



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – April 2012

Electronic Newsletter

Many thanks to all those who responded to either the plea in the newsletter or to Peter Walker's telephone calls to them. We now have nearly 93% of members who will receive their newsletter by email which will cut down on costs. Apart from 7 members without a computer, we only wait to hear from 5 members as to whether they agree to switch to the email version.

Peter Walker

EDAS LECTURE: Adventures in Pembrokeshire – the 2012 EDAS Field Trip, with Andrew Morgan

The annual EDAS field trip is one of the cornerstones of the society: the first was run in 1989, when John and Della led a group to explore Hadrian's Wall. Since then, every year bar one, the society has investigated areas across the length and breadth of England and Wales. Andrew explained he had been inspired by the trips to Dartmoor and North Wales organised by Brian Maynard and Mal & Mo Houghton respectively. This was the 22nd trip and he wanted to explore Pembrokeshire and better understand how people and ideas moved along the Atlantic seaboard between Wales, Ireland, SW England, NW France and beyond.



Clawdd y Milwyr: IA Promontory Fort

Over six days the group explored a wealth of great archaeology and enjoyed fabulous scenery. Several walks were quite demanding but nevertheless were completed, and the exhausted walkers seemed to smile most of the time. They visited numerous Neolithic burial tombs, a rare Neolithic settlement site and stone quarries which produced many of the Bluestones used at Stonehenge. They followed a prehistoric path across the Preseli Hills called the Golden Trail, and clambered heights to visit imposing Iron Age promontory forts jutting into the sea - over 90 have been identified in Pembrokeshire. The group visited the Roman port at the mouth of the river Alun which flows through St David's. They visited ancient churches and saw numerous inscribed stones with messages carved by the early Celtic Christians, which add to this land of myths and legends.

One great advantage of a society trip is that local experts are often keen to provide support and advice. On this occasion Andrew had enlisted the help of Pete Crane, an archaeologist with the Pembrokeshire National Park, and recently seen on TimeTeam. On one evening, in his own time, he led them to promontory forts at The Gribben and Porth y Rhaw, the latter was visited by a depleted group, in the wind and rain. The following day he took them round a splendid Motte and Bailey Castle that had been fought over by Welsh princes and Norman barons, now being excavated by CADW. On the final day they marched across the Preseli Hills accompanied by Polly Groom and Ffion Reynolds, archaeologists working with CADW; which was absolutely brilliant. At the end of the trail Andrew had arranged a surprise visit on Tim Darvill and Geoff Wainwright working on an excavation site: part of their long established SPACES project. They were very enthusiastic and laid down their mattocks as the group approached.

The EDAS Field Trip offers an opportunity for members to fully explore interesting areas, along with enthusiastic like-minded people. The programme will be well researched and local experts will be asked for support. And of course the weather is guaranteed to be perfect. Do try it.

Andrew Morgan

EDAS ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT

Clay Tobacco Pipe Kiln, at Westport, Wareham

Start date: 14th May - Volunteers are needed, all welcome – lots of tasks!

Following on from last year's excavation, we intend to extend the trenches in the hope of locating any remnants of the kiln as well as other archaeological features which pre- or post-dated the site.

Email Lilian for up to date information at bestwall@tiscali.co.uk

Robert Lancaster and Lilian Ladle

Druce Farm Roman Villa

Start Date: August (TBC) - Volunteers will be needed.

An evaluation of this newly discovered Roman Villa will take place in August/September. Planning is in the early stages. Experienced volunteers will be welcome to participate on the excavation work, but there will be an opportunity for others to help with finds processing. Further information about this project will follow in due course.

Lilian Ladle

Worth Matravers Excavation – Post-Roman Anchor

During the 2011 excavations at Worth Matravers, conducted prior to building work, part of a well-laid out cemetery was discovered. There were 26 inhumations, including one triple burial and three double burials. Many of the graves utilised Purbeck limestone as lining or as grave covers, some of these stone were identified as Roman roof tiles which no doubt had come from nearby demolished buildings. In one of the double burials, the head of one of the skeletons was resting on a shaped stone.



The Anchor



The Double Burial Grave

This 'waisted' and perforated object has been identified as an anchor and is the first of its type to be found in a secure archaeological context. The cemetery has been dated to the Post-Roman period which spans the dates 410AD up to about 700AD. We are told that the anchor is of '**national importance**'! A note is being prepared for the Journal of Nautical Archaeology.

Lilian Ladle

Return of the Hound of Worth Matravers

You may remember that last October we reported that one of the prized finds, from our 2007 excavation at Worth Matravers, had been misplaced. I am delighted to report that the dog skull has been found and is now being analysed by Dr. Clare Randall. Holmes offers thanks to the retriever.

Andrew Morgan

PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM - UPDATE

Wimborne Square Excavation

Firstly thanks to all those EDAS members who volunteered to help with the excavation. I am sorry we could not accommodate everyone but even with only four in the trench at one time, space was rather limited, especially with the number of burials we found. We were lucky with the weather and pleased when it did rain as this softened the compacted ground. The trench excavated measured approximately 5m x 3m and it was taken down to a depth of just over 1m.

The tarmac and hardcore underneath were removed by machine and almost immediately we started coming upon fragments of bone, some human and some animal. The layer under the hardcore was very disturbed with areas of burning and also demolition rubble as well as lots of disarticulated bones. From this layer we recovered one coin which is possibly a Nuremburg Jetton dating to the mid-16th century, but this has to be confirmed. Other than this there were few finds, some pottery including fragments of Verwood and a bone handle with a pattern carved on it together with the expected masonry, brick, roof tile and flint cobbles.

Under this disturbed layer we found intact burials, 12 in all, both adult and infants, some of which were very close together and interlinked. Other than the burials, there was only one find from this layer, a polished stone or shale pendant closely associated with one of the burials.

It was quite difficult work because of the compacted layers and the fact that the skeletons were placed so close together. We were allocated two weeks for the excavation, which we initially thought would be sufficient but in the end it was touch and go as to whether we would finish within the time allotted. We certainly would not have done except for the efforts of Keith, Dave and Chris who went in on the Sunday, working seven days in a row, to lift the remaining burials.

It is hoped that the post excavation work will start in the next few weeks. If anyone would like to help with this please let me know. A full report will be prepared following analysis of the data obtained.

Priest's House Museum Excavation 2011

The processing of the very large number of finds from the excavation is progressing well. All the pottery, glass and clay pipes have been recorded and marked and some are in the hands of specialists. The animal bone report is also proceeding well. We are now starting to record the remainder of finds which until now we have not been able to access because of the building work. There is already an enthusiastic team working on the finds but there is always room for more, so if any EDAS member would like to become involved in this easy but interesting work please let me know.

Othe News from the Priest's House Museum

Members of EDAS have been working hard at the Museum and have put together two new displays in time for its re-opening at the beginning of April. The first is a charming and colourful display of some of the important collection of Verwood Pottery held at the Museum. The second is an interesting and informative display of some of the finds recovered from the garden area during last year's excavation. Both are well worth viewing.

The new building is now finished and hand over is on the 4th April. I have had a preview of the storage space for the archaeological collections and I have to say it is great. However, there is now much work to do as all

the collection has to be brought out of storage, checked and placed in the new facility. Again, if anyone would like to join the current team to help with this, either one or two days a week please let me know. Currently we tend to work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The Museum can always accommodate more volunteers to help with the “front of house”, working in the shop and collecting admission fees. If anyone can spare even half a day a week on a reasonably regular basis and would like to help with this please contact: **Wendy Read at the Museum. Tel: 01202 882533.**

Gill Broadbent

Tel: 01202 841547

agbroadbent@btinternet.com

THE PLAGUE – “Lies, *damned* lies and *statistics*”

Statistics are a valuable tool for the understanding of sociological factors, but they can be very difficult to understand, particularly when one is faced with such things as ‘weighting’ and ‘back projection’. However in Cranborne we are left simply wondering if we can believe them.

In 1604 the burial register records 104 burials: of these 90 were diagnosed either as ‘plague’ or just ‘infected’. Outbreaks of plague in Dorset are well attested and there is nothing peculiar in these figures. That is until one looks closer. The first plague victim is John Mellor in June, the last for that year are Charles Studley, Margery Ginkin and Agnes Arnold, the only burials in December. From January to June, there are 15 burials, but only John Mellor is a victim of plague. There were no infected people recorded in the two years before or two years after 1604.

Plague is highly contagious and it is no surprise that many taken with this disease were from the same families. It cannot be easily believed that the disease killed off parishioners between June and December without appearing in the preceding or subsequent years.

A quick cursory glance – other research was given higher priority – showed no infections in other nearby parishes.

If any members would like to actively participate in further research they can do so by checking out the baptismal records, where they exist, between the years 1600 and 1610. There are about 50 parishes with adequate records. It is made easier that they are all transcribed and easily available at the History Centre, Dorchester. The staff are exceptionally helpful. They are open Saturdays. Further information is available, please e mail: john.della@btinternet.com, or write 2 Wigbeth Cottage, Horton, BH21 7JJ. For more information. Even if you can only do one visit this would be helpful.

As part of the celebrations for the 30th Anniversary of EDAS, there will be a compendium of Dorset History comprising at least 10 essays, one of which will, hopefully, be an extension of this short note. It would be interesting if there were any members who would send me any information on this subject that could be acknowledged and included in a later essay.

I plan to have the essays completed for the 2012 September meeting, but it will take about three weeks to collate them in presentable form so time is precious.

John Day

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2012
Wed 18th Apr <i>(Note: this is the 3rd Wednesday)</i>	EDAS Lecture: “The Damerham Project” with Dr Helen Wickstead MIFA of Kingston University and Martyn Barber, English Heritage
Wed 9th May	EDAS Lecture: “The Big Dig and Banjo's at Winterborne Kingston. Investigating the daily lives of the Durotriges” with Dr Miles Russell of Bournemouth University.
Sat 9th June to Sat 16 th June	EDAS Field Trip: to Exmoor. For more information contact Alan and Anita Hawkins: email - alhawk@ntlworld.com , Tel: 01202 668178 or Mob: 07985 957235.

Workshop with Nick Griffiths

We are hoping to use the new facility at the Priest House Museum for a workshop with Nick. Arrangements are progressing and hopefully we can agree a date (we will try for a Saturday) for late April/early May. We will advise you of the arrangements as soon as possible. I am sure this will be a very popular activity.

Steve Smith

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Your membership fee is due on 1 April no matter what time of the year you joined EDAS.

Thank you to those members who pay by Standing Order who can ignore the remainder of this article.

If you are paying by cheque please send or give your cheque and the attached renewal form to our Membership Secretary Helen Brickell. It would be helpful if you pay not later than 30 April so as to avoid extra work for Helen and our Treasurer Peter Walker in having to chase you for payment. If you want to pay by standing order please let us know and Helen will send a form to you.

Peter Walker

EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM 2012

Please highlight any change of details otherwise leave blank

Surname/Forenames

Address and Postcode

.....

Telephone No. E-Mail.....

Individual £8.50, Family £12, Student £5

Cheques payable to: **EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY**

Please return form with cheque to:

Helen Brickell, Membership Secretary, 48, Lytchett Drive, Poole, Dorset, BH18 9LB

or email: hmbbrickell@googlemail.com or Tel: 01202 602753 for a standing order form

Name\ s in block letters.....

Signed