



Established 1983

## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

[www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk](http://www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk)

[mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk](mailto:mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk)

Edited by: Andrew Morgan, email: [andrewmorgz@aol.com](mailto:andrewmorgz@aol.com) , tel: 01202 731162

### NEWSLETTER – September 2013

#### EDAS Lecture - Stonehenge New Discoveries with Mike Parker Pearson

As you know this lecture on 13<sup>th</sup> November will be held in the East Dorset Chambers at Furzehill. In anticipation of a high demand we are making this a ticketed event. There is NO charge for members but the usual £2 charge for guests. **Tickets will be available at the next meeting** , on 11<sup>th</sup> September and subject to availability again on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Lilian Ladle will be handling the distribution during the refreshment break.

#### EDAS Visit to Down Farm with Martin Green



Photo: Jim Hart

On the 4<sup>th</sup> August a group of approximately thirty EDAS members were privileged to be given access to Martin's unique world on Down Farm. First we visited his private museum and were allowed to handle precious artefacts he has found on his 300 acre farm where he has been exploring since his childhood. The cabinets were bursting with examples from the Palaeolithic through to medieval. He proudly and carefully exhibited two exceptional flint items (see image-1) which have been polished to a smooth translucent finish, these are extremely rare, made by exceptional craftsmen.



Image-1: Flint blade/plaque



Image-2: Stone Axe made of eclogite

Several members handled a Neolithic stone axe of eclogite (see Image-2) that originated in the Italian Alps, it's perfectly smooth surface of mottled green, blue and pink crystals, an object whose aesthetic values still resonate 6000 years after it was created. The collection also contains the skeleton remains from a Bronze

Age burial, several bones have been pierced suggesting that they had been tied, so they could be articulated long after their original deposition.

Martin also has a rare example of Dorset rock art, on a slab of rock that had been casually discarded by a local farmer who thankfully mentioned it to Martin, who was then able to rescue it (see Image-3).



*Image-3: Dorset Rock Art*

On leaving the museum we set off on a short walk round the farm. A few hundred metres and we approached the impressive “Great Shaft” (see Image-4) that had been excavated to a depth of 13.2m, and the work only stopped when the team reached the water table.

It is a natural feature, a sink hole formed by a collapse into an eroded subterranean void. It would have been of great symbolic significance for the local communities. It had been capped in Beaker times and trapped 2500 years’ worth of material, providing a unique environmental sequence for the area.



*Image-4: Looking into the Great Shaft*



*Image-5: Approaching the Bronze Age Pond Barrow*

We then moved on to the site of a fascinating and quite rare Pond Barrow (see Image-5 and the panoramic image at top) which are associated with the burials of women and infants. These features are quite fragile and are easily ploughed out. Then onto another Bronze

Age bowl barrow (Image-6) that Martin has reconstructed, although its once stunning white chalk finish has been planted with wild seeds to stabilise it. Martin pointed out the proximity to the Dorset Cursus and explained that this massive monument exerted an influence on society for thousands of years, drawing people to the immediate area where their legacy can be partially seen in their burial chambers.



*Image-6: Reconstructed Bronze Age Bowl Barrow*

Martin is also a keen conservationist and talked proudly of wintering Hen Harriers and Short-Eared owls and the encouragement of traditional grassland birds such as Lapwings.

Yet again we thank Martin for showing us round his farm and sharing some of his archaeological wonders.

*Andrew Morgan*

## Archaeology Report -Druce Farm Roman Villa

A second very successful season consisting of four months of excavating has been completed at Druce Farm thanks to the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers involved.

Three ranges of buildings were investigated including an industrial/agricultural complex, an aisled building and a high-class set of rooms which included two mosaic pavements. One of these was complete; the only damage was where heavy limestone roof tiles had penetrated the floor.

Currently Dr Malcolm Lyne is looking at the pottery and coins. When his analysis is complete, we should have a good time frame for the occupation of the villa. Dr Clare Randall is looking at the animal bone assemblage, and from the findings we will get an idea about farming practices and diet.

The Association for Roman Archaeology are supporting the Druce work and the site was visited by Luigi Thompson who photographed the mosaic and who is currently reproducing the floor as a painting. Mr Anthony Beeson is preparing a technical report for us. A short article will be appearing in their next newsletter and the mosaic is featured on its front cover.



An in-depth interim report will be prepared for the Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society, and we have been advised that because of its importance, an article should be prepared for the academic Roman journal 'Britannia'.

Plans are being formulated for a further season's work in 2014 – watch this space!!

***Lilian Ladle***

### **DORSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARDS 2013**

We have submitted the Druce Farm Roman Villa Excavation for the Dorset Archaeological Awards 2013. These biennial awards are run by the Dorset Archaeology Committee. You may recall that in 2011 we submitted the Worth Matravers Excavation, when we achieved a slightly disappointing but highly praised second place.

## EDAS Walk – Three Churches and a Wise Man, led by Peter Walker

On 1<sup>st</sup> September a small group enjoyed a lovely walk in the area just south of Dorchester starting at Max Gate. This house was designed by Thomas Hardy in 1885 and he lived there over 40 years until his death in 1928. He wrote some of his famous novels here - including *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. The house was named after nearby tollgate keeper called Mack.

Peter our leader is long of leg and he set off at a brisk pace. As we approached the South Winterborne valley he showed us Winterborne Farringdon a dmv with extensive earthworks. This is overlooked by the palladium styled Winterborne Came House – designed and built by master-mason Francis Cartwright in 1754, for John Damer younger brother of Joseph Damer who purchased Milton Abbey. Peter explained that the name Came relates to the manor being owned by the Abbey St Etienne in Caen (Normandy) from the time of William the Conqueror. They retained ownership until the Reformation and eventually the estate was purchased by the Meller/Miller family in 1561 and passed to the Damer family in early 18th century. Hutchins wrote in 1750 that the village consisted of just 3 or 4 houses – probably the other occupants were relocated when the house was built.

Nearby is St Peter's Winterborne Came church. The graveyard is noted for the gravestone of William Barnes – rector here from 1862 until his death in 1886 - best remembered for his poems written in Dorset dialect but he had a wide range of interests, including languages, music, wood engraving, historical studies. He was greatly admired by Thomas Hardy. The church has a perpendicular style nave late C14th, the chancel was rebuilt and enlarged early C15th and a tower was later that century, along with square-headed windows. Inside there is an interesting rood screen of C16th that has been considerably restored in the Arts & Crafts manner. The font is a late medieval bowl of Ham Hill stone on a base of Portland stone. In the chancel is a large tomb chest for John Mellor d1595 and his wife Anne d1610 with traces of the original colour.

We moved on to Whitcombe church – and another shrunken village - excavations south & east of church suggest a medieval settlement stretching over 14 acres. Folklore suggests the village was deliberately destroyed by fire during the black death of 1348/9. The manor house cottages & thatched barns around a green date from C17th. This is part of the original endowment of Milton Abbey by King Athelstan circa 966. The impressive nave is largely C12th though there is some pre-conquest masonry at the west end. The blocked north doorway (used to expel the devil) is C12th and the tower is C16th, with carved stone louvres on the south elevation. There are steps to a long since removed rood loft dating to C15th. A small alcove contains two remarkable fragments of C10th Anglo-Saxon crosses that had been found built into east wall



when repairs were made in 1912. The font is c C13th and is of Purbeck Marble. Fragments of paintings on the wall a pattern of arches on the west end c 1300 and from 100 years later a depiction of the St Christopher fable “when on a dark and stormy night, a child came to Christopher and asked to be carried across the river. Christopher put the child on his shoulders and waded into the wild river. He found the child heavy and had to struggle desperately to reach the other side. The child told him that he was Christ and that he had carried the weight of the world on his shoulders”.

Onwards we walked until we spied a man pampering a contented ram. On interrogation the farmer confessed that he was carefully preparing his fine Dorset Down specimen for the Dorset Agricultural Show. The beauty treatment would continue daily for the whole week. We then found West Stafford church – a richly decorated interior suggestive of the high church with an alter decorated by an array of fine oil paintings. It boasts another barrel roof and tower from the C16th. The nave displays an array of windows each of a different date, one by Kempe dated from



1926 and showing his customary wheat sheaf in the bottom left hand corner. We felt a bit insulted when Peter set us a challenge to find a Wise Man, but delighted to find that this is the name of a rather nice village pub and we were even more surprised that John had booked a table (or so he claimed) where we enjoyed an excellent Sunday lunch. Highly recommended by all of us.

Suitably refreshed we wandered on to find West Stafford house, which is now the residence of Julian Fellowes. It has two facades, the east is dated 1633 and the west 1848-50.

We followed the Frome river and then had a final stretch where we quickly investigated the local recycling plant and had to carefully cross the railway track before climbing over the gentle slopes just to the west of the Neolithic palisaded henge of Mount Pleasant.

Thank you Peter for an excellent walk; fine weather, stimulating company and plenty to see...not forgetting the lunch.

**Andrew Morgan**

## **NEWS FROM THE PRIEST HOUSE MUSEUM**

The hard work of the volunteers in archaeology department has paid off and I am glad to be able to report that work sorting out the collections has nearly finished. At the same time as sorting these out the volunteers have also been involved in other activities at the Museum and have put together new displays.

### ***Every Pitcher tells a story***

This is the latest display at the Museum and highlights a wide variety of ceramics ranging from Roman black burnished ware through to Verwood Pottery items and onto more modern tea cups and saucers. The interesting stories connected with these items are told in the display showing that they are more than just inanimate objects. Penny Copland-Griffiths, the well known expert in Verwood Pottery, is the guest curator and has lent some of her personal items for the display. She has been ably assisted by two EDAS members, Sara Marshall and Vanessa Joseph. The display runs until the end of the season and is being opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2013 by Julian Richards.

### ***The Journey: Exploring the Nature of Mending***

A number of EDAS members also took part in workshops held at the Museum in April this year as part of a wider contemporary craft project entitled "*The Journey: Exploring the Nature of Mending*". The workshops were directed by Jenni Dutton, one of the project's 5 commissioned artists. The mosaics were made from some of thousands of unstratified finds uncovered during the community excavation undertaken in the Museum garden in 2011 prior to the building of the Hilda Coles Open Learning Centre. The finished items can now be seen on display in the Museum Garden. The contemporary craft project, which explores mending and museum collections, culminates in an exhibition at Walford Mill Crafts, Wimborne, between 14th September and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2013. For more information see [www.natureofmending.co.uk](http://www.natureofmending.co.uk).

### **WIMBORNE SQUARE EXCAVATION 2012**

The osteo-archaeological report on the skeletons found during the excavation in the Square has now been received from Winchester University and the skeletons returned to the Museum. Work on the final report will be undertaken over the winter months. At the moment we do not know when re-burial of the skeletons will take place as we are awaiting for information from EDDC.

### **PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM EXCAVATION 2011**

Unfortunately due to pressure of more urgent work the post excavation work on the finds has ground to a halt. However the reports on the clay pipes, glass, coins and animal bone are nearing completion and now the work on the collections is nearly finished work on the rest of the finds will recommence.

**Gill Broadbent**

**Hon Keeper Archaeology Collections**

**PHM**

### REVISED ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

The committee has decided to change the attendance procedure for our monthly meetings.

1. We will no longer require attendees to sign a register and we will take a count to monitor overall attendance.
2. Guests will be expected to place their £2 entry fee in an honesty box, that will be positioned near the entrance.

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### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2013
11th September 2013	EDAS Lecture - <b>Bouldner Cliff Project</b> , with Lauren Tidbury of the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Marine Archaeology,
9th October 2013	EDAS Lecture – <b>What’s so fascinating about watermills?</b> with Peter Lightfoot
13th November 2013	EDAS Lecture – <b>Stonehenge, New Discoveries</b> , with Professor Mike Parker Pearson, UCL Institute of Archaeology. <b>NB: this event will take place at the East Dorset Council Chambers, Furzehill</b>
11th December 2013	EDAS Lecture – <b>Isaac Gulliver Dorset Smuggler</b> , with Malcolm Angel

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

*This month I am delighted to include an essay written by EDAS member Sue Cullinane, who describes how she took on the challenge of working for an archaeology degree as a mature student. She describes how she overcame many obstacles and challenges, and through sheer hard work and determination and the support of her family and friends she graduated this year. I find her story quite inspirational and having worked with Sue on several excavations, I know she is a fine field archaeologist who just doesn't give up.....*

### **Distance Learning – Persistence, Focus... and a Degree of Insanity**

When Andrew asked me to write about my experiences in distance learning, I wondered what on Earth I could possibly write that would be interesting... entertaining... informative...? So I sat down and thought about the events that led up to my decision to attempt a BA in Archaeology with Leicester University.



**My long-suffering Dad, my brother and me, 1966**

An inquisitive and probably somewhat irritating child, I was forever asking my father 'What's that?', 'How does that work?', 'Why?' and so on, and on, and on... A man with apparently endless patience, it was he who encouraged me in what turned out to be a lifelong interest, first in dinosaurs and fossils, the natural world, history and ultimately, archaeology. By the age of fourteen I had a half-formed idea that one day I might like to be an archaeologist. However, schooldays came and went, exams were sat and just as I was considering sixth form, my lovely Dad died unexpectedly. I left school. Employment at a bank and then a quarry was followed some time later by marriage and five children, which meant that I had little time available to ponder on what might have been.

During the twenty-odd years that my children attended school, I helped out at dozens of school trips – The Roman remains at Bath, Maiden Castle, The Mary Rose exhibition... What a helpful mum! However, looking back, I think I may have had a hidden agenda. Trying to pass on my enthusiasm to groups of children was a small fee to pay in exchange for all those 'behind the scenes' visits to museums and suchlike! Fast forward now (by far more years than I want to think about) to around 2002 when my children were older, and in an idle moment I spotted an advert for an evening class, 'An Introduction to Archaeology'. It sounded interesting and I enrolled, never expecting for a moment that it would lead to anything else. By Christmas that year I was completely hooked. I started looking around for something else to feed my re-awakened interest.

September 2003 found me nervously embarking on a level one distance learning course with Leicester University, for a Certificate in Archaeology. Having 'shopped around' on the internet, I decided that Leicester's was the course for me because the modules sounded ideal – a mix of archaeological practice and theory, interspersed with lots of case studies illustrating the stages of human development right through from the Palaeolithic to industrial archaeology. Fascinating stuff!

During the winter of 2003/04 I quickly found that distance learning wasn't as easy as it sounded. Organizing study time around the needs of a large family (aged between nine and nineteen at the time) and other commitments, turned out to be something of a juggling act – and I also discovered that learning in a home-environment could be an uphill struggle. Telephones ringing, people at the door, dogs barking, children wanting something, loud music somewhere in the house, people popping in and out of the room just for a casual word... all these things made concentration somewhat difficult, if not impossible sometimes.

Another difficulty I often encountered was finding the motivation to sit down and get on with it, especially when other things needed to be done. But the discipline needed to study became even harder to find after a new distraction came into my life. Whilst chatting to an acquaintance early in 2004, she asked how I was getting on with my studies. I told her that despite the difficulties that 'real life' often throws at you, I was really enjoying it and wished I could get some hands-on experience. She replied, "You should talk to that Mrs. Ladle – you know, she's been running that thing down at Bestwall Quarry for years." Well, actually I

didn't know! But I soon found out. A quick phone call later, and I was soon meeting Lilian for the first time, arriving at Bestwall with a shiny new trowel and itching to try out some real archaeology. I soon got the hang of excavating and found the whole process fascinating. I met several friendly EDAS members, the camaraderie on site was great and it was wonderful to chat to so many like-minded people – and of course, Carol's famous cups of tea at break time were the best ever! I felt as if I'd finally found my forte in life.

In July 2006 I was awarded my Certificate and for a while was happy just to have completed it. But the craving to learn kicked in again a year or two later, and I decided to continue with Leicester, working towards a Diploma. Of course, I also wanted to carry on digging. The Bestwall Quarry excavations had ended by that time and I volunteered at Bournemouth University's dig at Knowlton for two seasons, where I became re-acquainted with Dave Stewart, who I'd previously met at Bestwall. He told me about



**Bournemouth University's excavation of a ploughed-out barrow at Knowlton**

the EDAS dig at Worth Matravers, and introduced me to Phil Roberts who was directing the excavations at that time. So, in 2008 I joined EDAS, specifically with a view to joining the dig, but alas, catastrophe struck! After the second day on site, hungry and tired I stopped off at a chip shop for something to eat on the way home. A big mistake... Severe, underdone-chicken-induced food poisoning put me out of action for six weeks and my digging ambitions for that year were well and truly scuppered.

Disease, distractions, digging and the odd family disaster aside, I gained my Diploma in July 2010 and attended a ceremony at Leicester to receive it. It was good to finally meet some of the other students, the tutors and support staff – especially the people in the distance learning office who I'd often spoken to but never met. While I was there, Kathy, a lovely lady from the DL office asked me 'What next?' Would I be continuing with the BA? I didn't know. Did I have what it took to do a Degree course at home? My past experiences had already taught me that focus and motivation were sometimes difficult to drum up when you were learning by yourself. Although advice was only a phone call or e-mail away, and an on-line student forum was available, nothing quite made up for the lack of student interaction you'd get in a classroom situation. I suspected the level-three Degree course would be far more demanding than anything I'd encountered up to this point, but on consideration, I'd got this far, so why not...?



**Recording an Iron Age pit at Worth in 2010**

My suspicions were right. The degree course was **very** difficult on occasion. However, the high spots more than made up for the hard work. One of the conditions of the course was to complete six weeks of approved fieldwork. The Worth Matravers dig, now under Lilian's direction was deemed to be acceptable and so I had the ideal excuse to indulge my passion (for rather more than the required six weeks)! The compulsory lab week at the University during May 2011 was an amazing experience. It was great to catch up with some of the students I'd met at the Diploma ceremony and to get to know several others. The formal lectures and hands-on lab work were intensive – we were told on the last day that we'd completed more or less half a term's work in one week –

no wonder we were all exhausted! Getting together at the end of each day to discuss the day's work, have a bite to eat and a few drinks gave us a taste of student life. All in all it was brilliant, although it did serve to highlight some of the limitations of distance learning compared with attending university full-time.

The beginning of August 2012 saw me starting work on my dissertation. In retrospect, I would have done it differently if I'd known then what I know now! Without going into boring detail, more self-discipline and focus would have served me very well. Research was quite difficult without a supervisor on hand to keep



me on the straight and narrow. Although in touch with the university by phone or e-mail, it was far from ideal, although this is an inherent flaw with distance learning, not the University! Writing the final draft and editing took far longer than anticipated. By the time it was written, edited, re-written, read, re-read (repeatedly), corrected, printed and bound, I found myself posting it off on the afternoon of the deadline date. And I still found at least three errors after it was submitted! However, overall I was pleased with the work I produced and was able to pinpoint its weaknesses and strengths. When I received my results, the marker's comments were very fair and more or less what I expected. After 9½ years (!!), (including a couple of very long breaks I hasten to add) I'd finally achieved a respectable qualification in Archaeology. It was a long haul, but on balance, thoroughly worth it. I like to think my Dad would have been proud. So there you are, if you think you might enjoy doing a degree by distance learning – go for it! All you'll need is persistence, focus... and a degree of insanity.

***Sue Cullinane***

Distance learning courses with the University of Leicester can be found at:

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/dl>