



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 – May 2014

#### **EDAS Lecture – The Egyptians and other Travelling People in Early Modern Dorset, with Judy Ford**

Our April lecture was by Dr Judith Ford, PhD, FSA, who has recently retired as joint editor of the Somerset & Dorset Notes and Queries journal. Judy presented a very interesting and sympathetic story of travelling people in Great Britain and Dorset, where they have formed the largest ethnic group since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. She explained that these itinerant people, who are today referred to as Romany, came originally from the Sind Province in the Indian sub-continent. Their westward migration remains a mystery but a detailed study of their distinct language has found that it derives from a form of Sanskrit. We do not know when they first appeared in England but the earliest records are from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century when they are referred to as Egyptians. The origin of this label is not known, but apparently at some time these people settled in an area of the Peloponnese called Little Egypt, or else their exotic appearance was interpreted as Egyptian. The term stuck and was even used by the group. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the word became shortened to gypsy, and again for a time this term was accepted by the people. Later it was seen as a derogatory term and they adopted the name Romany which is derived from the Sanskrit word “dom” meaning man of a lower caste.

These itinerant people are nothing if not fiercely independent. Their lives revolved around an urge to travel, following well established routes where they could find seasonal work, and provide specialised services and goods. Their traditional services included, manual work, metal working, horse dealing and providing various forms of entertainment such as playing music and fortune-telling. Whilst in modern times this life style is often seen as anachronistic and possibly suspicious, in the past they were welcomed by isolated rural communities. The romantic image of the free-spirited traveller leading a highly decorated horse-drawn wagon was a recent reality. For centuries the Egyptians would travel lightly by foot, because the roads were not conducive to long distance travel by wheeled transport. Whilst the land still contained many areas of wild wood and open commons they were able to live quietly and effectively off the land, but gradually as these open areas were enclosed by eager landowners the opportunities for the gypsies were reduced.

By the 1528 it's estimated that 10,000 gypsies were living in England. Their habit of travelling extensively, often across borders back onto the continent and into Scotland, provoked a degree of suspicion. In 1530 the first of several parliamentary acts were passed to restrict and persecute them, and force them out of the country. But from detailed research Judy has found some interesting examples of how the laws were applied. She concludes that there were few prosecutions and suggests these laws were not popular and indeed many gypsies could now prove they were born in England. The earliest record in Dorset was found in the Parish Register of Lyme Regis date 14<sup>th</sup> February 1559 when Joan, the daughter of an Egyptian, was baptised. In the same year a group of gypsies were prosecuted in Dorchester but they were released on a technicality when they proved they had entered England from Scotland. She found a reference dated to 1622 referring to a group of travellers camping near Wimborne who local people visited to have their fortunes told. She said that fortune tellers have always enjoyed weaving mischievous stories, suggesting unfaithful partners and unpleasant events to unsettle their expectant clients. During the confusion of the Civil War twelve travelling men were rounded up in Uplyme, they were paid to leave the area. Later in 1753 Mary Squires an elderly woman was tried in Old Bailey for abduction, and the case became national news. She claimed her innocence and a number of Dorset people appeared to vouch for her character and her

innocence. She was acquitted and took to the road to walk home to Dorset. The act was repealed in the late 1750's.

Romany families have had to acquire surnames and a number of names are closely associated with Romany families, such as Friend, Lee, Palmer, Smith, which are often derived from a trade. In Dorset, Burden is a renowned Romany name especially in the Wool area. A headstone in Puddletown church cemetery is dedicated to Peter Stanley, referred to as the King of the Gypsies, who died aged 70 years in 1802. Judy also said that many gypsies settled in the Purbeck area. Many Romany people were able to continue with their traditional life style well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Dorset and many local people have fond memories of meeting these people of the road.

Judith captivated her audience and by the end I am sure everyone felt they understood the Romany people a little better. A number of the audience described their own experiences with the Romany people and in the main they were positive.

**Andrew Morgan**

## ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT

### Druce Farm Roman Villa Excavation

The site has been prepared and the official excavation period started on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May. Normally the site will be open from Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Note that the site will be closed for two weekdays following any scheduled weekends. Below are some key dates:

DATES	ACTIVITIES
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Site opens
May 31 <sup>st</sup> / June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Weekend Working
June 28 <sup>th</sup> and 29 <sup>th</sup>	Weekend Working
June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Open Day
July 19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup>	Weekend Working
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	CBA Archaeology Day
July 26 <sup>th</sup> /27 <sup>th</sup>	Weekend Working

### **BBC** Coverage

The Druce Farm Roman Villa excavation is featured on the BBC News website for Dorset <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-27266690> under the headline "Two Roman mosaics set to be unearthed at Puddletown".

On 7<sup>th</sup> May at 8.05 Lilian was interviewed on BBC Radio Solent.

As mentioned previously we are liaising with Nicola Berry of Dorset County Museum and making the site available for school visits. To date we have six visits scheduled that will cater for 72 eager children. Older children will be given the opportunity to get their hands dirty and we have purchased some equipment they

will be able to use. We hope a few more schools will confirm their attendance in the near future. EDAS member Sue Cullinane will co-ordinate the visits.

The new trenches opened for the 2014 season have already been productive and we have uncovered sections of two new mosaic floors. Interestingly one is quite plain but contains a number of tesserae made from fragments of box flue tiles.



*Mosaic 1*



*Mosaic 2 with fragments of re-used box flue tiles*

There is a great deal of work to be undertaken this year and there are opportunities for people whatever their level of experience. So far 61 people from around the county have registered an interest in working on the site; hopefully many will turn up and support the work throughout the summer. If you are interested then please contact:

Lilian Ladle, Site Director, email: [bestwall@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bestwall@tiscali.co.uk) or tel: 012929553144




### **EDAS COMMITTEE 2014 - 2015**

<b>Chairman</b>	Andrew Morgan	Tel: 01202 731162
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Helen Brickell	Tel: 01202 602753
<b>Treasurer</b>	Peter Walker	Tel: 01425 471326
<b>Secretary</b>	Brian Maynard	
<b>Programme Secretary</b>	Steve Smith	
<b>Director of Field Archaeology</b>	Lilian Ladle	
<b>Communications Officer</b>	Vanessa Joseph	
<b>General Members</b>	Bryan Popple	
	Dave Stewart	
	Geoff Taylor	
	Karen Winsor	

The EDAS Committee usually meets four times a year to discuss anything affecting the society. The next meeting will be on 20th May.



## Sketches of Druce – May 2014 by Dorothy Michell

		
<b>Recording</b>	<b>Mosaic appearing</b>	<b>Pondering</b>
		
<b>Where?</b>	<b>Getting down to it</b>	<b>Trowelling</b>
		
<b>Must be something down here</b>	<b>Handy bucket to lean on</b>	<b>Where am I and where am I going?</b>

These rather charming sketches were made by EDAS member Do Michell, who is working on the site with her husband John.

## **EDAS Walk – West Parley 26 April 2014**

11 EDAS members and a dog joined John Cullen for a guided walk around West Parley. We had perfect spring weather although the ground underfoot was somewhat boggy in places following some heavy rain the day before.

West Parley is much maligned and famous for its dreaded cross roads and traffic lights. However, this walk, known as the Heritage Walk and inspired by a local parish plan, took us from the Parley Country Club through a series of different landscapes. We started in Parley Wood, ancient natural woodland shown on manorial documents. Through the years, local residents coppiced hazel for hurdles and fencing and felled the oak trees regularly until the 1940s. In contrast, Parley Common is a large area of heathland previously used for grazing cattle and digging turves for fuel as part of local subsistence farming. A large number of trees have been cut in the last 10 years to restore the heathland habitat where lizards and slow worms can be found. It was here in Parley Common that the first “smooth snake” was discovered.

We then walked through residential areas where, surprisingly, one can find three Bronze Age bowl barrows along the side of the road or in residents’ front gardens. These barrows used to offer extensive views from higher ground across the Stour valley and beyond. Mags Barrow was excavated in 1924 and a number of grave goods were found.

Coming out onto Dudsbury Road, the large oak trees mark an ancient field boundary which remained despite housing development infill of existing fields and pastures. We crossed over to Dudsbury Camp, an Iron Age (700BC-43AD) fort on the highest ground on the edge of the River Stour. Double rampart defences enclose a centre of about 8 acres. The Camp is a Scheduled Monument of national importance although many will associate it with the Girl Guides who have held camps here since 1931.

We walked down Ridgeway, an ancient track leading to the River Stour, once known as Dudsbury Lane. It is very likely to have been used by smugglers after crossing the Stour. Some of the oak trees nearby are at least 300 years old. We then passed several older farmhouses in an area which was part of the original hamlet of West Parley

Within the Conservation area, we found the Old Rectory, Appletree Cottage, All Saints Church and Church Farm. Little has changed here for hundreds of years. Although much of the Saxon church was rebuilt in 1896, many elements of previous architecture were used. The sundial on the approach path was originally part of the post from the gibbet that used to be on East Parley Common. A recess in the east wall contains a C14 earthenware vase found in the graveyard in 1895 and reputed to have contained the heart of the Lady of Lydlinch who originally endowed the church.

We could have spent longer and learned even more about the area. But, unfortunately, there are one or two god pubs in the area and it was a glorious spring day. Many thanks go to John for a very enjoyable and informative morning. For those of you interested in doing the walk in the future, visit the West Parley Parish Council web site [http://www.westparley-pc.gov.uk/heritage\\_walk.php](http://www.westparley-pc.gov.uk/heritage_walk.php) where you can print out a map and directions.

***Vanessa Joseph***

## PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM AND GARDEN - THE MUSEUM OF EAST DORSET

On behalf of EDAS on the 30th April I attended the private viewing of the new exhibitions at the Priest's House Museum. The first one, "Lost Tracks" was guest curated by Prof. Colin Divall of the University of York and Mr Peter Russell of the Somerset and Dorset Railway Heritage Trust. This exhibition is a joint venture between the Museum and the East Dorset Heritage Trust and runs until the end of June and additional displays and artefacts can be seen at Allendale House.

The displays explore not only the local East Dorset railway stations and tracks but also the people who worked on the railways and those who travelled on the trains from the mid 1940's until closure in the mid 1960's. The "Beeching" axe was dreaded by many rural communities and this exhibition takes us all back to a quieter bygone age. I wonder how many had a model railway or dreamt of being an engine driver. For all it is well worth a visit.

The exhibition was opened by Councillor Robin Cook and Wimborne Mayor Andrew Hampton. We were all also welcomed by the instigator of the campaign to bring the railway to Wimborne in the 19th century, Charles Castleman himself. This was actually Tony Horitz who is a member of Wimborne Community Theatre and State of Play. Complete in period costume Tony gave a lively rendition of the speech Charles Castleman gave to the townspeople of Wimborne outlining the benefits he thought the railway would bring.



**Charles Castleman (Tony Horitz) speaking to the townspeople of Wimborne**

The other major new display "Uniforms for All" also had us reminiscing and talking about long lost memories of when we were children. It showcases uniforms from the Museum's costume and textile collection and includes school and Scout and Guide uniforms of a bygone era. Who doesn't remember their Cub cap or their Brownies uniform?

Following tasty light refreshments we were conducted by *Charles Castleman* to Allendale House for a viewing of the second part of the "Lost Tracks" display. Altogether a very enjoyable evening.

The Museum is open Monday to Saturday 10.00am to 4.30pm. The cost of admission is £5.50 (concession £4.50) for an adult and up to 2 children. This will give you admission for a year during normal opening hours (excluding some special events and ticketed events). It also enables you to make use of the Garden Tearoom during opening hours where you can purchase a drink, cake or light snack and enjoy the lovely garden, a haven of peace in a hectic world.

***Gill Broadbent***



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2014
14th May 2014	<b>EDAS Lecture – Kingston Lacy, an undiscovered history, with David Smith, National Trust</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> May 2014 Saturday	<p><b>EDAS Walk – Pamphill Environs with David Smith.</b> Meet David at 10.00 at Pamphill Green opposite church. Explorer map 118 grid reference ST 992 005. The walk which will be about 3 miles will take about 2.5 hours. David will introduce us to the Saxon and Medieval landscape that may still be seen by visiting various sites such as the Saxon watch tower, the royal 'Cyninges tun', the Medieval village of Cowgrove ('Cougrau') and its fields and meadows and old highways.</p> <p>If you want further details please contact Peter Walker on 01425 471326 or email him at <a href="mailto:peter@peterwalker.info">peter@peterwalker.info</a></p>
18 <sup>th</sup> June 2104 Wednesday	<p><b>EDAS Walk – Tarrant Rushton Airfield-1 :</b> Meet Pete at 6.30pm for the Wednesday evening walk at Windy Corner, Tarrant Rushton. This is a shorter version of the Saturday walk. Parking is limited so please share cars if possible. Explorer map 118 grid reference ST 950 062. He will explain how Tarrant Rushton played its part in the Second World War and in D Day. For further details and a copy of the map please contact Pete on 01202 885012 or email him at <a href="mailto:peteas@talktalk.net">peteas@talktalk.net</a></p>
28th June 2104 Saturday	<p><b>EDAS Walk – Tarrant Rushton Airfield-2 :</b> Meet Pete Scrivens at 10.00am for the Saturday version of the walk at Windy Corner, Tarrant Rushton. Parking is limited so please share cars if possible. Explorer map 118 grid reference ST 950 062. For further details and a copy of the map please contact Pete on 01202 885012 or email him at <a href="mailto:peteas@talktalk.net">peteas@talktalk.net</a></p>

**Note:** unless otherwise stated all lectures start at 7.30pm and are held at **St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.**

### ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY CENTRE - Fairy tales for Grownups

**On 17<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm**, the Ancient Technology Centre, Cranborne, with the Crick Crack Club will perform **THE DEVIL'S PURSE**, by Dominic Kelly with music by Leif Ottosson & Bridget Marsden



These are some of the finest contemporary performance storytellers and will create a memorable experience in this atmospheric venue. They promise to turn the earthhouse into a cinema of the imagination. Wrap up warm, bring a cushion & wear sensible shoes!

*'I was spellbound – I don't use the word lightly' The Times*

For further information <http://www.crickcrackclub.com/earthouse/>

**Wareham and District Archaeology and Local History Society**

**The Mary Rose Recovered**



**Bill Moore**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

**at 7.30pm**

**Wareham Town Hall**

Visitors welcome £2

<http://wareham-archaeology.co.uk>

**Wareham and District Archaeology and Local History Society**

**Wareham and World War I**



**Lilian Ladle**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June**

**at 7.30pm**

**Wareham Town Hall**

Visitors welcome £2

<http://wareham-archaeology.co.uk>



## FINAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

The membership fee was due on 1 April no matter what time of year you joined. Those members who pay by standing order or who joined this year can ignore the remainder of this note.

Please pay your fee to me either at the next meeting or send your cheque (not cash) by post to me together with the attached renewal form. If you want to pay by standing order please let me know and I will send a form to you.

Helen Brickell

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## EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM 2014

Please highlight any change of details otherwise leave blank

Surname/Forenames .....

Address and Postcode .....

.....

Telephone No. .... E-Mail.....

Individual £8.50, Family £12, Student £5

Cheques payable to: EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Please return form with cheque to:

Helen Brickell, Membership Secretary, 48, Lytchett Drive, Poole, Dorset, BH18 9LB

or email: [hmbrickell@googlemail.com](mailto:hmbrickell@googlemail.com) or Tel: 01202 602753 for a standing order form

Name\s in block letters.....

Signed .....

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