



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2010

PERSONALIA

It is with great sadness we report the death of Barry Perratt's wife, and we send our condolences to Barry and his family.

We note that Anita Hawkins has had a operation recently, and although still hobbling about she is making good recovery. As members will know, Janet Bartlett has been unwell for some time now. We are pleased to say she is in good spirits and is spending her time usefully by illustrating a vast number of artifacts recently retrieved from excavations at Worth.

We must congratulate Lilian Ladle, Gillian Broadbent, John Winterbottom and Alan Hawkins for their contributions in the current Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society.

Members who read Current Archaeology will see a letter from Clive Bowd about the pros and cons of growing Ivy. This is in response to previous letters. Clive was a member of EDAS before he moved to Scotland. He trained as an archaeologist at Bournemouth and played an important part in EDAS excavations. (Perhaps we can persuade him to do a article for our Newsletter. Watch this space!)

Recent Events

Saturday 15th May - Walk around Cerne Abbas with Rob Curtis.

In mid May a small group of EDAS members enjoyed a fascinating tour round Cerne Abbas, led by Rob Curtis who, on a previous occasion, had guided us round Sherborne. Rob explained the derivation of the name Cerne Abbas (Abbey on the Cerne River) and illustrated the ups and down of the village's development since its Benedictine origins in 987AD. He escorted us round the parish church, the remaining parts of the Abbey, including the well, the mill and other features. The ups and down of Cerne included it being the 2nd most important religious house in Dorset in the 13th century then, after the Dissolution, adopting, in turn, brewing (to support the 16 or pubs in 1640), leatherwork and smuggling (!!) as means of supporting the population. The population of 1500 or so then declined until a resurgence in the 19th century - the days of the stage coaches and the railway. A further slump followed after the First World War when the Pitt-Rivers sold their estate. Cerne's recent return to prosperity originated after the Second World War when car travel and tourism (the giant) grew.

We did of course speculate about the origins and age of the Giant but enough has been written of that elsewhere. Most of us had gathered earlier for a morning climb up above the Giant to view a putative roman signal station. It made a pleasant walk, with some marvellous views of the beautiful surrounding countryside, but we concluded that the remains were the wrong dimensions, and were more likely to be a henge.

Current Excavations at Worth Matravers



Excavations prior to building development at Compact Farm have been taking place since the beginning of May. The site is very small (15m x 7m) but not only has it produced well-stratified archaeological sequences but stunning finds as well.

The earliest levels appear to be possibly Early Bronze Age (based on the worked flint) and consist of parallel upright limestone slabs about 1m apart. Unfortunately where they were heading is outside the excavation area! Before the end of the Late Bronze Age, a floor of small limestone cobbles was laid, possibly as hard standing to protect against the underlying clay soil. Cut into this and above it

were features and finds dating to 700-600BC, including a clay hearth and several pits. A very large amount of pottery dates to this period, as does a bronze axe, bone weaving combs and needles, and ceramic and shale spindle whorls. Shale working was an important element and there is much debris as well as finished items, mainly bracelets.

Remnants of a foundation for a Late Iron Age house (which was built directly on top of the cobbles) were uncovered, and a possibly contemporary, very large storage pit was sited close by. Surviving carbonised grain in this pit will be used to secure dating for the infilling of the pit.



A rectangular building dating to the Late Roman period was probably used as a shale-working area – enormous amounts of lathe-turned shale were found here. The Late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman pottery sequence will help define the dating and use of the site. The last episode to mark the site was the burial of seven infants (one in a stone cist) in the Roman building which had no doubt gone out of use by then. Eventual analysis of the structures, features and finds will build up a picture of the site's use and function.

EDAS members (friends and family) are invited to visit the site on Tuesday 14th Sept, Thursday 16th Sept and Saturday 18th Sept between 11am and 3pm when we will be doing the final week of work. There will be a selection of finds to look at as well as the excavated features.

I am indebted to Corrine Board, Sue and Claire Cullinane, Steve and Vera McDonald, Andrew Morgan, Len and Pam Norris, Bryan Popple and Dave Stewart who have turned out on a regular basis and to Kerry Barras, John and Della Day, Maureen and Malcolm Houghton Gillian Stolworthy, Ken Wheatley, and Peter Walker who helped when they could.

Bob Kenyon the land owner has successfully bid for funds (£8000) to proceed with post-excavation work on the 2007/8 excavation finds. Various specialists have been commissioned to undertake this work which should be completed by spring next year. **Lilian**

Field Week 2010 - North Wales – 12th to 19th June

See John and Della's separate write-up included with this Newsletter

Walk around Fritham on 3rd October –PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE FROM 26th SEPTEMBER

This walk, entitled "In the Footsteps of Heywood Sumner" will be led by our member Henry Cole. It is in two parts, both of which can be done independently. Part 1 is about 4.0 miles. We will look at some of the HS sites and landscapes around Old Sloden using some of his contemporary drawings and sketches. There are quite a few earthworks and kiln sites but above all stunning scenery. Part 2 will be about 3.5 miles and will be visiting the medieval hunting lodge, Studley Castle, also surveyed by Sumner. We will also see the site of the gunpowder factory at Eyeworth.

Meet at **SU230140** at 11.00 (Fritham Car park). Bring a picnic lunch or visit the Royal Oak pub. We will be back for lunch at around 13.00 and set off on Part 2 at 14.00

For more information contact Henry Cole on 01202 470771 **Peter**

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.

2010

Wed 8 Sep

EDAS Lecture: "**The Prehistoric Temples of Malta**" with Lillian Ladle MBE.

Sun 3 Oct

Walk with Henry Cole – looking at Heywood Sumner's landscapes and archaeological sites. See earlier for details.

Wed 13 Oct

EDAS Lecture: "**The Cadbury Castle Environs Project**" with Clare Randall of Bournemouth University

Wed 10 Nov

EDAS Lecture: "**English Coins**" with Peter Preston-Morely, Secretary of the Wessex Numismatic Society.