



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2011

Recent Events

Our last EDAS Lecture was "**Prehistoric Cave Art**" with Dr Andrew Lawson, former Director of the Trust for Wessex Archaeology. Before introducing the topic itself, Andrew reminded us about the view of history prevailing in the Victorian period. By counting the generations in Genesis, Bishop Ussher had meticulously established the first day of creation as Sunday 23 October 4004 BC, and the expulsion from paradise as Monday 10 November 4004 BC. This was even incorporated into an authorised version of the Bible printed in 1701, and became effectively treated as scientific fact.

At the same time, a number of Victorians, especially some individuals based in France and Germany, were investigating caves and sites used by prehistoric man. They found that the four species which man hunted sequentially over that very long time period were in order: Mammoth, Cave Bear, Reindeer, and finally Oryx. Also, certain types of stone tools (which could only have been made by man) were found in direct association with the particular prey animals (either the bodily remains, or the associated cave paintings). In addition, as the stages progressed the stone tools and paintings themselves became more and more sophisticated. By 1860, many Victorian Anti-quarians believed that there was a very good case to show that the world, and indeed the human race itself, could be many hundreds of thousands of years old. Yet again, these worthy Antiquarians had ignored dogma and changed the direction of science.

As interest became stronger, there were many delegations and expeditions to cave art sites, but, without the availability of Radio Carbon dating, there was no independent, scientific proof of their age. The first Radio Carbon date at Lascaux was made in 1951, and its age was determined as 15,000 years Before Present. This was disputed by many archaeologists as being too late. Richard explained to us that it was very important to produce a date from the right piece of evidence, for example, carefully using the carbon which was used to make the original paint pigments.

Nearly all caves have suffered from 'date pollution', and there are still arguments about their ages. Also, allowing visitors in has created very bad archaeological problems: site disturbance, moisture and mould. However we saw some wonderful cave art pictures, taken by Andrew, which showed how capable and sophisticated early man really was. We thank Richard for a very interesting and knowledgeable lecture.

EDAS AGM 2011 – Wednesday 16th March.

In the last Newsletter we included the details of the current EDAS Committee, and also a nomination form if you want to nominate a new candidates. These must be returned to John and Della by 22nd January. Every year all Officers must step down for re-election, and also two of the Ordinary members. This year they are Graham Adams and Brian Maynard, and both are willing to stand for re-election. As usual. John will speed through the AGM Business, and we will have to wait long for the lecture!

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 1Q2011, 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 email: andrewmorgz@aol.com

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.

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| <u>Wed 12 Jan</u> | EDAS Lecture: " <u>Rockbourne Roman Villa: its History, Excavation and Conservation</u> " with David Allen, Senior Keeper of Archaeology, Hampshire County Museums & Archives Service |
| Fri 4 Feb | <u>Martin Green: "Cursus Country"</u> . Dorset County Museum at 7:30pm. |
| <u>Wed 9 Feb</u> | EDAS Lecture: " <u>Collapsing time: the strange tale of the Salisbury Hoard</u> " with Ben Roberts, Curator, European Bronze Age, The British Museum. |
| <u>Wed 16 Mar</u> | <u>EDAS AGM</u> , followed by Lecture: " <u>Novgorod the Great: The spectacular archaeology of a medieval Russian city</u> " with Mark Brisbane of Bournemouth University. |
| Fri 1 Apr | <u>Lilian Ladle: "Worth Matravers: Buildings and Burials, Rituals and Rubbish"</u> . Dorset County Museum at 7:30pm. |