



Established 1983

## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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### NEWSLETTER – March 2013

#### Annual General Meeting 2013

Please be reminded that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March. This will be a special evening because John Day will be stepping down as chairman after 30 years and this will be an opportunity to thank him for everything he and Della have contributed to the society. To mark the occasion Martin Green will be giving a talk: EDAS and the Archaeology of Cranborne Chase.

#### EDAS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Garden Party – 23<sup>rd</sup> May

One of the key events in celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of EDAS will be a Garden Party to be held in the lovely gardens of the Priest House Museum. It will be held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May from 6pm to 8.30pm. We will be inviting a number of guests who have made a special contribution to the society over the years and we are sure this will be a memorable evening.

We are providing a finger buffet and a variety of drinks. We anticipate a lot of interest and the numbers are restricted so get your tickets as soon as possible. The tickets will cost £4 each and will be available at the AGM, else please contact Karen Winsor tel: 07935 341380, email: [karen.winsor757@btinternet.com](mailto:karen.winsor757@btinternet.com)

#### EDAS Lecture: Analysis of Hooks Sands and the Swash Channel wreck, with Robert Heaton

Last month EDAS member Robert Heaton gave a talk about the Swash Channel Wreck that lies in approximately 7m of water immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the dredged section of the Swash Channel in the approach to Poole Harbour. Robert explained that he is a keen scuba diver and as a mature student gained a MSc in Marine Archaeology from Bournemouth University and has been actively involved working on the Swash Channel wreck. This is a joint initiative between Poole Harbour Commission, Bournemouth University and English Heritage. The boat is quite special, but is still surrounded in mystery. Its name is not known and no records of its voyage and destruction have been found. It was a high status merchantman and is a very large boat for the area, being 40metres in length. Dendochronological analysis has dated the ship's timbers to late 16<sup>th</sup> century and they originated from the Dutch/German Border. No papers have yet been found that refer to the ship, so it's history remains unknown but it is likely to have been built for the Netherlands West India Company and because it featured a cladding of sacrificial pine boards (acting as a barrier against equatorial, marine molluscs), it may have been involved in the triangular trade between Newfoundland, West Africa and the West Indies.

This is the largest marine excavation undertaken in the UK since the Mary Rose. One of the prized remains is the enormous rudder and Robert emphasised that thousands of artefacts have been collected from the site, including several Dutch made iron cannons, Dutch style wood features with baroque carvings, leather shoes, wooden barrels, rigging elements, copper, pewter and ceramic domestic artefacts and these are being preserved by specialists around the UK.

Robert has done a lot of research looking at old maps and charts to understand better why the ship floundered and it's location. He showed numerous maps, including the earliest local map made for the Marquis of Salisbury, a survey of Brownsea, which showed a channel out to sea, and Ralph Tresswell's map of 1580. A map of 1590 shows a sand bar stretching across Poole Bay with a narrow channel, which may

well have been dredged for the benefit of small local shipping. He explained the sea currents which swept along Studland Bay on the flood tide which creates the natural channel for shipping using Poole Harbour, which sailed under the cannons of Studland Castle once located near Handfast Point - one of Henry VIII's forts that has fallen entirely into the sea.

The absence of any written reference is a surprise, since this was a valuable boat, it would have sat on the sand with its masts and rigging standing proud of the water, it would have provided significant plunder for local pilferers and looters. One partial explanation is that during the age of the Commonwealth (1649 – 1660) little was written down.

Later maps show that the sand bar has moved through the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For a period the channel was being dredged, probably financed by the wealth created by trade with Newfoundland.

It is likely that boats were occasionally hitting the wreck and in 1778 the chart drawn up by Murdoch McKenzie, a leading hydrographer and cartographer of the period, shows that a warning buoy had been located on the site. But by the end of the century the finances had dried up and there were no funds to continue dredging. In 1820 there were complaints about the dangers from the wreck. There were plans to tame the Studland Bay current which deposited sand in the entrance to Poole Harbour. But these weren't acted upon until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Training Bank was constructed.

In conclusion Robert said that this is a real opportunity for interested EDAS members to get involved, whether in research or helping with a local education programme. There will be an exhibition in Poole Museum and you can keep informed via the Bournemouth University web-site "Mad about the wreck".

**NB.** the site is still under construction: <http://microsites.bournemouth.ac.uk/mad-about/>

**Andrew Morgan**

## **EDAS Visit – to Wimborne Minster Chained Library**

Saturday 23rd March at 2:00pm"Frank Tandy, who is the Minster's "Keeper of the Books", will take a group of EDAS members on a fascinating tour of the Wimborne Minster Chained library, which dates back to 1685 and is the second largest in the country, after Hereford Cathedral. The library contains a collection of over 400 books, most in either Hebrew, Greek or Latin, which were chained (as was common practice in 1685) in accordance with the bequest of Roger Gillingham.

Due to the difficult access (up a small spiral staircase) and the limited size, numbers must be limited to 10 to 12 visitors at a time. However if numbers are higher it may be possible to divide into two groups, the second group being shown around the minster while the first is in the library.

Due to the limited numbers please contact Steve Smith to confirm your interest in visiting the Chained Library, either directly at the AGM (March 13th) or via email at [essjayme@googlemail.com](mailto:essjayme@googlemail.com)"

## **Hengistbury Head Pottery Workshop 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

Workshops are being run by Bill Crumbleholme in the new visitor centre at Hengistbury Head. Book a place and join him to make pots using traditional methods. No fees but attendees are expected to bring something to use and share: knowledge, food, clay, sand, seashells, flint, timber fuel, or turf. Workshops start at 10am and finish late, allow two hours minimum.

Book places by contacting Bill by email: [Bill@Beakerfolk.co.uk](mailto:Bill@Beakerfolk.co.uk)

See also: [www.beakerfolk.co.uk](http://www.beakerfolk.co.uk)

## PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM UPDATE

### WIMBORNE SQUARE EXCAVATION 2012

At long last the money has been made available by EDDC for analysis of the human remains that were recovered during the excavation in the Square last year. They are now in the expert hands of Winchester University where work on them is well underway. It is expected that the Museum will be in receipt of a report by the early summer.

We were hoping that DNA analysis could be undertaken on a group of closely buried skeletons to see if in fact they represent a family group. Unfortunately, the cost of such analysis would amount to several thousand pounds and the money available is not sufficient to cover this. However, it is hoped that Carbon 14 dating of one of the burials will be possible which in itself should help to confirm exactly when the burial ground was in use.

### PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM GARDEN EXCAVATION 2011

The work on the finds is still progressing albeit at a slow rate— with over 30,000 pieces of animal bone and over 50,000 other artefacts it is quite a task for the volunteers. We have also had to fit the work around other more urgent tasks at the Museum, such as re-boxing over 100 cases of Roman wall plaster from the Tarrant Hinton excavation which took place back in the 1980's.

Reports on the bone, glass and the clay pipes are now being prepared by respective experts. There has been some progress in the analysis of the pottery. The initial work is being undertaken by the archaeological volunteers at the Museum with help and advice from Lorraine Mephram of Wessex Archaeology with Penny Copland-Griffiths giving valuable advice and support with the Verwood pottery sherds. To help us with the pottery analysis a number of the volunteers were able to attend pottery recognition courses run by Lorraine at Wessex Archaeology. These are proving to be of great assistance to us.

Whilst the current Museum building dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century initial results from the excavation are suggesting there was activity on the site long before

this time. A casket key has been dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century and a coin identified as originating from Mercia, again from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Amongst the vast amount of pottery on the site sherds from the early medieval period have also been identified.



*EDAS members at Wessex Archaeology Pottery Recognition course November 2012.*



*John V France (1399 – 1442) Blanc D'arg*

Contact with the Continent is also apparent with the recovery of two French coins. The first from the 15<sup>th</sup> century relates to John V of France and the second is a Frances de Bourbon, double tournois dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### OTHER NEWS

The archaeology volunteers at the Museum are now busy preparing new displays for the 2013 season which opens at Easter. An article on the hidden treasures of Dorset's museums is to appear in the "Dorset" Magazine in April. One such treasure is the little known Frank Robbins collection of Roman oil lamps which

is held at the Museum. To coincide with this article a display of these lamps is currently being put together. Another new display will focus on EDAS and the celebration of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Museum is run as a charity and is reliant on the support of its group of volunteers. More volunteers are always needed to man the front counter in the shop and assist in the tea room. If anyone has a few hours to spare and would like to help please ring the Museum on 01202 882533 and ask to speak to Carole, the volunteer co-ordinator. Another option is to become a "Friend" of the Museum for a small cost of £12 a year. As a "Friend" you would have access to the Museum and garden whenever it is open with the option to buy a "cuppa" and piece of cake in the lovely new tea room.

***Gill Broadbent***

***Hon. Keeper Archaeology PHM***

### **National Trust - Brownsea Island: CBA Festival of Archaeology - events 27<sup>th</sup> & 28th July.**

There is an opportunity for EDAS members to get involved with this event and the activities planned over the weekend 27th/28th July, and it is hoped EDAS will be represented and assist with some of the activities as well as promoting our Society.

Depending on the particular interest of the volunteer group, which will include members from other organisations, there will be various activities, including pottery making, or mucking about with clay, and setting up some displays. Plans are still at an early stage but it is intended to repeat last year's 'mock dig' which proved very popular with many of the younger visitors. As a SSSI 'digging' on Brownsea is always a problem but for last year's mock dig we were based in an old gravel pit so able to set up as near as possible on the lines of an excavation. Most of those taking part were youngsters with no previous experience of archaeology but they were full of enthusiasm and seemed to enjoy the experience basic as it was.

There will also be a historical trail which will cover Maryland, the 19th century village, the Old Pottery site and area of the copper works and the early kilns now eroding out of the shoreline. There will be some preparation work which we plan on doing late June/early July and this may involve tidying the sites and setting out. Although most of the archaeology we see on the island is post medieval during the weeks of last year's Fest a 'log boat' was made by the visitors and the official launch is expected in the coming months.

While I would not wish to disappoint anyone there will be a limit to the number we can take. One or two members are already familiar with the routine but for those considering joining us you need be aware we have to get to Sandbanks for the 9.30 NT boat (this is not a public service NT bookings only) and would not expect to return until the 5pm ferry.

As a volunteer you could not wish for more pleasant surroundings than Brownsea Island and if you would like more details see below or seek us out at our meetings. You may also be interested in becoming a National Trust volunteer and there are special recruitment days on the island each month. (Phone NT Brownsea 01202 707744).

Interested in the Archaeology Festival contact :-

Alan. tel - 01202 668178 - email - alhawk@ntlworld.com

or Gill. tel - 01202 841547. email - agbroadbent@btinternet.com

***Alan Hawkins***

## EDAS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Essays

*This month we have essays written by two founding members of the society, the first by Teresa Hall about work undertaken at Chalbury Church and Witchampton. The second is by Iain Hewitt who ignored the advice of a colleague and accepted John and Della's invitation to join an "antiquarian" society.*

### **Reminiscences of EDAS from a far off place: excavations at Chalbury Church (1989) and fieldwalking at Witchampton (1990), by Teresa Hall**

After the birth of my first child, Peter, in 1979, I joined an evening class in Wimborne, run by the late David Johnston, a Romanist, and one of the first honorary members of EDAS. Most of the founder members of EDAS were attending this evening class and EDAS grew out of the group's determination to provide a society for local people interested in archaeology and history.

In the early years (I moved from Dorset to Somerset in 1992), in addition to the lecture programme, EDAS put on several archaeological exhibitions, at the Cornmarket and Priest House Museum in Wimborne, and at the county farm open day, which we undertook at the behest of the County Society for several years. We also restored the information sign showing the Celtic fields and settlement at Meriden, Winterbourne Houghton (see Fig 1 of John at our official opening ceremony).

A lot of archaeological activities were undertaken by EDAS. I was involved with: fieldwalking in the Allen valley, which was set in motion by Peter Fasham (who took the WEA evening class a couple of years after David Johnston); excavations at Chalbury Church; an historical and archaeological appraisal of Witchampton, which led to fieldwalking over the deserted area of village; and that famous excavation of the Roman crossroads at Batts Bed to the north of Badbury Rings led by David Johnston. David camped in his caravan on site for the duration of the excavation. Quite rightly, he was very particular about how the excavation was carried out and one of my few pictures of the proceedings is of Phil Coles holding up the 'no photography' sign (see Fig 2).



Fig 1 John Day with the Meriden interpretation board



Fig 2 Phil Coles at the excavation of the Roman crossroads at Badbury Rings.

### **Chalbury Church**

The excavations at Chalbury Church were undertaken by members of EDAS in 1989 at the request of Laurence Keen the County Archaeologist. The church was having problems with damp rising up through the floor and the church wardens wished to insert a damp-proof course which required the removal of the top 6 inches of the existing floor. Under the pews, there was a laid brick floor bedded in sand with a grave slab at the western end. Towards the altar there was a brick and slate foundation which was probably where a warming stove had stood in the past.

To our surprise when the sandy bedding material was removed several features were showing in the top of the next layer (Fig 3). Chief amongst these was a series of pits, which we were given permission to half-section. They turned out to be associated with bell-founding and one of the pits still had a clay ring at the bottom where the bell mould would have stood when it was being filled with molten metal. Recently I visited the bell-foundry at Villedieu les Poêles in Normandy (Fig 4).





Fig 3 The pits and warming stove footing after the brick floor had been removed



Fig 4 Building the bell mould at Villedieu les Poêles in Normandy

In addition to the bell-founding pits, we also found evidence for what appeared to be a twelfth-century, slightly narrower, nave which pre-dated the present fourteenth-century walls. The present chancel is said to be of 13<sup>th</sup> century date. It is worth going to the hill-top site of Chalbury to look at the church if you have never been there. Two Anglo-Saxon charters dating to 946 and 956 describe the bounds of the manor and these seem to equate roughly to the present parish boundary. In the charters there is a reference to the east and west gates of 'Ceol's' burh, raising the possibility (suggested by A D Mills, the Dorset place-name expert) that this may have been a hill fort, though there are no longer any obvious banks and ditches. The situation of the church is of interest though, given that the manorial centre appears to have been at Didlington, down by the river Allen in the western part of the parish. This rather rules out its foundation as a proprietary manorial church which one would expect to be sited for the convenience of the lord of the manor. If the burh referred to in the charter bounds is not a hillfort, perhaps it is an earlier manorial centre on the hilltop near the church.

### Witchampton

At Witchampton, the late Norman Field, another honorary member of the society, drew attention to a deserted area of settlement to the north of the present village. This had been ploughed in 1968 and the air picture shows a lane coming from the north end of the village, heading towards the present settlement of New Town, with plots on either side and some of the house platforms showing up as lighter areas. **(see Fig 5)**. The field was ploughed again in 1990 by the farmer Mr Sanders, a tenant of the Martens of Crichel House. We were allowed into the field to do a fieldwalking collection with amazing results. Over 28kg of pottery were recovered, ranging in date from a small amount of Iron Age and Roman, through the 10/11<sup>th</sup> century to the early modern period with most of the medieval pottery being of 12-13<sup>th</sup> century date.



Fig 5 1968 air picture of Witchampton with the stream at the bottom, the village centre left and the deserted village stretching across the middle of the picture.

The medieval pottery was tightly concentrated on the house platforms

where the ploughing had brought much material to the surface. With the help of Peter Woodward, assistant curator in the County Museum at the time, I wrote up the pottery report. Sadly the field has continued to be ploughed and if you go to the air pictures on Google maps the features that showed up so well on the 1968 air picture and were so obvious on the ground when we walked across the field, are now barely visible. What a wasted opportunity! A small excavation over one or two of the house plots would have been very exciting, especially given the pre-Conquest date of some of the pottery which shows that this planned area of Witchampton must date to at least that period.

Members can read more about both these archaeological exercises which were written up in the proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society:

T Hall (1990), 'Excavations at the parish church of All Saints, Chalbury, Dorset, 1989', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, volume 112.

T. Hall (1993), 'Witchampton: village origins', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, volume 115.

The aerial picture of the village is in volume 116, p.143 as it was mistakenly printed in reverse in volume 115.

***Teressa Hall***

## **An Unintended Relationship, by Iain and Irene Hewitt**

In the first instance our association with EDAS was totally unintentional. Back in 1982 we had been looking for a summer holiday with a difference and ended up staying at a border castle in Northumberland as participants in a week's course on the prehistory of that county. The experience must have created an impression because we decided to repeat the holiday the following year, but upon our return we thought that it would be a good idea to extend our learning to our home County of Dorset. By this time I had made a number of acquaintances amongst the academic staff at the Dorset Institute of Higher Education (DIHE), and we noted that one of these erudite people was running some evening classes on the prehistory of Dorset at Bournemouth and Poole College. Enrolment followed, and that is where we first met John and Della Day. There were coffee breaks during these College sessions, and it was during one of these breaks that John approached us as we were munching our institutional biscuit. He outlined his ideas for what he then described as an 'antiquarian society' and asked if we would like to join it. John had obviously discussed this with the lecturer for the evening too because that individual later spoke to us too in order to tell us that he did not have any truck with antiquarian societies and that in any case, if one was to be formed it would not last more than a couple of months! Anyway, we did join, as did some others from the course, and so the 'rump' of EDAS had been formed and the meetings started to happen, based upon a programme of events that extended well beyond the predicted two months.

The rest of the initial story is quite hazy. EDAS experimented with a 'journal' but that certainly did not survive beyond about three issues. There were changes too for me. It is a complex story but to be brief, I was getting drawn more and more into the work of the DIHE and that was creating demands upon my time which meant that involvement with EDAS had to be sacrificed and in terms of membership, it has remained thus ever since. However, circumstances developed that were simply to change the nature of my involvement and, like most things, coincidences were to play their part. For the next episode we need to jump to 1997 by which time I was working full time for what was no longer the DIHE, but the relatively newly formed Bournemouth University. During that year, I had spent the usual five weeks on a University excavation site. This time, it was the Dorchester Roman Aqueduct, a project inspired and led by the late Dr Bill Putnam. Bear with me as I relate this story. The Aqueduct had been a very tiring excavation; sections across its course had to be dug, sometimes to a depth of 2 metres and backfilled, before the relatively small teams of diggers had to move onto the next site and repeat the whole process. On the final day we were all shattered and when I got home in the afternoon, that armchair and cup of coffee were so welcome. But not for long because the telephone rang (the early tyranny of mobile telephones). It was a student on placement who had been digging on duty. Digging that is, where he should not have been digging and in fact, he should not have been digging at all. In these cases the worst case scenario always applies: human remains had turned up. Directions were hurriedly given and I was out there like a bullet. The usual things followed, the phone call to the Home Office, the Coroner and the invitation to the local police. The body was close to the plough soil, it had to be lifted, but sadly, underneath was yet another which given the available time, had to be left and backfilled. This set the archaeological agenda for the following year and the next two: the site had to be properly excavated and recorded. What we did not know at the time is that on the adjacent farm, EDAS was excavating a late Roman building as its own excavation project. Consequently, in 1998, 1999 and 2000, the University and EDAS were excavation neighbours.

This neighbourly juxtaposition set the scene for co-operative opportunities. Undoubtedly the two sites are related and little excuse was needed to exchange visits on a fairly regular basis. In particular John and Della turned up when they could, but so too did other EDAS members such as Phil and Marion Roberts.

Eventually, these interchanges culminated in a joint enterprise whereby a ditch system between the two sites and identified by a magnetometer survey, was excavated by EDAS members under the supervision of my own assistant Director.

The EDAS and University sites still await publication and attempts have been made to jointly resolve this issue. Time, as always, is at premium, but perhaps we are on the verge of the next co-operative opportunity: to get the research into print.

**Iain Hewitt**

**Associate Practice Fellow, Bournemouth University**

## Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society

EDAS is a member of the DNHAS and has received 2 membership cards. These allow EDAS members free entry to the Dorset County Museum and to the DNHAS library. If you would like to make use of a card please contact me [peter@peterwalker.info](mailto:peter@peterwalker.info) or 01425 471326.

I hold the EDAS library of "The Proceedings" which is the annual journal of the DNHAS. We have a complete set from 1988 to 2012 and several others for the 1960s and 1970s. There are fascinating articles on Dorset history, archaeology and various aspects of natural history. If you want to borrow any of the volumes please contact me.

**Peter Walker**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

| DATE  | EDAS EVENTS – 2013  |
|---|---|
| <b>Wed 13th<br/>March 2013</b>                            | <b>AGM</b> followed by <b>EDAS Lecture</b> : EDAS and the Archaeology of Cranborne Chase, with Martin Green   |
| <b>Sat 23rd<br/>March 2013</b>                            | <b>EDAS Visit</b> : Frank Tandy, who is the Minster's "Keeper of the Books", will take a group of EDAS members on a fascinating tour of the Wimborne Minster chained library (see page2).                                 |
| <b>Wed 10th April<br/>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>15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup><br/>April<br/>2013</b> | Henistbury Head Pottery Workshops are being run by Bill Crumbleholme in the new visitor centre. Book a place by contacting Bill by email: <a href="mailto:Bill@Beakerfolk.co.uk">Bill@Beakerfolk.co.uk</a> (see page 2).  |
| <b>Wed 8th May<br/>2013</b>                               | <b>EDAS Lecture</b> : The strange case of the Dewlish Roman Villa, with Ian Hewitt of Bournemouth University  |
| <b>Thurs 23rd May<br/>2013</b>                            | <b>EDAS Garden Party: 6.00 to 8.30pm in the Priest House Garden.</b> For tickets please contact Karen Winsor tel: 07935 341380, email: <a href="mailto:karen.winsor757@btinternet.com">karen.winsor757@btinternet.com</a> |
| <b>8th-15th June<br/>2013</b>                             | <b>EDAS Field Trip: Penwith, Cornwall</b> for further details please contact Graham and Susan Adams, email: <a href="mailto:g_s_adams@btinternet.com">g_s_adams@btinternet.com</a>  |
| <b>27th-28<sup>th</sup><br/>July<br/>2013</b>             | <b>National Trust - Brownsea Island: CBA Festival of Archaeology - Weekend events</b> (see page 4).   |