hampshire**“ with Robert Webley, Portable antiquities officer for Hampshire. * **Change from the published Programme** *.
- Wed 9 May EDAS lecture: “**The Villages of East Dorset**“ with Emma Ayling, curator of the Priests’ House Museum, Wimborne.