

Established 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk

mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk

Edited by: Andrew Morgan, email: andrewmorgz@aol.com , tel: 01202 731162

NEWSLETTER – November 2013

EDAS Lecture - Stonehenge New Discoveries, with Mike Parker Pearson

If you have a ticket you are not able to use please contact Andrew Morgan, tel: 01202 731162 or email andrewmorgz@aol.com, so that we can make it available to people on the standby list.

NB. It will not be necessary to actually return the ticket.

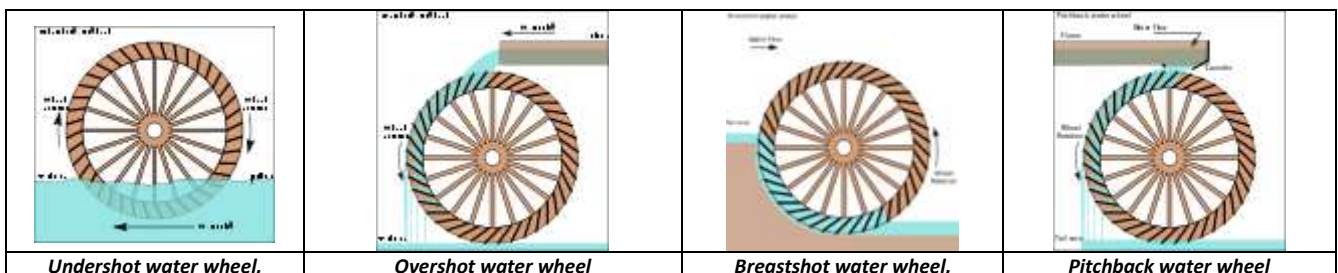
EDAS Lecture – What is so fascinating with watermills? With Peter Lightfoot

Our October talk was by Peter Lightfoot, a retired engineer who is also an artist, and his talk reflected his interest in both fields. Peter showed numerous paintings throughout his talk and in one by John Constable, of Purns (Parham's) Mill at Gillingham (c. 1826), he pointed out that the mill supported a second smaller wheel to the side, and explained that it powered a grinding stone, used to sharpen scythes and other cutting edges. The mill has been a feature of the country since Roman times and there were 270 recorded in the Domesday Book for Dorset but only 7 survive; Alderholt, White Mill at Shapwick, Town Mill at Lyme Regis, Boar's Mill at Corfe Castle, Sturminster Newton, Place Mill at Christchurch and Mangerton Mill, Bridport Swanage. Only two of these are working commercially and neither is powered by water. Many old mill buildings have been converted to private residences, not surprising when you consider their attractive waterside location.



Parham's Mill at Gillingham by John Constable

Peter explained that the power of the mill depended on the management of the water flow. Over the years technical developments were made to increase power by adjusting the height, weight and the pressure of the water. The original arrangement was the undershot wheel but by the 1st century BC this was improved by the overshot, and subsequently by the 3rd century AD the breastshot had been developed and slightly modified by the pitchback.



A typical watermill is constructed over three floors; the top being the bin floor, where the grain was stored, the grinding stones would be housed on the second floor and the lowest floor being the meal floor. The typical water wheel rotates on a horizontal axis, it is connected by gears to a shaft rotating on a vertical axis

and connected to the stones which rotate on a horizontal plane. Gearing is used to increase the rate of rotation up to 100-150 rpm. Other devices such as pulleys to haul the grain sacks up can be powered from the vertical shaft. The grinding stones are arranged in pairs; the lower is stationary and is called the Bedding Stone, into which grooves are cut to allow the flour to escape and the top stone being the Runner Stone, through which the grain is fed. Burgh stone is the preferred material for making these stones, it is a fine grained siliceous limestone, originating from the Marne Valley in France. The bedding stone is often found in three pieces held together by a metal belt with the joints filled with plaster of Paris. It is a hard durable stone that doesn't break down and deposit grit in the flour. The best English stone is Millstone Grit from the Peak District, which has the advantage of coming as a single piece but it does erode and the grit drops into the flour. In large mills there may be up to six pairs of grinding stones. Peter explained that the miller would be highly sensitive to the sounds of his mill, and would manage the processing and be able to detect the slightest problem aurally.

The watermill is a sophisticated structure and resulted in the development of support trades, such as carpentry and metal work, as well as the organisation of the farming community and transport to support a distribution network. The water wheels were usually made by local engineering companies. He gave the example of a mill at Bourton in north Dorset which was owned by the Maggs family who were originally flax farmers. It grew from a cottage industry to a highly mechanised flax processing factory and engineering works employing over 250 people and had a 60 foot waterwheel until the 1880's. The wheel is now in the Castleton Museum, near Sherborne.

Faced with a growing concern about using fossil fuels, some would advocate that we should return to traditional sources and harness natural energy from wind and water. At Bindon Mill on the river Frome, Lulworth estates have built a new water mill with a 20 kW screw turbine to generate 77,000 kWh/yr worth of electricity and saving 40 tonnes of carbon dioxide. There is another electric installation at Lyme Regis where they have installed a plant to generate electricity. So watermill technology may have a role in our search for renewable energy.



Bindon Mill hydro electric

We thanked Peter for an interesting talk and it was noticeable that many questions were asked by members with a particular interest in engineering.

Andrew Morgan

EDAS Field Trip 2014 - Lincolnshire between 7 -13th June

Christmas is coming and it is time to get your diaries out and plan for next summer! If you want to avoid the stifling heat of the South coast, the influx of tourists or the inevitable disappointment of watching England go out of the World cup on penalties, then come to Lincolnshire with EDAS. Although the programme for the week is at an early stage of formulation I can promise a wealth of interesting visits led by knowledgeable guides (apart from me that is). We will see medieval castles, monastic sites, a smattering of Roman remains, mills, a very rare Templar site, and above all the glorious city of Lincoln.

If you have never been on an EDAS field trip before I would urge you to give it a try – just ask anyone who has been on one and find out what you have been missing! To find out more come and talk to me at the next meeting or email me on brian.retired@ntlworld.com

Brian Maynard

Dorset Archaeology Awards 2013

The ceremony took place in the recently refurbished Town Hall in Bridport. There were three awards and the winners were selected by a panel chaired by Maureen Putnam. Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe made the presentations.

The Dorset Archaeological Award went to the team from the Parochial Church Council of Puddletown, who completed a conservation project named the Five Monuments in the Athelhampton Chapel of St Mary's Church, which renovated the chapel and conserved important monuments.

The Ian Horsey Memorial Award was presented to Alistair Somerville Ford, Julian Richards and Claire Ryley for their project named What's Under Your School? Nearly 40 schools from Dorset and Wiltshire were involved to engage young people to understand and value the past and the remains that inform it.

Spetisbury Primary School, a participating school in the above project, was awarded the Young Archaeologists Award.

The Druce Farm Roman Villa Excavation submitted by EDAS failed to make the top three out of 9 entries for the main award. Maureen later explained that she felt this was still a work in progress. However, much to our delight, Barry Cunliffe was very interested in the site and asked if he could visit site next year.

Andrew Morgan

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2013
13th November 2013	EDAS Lecture – Stonehenge, New Discoveries, with Professor Mike Parker Pearson, UCL Institute of Archaeology. NB: this event will take place at the East Dorset Council Chambers, Furzehill
11th December 2013	EDAS Lecture – Isaac Gulliver Dorset Smuggler, with Malcolm Angel
DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2014
8th January 2014	EDAS Lecture –Pre-Columbian Mayan Culture, with Neil Meldrum, EDAS Member
12th February 2014	EDAS Lecture – Burial Mounds and Battletanks, Archaeology of MOD estates, with Martin Brown
12th March 2014	EDAS AGM and Lecture – Hod Hill, with Dave Stewart, EDAS Member
9th April 2014	EDAS Lecture – Egyptians and other Travelling People in Early Modern Dorset, with Judy Ford
14th May 2014	EDAS Lecture – Kingston Lacy, an undiscovered history, with David Smith, National Trust

EDAS 30th Anniversary Essays

This month's essay is by Bryan Popple who explains how EDAS has helped him to fulfil a lifelong interest in archaeology. And don't worry about Russell, No Animals Were Harmed during the excavation!

A Staffordshire Lad and his Quest for the Ancient Past of Dorset

How Archaeology and EDAS has Inspired my Future

By Bryan Popple



Figure 1: Castle Ring

I was born in Walsall, Staffordshire in the late 1950s and brought up in, what was then a smallish village called Aldridge, with a few thatched cottages (long since demolished). It has a church with Saxon/Norman origins and was mentioned in the Domesday Book. An Iron Age hillfort stands amongst trees on the outskirts of the village and nearby was a field with a mound topped by a lone tree, which was always said to be a civil war burial place. The Roman site of Letocetum (Wall) is within walking distance and when I was young I sometimes took time to walk there and to Castle Ring, another Iron Age fort on Cannock Chase.

I always had an interest in history and childhood Sundays were spent visiting historic sites, stately homes and ruins around the midlands and further afield. Petrol was cheap then! At junior school I wrote a project about the Temple of Mithras in London.

Family holidays in the sixties and early seventies were either in West Wales or Bournemouth and that is why I ended up here in Dorset. Leaving school at 16 I did a foundation art course in Walsall and then chose to carry on my education at Bournemouth Art College. My interest in archaeology continued, visiting sites in Dorset, Cornwall, Devon and West Wales.

Archaeology was rather put on the back burner after getting married and the arrival of two children. However when the boys were at school I volunteered to help on school trips to the Natural History Museum, the Ancient Technology Centre and did a couple of talks at the school, making Iron Age roundhouse models.

In the late 1990s I came across WEA walks on Cranborne Chase, led by Martin Green and this gave me the nudge I needed to rekindle my interest. Meeting Martin and spending time talking to him soon led to me being able to identify sites and artefacts. However I have lost count of the number of times I proudly showed Martin things I found only to have him fling them into the middle of the field.

My first encounter with EDAS was when Martin asked me if I would like to help with a field walk at Avenue Lodge on the Cranborne Road with Dr Charles French of Cambridge University. Many EDAS members were involved and it was a very interesting day. I won't mention tanged and barbed arrowheads or Roman pottery. Whoops! Charlie asked me to help with an excavation at Knowlton and after going around filling in trenches they dropped me off at Knowlton. Charlie gave me his trowel and pointed me in the direction of Jake Keen, a couple of fields from the main henge. I was a little nervous and when I found Jake he said to go and start excavating a section of a ditch. Nerves kicked in further and I explained that I had never excavated before. Jake said 'no worries', showed me where to start and set me to work. More Romans! Post holes and signs of a palisade but not much else by way of finds, apart from fragments of worked stone. That was it! I was hooked and craved more adventures. I had a new toy to play with!



Figure 2: Postholes at Knowlton

In 2003 Martin asked if I would like to help with the excavation of a Roman burial near the Ackling Dyke at Gussage St Michael. Once again I was working with Jake and Martin. This proved to be a very interesting dig with a burial mound surrounded by a rectangular ditch with post holes. The burial was of a teenage girl, and amongst the grave goods were spindle whorls of shale and a beautiful bone comb. In 2004 Martin came up trumps again and found two projects for me to get involved with. This is where I met someone else who was going to shape my archaeological career. Martin told me that help was needed at Shillingstone Roman villa, and also that I should go to see Lilian Ladle at Bestwall Quarry. I rang Lilian and arranged to see her on site one morning, and in the afternoon went to see the Shillingstone Villa site. I walked in, introduced myself and got set to work immediately. Shame about the service trench straight through the bathhouse!



Figure 3: Bone comb from the Roman burial



Figure 4: 'Black Peat' last phase at Bestwall

As for Lilian and Bestwall, joining the team was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Over the next 18 months I was taught many skills and my confidence grew. Bestwall was a magnificent site to learn on and Lilian, Janet, Carol and many others were the perfect teachers. Around this time I got involved in a Time Team dig at South Perrot, going along as a field walker initially, but half way through the first morning they needed more diggers and I volunteered.

Both Lilian and Martin encouraged me to join EDAS and once again they led me in the right direction. My first excavation with EDAS was at Higgins' Field, Tarrant Monkton and that excavation will forever stay in my memory - and my medical record! To help excavate a henge monument was a dream assignment. However my involvement was cut short by a six week illness. Should have washed my hands properly before lunch! This episode did not put me off but taught me a very valuable lesson.

I also took part in a Wessex Archaeology Training Dig in Home Field at Down Farm, excavating an Iron Age site. I dug a large section of a ditch and learned a lot, including some surveying techniques. Just before this I did a field walk with Martin on Handley Common. It was a bright, sunny summer day with an occasional shower. Each time it rained we got soaked and then dried off in the sunshine. Walking a few feet apart, we picked up scrapers and blades and other tools. During one of the showers I decided to carry my finds on my right forearm until the rain stopped and I could clean them off. Half way down a row Martin looked at me, reached over and plucked one of the items from my arm. He wiped the mud from the object and let out a strangled cry of 'I don't believe it!' à la Victor Meldrew, and said in a calmer tone 'you found an axe'. He returned it to me and we carried on along the rows. Martin always said 'if anyone is going to find anything it will be Bryan'. In fact on one of the WEA walks on Martin Down he joyously celebrated when someone else found a piece of Bronze Age pottery.



Figure 5: Iron Age ditch at Down Farm



Figure 6: Postholes demarcating a Bronze Age roundhouse

After Bestwall finished in 2005 I wondered where my next adventure in archaeology was going to be. I began planning a trip to walk Hadrian's Wall, but due to a number of things plans were changed and I found myself excavating as a volunteer at Vindolanda in Northumberland for a week in 2006. This was the start of regular trips to the north to assist with the excavations.

Back in Dorset, it was now time for the next big EDAS project, starting as a field walk, on Football Field, Worth Matravers. Little did we suspect that Phil Robert's comment 'Probably won't find anything' was going to lead to a multi-period site, dating from the Neolithic to the Dark Ages. Over six years I fell in love with the place, excavating in all weathers, aided by a few gallons of Stowford Press in the Square and Compass, and some amazing finds and discoveries. Lilian took over the directorship of the project in 2010 and many

talks have been given and articles written about our findings. I will not go into any more detail here as there have been updates in newsletters over the last few years and you can look at these on the website, along with photographs. Perhaps we will revisit at some point, who knows. It would be good to answer many more questions. And as we speak, Lilian is working hard, with help from the team and many others, preparing the report for publication in the not too distant future.

I joined the committee of EDAS and got involved researching other sites around the Purbecks and the work of J B Calkin in this area. I am even in touch with one of Calkin's sons in Australia and one of his nephews in England. I have also joined other societies and got involved in some excavations in Christchurch and elsewhere. Test pitting in Wimborne Square, I spent one particular day sitting on mud, sieving every shovelful coming out of a waterlogged trench, eventually bailing out the water to discover I had found a wall, with a couple of Roman tesserae included in its construction. This drew a small crowd of onlookers including the other excavators. Well I like to finish what I started! Shortly after, I spent a day digging at Durrington Walls with Martin and Mike Parker Pearson.



Figure 7: Clay pipe bowl from Westport

EDAS also got involved in hunting for a 'Roman Road' with the 'Sandford Heritage Project'. Sadly halfway through the two week project it was agreed there was no road. But all was not lost and we moved on to Holton Lee to continue investigations started by Bournemouth University in the early 2000s. Here we discovered pottery from about 100 years after the Norman Conquest. The following week found me digging with Lilian and the others in Wareham, close to the council offices at Westport House. The site was very close to the Saxon walls of the town and during the digging of service trenches they had discovered fragments of clay tobacco pipes. The story from here proved to be interesting, with lots of evidence of a kiln, hundreds of pipe fragments and an interesting story involving the maker: theft, transportation to Australia and two families at opposite ends of the world. Who knows what you will discover when you pick up your trowel?

The most recent project with Lilian and EDAS, in the heart of Dorset, began with fieldwalking, geophysics and two seasons of excavation. Lilian was asked by the owner of Druce Farm, near Piddlehinton, to discover if the building debris and scattered tesserae in the ploughsoil of one of the fields, was a sign of a major Roman building. We feared that the preservation would be poor but have been proved wrong with the discovery of a fine geometric mosaic, fallen wall and many more features. We were joined by colleagues from other societies, groups and experts, and even the local wildlife. The open day this year attracted around 300 visitors. Next year we will return to discover more of its secrets.



Figure 8: 'Russell' who dropped in at Druce to join us for lunch



Figure 10: Mick Aston & Martin Green at the celebrations

This last year has also been memorable for the 30th anniversary celebrations at the Priests House Museum in Wimborne with our special guest Mick Aston who is sadly no longer with us and will be greatly missed. A presentation was made to John Day who retired from the chairmanship of the Society. His contribution from the beginning has been immeasurable and I thank him for having the faith in me to persuade me to join the committee. The year also gave me and



Figure 9: Post-Medieval drain at Kimmeridge

some of the team the chance to join AC Archaeology working on the site of the new village hall in Kimmeridge, which will include a new Fossil Museum. The site had medieval pottery, shale objects, field drains and a beautifully constructed Post-Medieval drainage channel, which I helped to excavate.

Dorset has become my true home and its archaeology my passion. EDAS has given

me the chance to realise that I should have got involved sooner. I have now written a number of articles for various newsletters, given talks to societies, coach parties, SAGA holiday makers, retired groups etc. I have also been given the encouragement to write an appendix, for the Worth Matravers report, about Calkin's work.

My thanks to EDAS, John, Lilian, Martin, and the many, many friends I have made during my journey to discover a new purpose in my life.

This Staffordshire lad is happy digging the dirt on Dorset's past. I look forward to many more adventures in the future and looking 'backward' to discover what else this wonderful county has hidden underground.

Bryan Popple