



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2010

Recent Events

Our last EDAS Lecture was "**The Prehistoric Temples of Malta**" with Lilian Ladle. Lilian told us that it is assumed that the island was originally settled by Neolithic people from Sicily. This is a 30 mile journey across open sea, with winds, tides and navigation to contend with. They must already have had a very well advanced sea-faring culture to succeed in the successful colonisation of this remote island, with only what they could carry in open boats. The colony seemed to thrive, and people started living in small village settlements, with very sophisticated pottery being produced. Copper was then introduced to the island people, and this was used to make improved tools.

The culture developed quickly, with huge efforts being made to produce very large temples, which were either hewn directly out of the native rock, or built with walls made from very huge carved blocks of limestone (some 20 feet high), and then roofed over. The effort required to produce and move these blocks must have been easily equivalent to the efforts needed to build Stonehenge. The temples' internal construction consisted of a number of 'rooms' and 'stone cupboards' such as those found at Skara Brae, and also 'letter-box' openings that people could speak through. At one stage the bones of the deceased were put into the individual temples, where presumably there were rites and ancestor worship or communication. However, at some later date the bones from each temple were taken out of the individual tombs and placed in one huge, central temple. For those of you who missed the lecture I couldn't resist putting in an internet picture of one of the famous temple sites.



Mnajdra Neolithic Temple.

Most of the temples have not been well preserved, and only a few have been properly excavated. However, there is a lot of evidence of possibly a 'mother goddess' or fertility cult, as a large number of fertility statues like the Wildendorf Venus have been found.

These Maltese temples are as dramatic and important as sites such as Stonehenge and Avebury, but they are also as enigmatic as others like Easter Island.

We thank Lilian for introducing these sites to us in her lecture, and wonder when more tantalising evidence will be available.

Fritham Walk with Henry Cole

As advised by email, the walk on **26 September was cancelled** because of forecast bad weather. It has been decided to **reschedule the walk for the spring** so watch out for it being listed in the newsletter next year.

Peter

Maintaining our EDAS Contact Details

If you have changed your address, e-mail address, or telephone number please could you help us to keep our records up to date by sending your new details to either:

John and Della Day,
2, Wigbeth Cottage,
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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 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.

Wed 8 Dec

EDAS Lecture: "**Prehistoric Cave Art**" with Dr Andrew Lawson, former Director of the Trust for Wessex Archaeology.

2011

Wed 12 Jan

EDAS Lecture: "**Rockbourne Roman Villa: its History, Excavation and Conservation**" with David Allen, Senior Keeper of Archaeology, Hampshire County Museums & Archives Service

Wed 9 Feb

EDAS Lecture: "**Collapsing time: the strange tale of the Salisbury Hoard**" with Ben Roberts, Curator, European Bronze Age, The British Museum.