



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk

mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2011

PERSONALIA

Members will be sorry to hear of the death of John Boyden of Chebbards Farm. John was famous for his aerial photographs of Dorset archaeology, and took several of EDAS excavations. Our member Sandra Game has spent some years in cataloging many of his photographs. John also stored many of our artefacts and allowed us to work on them in his barns. John Boyden was well known, and respected person. We offer our condolences to his family.

Recent Events

Our last lecture was "**Collapsing time: the strange tale of the Salisbury Hoard**" with Ben Roberts, Curator, European Bronze Age, The British Museum. The Salisbury Hoard was a cause célèbre when, some time after its discovery, the story was revealed. It was found in the 1980s in a pit near Netherhampton by two Metal Detectorists, and the hoard contained a great number of forged and worked objects in both iron and bronze – more than 500. This is the largest hoard of such objects ever found in Britain. Despite the treasure trove rules in force at the time, most of the hoard was spirited away and sold illegally to independent collectors here and abroad. Some of it was even exported by being hidden in the carcasses of animals.

However, over time many pieces of the hoard came into circulation, and eventually the majority of the hoard objects were surrendered to the British Museum. Ben told us that recently when he was 'on duty' at the Museum, an old gentleman came into the British museum with a folded-up cloth. When he opened it, Ben saw that it contained 18 pieces which were obviously from the original hoard. This old gentleman had been the survivor of a Concentration Camp, and was in poor health, but obviously thought that it was very important that the hoard was brought together again. Fortunately, the hoard is now thought to be reasonably complete.

(Perhaps the returning of objects shows the guilty consciences of the "collectors" involved. The two detectorists were eventually charged with the crime, but only prosecuted with a small offence, as this was most likely to be successful.)

Now the archaeology itself begins to get very difficult. Bronze and iron objects had all been thrown in the pit together, and the hoard covers the period 2000 – 1600 years before present. However, there were no discrete layers between the objects, and therefore no archaeological context was available. It was also obvious that object types which were known to have been manufactured at different archaeological periods, were not lying in the right (or even any!) order.

The hoard contains a number of unusual objects in Bronze and/or Iron, including socketted axes, small rapiers, miniature iron 'moustaches', miniature cauldrons, and others that look very similar to 'plug-hole outlets'. Some of these possibly could have been made as 'apprentice pieces', but very similar (and equally confusing) hoards have also been found in France. The best interpretation at the moment is that these were votive offerings

As similar hoards are discovered, their similarities and differences may lead to some better clues about how and why prehistoric man was performing these practices. We also know that if anybody can eventually get to the bottom of these mysteries, then the British Museum can.

We thank Ben for introducing us to this perplexing problem, and for giving us a very interesting and informative talk about it.

By the way, many of the British Museum collections are visible on-line. Look at http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe/t/the_salisbury_hoard.aspx

You can also browse other sections at the museum.

Sun 17th April Walk with Henry Cole

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 10.30 (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

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.

2011

Wed 16 Mar Note that this is the 3rd Wed of the month

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

Wed 17 Apr

Walk with Henry Cole: "In the Footsteps of Heywood Sumner" See above for more details.

Fri 1 Apr

Lilian Ladle: "Worth Matravers: Buildings and Burials, Rituals and Rubbish". Dorset County Museum at 7:30pm.

Wed 13 Apr

EDAS Lecture: "**Deconstructing the Durotriges**" with Dr Martin Papworth of The National Trust.

Wed 11 May

EDAS Lecture: "**Discovering Dorset (part 1)**" with Rev. Stewert Timbrell.