



## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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### NEWSLETTER – November 2012

#### **EDAS LECTURE: Richard III, the reluctant King? Plus revelations from Bosworth 1485, by Dr Charles Rees**

For our October lecture we thanked Charles for stepping in at the last moment for reasons explained in our previous newsletter. Charles is rather passionate about this blighted monarch and is a member of the Richard III Society ( <http://www.richardiii.net/> ). The talk was in two parts: first he explored Richard the monarch; and then site of the Battle of Bosworth.

Charles explained that Richard was well respected before, during and immediately after his short reign: he was a courageous, honourable and pious lord. He had been a loyal brother to Edward IV and on his behalf had dealt effectively with the Scottish threat. His coronation on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1483 was described as magnificent and attended by all the nobility, and his Parliament of 1484 was remarkable in the degree of social justice contained in its legislation and the fact that they were the first to be written in English. Such was their loyalty, the whole of his government rode with him to meet the Tudor threat and so shared his defeat at Bosworth. This all changed with the posthumous character assassination ruthlessly undertaken by Henry Tudor's supporters, such as Archbishop Storton and Sir Thomas Moore, and later set in stone by Shakespeare's devastating portrayal. One key accusation was his involvement in the murder of his nephews, the heirs to the throne; the Princes in the Tower. Charles tore into the evidence, claiming it was circumstantial and not realistic. A major flaw being the absence of corpses: a critical problem because mere disappearance leaves opportunities for pretenders at a later date. Charles felt that Richard had clearly dealt with his nephews by proclaiming they were illegitimate, the product of a wastrel father and so had nothing to gain by their deaths. Richard's physical stature was also denounced, but evidence of a disability only started to appear some years after his death. There are 21 surviving portraits, 20 of which were painted 20-30 years after his demise but the earliest shows no sign of a deformity. Niclas von Popplau from the court of King Frederick visited Richard; they conversed in Latin, he praised Richard for his knowledge and judgement, and described him as being three fingers taller than himself, slender and of great heart.



*The earliest surviving portrait of Richard (c. 1520, after a lost original), formerly belonging to the Paston family (Society of Antiquaries, London).*

On the death of Edward IV on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1483 his older son Edward V was prepared for the coronation scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> June, later it was rescheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> June. However, a great council of 500 lords was called and on 9<sup>th</sup> June they found that the marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, a commoner, was

invalid, making the princes illegitimate and thus Edward V could not inherit the crown. They also passed the act Titulus Regilius which gave the throne to Richard III and on this basis he was crowned on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1483. There were two major rebellions against Richard. The first, in October 1483, was led by staunch allies of Edward IV and most notably by Richard's former ally, Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham. The revolt collapsed and Buckingham was executed at Salisbury near the Bull's Head Inn. In August 1485 there was another rebellion against Richard, headed by Henry Tudor, 2nd Earl of Richmond (later King Henry VII) and his uncle Jasper. Henry Tudor landed in Pembrokeshire, with a small contingent of professional French troops, and marched through Wales recruiting troops. They met at Bosworth where Richard was killed, the last English king to die in battle (and the only English king to do so on English soil since Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066).

The second part of the lecture was about the Battle of Bosworth on August 22nd 1485. Charles explained that some English battles have been well documented but not this one, even though it marked the end of the Plantagenet dynasty, which had ruled England since the succession of Henry II in 1154. Medieval battles traditionally took place on plains and at a pre-arranged site. In the study of the battle of Bosworth, Charles proclaimed that the work of the enthusiastic amateur has outwitted the professionals in finding the real site of the battle. For many years it was believed to have taken place on Ambion Hill, near Sutton Cheney in Leicestershire but a study of original documents and archaeological survey of the area has now pinpointed a site in fields more than a mile to the south west. The survey utilised recent developments in battlefield archaeology, pioneered by Doug Scott at Little Big Horn, which looked at the distribution of shot. This evidence including cannon balls - now the largest collection of that date in Europe - and pieces of armour have been used to confirm the site. An important find is a gilded silver badge in the shape of a boar - Richard's personal emblem. Experts believe this would have been given to one of the king's closest companions and lost in the final stages of the battle. A new trail will lead from the current visitor centre to the new location.

There were several factors that determined the outcome, possibly the most decisive factor was Stanley did not commit to either side until the result was clear. Also Henry had the battle's most effective leader in John de Vere, Earl of Oxford and the contingent of professional French soldiers.

We thank Charles for his interesting talk, which may have changed our opinion of the last Plantagenet King.

**Andrew Morgan**

## **EDAS ARCHAEOLOGY- Druce Farm Roman Villa Excavation**

Work has just finished at Druce Farm. For six weeks, 22 EDAS members together with several 'dedicated Romanists', investigated the potential courtyard villa which had shown up on the 2010 geophysics survey.

Three 1.5m wide trenches were put in to evaluate the underlying preservation, the hard topsoil and remains of the wheat crop were removed by Bernard Cox the tenant Farmer. Trench 1 in the centre of the site confirmed that there were no buildings in that area. Ten metres away, the 60m long Trench 2 was very exciting. It just clipped a northern building range and surviving wall bases indicate at least three phases of construction. The amount of building debris *in situ* was enormous. It would appear that part of a roof had slipped off. Limestone tiles, some with nails intact, lay one above the other and on top of these was a jumble of flint building nodules and fragments of stone and ceramic tiles.

One area bounded by two walls, produced a large amount of painted wall plaster. The colours were superb - shades of cream, red, green and blue, that latter two apparently very expensive colours. Although no floors were intact (at least in the area we looked at), there were huge numbers of loose tesserae. Some were red, probably chopped up ceramic roof tiles, some were cubes of white and grey limestone and a few were of brown Kimmeridge shale. They varied in size suggesting not only red and white borders but intricate patterns as well. Lumps of 'opus signinum' point to other well-appointed room flooring



*Black burnished Ware 'dog dish' with unusual lead' pot mend*



*Limestone tiles lying where they had slid off a roof*



*High class painted plaster decorated some of the villa's rooms*

The geophysics survey had indicated ditches enclosing the villa on at least three sides and excavation of three sections proved that they were all about 2.5m wide and just over 1m deep. Part of the northern ditch was excavated in Trench 3 and the western and eastern ditches were excavated in Trench 2. The ditch sections were full of finds. The uppermost fill contained much building debris; flint walling, roof tiles, occasional tesserae, mortar and odd bits of wall plaster as well as domestic rubbish and could have been associated with a re-building phase. Large amounts of animal bone had been dumped in all three sections; this included the substantial remains of a cow – the inhabitants obviously fed well! The pottery was mostly Dorset Black Burnished Ware (cooking pots, flanged dishes, bowls and flagons). One large dog-dish sherd had a very unusual piece of lead pot-men attached. 'Posh' pottery from the New Forest and Oxfordshire and Samian from Gaul was also present. Significantly, several sherds of 'Dorset Orange Wiped Ware' were identified; this coarse pink, pie-crust pottery is an indicator of activity into the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Five fragments of vessel glass all came from the ditch fills. Two finds were of note – a complete bronze hair pin and a perforated bone counter.



*A round-headed copper alloy hair pin dates from AD 200-400*



*The silver denarius of Vespasian*

The Stour Valley Metal Detectorists were instrumental in locating the site in the early 2000s and several of their members came over to detect in and around the excavation. They found the earliest coin – a spectacular silver denarius of Vespasian dating to around AD 80 as well as bronze issues of the 200s and 300s AD.

All the finds will be assessed this winter, a report prepared for the Dorset Proceedings and we hope to return to the site next spring. Thanks are extended to Ann Ridout, the landowner for access to the field and for the loan of a vintage land rover, and to Bernard Cox for allowing us to 'mash up' his arable fields.

**Lilian Ladle**

**October 2012**

## EDAS FIELD TRIP 2013 to PENWITH

The 2013 EDAS Field Trip will be to Penwith, which is the very small 'toe' of land right at the end of Cornwall. Although the area covered by Penwith is only about 13 by 16 kilometres, the density of spectacular ancient monuments is quite remarkable.

We last had an EDAS Field trip to Penwith all the way back way in 1992, so even many of the longer term members of EDAS will not have seen this unique landscape. In the years we expect that more information will have been revealed, and that the facilities and information at those sites will have improved.

On the down side, the time elapsed since the last Penwith trip means that we are all a bit longer in the tooth. Susan and I will try to plan a field trip that allows some of us to walk around and between the monuments, and only make reasonably limited use of cars, but at the same time allow others to use cars.

We have looked at the general position of Hotels and B&Bs for those who are looking at that types accommodation. The largest concentration of B&Bs and Hotels seem to be near, or in near Penzance, and I think that's where we will be planning to look for our hotel.

We will confirm quite soon when the Field Trip starting date will be- still in June as usual. If you think that you might be interested in coming then please drop me an e-mail at [g\\_s\\_adams@btinternet.com](mailto:g_s_adams@btinternet.com) Please be aware that the terrain to reach some of the sites will require moderate fitness (no great challenges!)

*Graham (Adams)*

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2012
Wed 14th November	<b>EDAS Lecture:</b> "The Lands of the Queen of Sheba – Myth, History and Endemics" with Ian Lewis
Wed 12th December	<b>EDAS Lecture:</b> "Were the Romans like us", with Geoff Taylor
DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2013
<b>Wed 9th January 2013</b>	<b>EDAS Lecture:</b> The David Johnston Memorial Lecture, with Tim Schadla-Hall
<b>Wed 20th February 2013</b>	<b>EDAS Lecture:</b> Analysis of Hooks Sands and the Swash Channel wreck, with Robert Heaton
<b>Wed 13th March 2013</b>	<b>AGM</b> followed by <b>EDAS Lecture:</b> EDAS and the archaeology of Cranborne Chase, with Martin Green
<b>Wed 10th April 2013</b>	<b>EDAS members evening:</b> i) The 2012 Field Trip to Exmoor, with Alan Hawkins, and ii) Aerial photography over Cranborne Chase, with Jo Crane
<b>Wed 8th May 2013</b>	<b>EDAS Lecture:</b> The strange case of the Dewlish Roman Villa, with Ian Hewlitt of Bournemouth University