



Established 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – October 2014 Druce Farm Roman Villa Edition

“Absolutely blown away by my visit to the Druce Roman Villa”

This was the reaction of a delighted local resident from Puddletown after attending our latest Open Day. Throughout the season we have put a great deal of effort into providing access to the Druce Farm Roman Villa for as many people as possible. We have run three Open Days (see article below) and supported the CBA National Archaeology Week over two weekends. Working with Dorset County Museum we made the site available for school visits (see article below). Over a dozen local societies have visited the site and in addition Lilian has given a series of talks (a total of 22 during 2014) to groups around the county and beyond.

We have benefitted from visits by many experts; professional archaeologists from the commercial and academic world, learned members from societies across the country and the men of stone from Purbeck quarries.

We were honoured by a visit from Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe who really enjoyed an afternoon on site; he offered recommendations for further investigation and most importantly has promised his ongoing support to the project.

BBC South Today delivered a live broadcast from the site and Dorset County Museum arranged for a company to take overhead imagery using a drone device, for possible use in the new archaeology gallery.



I totally agree Sir Barry, BUT.....

This is a community excavation led by EDAS with participation from individuals and groups from all over Dorset. Many members of EDAS and other societies have enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the excavation. This has also resulted in several new members attracted by the practical archaeology opportunities offered by our society.

We have received over **1000 visitors** throughout the summer, many of whom travelled from outside the county.

WE THANK EVERYONE WHO CAME

EDAS Lecture – Druce Farm Roman Villa, with Lilian Ladle

As expected the first talk of the season by Lilian resulted in a full house. Lilian explained that the Druce Farm Roman Villa project came about because the landowner Ann Ridout wanted to know what was on her land. In the 1990's the Avon Valley metal detector group found Roman coins, roof tiles and mosaic tesserae on the ground surface. But it wasn't until a small team of EDAS members, who had been working on the Worth Matravers Project, undertook systematic field walking in November 2011 that we were convinced the field contained a Roman building. This was followed by a geophysical survey undertaken by Hannah Simpson, a post graduate student at Bournemouth University, which showed that the site was surrounded by a rectilinear enclosure and contained three possible ranges of buildings.



Day-1 a pristine field

This was enough to convince the team that it was worth returning in 2012. We were on site for six weeks working on three exploratory trenches and we confirmed the presence of building remains and deep ditches. Finds included painted plaster, pottery from the Rhine area, sherds of Dorset orange ware and personal items such as hair pins. In December 2012 Dave Stewart completed the geophysical survey of the immediate area covered by the villa complex. We realised that the villa had the same layout as Brading on the Isle of Wight.

We returned in 2013 with specific aims to determine the extent of the villa ranges and to understand the state of preservation. This season ran for 4 months from May and six new trenches were opened to allow exploration of the three ranges. The East Range was very exciting because we started to unveil a succession of features which suggested a massive building in the shape of an aisled hall. A large stone plinth with a cut (one Roman foot square) for the upright wood post has since been identified as a very rare example of its type. The team recognised an extended area of aligned flints embedded in mortar as being a collapsed wall, proven by the presence of putlogs (holes for scaffold). This caused great excitement and Professor Anthony King from Winchester rushed over to examine what is a rare feature and recommended we left it intact. On the North Range several rooms were identified from the remains of walls, some protected by the collapsed wall and roof material. In Room-1 we removed layers of building material that had collapsed into the room. Eventually at the floor level we uncovered a solitary tessera, the area was soon extended suggesting a mosaic pavement. After a massive effort to remove a large amount of building material the team had uncovered a complete Roman pavement.

This has resulted in a lot of interest, especially from the Association of Roman Archaeology (ARA). Bryn Waters provided invaluable advice and introduced Luigi Thompson who took detailed photographs of the mosaic pavement, from which he has produced a very detailed painting. The pattern is an expanding swastika (an ancient symbol of good luck) geometric pattern surrounded by poised squares. The mosaic is of the Illchester school and was laid in about AD350, but the pattern is much older suggesting the owner liked a traditional style. Part of the mosaic had been crudely repaired and Mark Corney identified six separate areas of maintenance that he dated between AD450-600.



Luigi Thompson and Bryn Waters work on the Mosaic

An ante-room contained the remains of a further mosaic pavement but this had been almost destroyed by ploughing. We also discovered the remains of a fireplace, which are quite rare. A sondage through the south end of Room-3 revealed a flint wall laid on the chalk bedrock and a line of post holes, suggestive of a palisade predating the villa.

At the end of the season in agreement with the landowner we marked out an area that was taken out of production; this undoubtedly saved the villa area, because the tenant farmer performed deep ploughing in the remainder of the field before planting a crop of maize.

We returned this year with the objectives to define the extent of the three ranges, place the villa into the landscape and to engage the general public. We have benefitted greatly by having a JCB on site, owned by

EDAS member Robert Heaton who has worked tirelessly clearing new areas and shifting spoil heaps, which has given us a great deal of flexibility. In the North range we have uncovered 10 rooms with six mosaic pavements. Four are badly damaged because they lie beneath a shallow layer of soil and over the years have been torn by the plough. Room-6 has another mosaic floor (dated AD250) comprising red ceramic tesserae many made from box flue tiles, and it has a fireplace clearly defined by a fillat(skirting board) running round the side of the room. This is likely to have been a sitting room used in the winter. Room-7 has a red and white chequerboard design mosaic (dated AD200) which is 50% destroyed. There is a rammed chalk floor running along the south edge of the range, clearly showing plough marks. The penultimate room is recognised as the main reception room, only a fragment of the mosaic pavement remains but sufficient for experts to recognise this as probably the finest mosaic in the villa. Not only that but we have recognised that it sits on top of an earlier mosaic that appears to have been in poor repair and been covered by its replacement.

The western range is a building of probably five rooms set back from the main living area and used for industrial purposes. In the top room we have uncovered a striking grey stone walled oven/kiln which lies under the northern wall. In another room there are two features which are likely to be ovens.



Carole planning the oven/kiln



The aisled hall from the NW corner

The extent of the eastern range has been uncovered and we have confirmed a large aisled hall with six pairs of pillars, sitting on large flint foundations, and it measures 23m x 11m. Within the hall we have a tank shaped structure lined with opus signinum. A vertical pit measuring 2m wide and 2.5 m deep was cut into chalk just outside the NE corner of the hall was used as a cess pit and filled with early material. In the NW corner is an impressive large domestic oven.

There is a wide range of roofing material; the earlier roofs comprised ceramic tiles consisting of rectangular tegula and rounded imbrex which were probably made in the Dorchester area. Several makers' marks have been noted. These appear to have been replaced by tiles cut from Purbeck limestone which are by far the most common on the site. Other roofing materials are yellow South Somerset sandstone and grey slate from Delabole in Cornwall, both types incorporated for decorative purposes.

We have collected a variety of finds including a large number of sherds: Black burnished ware, Dorset Orange wipe ware, Oxford colour coated ware, New Forest parchment ware and early Samian. Also some interesting sherds of very thin Mosel black slipped-ware and a fragment of an early Soller whiteware mortarium. Other finds include bone hair pins, copper alloy artefacts, and a fragment of snake thread glass from Cologne. To date we have uncovered four infant burials in the area of the villa. The animal bone assemblage comprises cattle, sheep/goat, a variety of shell fish and fish bones suggestive of a high status villa. As one would expect from a villa site, there have been over 100 coins collected, one of the more important being a Vespasian denari. We have a collection of worked flint from the Mesolithic onwards.

The project has proven to be very interesting not least because the villa exhibits the complex changes that have occurred from the earliest phase right through the Roman period, and the villa continued to be occupied well after the Romans had left Britain. In Room-1 just above the mosaic we have thousands of animal bones which have been identified as from owl pellets and in Room-3 we have evidence of late occupation after the room was abandoned for its original domestic use.

Lilian is grateful for the support from a large number of experts including: Dr Steven Cosh, Dr David Neal, Dr Malcolm Lynne, Dr Mark Corney, Miles Russell, Martin Green and Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe who has recommended further research subjects that will be investigated next year. We thanked Lilian for the talk and her dedication to this exciting excavation.

Andrew Morgan

FINAL OPEN DAY of 2014 - 27th September



On September 27th we held our third and final Open Day of the season; we wanted to give an opportunity to visit the site before we close it down for the winter. We had fifteen volunteers available, eight of whom acted as tour guides and really enjoyed taking parties around the site, others welcomed the visitors, organised the car parking, demonstrated real excavation activities and explained the finds. We counted 324 visitors and we conducted 28 tours, each taking about 60 minutes. Then the visitors could examine our display of finds and look at notice boards which offered background information about the excavation. All the visitors were very enthusiastic, many quite knowledgeable and there were numerous children, all well behaved as they roamed over the spoil heaps.



Vanessa Joseph and group



Robert Heaton and group



John Bithel and group



Sue Cullinane and group

Many visitors took away copies of the EDAS programme, a few took membership forms and just about everybody made a generous donation.

It was a very enjoyable experience for everybody; although the team were quite exhausted by the end. Many thanks to everybody involved and especially to all our guests who also had a good walk to and from the site.

Andrew Morgan

OPPORTUNITIES for YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Throughout the summer EDAS has enabled over 100 children to experience real archaeology at the Druce Farm Roman Villa excavation site. With the support of the landowners, Tom and Ann Ridout, we decided it was the perfect opportunity to encourage young people who are interested in archaeology and their heritage.

Working with Nicola Berry, the Education Officer of Dorset County Museum, schools throughout Dorset were contacted about this opportunity. Several were able to visit, including: St Andrew's Primary School Yetminster, The Swanage School, Poole High School, Thomas Hardy School, Bryanston School, The Gryphon School Sherborne and Poole Grammar School. In addition, members of the Dorset County Museum branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) and a group from the Home Education Group, based in Beaminster, were able to visit the site.

The visit comprised a guided tour of the site and a talk describing some of the most important artefacts found so far. This was followed by practical archaeology; finds washing, which is the first of the post-excavation processes, and trowelling when the pupils were able to work in newly opened trenches. All the young guests were very enthusiastic and enjoyed the experience. The teachers were delighted that EDAS had been able to offer this unique opportunity to visit a real archaeology site and that their pupils were able to experience practical archaeology.

We are very pleased and rather proud with the success of this exercise and would like to thank Nicola Berry who liaised with the schools, all the volunteers, especially Sue Cullinane, Bryan Popple, Geoff Taylor and Barbara Milburn who arranged the on-site activities, and not forgetting the teachers who enthusiastically supported this opportunity. Special thanks to all the young people who made this such a rewarding experience for everyone. We look forward to offering a similar opportunity next year.



St Andrew's Primary School – Trowelling



Poole High School – Washing finds



The Swanage School -Examining Finds



Thomas Hardy School - Guided tour



The Gryphon School, Sherborne – washing finds



Poole Grammar School – Trowelling



Home Education Group – Guided Tour



Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) - Trowelling

Note: The leaders of all the groups gave permission for the photographs to be published and have received copies.

Andrew Morgan

BBC SOUTH TODAY- BROADCAST

Following contact made by Vanessa Joseph we were excited when the BBC South Today programme asked to visit the site and were surprised when they requested to do a live broadcast for the midday and the evening news programmes.



Cometh the camera cometh Len

Steve Humphreys and Trevor his cameraman duly arrived at 9.30 am and didn't leave until 7.00 pm. After confirming that the farm track was suitable they called in the outside broadcast vehicle which turned up in time for the midday news.

They were suitably impressed by the site and took a huge amount of footage although this was greatly cut down for the eventual broadcast.

Feedback from a number of viewers was immediate and very positive; everyone agreed that the excavation and EDAS had been very well represented by the programme. Several Open Day visitors referred to the broadcast.

After his star performance, several people have asked for Len's contact details and I believe he has now appointed Pam as his agent to manage his image rights.



Outside broadcast winnebago

Steve promised to send us a version of the programme and stated we can do with it as we please, so in due course we will provide access through the EDAS website.

AERIAL VIEWS

Aerial photographs provide an important overview of the site and can help place it in the landscape. We are fortunate to have the support of EDAS members Jo Crane and Sue Newman who spend many hours taking photographs of archaeological sites across Dorset and the Wessex area.



The de-construction site
Photo: Sue Newman & Jo Crane

Here is a photograph of Jo and Sue in their impressive light aircraft, taken from the Druce Farm Roman Villa as they flew over, taking images they will make available to the project.



Jo and Sue overhead

We thank them very much for their invaluable images of the site and the landscape.

ATTACK of the DRONES

For some time we have thought about the merit of having detailed photographs taken of the site using a drone flying machine. And we were pleased when the Dorset County Museum offered to send a team using state of the art equipment that is being tested. Dave Brown of Head In the Clouds RC came with his equipment and took some great hi-resolution video imagery, using a multicopter, from which we can take individual photographs.



Remote controlled Drone with video camera

Again we hope to make the material available via our website and I believe that the imagery may be used in the new archaeology gallery being constructed for the Dorset County Museum.



You can count the tesserae in Room-6

One of the impressive features is that he has several pairs of goggles which give a realtime view of what the camera is seeing. This is used to guide the machine to cover the area required.



Lilian and John go virtual

The resolution of the photographs is stunning, but the images are slightly distorted and this is rectified by use of software. Dave has said he is willing to return next year.

If you are interested Dave's web site is: <http://www.headinthecloudsrc.co.uk/index.php>

UPDATE: Archaeological Excavation Walford Farm, north of Wimborne

EDAS member Pete Scriven has been keeping a close eye on the proposed development site at Walford Farm, just north of Wimborne. He has been informed by John Trehay the Associate Director/Archaeologist of the development company, that the team from Bournemouth Archaeology are getting close to completing the site excavation work with the expectation that all will be complete on site by the week ending 17/10.

The archaeologists have had a number of significant finds including two Early Neolithic handaxes but no associated features or settlement of this date. They have however uncovered what appear at present to be two Iron Age roundhouses and are currently undertaking the necessary excavation and recording of these settlement sites.

Unfortunately the development company refused public access to the site. They have now stated it has not been possible so far to undertake any public outreach programme due to the exceptionally dry weather which starved the archaeological features of much needed moisture for identification and ease of excavation for the team. Thankfully the rain did arrive and the team have been flat out recording the probable Iron Age features.

They must undertake another monitoring sign-off meeting with Steve Wallis, DCC and Emily Jones, Christchurch and East Dorset Council next Wednesday but once that is complete there is potential to invite the public to view the findings. He has stated that there is now no opportunity for anyone to excavate unfortunately but an appreciation of the archaeology, the finds and the post-excavation procedures can be explained to those who can attend.

He proposes a lunchtime site tour or perhaps a time at the end of the archaeologists' working day, perhaps 4.30/5pm? He suggests that it would be best to organise a group so that Bournemouth Archaeology can facilitate this exercise with efficiency.

He explained that they cannot offer a site tour on either of the Saturdays before the archaeologists complete their work due to farm restrictions and agreements made with the tenant farmer.

Pete will try and organise a visit and make details available as soon as possible.

Andrew Morgan

EDAS 2015 FIELD TRIP: Cambridgeshire, led by Keith and Denise Allsop

We are delighted to announce that the EDAS Field Trip for 2015 will be led by Keith and Denise and they have decided to base the trip in the Cambridge area.

They are working on the itinerary and are considering visiting Cambridge, Bury St Edmund's, Thetford. Other locations being considered are Ely, Grimes Graves and Flag Fen.

The provisional date for the trip is 13th to 20th June 2015

For those of you who haven't experienced an EDAS Field Trip one of the great advantages is that local experts are often very willing to help visiting societies, both in the planning phase but also by offering to give talks and lead events during the week.

Further details in due course.

EDAS Walk - Portland

On Sunday 28th September 2014 eight EDAS members and one guest joined John Gibbons for a five mile walk taking in some of the fascinating history of the Isle of Portland.



We all met at St George's Church in the hamlet of Reforne where one of the local guides gave us a history and tour of the church. The church was originally started in 1754 and was built by a local man Thomas Gilbert to replace the dilapidated St Andrew's church at Church Ope (of which more later) and was consecrated in 1766 by the Bishop of Bristol. It is largely built of ashlar blocks of roach stone (a very hard limestone with fossil inclusions) but also incorporates some of the old stones from St Andrew's. The interior is distinctive in that it is very plain (the style is Primitive Georgian) but retains its box pews, three of the four original galleries, and two centrally

located "hour glass" pulpits. The church is from the period when The Word was the important feature of Christian worship so the pulpit was centrally located so that the sermon could be experienced by all. The second pulpit was where the order of service was conducted. Unusually the majority of the pews were sold (freehold) to individual families to raise money for maintenance shortly after the church was built. This caused severe problems during the Victorian period when the descendants of all the owners had to be contacted before restoration work could be carried out. This complex ownership also prevented, in 1901, the then Bishop from completely restructuring the church (for the new focus on the Eucharist i.e. the altar, instead of The Word, the pulpit). The church eventually closed in 1914 when a new church was built but it is still consecrated and is now under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.



Having relocated to the main Heights car park we headed off in the direction of the Verne Prison, where we paused briefly to learn that it was originally built in 1881 as a military fortress to house up to 1000 troops in defence of Portland harbour, but later became a prison in 1949.

Moving on we passed goats and Wallabies (!) in an enclosure (which turns out to be Fancys Family Farm <http://www.fancysfarm.co.uk/>) and stopped briefly at the Old Engine shed at Grove. This building once housed the locomotives that worked in the Admiralty Quarries, including a Bagnell 0-4-0 loco which transported the stone from the quarry to the top of the incline, near the shed. Here the stone was attached to a cable and winched down the incline to be part of the new breakwater. The foundation stone of the Portland breakwater was laid by Prince Albert on 25th July 1849.



Skirting past the young offenders institute we followed a public right of way past St Peter's church at Grove. This church is no longer in use and has been in private hands for a number of years, although its future is uncertain. There were signs of some renovation work being undertaken in the grounds. The church was built in 1872 by convicts for the use of the nearby garrison. It was declared redundant in 1972 and was listed Grade II* in 1978.

Walking on through the village of Grove we cut through The Governor's Community Garden which was originally laid out in 1851 and renovated in 2010. The gardens contain three

Victorian ventilator shafts, which were once used as ventilation for a sewer system.

Following the coastal path we enjoyed some magnificent views towards Portland Bill lighthouse, eventually arriving at Church Ope Cove where we stopped for lunch.

Church Ope Cove has the only beach on Portland and before the causeway was built was the main access point to the island. Because of its position the Normans built both a castle (Rufus Castle) and a church (St Andrew's Church) on the cliffs overlooking the cove. Most of our group climbed down the steep steps to visit the church, which is now in ruins and was replaced by St George's church which we visited earlier. Climbing back up from the church we passed Pennsylvania Castle, a gothic revival mansion built by John Penn, the grandson of the founder of Pennsylvania in the USA.



Passing a large working quarry our next destination was a visit to the two remaining windmills on Portland, both in a ruinous state. They are believed to be medieval and were first recorded in the Land Revenue Accounts of 1608. They have both been listed Grade II but are in a poor state of preservation. They are built of coarse rubble and are roofless, the walls topped with an ashlar ring which would have supported the canopy. The south mill was used as an observation platform by the home guard during the Second World War.

The conclusion of our walk took us back along the coastal path, this time with wonderful views of Chesil beach. Several detours had to be taken to avoid rock falls, and we passed through the stone arch which was originally constructed to allow quarry rubble to be dumped without blocking the path. Towards the end of the walk we passed through the Tout Quarry Sculpture Park which, since 1983, has hosted a wide range of sculptures and also runs outdoor sculpture workshops.

Many thanks to John for leading us on a fascinating and enjoyable walk on what turned out to be a wonderful warm and sunny late September day.

Steve Smith

New Wessex Gallery of Archaeology – it all happens behind the scenes!

In May this year, Sara and I were two of the lucky volunteers invited to attend the private visit to Salisbury Museum of Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex and his wife Sophie, Countess of Wessex. Their purpose: to place the ninth century Warminster Jewel in the new Wessex Gallery of Archaeology.

This was the perfect excuse for a new outfit as protocol dictated smart day dresses for the ladies and lounge suits for the gentlemen. We all looked the part on the day. The gentlemen were suited and booted and there were no gilets in sight.

In the end, we were amazed by the actual informality of the occasion. We had both practised our bobs but had no real occasion to perform them as the Earl and Countess of Wessex were so relaxed and friendly they just put everyone at their ease. They seemed genuinely interested in what was going on at the Museum and the different types of work we do. We were very flattered when Sophie specifically said "Now I understand that some of you are good with a box Brownie ..." - a reference to the fact that Sara and I, as artefact photographers, were urgently photographing the artefacts which would soon be on permanent display again.

We felt especially proud when their Royal Highnesses unveiled the plaque for the new Wessex Gallery of Archaeology. Their Royal Highnesses help install the Warminster Jewel: a ninth century gold, rock crystal and lapis lazuli jewel inset which was found in a field near Cley Hill, Warminster in 1997. The jewel is an aestel (manuscript pointer) made for Alfred, King of Wessex.



The Earl and Countess of Wessex

Over 2,500 rare and exciting artefacts now on display in the new gallery

The new gallery brings the story of Stonehenge and ancient Britain to life in a highly visual, imaginative and exciting way that's not only memorable and compelling, but takes visitors on a fascinating journey of discovery. It showcases over 2,500 rare objects which tell the story of early Britain from the mathematical genius of the ancient Britons and Beaker people through to the Roman invasion and the Norman Conquest.



A beautiful setting for amazing archaeological finds

Famous and treasured exhibits include the Beaker grave of the Amesbury Archer (Sara and I had to photograph his arrowheads for a graphics display); the Warminster Jewel (which we have also been lucky enough to handle); and the Wardour Hoard, discovered in 2011.

The gallery also places the story of Stonehenge within its wider chronological and regional context. For example, it explores the stories of the archaeologists who uncovered the past – such as William Stukeley.

It includes the gneiss mace-head found by Colonel William Hawley in 1924 and a bronze-age axe and dagger, which match the carvings on stone 53 discovered by Professor Richard Atkinson in July 1953.

We are extremely proud to have played our part in the creation of the new Wessex Gallery of Archaeology. We're now back behind the scenes – our first task will be to start photographing the rest of the Pitts-River collections.

Vanessa Joseph and Sara Marshall

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Druce Farm Roman Villa Excavation

Work on the site for the 2014 season will finish on Friday 3rd October. Following recommendations from learned colleagues we have decided to return next year with a smaller team to investigate some specific research questions that are still outstanding. Details will follow in due course.

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2014
8th October 2014	EDAS Lecture – Cage Chantries of Christchurch Priory, with Dr Cindy Wood, Winchester University
12th November 2014	EDAS Lecture – The Roman Army, Fact or Fiction, with John Smith
10th December 2014	EDAS Lecture – Saxon Wimborne and East Dorset, with Janet Seal
DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2015
14 th January 2015	EDAS Lecture – Geomantics in Archaeology with Ben Urmston, Wessex Archaeology
11th February 2015	EDAS Lecture – The Protected Wrecks on the South Coast, with Mark Beattie-Edwards, Programme Director Nautical Archaeology Society
11 th March 2015	EDAS Lecture – Life & Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum, with Paul Roberts Curator British Museum, location tbc
25th March 2015	EDAS AGM followed by members' evening
8th April 2015	EDAS Lecture – Catalhoyuk Neolithic Settlement, with Professor Peter Andrews, Curator of Blandford Museum
13th May 2015	EDAS Lecture – The Portable Antiquaries Scheme and the Treasure Act, with Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen, Dorset Finds Officer

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