



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER– September 2011

PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM EXCAVATION - UPDATE

Firstly, many thanks to all the EDAS members who took part in the recent excavations and helped make them so successful. From July's newsletter you will be aware that the excavation received the Dorset Archaeology Award for its outstanding contribution to Dorset archaeology in 2011. We were delighted to have been nominated but to win against such strong professional competition was more than we could have hoped for. Again many thanks for the contribution made by so many EDAS members in achieving the Award.



Emma - Museum Curator, Dave - Site Director, and Gill with the Award

The excavations finished on the 13th July with a very enjoyable BBQ and work is now underway analysing the results and processing the many thousands of finds that were recovered. Until this work has been completed it is too early to reach any concrete conclusions about the use of the site overtime. However, initial assessment suggests the area was mainly used for industrial purposes and not surprisingly, in connection with the various construction stages of the Priest's House Museum. Unusually for a site that is not Roman, large amounts of oyster shells were found which, it has been suggested, may have an ecclesiastical connection. Also, exceptionally large amounts of animal bone from the usual domestic species were recovered. It is possible the animals had been butchered on site, maybe in connection with a tannery known to have existed in the vicinity. At one time it looked as though we may have found a ditch dating to Early Medieval times but further excavation suggests this is not now the case. However, assessment of pottery found within the ditch should help to throw more light on its date of construction. We also have recovered many thousands of sherds of pottery dating from modern times back to the early medieval period and possibly even some from the Romano-British era.

Dr Dave Collinge, the site director, has now moved to North Wales and is currently working on the collection of animal bone prior to the writing of the final report. I am heading a team of volunteers to undertake the recording of the remaining finds all of which, I am pleased to say, have now been washed. As we recovered such a large number of finds it is expected this work will continue for the next few months. If anyone would like to help, please contact me on 01202 841547 e-mail - agbroadbent@btinternet.com.

Gill Broadbent

14.08.11

EDAS EXCAVATIONS – opportunities for volunteers

1. WORTH MATRAVERS – Update – New Cemetery Site

Work associated with the digging of the footings for the five houses at Worth Matravers started on July 15th and should have been an easy five day 'watching brief'. This turned into five weeks of intensive excavation when a skull was discovered in the building plot of one of the houses.



When Janet's excavating she won't be stopped, even by Lee's digger!

Three adult males, possibly a father and two sons?

Dave and Bryan carefully remove a fragile skull

A total of 25 burials were uncovered, all placed in east-west aligned graves. Most were single inhumations but there were three graves with double burials (probably a male with a female) and one with three adults (probably all males), placed together. One skeleton had a small copper alloy buckle placed in the pelvic area. This has been dated to the mid-6th century, placing the cemetery in the post Roman period.

A huge amount of post-excavation work remains to be done. All the skeletal material; has to be washed and hundreds of soil samples need to be processed.

Can you give us one day a week? Wednesdays at Norden Barn, Corfe Castle (courtesy of Nancy Grace) 10am -3pm.

2. WESTPORT, WAREHAM – Excavation of 19th century clay tobacco pipe kiln

Date: Monday 26th September – Saturday 8th October

Excavation of a rare survivor – the kiln of Augustus Moore who was transported to Australia for theft in 1834. Volunteers needed, those already on the list will be sent details of the excavation in the next few weeks.

3. SANDFORD – Excavation through a potential Roman road

Date: Monday 10th October – Saturday 22nd October

This excavation is for the Sandford Heritage: Cordite Clay and Calluna Project. We are seeking volunteers for this short excavation which will be insured through Dorset County Council.

Please contact Lilian Ladle: 01929 553144 or at bestwall@tiscali.co.uk , if you want to help on any of these projects

***Lilian Ladle,
29.08.2011***

DAMERSHAM PROJECT EXCAVATION

We had intended to visit the Damersham Excavations but we have not been able to finalise arrangements with the excavation team. However we look forward to a lecture about the site next year.

Steve Smith

PARISH RECORDS

A small group of us have been researching the Baptismal records from the 16th century to 1837 - the period of Parish Records - to assess the comparative ratios of illegitimate births. We have been basing this project on some aspects of the Cambridge Universities Population Studies Group book by Peter Laslett, *The Comparative History of Bastardy*.

While most of this activity is tedious it is almost always interesting. Transcribing the baptisms of Whitechurch Canicorum for instance brings up some intriguing questions.

Between 1558 and 1729 there were 2697 baptism in the parish. The majority were registered as one would expect, the parents' names (often only the fathers), name of child and date of event. Bastardy was identified in different ways, sometimes just having the mother's name, though the putative father is on a very few occasions included. The most frequent identification in Dorset was putting BB (base born). Among other methods were spinster and natural child.

In Whitechurch Canicorum we have some fifteen recordings that the child's parentage and name was unknown. Examples of this are: 1643, unknown child of Thomas & Elizabeth Mortemo; 1633, unknown daughter of John Langley; 1649 unknown child of Thomas Ipsley, gent.

It seemed to me strange a child be taken to church and baptised with the name not known, and the fact this identification had not been seen in the several thousand baptismal records of Dorset Parishes researched, that it was a peculiarity of this parish, and one I could not understand. That it seems not to have occurred elsewhere in Dorset would imply a tradition in this parish for whatever reason. But searching further there seemed possible understanding.

JUDITH HABGOOD-EVERETT wrote in the *FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE* in October 1998 that from 1837 the Civil Registers have a section for baptisms of babies noted as unknown by the person registering them. These babies would usually have been foundlings – illegitimate babies left in the porch of an orphanage, at the crossroads or in a church. In the early years following the start of registration most of these foundling babies are simply listed as male or female with no indication of a name. Later the babies were given names often relating to the place they were found, the person who found him, the season of the year. or what was happening in the news at the time. Whitechurch Canonorum is a small parish, 932 people in 1801, and in the 19th. century in the absence of orphanages if such foundlings occurred they may have been left at the doors of domestic buildings. The parish records do not give names to any of these baptised babies so there is no hint of what the occurrences of finding them may have been.

Among questions to be asked is Whitechurch Canicorum the only parish in Dorset that had foundling children? Was there a "cover up" of bastard births? Is the percentage in the parish of bastard births any hint of views and attitudes to extramarital sex? What was the knowledge and views of the curate who baptised them? Surely the curate of a small village would be well aware of village activities? If so what motivated him to perform the baptisms.

Further research into the Church Wardens and Overseers accounts may give some indication of why this parish experienced this practice, but in the meanwhile if any EDAS member can extend on the question this asks or give any probable explanation we would be grateful.

John Day

ERRATUM NOTICE

DORSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARDS 2011

In the summer newsletter I made an error regarding the surname of the recipient of the Ian Horsey Award which was awarded to Susann Palmer not Parker. I thank Len Norris and Martin Blundell, Secretary of the Association for Portland Archaeology, for bringing this to my attention.

Andrew Morgan

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we report that our member **DAVID JOHNSTON** passed away after a lengthy illness with prostatic carcinoma on July 3rd, at the age of 77 years.

Before retirement he had been an external lecturer of Southampton University and it was in this role that EDAS became acquainted with him. He gave a series of lectures for Wimborne Workers Educational Association on archaeology which were enjoyable and detailed. He was not satisfied with just giving a talk but involved his audience in doing some research and reporting back. This practical application led to an excavation at Batts Bed, a field next to Badbury Rings. Here he directed a dig on the cross roads of the two great Roman roads, Ackling Dyke and the Bath to Hamworthy route. This was the first time a rural Roman Cross Roads had been excavated. It was this project that caused six of us to meet later that year, on December 22nd 1982, to discuss the viability of forming an archaeological society. And so, in 1983 EDAS was inaugurated and David was made an honorary member. He later directed us on another excavation, a Roman Road at Stoney Cross, in the New Forest.

There was no doubting his interest and expertise lay in his knowledge of Roman archaeology and history. This was clearly revealed in his book on Roman Roads. He once said to me that going to Egypt, excavating Roman remains and getting paid for it was a remarkable all pleasing employment.

A few years ago he had a stroke, but made a good recovery and lectured us on chalk hill figures. Regrettably this was his last visit to us, but he did supply an article on some research he undertook with his wife Pamela, on Wareham.

The world of Roman archaeology has lost a valuable representative.

We note this very unhappy period for David's wife and family, offer our condolences and assure them our thoughts are with them.

John Day

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2011
Wed 14th Sept	EDAS Lecture: "Buildings and Burials, Ritual and Rubbish - recent excavations at Worth Matravers" with Lillian Ladle MBE.
<i>Sat 24th September (cancelled)</i>	<i>Guided Tour of Salisbury Cathedral and a Blue Badge guided tour round the town. Please be advised that this trip has been cancelled, but may be re-arranged for a future date.</i>
Wed 26th Sep to 8th Oct	EDAS Excavation: of C19th Pipe Kiln at Westport Wareham, contact Lilian Ladle on tel: 1929 553144 or email bestwall@tiscali.co.uk
Wed 10th Oct to 22 nd Oct	Excavation: through a potential Roman road, for the Sandford Heritage: Cordite Clay and Calluna Project, contact Lilian Ladle on tel: 1929 553144 or email bestwall@tiscali.co.uk
Wed 12th Oct	EDAS Lecture: "A Celtic feast: the tale of the Chiseldon cauldrons" with Dr Andrew Fitzpatrick of Wessex Archaeology
Wed 9th Nov	EDAS Lecture: "The Roman Invasion of Dorset and the Road System" with Peter Laurie of the Dorset Roman Conquest Group.
Wed 14th Dec	EDAS Lecture: "Early Mechanical Music" with Gordon Bartlett

The monthly lectures start at 7.30pm. Walks and field visits usually meet at 10.00am for 10.30am start, at the published OS Grid Reference. Ring the leader if the weather is doubtful or if more details are required.