



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – February 2013

Please be reminded that the next Meeting will be held on the 20th February which is the 3rd Wednesday rather than the customary 2nd Wednesday of the month.

AGM and Election of Committee

A final reminder that nominations for Chairman and General Committee Member should be submitted on the attached slip (see end of Newsletter) and returned to Brian Maynard no later than 11 February 2013, the date of our next committee meeting.

If you are interested in standing for either position or require more information before doing so please contact our Secretary Brian Maynard Tel: 01202 677707, email: brian.retired@ntworld.com

The David Johnson Memorial Lecture: with Tim Schadla-Hall.

In January we were delighted to welcome Tim Schadla-Hall to deliver the David Johnson Memorial Lecture. Tim is a natural communicator with an endless stream of amusing and insightful anecdotes. He is an enthusiastic advocate of public involvement in archaeology; emphasising that it is cheap, exercises the brain and has a natural connection with the pub. He confessed that he is still baffled how a society that proudly adopted the description Antiquarian could possibly survive and be so successful for 30 years.

Tim first met David in Winchester in 1974 and they both lectured for the Workers Education Association (WEA) and they later both helped educate and train the group of enthusiasts who went on to create EDAS. David was a Cambridge graduate in classical archaeology, a keen Romanist who had a very successful career. He wrote numerous books and Tim mentioned his book on Roma Villas for the Shire Series, he directed excavations on the Channel Islands, he was a recognised expert on Roman mosaics and was an expert flint knapper. He led the excavation of the Sparsholt Roman Villa and was heavily involved in the reconstruction. David saw himself first and foremost as a teacher and was committed to adult education. Tim described his own style as encouraging a strong interest whilst David came along and introduced discipline; he trained the group in the rigours of archaeological processes. David shared the conviction that archaeology is for everyone, an opportunity to discover our heritage, exploring our roots through practical activities. This was obviously a compelling combination which must have much to do with the longevity of the society.

Tim quoted Peter Reynolds who said "Pick and shovel the true discoverer of the past" and stated a truism that if you dig a hole and you'll find something. He praised the work of WEA offering adults the opportunity for first class education services for a small cost, nowadays only Leicester University offers comparable courses and they cost more than £2k per year. He really enjoys the challenges of a mature audience, who are often highly qualified in different disciplines and can contribute specialised knowledge to the class.

He praised EDAS as an early example of local archaeology being undertaken by local people. It is something that it can be enjoyed by everyone. It cannot and should not be left only to the professionals who do not necessarily have a commitment to the location. These amateur societies prove that you do not need an academic qualification to effectively wield a trowel, he cited Tsukinowa, now regarded as a landmark excavation of a burial mound in China that was excavated entirely by local villagers. The key is accurate recording and warned that interpretation must be evidence based but is not always accurate, even by the professionals. The audience smiled when Tim mentioned that when lecturing in China he used the example of the EDAS henge excavation at Tarrant Monkton as an example of community archaeology in the UK.

Tim then touched on some archaeology topics such as: dealing with human remains and believes they should be displayed; the challenge of metal detectorists, and he praised the scale of the Portable Antiquities Scheme which is the largest archaeology recording scheme, its database contains more than 800k archaeological objects found by the public, and is recognised as an extremely important research facility that is available to all. He explained there is a growing awareness of the economic value of archaeology and when everything is taken into account Tim is optimistic about the future, he firmly believes that most people, even parliamentarians, have an inherent interest in the past, they want to know where they came from and to better understand how people once lived. Keep digging.

Tim then took us to Hokkaido, the northern most island of Japan. He explained this land was ignored until the late C19th when the Japanese decided to colonise, helped by a manual written by the British. The Ainu, the indigenous people of Hokkaido were a sophisticated hunter gatherer community whose life style can be traced back to the Jomon people who inhabited the region from the Ice Age some 8000 years ago. Tim is a prehistorian and particularly interested in hunter gatherer communities to help him better understand the Mesolithic in particular. There is much material available from the comparative recent past which can be useful in understanding the customs and practises of the Mesolithic. Tim mentioned carefully carved wooden staves of the Ainu which have helped in the assessment of material found at Star Carr. Interestingly Tim explained that these people also had the skills to make very elaborate pottery. Because of an innate sense of their superiority the Japanese left these people to their own devices, other than some trade in fur, fish and wood that is until they decided to invade. Today there is a growing interest in these indigenous people and over 25,000 Japanese recognise them as their direct ancestors and are rediscovering their past after three generations of neglect. Tim also explained that the other Japanese are really Korean and that the royal family absolutely refuse any approach from geneticists. Recently due to the justice of the Japanese legal system, the Ainu were awarded massive compensation when some of their land was flooded illegally after the construction of a dam. Some of this has funded an excellent museum celebrating the Ainu culture and society and contains many artefacts such as: reconstructed pots, fish traps, bear heads on sticks, shells used as knives, massive obsidian blades and a very informative display which demonstrates what resources were available in the different seasons.

Tim is a honorary member of EDAS and very supportive of the society from the beginning, and he enthusiastically volunteered to ask Nicky Milner, Excavation Director at Star Carr and Mike Parker Pearson who recently was the Director of the Stonehenge Riverside Project to see whether they would be guest speakers at EDAS in the not too distant future. We thank Tim for a fascinating and very suitable David Johnson Memorial Lecture and for his continuing support.

Andrew Morgan

EDAS 2013 Field Trip to Cornwall organised by Graham and Susan Adams

The Field Trip dates are confirmed as the 8th/9th to the 15th of June. We'll begin with a walk (or similar) on the Sunday afternoon (9th) and follow the usual pattern with a day off during the week to allow people to "do their own thing".

The Field Trip this year will be based in **Penwith**, which is the very tip of Cornwall. Although the area of Penwith is very small, it is 'perfectly formed', with nearly 50 very well preserved prehistoric sites, many of which are very unusual or completely unique (such as Men-an-tol, or Men Scryfa). Many of the sites are very close together, and that means that we can walk between them to see the monuments, which should reduce driving quite a bit. There is also enough road access over the moor for those who cannot walk too far. When we publish the sites and route details I'm sure that some people will form Car Pools.

More details will be provided once the programme has been finalised.

Penzance appears to be a good place to look for accommodation. Susan and I have booked at the Abbey Hotel and anyone else who wants to book would be eligible for a free night – 7 nights for the price of 6.

If you are interested please contact me with your details, email: g_s_adams@btinternet.com

Graham and Susan Adams

EDAS 30th Anniversary Essays

This month we have two essays in the 30th Anniversary Series. The first is written by Janet Bicheno one of the founder members, who reflects on the early days, the friendships and enthusiasm and she captures the enduring spirit of the society. The second is by Janet Bartlet who describes the work she has done drawing the artefacts found at Bestwall, Worth Matravers and now Druce Farm. Janet has produced thousands of meticulous drawings, many of which have been included in monographs on the sites, truly a momentous task requiring the utmost level of skill, dedication and commitment.

Memories of EDAS by Janet Bicheno

When asked to write about my memories of EDAS I readily said yes not realising what a difficult task I had agreed to as a number of the founder members are still there and would be able to give more accurate information than I can. I joined the Wimborne WEA classes which developed into EDAS little knowing that it was going to be a life changing experience for me as there I met Dennis Bicheno, who was the founder secretary, and who I eventually married .



I am sure that John and Della and others will be covering the many events and excavations that have taken place so I am only going to cover a couple of items. One was an undertaking which Dennis, Phil Coles, Cherry Trent, Sylvia Church (later Frith) and I undertook which was to visit the hillforts of Dorset I cannot remember how many but well over thirty. This led to some very enjoyable outings with the inevitable pub lunch or if no pub convenient then a picnic with the correct refreshment provided.

Phil Coles, Sylvia and Dennis on Chalbury Hill

The early EDAS outings and excavations were great fun. Dennis and I had an SOS on one very hot Summer morning regarding the Blandford by pass which was in the course of construction and they needed a certain area excavated before the diggers reached it. We hurried over there and we had some interesting finds doing a rush job and not a copybook excavation the most interesting find I had was part of the jaw of an early oxen or something similar with its teeth in situ. (I wonder what happened to this?).



Eventually the excavators were getting nearer and nearer and we had to retire from the scene not with great regret as it had been very hot, noisy and dusty.

I have very many happy memories of EDAS, of the friendship and the camaraderie. I learnt a lot from the knowledge of others I am only sorry that distance and Anno Domini today prevent me from attending the lectures and walks but I read the newsletter with great pleasure and wish EDAS every continuing success.

Janet Bicheno

My Years of Drawing since 1997 by Janet Bartlet

Many years ago I joined a select group of archaeological amateurs at Bestwall Quarry, Wareham. Lilian, Carol and I with a varied assortment of students and temporary excavators were happy and carefree as long as we managed to sort out the pits and ditches that we had flagged up after the machines had removed the topsoil from a whole field. After a few months the gigantic yellow quarry machines moved back to excavate the underlying gravel. Many a time we were left to finish something archaeologically important while the machines thundered around us.

We used to assess the materials found, and Lilian wrote the yearly report. We excavated flints from the Mesolithic Age to Victorian pottery and metalwork, with Bronze Age houses and Roman kiln remains in between. One day Lilian suggested that I should try to draw the microliths and pottery for the report. Little

did I realise what was to happen. Drawings of Bestwall artefacts number about 2000, while Worth Matravers only about 1300. Lilian and I now have to assess what needs to be drawn from the Druce Farm Roman Villa!



Janet carefully measures a reconstructed pot

Frequently when I mention drawing pottery or other artefacts, people say that surely photographic records are more illustrative and modern. They are certainly right; a good photograph does catch the colours, some of the design and the beauty. However a drawing does add to the scientific record of information. One advantage that an illustrator enjoys is the complete attention to detail put into an object by someone from hundreds or thousands of years ago. While Lilian is analysing the fabric and age, I can tell if the Bronze Age urn was made by a left-handed woman, or potted by someone who has left their mark on the base!

The potter working on the precise and repeating pattern on his Beaker, who might be trying to reproduce something he has only seen once before, must be admired.

Permatrace, a drafting film, is used for drawings. This is perfectly smooth and water repellent. Indian Ink makes a clear picture, with the advantage that mistakes can be rubbed out instantly. However nothing can be erased after the ink is dry! We restrict the size of drawings to A3, with the majority of artefacts fitting easily onto A4. Large stonework or extra-large pots must be reduced by half or quarter to fit; while very small objects must be doubled in size to appreciate their detail. The photo-copier is so useful and accurate when altering actual dimensions.

Luckily I enjoy completing jigsaws. When a Bronze Age or Iron Age pot needs drawing I am handed a bag of sherds; hours of sorting, fitting and chalking are needed to find diameters of rim, belly, base and decoration. Rarely is there a complete pot or even a profile present, so probable outlines must be indicated. I never depend upon my eyes to interpret contours and outlines; my trusty set-square gives the actual profile, although handmade pots are rarely the same both sides. I use a heavy oblong block to set the base or rim angle; the piece of pottery always knows its position!

Pit and ditch sections, mapping out Iron Age houses or Neolithic monuments have all to be drawn, sometimes in atrocious weather. We have been on site in rain, sleet, snow, hot sunshine and at Worth Matravers, the very memorable constant wind. We have cowered under hedges and wheelbarrows waiting for a dry spell, and the advantage of a site cabin must always be remembered. Here you can enjoy freshly-brewed coffee (thanks to Carol), or writing up the Context Records while drying off.

There have been our unexpected archaeological discoveries. We all thought our excavations were finished when the foundations for the new houses at Worth Matravers were underway. However topsoil removal revealed a Post Roman cemetery. The devotion and respect given to these burials by our forefathers was evident. Children were given Cist stones, including larger head and foot markers. Adults were placed on their backs east/west, sometimes with a pillow stone, again with marker stones. The burials must have been clearly indicated because frequently their spouse was eventually arranged immediately alongside them. In one grave there was father, mother and full grown offspring! It was interesting to observe that the nuclear family was highly important to these people. All these burials had to be photographed and drawn, being careful not to miss any legs or artefacts.

After the latest excavation at Druce Farm, we know that the Roman Villa had painted wall plaster, mosaic floors, ceramic roofs, very attractive imported pottery and decorated glassware; I look forward to drawing these domestic but fragmented items.

Janet Bartlet

15th October 2012

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2013
Wed 20th February 2013	EDAS Lecture: Analysis of Hooks Sands and the Swash Channel wreck, with Robert Heaton
Wed 13th March 2013	AGM followed by EDAS Lecture: EDAS and the archaeology of Cranborne Chase, with Martin Green
Wed 10th April 2013	EDAS members evening: i) The 2012 Field Trip to Exmoor, with Alan Hawkins, and ii) Aerial photography over Cranborne Chase, with Jo Crane
Wed 8th May 2013	EDAS Lecture: The strange case of the Dewlish Roman Villa, with Ian Hewlitt of Bournemouth University
Thurs 23rd May 2013	EDAS Garden Party: 6.00 to 8.30pm in the Priest House Garden. Tickets available from March 2013.
8th-15th June 2013	EDAS Field Trip: Cornwall

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Nomination Form

Nomination for the post of Chairman:

Name of Nominee		Nominee's signature	
Name of Proposer		Proposer's signature	
Name of Seconder		Seconder's signature	

Nomination for a general committee member:

Name of Nominee		Nominee's signature	
Name of Proposer		Proposer's signature	
Name of Seconder		Seconder's signature	

Please return the completed form to Brian Maynard, 7 Verity Crescent, Canford Heath, and Poole, BH17 8TH

Contact Telephone Number:

Date: