



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2011

Recent Events

At our last meeting the AGM took place – and it was very swift indeed! The AGM was followed by our Lecture: "**Novgorod the Great: The spectacular archaeology of a medieval Russian city**" with Mark Brisbane of Bournemouth University.

Mark has had a long association with the archaeology in Novgorod, and he first introduced us to it in an EDAS lecture he gave in January 1997. Since then, he has carried on visiting the site regularly as part of a multi-national team, and he has now even become reasonably fluent in Russian.

Some years ago, the site was made a UNESCO world heritage site because of the importance of the archaeology. Novgorod was founded in in the 9th century (it is said), and its wealth came from its position on the trade route between the Danish/Viking States to the North-West, and the Baltic to the South-East. Before very long the trade route was very busy transporting furs, sable and ermine, one way, which were exchanged for silver. As a result, Novgorod became very prosperous, such that even in the 12th C Moscow was not as important a place as Novgorod.

The archaeology is so special because the ground is saturated with water, and very delicate objects in wood, and even paper, metal and fabrics are almost perfectly preserved. We saw many examples of this preservation in Mark's slides. However, as soon as the artifacts are exposed to the air they have to be treated immediately, as they degrade very quickly indeed.

We thank Mark for a very interesting talk about such an unusual site, and will always remain slightly jealous about the preservation

"Studland Circles" Conference

EDAS was well represented both in the audience and the speakers at the conference "Studland Circles - An Archaeological Conundrum". Held in the North Passenger Terminal of Poole Harbour we were given an interesting summary by the Chairman, Professor Darvill on what is known about these enigmatic circles on Studland and similar features elsewhere. It was pointed out that it is not known when they were made or for what reason. The only thing certain was that the area was covered with wind blown sand in the mid 18th C. This immediately knocked on the head the theory of those of us who felt that they must be prehistoric. Professor Darvill said that the reason for the conference was that after the speakers had each given a resume of about the four possible usages there would be a vote on what attendees thought most likely.

Peter Burt, of the Poole Harbour Heritage Project argued his case of them being seasonal huts for fishermen, something to do with military training in the Napoleonic war, duck decoys, watering holes, or a meteorite shower. Lilian Ladle reviewed the possibility of gravel pits, sheep dips, animal pens, herb gardens, bee gardens, drying racks, retting pits or salt pans. Alan Hawkins argued in favour of industrial sites, copperas, peat/turf cutting, brick clamp kilns of clay pits used as weathering platforms. The following discussion brought forth a lively response from the audience, and the vote made one of Lilian's choices the favourite.

What then did she bring to our attention? She vividly described them as areas where seaweed was dried and the piles of wet slimy seaweed used to hide contraband spirits,

thus dissuading the Preventive men being from clambering into a soggy mess! (Though perhaps the thought of smugglers getting one over officials was an encouraging feature in this choice, and gives a hint of humour to the proceedings). It was a serious and informative day, though finishing as it started, in that no-one knew who, when or why they were made.

John

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

Sunday 22 May Guided Tour of Rockbourne Villa

David Allen who spoke to us in January will provide us with a guided tour of Rockbourne Villa on Sunday 22 May starting at 11.00. You will also be able to visit the museum which is reputed to be very good. Please be at the Villa by 10.45 so that we can make a prompt start at 11.00. The Villa is open to the public from Tuesday to Thursday and Sundays from 11.00 to 4.00 2 April to 29 September. Admission prices are adults £3, concessions £2 and free to members of the Association for Roman Archaeology.

Any queries please contact Peter Walker on 01425 471326 or email him at peter@peterwalker.info

Charge to guests and visitors to EDAS meetings

It has been decided to increase the charge to guests/visitors from £1 to £2 per meeting; this the first change since the society was formed. The payment should be made to Helen Brickell the Membership Secretary, who sits at the rear of the hall.

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 13 Apr

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

Sun 17 Apr

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

Wed 11 May

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

PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM EXCAVATION UPDATE

Firstly I would like to thank all the EDAS members who have offered to help with the excavations. Arrangements are well in hand and a small ceremony took place in the gardens of the Priest's House Museum on the 7th April to mark the beginning of the project. However, due to circumstances beyond the control of the Museum, the demolition of the old buildings will not now be completed until the end of April which will delay the start of the actual excavation by two weeks. The official start date for the volunteers is now the 9th May. There will be a small group of supervisors and experienced excavators on site during the week of the 2nd May to prepare everything in readiness for the official start on the 9th May.

At present it is hoped that we will still be able to finish all the work by the end of June as initially planned but we will not be in a position to know if this is the case until the work is underway. I will, however, keep all members advised of the progress via the EDAS newsletter

There has been a great amount of interest shown in the excavations with over 80 volunteers wishing to take part. It has also proved to be a hit with the local schools. Originally a week had been allocated for school parties to take part but the popularity of the excavation has meant extra days have had to be set aside to cater for the increased demand. This, together with the delay in the start date means that the allocation of days for volunteers, in certain cases, has had to be revised. As you can imagine there is considerable work involved dealing with so many applications but we expect to be in a position to write to each volunteer with full information and details of their allocation of days during the week commencing the 11th April. In the meantime please feel free to contact me if you have any queries or would like any further information.

Gill Broadbent 01202 841547 agbroadbent@btinternet.com.

Membership Renewal 2011

Would any members who have not renewed yet this year please send Helen Brickell a renewal slip (below), or preferably request that a standing order to be set up.

EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM FOR MARCH 2011/12

Please highlight any change of details

Surname/Forenames

Address and Postcode

.....

Telephone No. E-Mail.....

Individual £8.50, Family £12, Student £5

Method of Payment: 1. Standing Order _____ 2. Cheque. _____ **(Please Tick)**

Please return to:

Helen Brickell, Membership Secretary, 48, Lytchett Drive, Poole, Dorset, BH18 9LB
or **E-mail** hmbbrickell@googlemail.com or **Tel** 01202 602753

Name in block letters.....

Signed