



Established 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – May 2013

EDAS Members Meeting 2013

Several new members have mentioned they didn't know who is on the committee, so I took the opportunity to introduce the Committee Members. I think we are all very approachable so please make yourself known to any of us: Brian (Secretary), Steve (Programme Secretary), Helen (Membership Secretary), Lilian (Field Archaeology), Peter (Treasurer), Dave, Bryan, Karen and Geoff who are present at most meetings. In the future we will provide a brief profile of the committee members in the Newsletter.

I'm pleased to announce that the EDAS Garden Party is nearly sold out and most of the invited guests have confirmed they will attend. Now it's just a case of ensuring the weather is kind! Anybody who has promised to provide old photographs, please give them to me as soon as possible, preferably on Wednesday. And we still need a few desserts if anybody wants to make a culinary contribution.

If you have any comments about the society, whether good or bad, then please make your thoughts known, there is always room for improvement.

Andrew Morgan (Chairman)

EDAS Members Lectures:

1. Field Trip 2012 – Exmoor, by Alan Hawkins

Alan Hawkins reminded us of the most enjoyable visit to Exmoor last summer, even the occasional rainfall seemed quite enjoyable in retrospect. We had an excellent start as Alan had arranged for us to join the Exmoor Society on a walk across Brendon Common led by Robert Wilson-North, archaeologist with the Exmoor National Park Authority a highlight being an example of strange Exmoor archaeology: a Stone Setting comprising four miniliths arranged in the shape of a kite. The area is dominated by the old Royal Forest that had been purchased and enclosed by John Knight an ambitious entrepreneur whose family tried various schemes to extract profit from the land. Knight brought in an army of Irish labourers to erect 30 miles of wall round his estate all covered in carefully planted beech trees, which somehow flourished and still form a stunning boundary. We visited a deserted medieval village (DMV) used by RD Blackmore as the village of the Doone family, albeit sometime after it had been abandoned. The following day was wet but most of the group made it to Larkbarrow a short lived dairy farm and onto Dunkery Beacon when Steve demonstrated great sense by using his umbrella.

The days unfolded with visits to Dunster castle, once a Saxon burgh, and revitalised by the wealth of Mary Tregonwell – heiress of Milton Abbas – followed by a walk to the Iron Age hillfort of Bat's Castle; Simonsbath and the Knights' water-powered sawmill, and a greeting from the distinctive Exmoor ponies; we climbed an excellent Norman motte and bailey castle in Parracombe; we visited The Valley of the Rocks near Lynton, which has the remains of a Bronze Age settlement; the week ended with a visit to Porlock and went to the church of St Dubricius and Selworthy and finished in the pretty NT tea room for a well-earned pot of tea. I am sure this talk has encouraged people to join us in Cornwall.

2. Aerial Photography over Cranborne Chase, by Jo Crane

Jo explained that he gained his licence in 2005 and that Sue is his co-pilot and photographer. They fly an Ikarus C42 single engine microlight aircraft, which is enclosed and looked more substantial than I had expected. They have selected a big aperture camera with a fast shutter speed that gives best results and they wear dark clothing to minimise reflection.

The talk was quite fitting, as it followed the excellent one given last month by Martin Green who explained the wealth of archaeology on Cranborne Chase. Jo showed a large number of new sites that were only identifiable from the air. The drought of 2012, whilst difficult for arable farmers proved a boom for aerial observations as the footprints of ancient structures, whose presence had long been removed from the surface, showed again as crop marks in the fields.

They have covered most of Cranborne Chase and showed photographs from many prominent structures such as: Bokerley Dyke, Oakley Down Barrow complex, the Dorset Cursus, Gussage Down, and Ackling Dyke. They often showing features that have not been excavated yet. But their flights have covered a much larger area and Jo included a particularly beautiful photograph of Silbury Hill surrounded by water after heavy rainfall, giving it a extra dimension. He also had photographs from the New Forest that showed an old WWII practise bombing site, and others from the High Lea Farm excavation in the Allen Valley, run by John Gayle. To travel north of Salisbury Plain they have to wait until there is no military activity else they have a detour of 50km.

Jo and Sue have worked closely with many EDAS activities, to provide photographic evidence to complement the ground level field work, such as the Studland Circles Project. Perhaps there will be useful to have Jo and Sue fly over Druce Farm and take some photographs of the on-going Roman Villa excavation?

Andrew Morgan

Archaeology Report -Druce Farm Project - update

Druce is progressing well - we have foundations in two of the trenches so far and are working on the big ditches. We will be working until at least mid June.

All EDAS members are invited to join, there are a variety of tasks to be undertaken and we can cater for people irrespective of their experience. If you want to dig then you will need to have basic equipment of 4" trowel, bucket, kneeling pad and hand shovel.

If you are interested then contact: Lilian Ladle, Site Director, email: bestwall@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 012929553144

Lilian Ladle

National Trust - Brownsea Island: CBA Festival of Archaeology - events 27th & 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.

If you would like more details see below or seek Alan or Gill out at our next meetings or contact directly:

Alan Hawkins: tel - 01202 668178, email - alhawk@ntlworld.com

Gill Broadbent: tel - 01202 841547, email - agbroadbent@btinternet.com

Alan Hawkins

EDAS Field Trip 2013 – Cornwall

It is not too late to join the group who are visiting Cornwall this summer between June 8th to 15th. Graham and Susan have put together an interesting programme covering many important prehistoric sites.

Sunday 9th: Walk to St Michael's Mount

Monday 10th: St Just, Ballowall Barrow and Chun Castle/Quoit

Tuesday 11th: Chysauster Romano-British village and Zennor/Sperris Quoits

Wednesday 12th: Day off to pursue individual interests

Thursday 13th: Lanyon Quoits etc. and Carn Euny

Friday 14th: St Buryan standing stones and something a little more modern

If you are interested please contact Graham and Susan, email: g_s_adams@btinternet.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2013
Wed 8th May 2013	EDAS Lecture: The strange case of the Dewlish Roman Villa, with Ian Hewitt of Bournemouth University
Thurs 23rd May 2013	EDAS Garden Party: 6.00 to 8.30pm in the Priest House Museum, Wimborne. For tickets please contact Karen Winsor tel: 07935 341380, email: karen.winsor757@btinternet.com
8th-15th June 2013	EDAS Field Trip: Penwith, Cornwall for further details please contact Graham and Susan Adams, email: g_s_adams@btinternet.com
27th-28th July 2013	National Trust - Brownsea Island: CBA Festival of Archaeology - Weekend events (see page 4).

DATE	EDAS FIELDS WALKS – 2013 (details are still be being finalised for a programme of walks this summer)
Sunday 1st September 2013	A mostly flat walk of about 5 miles to pass and in some cases visit Winterborne Came House and church, Whitcombe church and West Stafford church. Meet at 10.30 parking near Max Gate off A352 SY704899 Explorer Map OL15. Any queries to Peter on 01425 471326. This is a shorter version of a walk Peter led in 2006.

Arrangements for other walks are being finalised and will include: Abbotsbury, Hambledon Hill, Cranborne.

EDAS 30th Anniversary Essays

This month we have two contributions about the origins of EDAS, from Henry Cole and Haydn Everall both founder members of the society and Haydn has added a tribute to their old friend Phil Coles.

Roman Dorchester – The first project, by Henry Cole

If our class secretary hadn't been so determined that our class would not switch from archaeology to the history of clocks EDAS may not have been born. Instead of EDAS we might have become EDACS! (The East Dorset Antique Clock Society)

Instead of 'old time pieces' we got David Johnston and what a culture shock that was. We started being set homework and a class project. Less time in the pub and more time in research! Our first project was to investigate a feature of Roman history and report back to the class. A few of us got together and decided to investigate Roman Dorchester. Our group comprised John Day as he had the best camera and more importantly knew how to use it. Haydn Everall took on the amphitheatre at Poundbury and I think the Roman aqueduct. Memory is a bit vague now going back over 30 years but I remember George Tublin and I investigated the Roman walls and Colliton town house. Phil Coles researched the Roman mosaic and was of course poet laureate. We took on Roman names and the only one I can definitely remember is that Phil was known as Philius Bilius and I think George was Georgius Porgius. There is a photo of us all somewhere wearing one large communal toga. This is probably in John Day's collection.



Haydn captivating his audience! From L-R Theresa Hall, Dennis Bicheno, Janet Bicheno, Alan Cosgrove, Haydn, Jim Obrien, George Tublin, Phil Coles

We threw ourselves heart and soul into our project with field trips to Dorchester or Durnovaria as we came to know it and practice sessions before presenting our findings to the rest of the class. This was the days before Powerpoint and epidiascopes were still in fashion!

Following the presentation we took the class on a visit to Dorchester. The weather was not kind but we did have an extremely good lunch as I recall. Our first stop was Maumbury Rings where Haydn enthralled us all

describing the history. Its amphitheatre role was briefly revived in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, as a place of public execution. In 1685, at the close of the Monmouth Rebellion, Judge Jeffreys ordered eighty of the rebels to be executed here. In 1705 Mary Channing, a nineteen year old woman found guilty of poisoning her husband, was executed by strangulation and burning at the Rings. Thomas Hardy used this event in his poem *The Mock Wife*, and recorded some details of his research into the event in his personal writings.



Inside the church at Fordington. L-R Anne Simms, Phil Coles, George Tublin, Florrie Blake, Janet Bicheno

We did visit Fordington church where we saw the Tympanum over the door and Phil mentions it in one of

his poems. The church stands high on a hill top, the tower is 15th century and is embattled with pinnacles. This church has a great treasure, a Roman stone, a block of Purbeck marble, engraved and the earliest inscription known in the county. A tribute to a Roman husband and father exiled in Britain from his family

and reads:- 'To Gaius Aristobulus, a Roman Citizen, aged 50. Rufinus and Marina and Avita his children. Erected by Romana his wife.'



David in pensive mood



Examining the mosaics

Following our visit to Fordington we visited the County Museum in Dorchester where David Johnston described the stories behind the mosaics and how they were made.

But what is most interesting about the floors at Frampton is that they include the earliest yet known icons of Christianity to be found in Britain as well as – and in tandem with – traditional pagan motifs. At both villas the mosaics featured the popular scene of the god Bellerophon slaying the monster Chimaera, as well as other hunting scenes and the popular inclusion of the wine god Bacchus. Yet at Frampton there is also the singular appearance of the Chi-Ro monogram – so called after the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek (a reverse "P" superimposed on an "X".)

Before setting off to look at the aqueduct and town house we had to take shelter and by pure chance found a pub! During soup and a pint we were entertained by Phil reading his latest literary gems.



lunch time literary reading

The Roman Town House in Dorchester is a Roman ruin within Colliton Park, Dorchester. Dorset County Council acquired Colliton Park in 1933 as the site for the construction of County Hall. The Town House was discovered in 1937/38 during an archaeological investigation carried out by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society prior to the construction of the new building. Plans for County Hall were modified so that the Town House could be retained on site. The Town House has two principal ranges of rooms. The South Range comprising rooms 1–7 survives in the plan form of flint and stone walls on the grass covered site. The West Range comprising rooms 8–18 was mosaic floored.

Thus from these small beginnings EDAS was born

HENRY COLE

The Origins of EDAS by Haydn Everall

The idea of EDAS was conceived by a small group of people whilst attending a series of W.E.A (Worker's Education Authority) lectures in Wimborne.

The first years' lectures were by Bill Putnam on the Romans. I then became involved as class secretary as Tim Schadla- Hall MA gave us 6 years of memorable lectures taking us through the various ages from European Prehistory to the Anglo Saxons. David Johnston completed the series with a year on the Romans in Britain.

At this point the non archaeological class members revolted and wanted “ Antique Clocks” for the following year at which point drastic action had to be taken and UDI was declared, a group of us decided to form our own association and that was how EDAS came about.

Myself and many others were all greatly encouraged to believe, by Tim Schadla-Hall and latterly by David Johnston that we as individuals and collectively could make a real difference to the archaeological record by our research, fieldwork and excavation.

Tim not only fired us with his early lectures but led us on many fieldtrips and introduced us to the value of fieldwalking at a time when many pastures and sites were being destroyed by deep ploughing. The fieldwalking, incidentally, forged a surviving relationship with Dr Martin T Green BSc FSA, who was then just....Farmer Green who has continued to encourage and inspire many of us over three decades.

As a fully fledged EDAS, David Johnston was brave enough to launch us on our first dig at Batts Bed, the Roman crossroads at Badbury Rings. We learned so much from his meticulous instruction on excavation interpretation and recording although some members’ tools were not always parked in alignment at the end of the day!

HAYDN EVERALL

Haydn Everall also provided a nice poem from which I include a short extract:

The Mosaics by Phil Coles

“In a meadow by the river
Where Frome and Cerne get together
In a field which cows have tramped on
Lies the fine mosaic of Frampton.....”

and ends

“...This mosaic turned up on the site of a school
That’s my last slide of Dorchester town
I’ve had my share of Durnovaria so I’ll now sit down”

Haydn has a collection of Phil Coles’ poetry and should any members of the Phil Coles Appreciation Society like to meet up for a rendition or two please let him know, everyone welcome!

Email: w.everall@btinternet.com