



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2010

WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES A
VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



Recent Events

Last EDAS Lecture

Our last EDAS Lecture was "**English Coins**" with Peter Preston-Morely, Secretary of the Wessex Numismatic Society. Peter started by showing us a coin of Philip of Macedon, who reigned in 300 bc. It is a testament to money that its use has been an essential way of doing business for over two thousand years since then. Early coins were crudely manufactured, and for many centuries they copied the basic principles used by Philip, such as writing around the outside of the coin, and even including a likeness of Philip's face. The value of coins was based on the actual value of the metal in the coin. Small denomination coins were often in short supply, and it was the practice to cut a higher value coin into pieces, to be able to give 'change'. A cross placed over the side of the coin was a guide to where the coin should be cut. Unscrupulous people would also trim the edge off the coin and sell this elsewhere for the value of the precious metal. Coin design then changed so that trimmed coins could be recognised easily, and coins were also weighed during transactions in markets. I did expect that fraud would take place somehow or other, but did not know that there were times of high monetary inflation. Peter told us that having a coinage system based on the actual metal value did not prevent other problems. Once, when the price of metallic copper went up significantly, the affected coinage disappeared from circulation as people melted the coins down to make some extra money from them.

Today, money in the form of coinage or notes may have a limited future. The widespread use of credit and debit cards may almost render the use of 'money' unnecessary. However, recently there is a new practice of some small towns issuing local currency such as 'Okehampton pounds' that can only be spent locally. How (effectively) this 'barter system' will work for purchased goods, and how things like VAT will be handled remains to be seen. Perhaps money has not yet finally had its day! We thank Peter for a very interesting talk.

EDAS Field Trip 2011 - Exploring Pembrokeshire

Date: 18th to 25th June 2011

Next summer, on our annual Field Trip, we will explore the fascinating area of Pembrokeshire, in South West Wales. The programme will not be finalised until **1st Quarter** 2011, but I would like to include: a good stroll over the Mynydd Preseli to find the source of the Stonehenge bluestones and better understand this stunning prehistoric landscape; we will also visit some of the many prehistoric sites near Strumble Head; visit the area around the IA hill fort of Castell Henllys, including the Cross of Nevern; and possibly go south to take in the Norman castle at Carew, the medieval town of Tenby and the holy island of Caldey. I plan to stay near St David's which offers a variety of accommodation and eating options and many places to explore. So I can

promise a trip packed with well-preserved prehistoric sites and traces of the Celtic Christian community from the Age of Saints, and reminders of the Roman and Norman invasions, all set in stunning scenery.

So that I can gauge numbers please contact me if you are thinking of going. And for those who are tempted but haven't been on one of these trips, please contact me if you require further information.

Andrew Morgan

Tel: 01202 731162 or email: andrewmorgz@aol.com

EDAS AGM 2011

The Next EDAS Committee Meeting is on 31st January, which means that Nomination Forms for the new 2011 season committee will go out with the Xmas Newsletter. This gives you plenty of time to consider your vote before posting them back to John and Della. You will find a Nomination Form at the end of this Newsletter. Please complete and return it to them by 22nd January.

The current Committee is:

Chairman:	John Day	Membership Secretary:	Della Day
Treasurer:	Peter Walker	Programme Secretary:	Steve Smith
Secretary:	Gillian Stolworthy	Special Advisor:	Martin Green

Ordinary Members: Graham Adams, Helen Brickell, Brian Maynard, Brian Popple and David Stewart. Co-opted Member: Lilian Ladle.

WELFARE – An Earlier Approach, by Alan Hawkins

The debate on the need and level of welfare for the poor and deserving is at the fore on the political agenda but helping the less fortunate or deprived is a basic human response and has a long history. A recent visit to the Dorset Record Office to check some of the papers from the Bankes Estate threw up some interesting observations in the Steward's Accounts from the 18th century.

The Steward's Accounts set out details of the tenants' holdings and rent due, or in many cases overdue. Perhaps in some way excusing his frustration and delay in collecting rent the Steward has added his observations on the circumstance and background of the family. These sometimes show a compassion for the tenants' plight

Extracts from Accounts for Christmas 1780.

“ A fat hen for the family for Christmas, cost 9^d [4p]

“paid for beer for tenants as usual5/10^d [29p]

or

Desperate – he being kept by the parish.

“Desperate” and “in poverty” are frequent entries - but as we often hear from cases today, some are less encouraging.

He has frequently promised to pay part of this but has disappointed me. He deserves to be seized on for rent as I do not see any chance of getting it else. **Tenant- William White**

The question also arises as to whether some were exaggerating their hardship but by 1840 the Tithe Apportionments show that most of the Studland holdings had been bought up by J H Calcraft, a member of the clay merchants family.

Have a Merry Xmas and enjoy your 'fat hen'.

Annual rent averages about - £2. Many in arrears by 6 months
Steward's salary £50 pa in 1780.

PAST VOICES John Day

“O weathercock on the village spire,
With your golden feathers all on fire
Tell me, what can you see from your perch
Above there over the church?”

Longfellow

Weathervanes were in use as far back as Saxon times, though with the use of the meteorological office and television they are now almost a thing of the past. They were extensively used in Elizabethan times on towers, castles and secular buildings. The usual form was that of a banner, while on churches it was generally represented by the male of the barn-door fowl, and was thus spoken of as a weathercock. In ancient times a representation of a cock was placed on the tops of sacred trees and was supposed to drive away evil spirits and may well in the first instance be placed on churches for the same reason. Taking over pagan beliefs was quite common in the Christian religion. It can be traced back to pagan times but is generally, if incorrectly, believed to be an essentially Christian symbol and associated with Peter's denial of Jesus:

“Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, though shalt deny me thrice.” (Matthew xxvi, 34) and it was chosen as a design for a weathervane as a reminder to the people not to do the same. But this idea is probably an afterthought for the cock not only had pre-christian meaning but also earlier religious associations.

The cock was sacred in the religion of Zoroaster and in one of the ancient sacred books of the Parsees, who worshipped the forbearers of our domestic fowls, the following lines appear:-

“Who is he who sets `the world in motion, a mighty speared and lordly god? It is Parodaro, the cock that lifts up its voice against the mighty dawn”.

John W. Day

NOMINATION FORM for EDAS Committee Membership – 2011/12

To: John and Della Day, 2, Wigbeth Cottages,
Horton, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7JJ .

TO ARRIVE BEFORE 22nd JANUARY

I wish to nominate for the post of

Signed: Seconded:

Signature of nominee.....

Priest House Museum

'*The Christmas Emporium*' in the museum shop at the Priest House Museum is now open during normal museum hours, 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. except for Christmas Eve when it will close at 3 p.m. This is the ideal place to buy traditional toys and Christmas novelties especially stocking fillers. Please also buy your Christmas stamps from the shop as it all helps to raise funds.

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 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.

Wed 16 Mar

EDAS AGM, followed by Lecture: "**Novgorod the Great: The spectacular archaeology of a medieval Russian city**" with Mark Brisbane of Bournemouth University.