



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk

mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk

Established 1983

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

NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2015

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2015

We thank all members who attended this year's AGM; it reflects well on the society that we had such a good turnout. The reports written by the committee officers were all accepted unanimously. There were no complaints or suggestions for change and the members passed a vote of thanks to the committee for the work undertaken over the year.

Brian Maynard and Steve Smith have both stepped down from the committee. Both have been stalwarts of the committee for many years and we offered our sincere thanks for their important contributions, they will be missed. Peter Walker, our long standing Treasurer also stood down but was willing to stand again and was re-elected. We are delighted to welcome Ian Richardson, Jan Cosgrove and Robert Heaton as new members; all are very keen to get involved. We thank Geoff Taylor who has been appointed Committee Secretary and Bryan Popple who will be our new Programme Secretary. All committee appointments were passed unanimously.

The Committee:

Andrew Morgan	Chairman
Bryan Popple	Programme Secretary
Geoff Taylor	Secretary
Helen Brickell	Membership Secretary
Lilian Ladle	Director of Field Archaeology
Peter Walker	Treasurer
Vanessa Joseph	Communications Officer
Dave Stewart	
Ian Richardson	
Jan Cosgrove	
Karen Winsor	
Robert Heaton	

We enjoyed an interesting talk by Alan Hawkins on Dorset's only known canal. Alan will hopefully prepare a short paper for the next newsletter. And we enjoyed a humorous talk by Brian on the 2014 field trip he organized to Lincolnshire; which he admitted is an area he chose before he realized it was devoid of any hills or prehistoric archaeology. But nevertheless a good time was had by all.

EDAS Lecture: Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum, with Mike Stone, vice Chairman of Association for Roman Archaeology

This lecture was hosted jointly by EDAS and the Bournemouth University Archaeology Society and held in the Marconi Theatre on the Talbot Campus. We thank Becca, Laura, Darwin, Emily and all the students who helped guide the audience from the car parks. We had an excellent turnout with over 140 people in the audience including a good contingent of students and lecturers, plus many people who were not EDAS members, several of whom have since joined the society. This is an event we would like to repeat next year.



We sincerely thank Mike Stone for giving the talk in the absence of the original speaker, who dropped out at the last moment. Mike really knows his subject and he gave a fact filled talk about Pompeii and Herculaneum and the tragic events that created this amazing time capsule, which sits on the Bay of Naples under the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.

Herculaneum and Pompeii are situated around the Bay of Naples. Herculaneum was once a Greek trading post and became a fashionable resort for wealthy Romans with a small population. Pompeii was a busy town with approximately 11,000 people. Both settlements only came under direct Roman rule around 80BC after supporting an unsuccessful rebellion against the Roman republic.

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius was recorded by Pliny the Younger and he sent two letters about the event to Tacitus the Roman historian. His father, Pliny the Elder, an admiral of the fleet, died attempting to rescue people from the shore.

It was a multi-phase eruption. The initial major explosion produced a column of ash and pumice ranging between 15 and 30 kilometres (49,000 and 98,000 ft) high, which rained on Pompeii to the southeast but not on Herculaneum upwind. Subsequently the cloud collapsed as the gases expanded and lost their capability to support their solid contents, releasing it as a pyroclastic surge, which reached Herculaneum but not Pompeii. Additional explosions reinstituted the column six times. Surges 3 and 4 are believed to have destroyed Pompeii. On the first day a fall of white pumice containing fragments of up to 3 centimetres (1.2 in) fell for several hours. It heated the roof tiles up to 140 °C. This period would have been the last opportunity to escape. On the second day many people who had escaped, made the fatal decision to return in an attempt to rescue their precious belongings. But another collapse of the volcanic column on the second day caused more pyroclastic currents that devastated Herculaneum and Pompeii. The temperature of these surges reached up to 300 °C: nobody could have escaped, as the city was engulfed by gases of such temperatures.

Thick layers of ash covered the two towns, they were abandoned and eventually their names and locations were forgotten. The first time any part of them was unearthed was in 1599, when digging an underground channel to divert the river Sarno ran into ancient walls covered with paintings and inscriptions. The architect Domenico Fontana was called in; he unearthed a few more frescoes, then covered them over again, and nothing more came of the discovery. It is likely that the paintings were regarded as too vulgar and had to be hidden as an act of respectful censorship. Herculaneum was properly rediscovered in 1738 by workmen digging for the foundations of a summer palace for the King of Naples. Pompeii was rediscovered as the result of intentional excavations in 1748 by the Spanish military engineer Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre. These towns have since been excavated to reveal many intact buildings and wall paintings. Karl Weber directed the first real excavations; he was followed in 1764 by military engineer Francisco la Vega, whose brother, Pietro, later worked with the Frenchman Christophe Saliceti. Giuseppe Fiorelli took charge of the excavations in 1863 and he noticed the voids in the ash layer had contained human remains. It was Fiorelli who realized these were spaces left by the decomposed bodies and so devised the technique of injecting plaster into them to recreate the forms of Vesuvius's victims. This technique is still in use today, with a clear resin now used instead of plaster because it is more durable, and does not destroy the bones, allowing further analysis.

In Herculaneum because initial excavations revealed only a few skeletons, it was long thought that nearly all of the inhabitants had managed to escape. But in 1981 when excavations reached a building with 12 arches on the beach area that archaeologists discovered several hundred skeletons huddled close together on the beach facing the sea. The study of the victims' postures and the effects on their skeletons indicate that death was a result of intense heat that caused contraction of hands and feet and vaporized the flesh. The temperatures at Pompeii were less and the flesh remained, to be covered by ash and slowly decompose waiting to be reconfigured with the use of plaster and resin.



After Pompeii was finally annexed by the Roman Republic, c. 89 BC, it underwent a period of development, which included an amphitheatre, a palaestra, with a central swimming pool and an aqueduct that provided water for more than 25 street fountains, at least four public baths, and a large number of private houses and businesses. The buried town offers a snapshot of Roman life in the 1st century, frozen at the moment it was buried on 24 August AD 79. Many buildings are well preserved when excavated. Details of everyday life are preserved. For example, on the floor of one of the houses a famous inscription *Salve, lucru* ("Welcome, profit") indicates a trading company. Other houses provide details concerning professions and categories, such as for the laundry workers. Numerous graffiti carved on the walls and inside rooms provides a wealth of information regarding vulgar Latin, the form spoken colloquially rather than the literary language of the classical writers.

The two sites have been extremely well preserved for 1600 years, under the volcanic ash and debris. However, once excavations began, exposure started the process of deterioration. This was not helped by the methods of archaeology used earlier in the town's excavation, which generally centered on recovering valuable artefacts rather than ensuring the survival of all artefacts. Today, tourism and vandalism have damaged many of the areas open to the public, and water damage has undermined many of the foundations of the buildings. Reconstruction efforts have often proved counterproductive. However, in modern times conservation efforts have been more successful. Today excavations have been temporarily discontinued, in order to direct all funding to help save the city.

A large number of artefacts are preserved in the Naples National Archaeological Museum.

Vesuvius has erupted many times since and is the only volcano on the European mainland to have erupted within the last hundred years. Today, it is regarded as one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world because of the population of 3,000,000 people living nearby and its tendency towards explosive (Plinian) eruptions. It is the most densely populated volcanic region in the world.

Mike Stone will also provide a resume of the talk, which we will publish in due course.

Andrew Morgan

PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM UPDATE

The Priest's House Museum has seen some radical changes over the last 12 months mainly due to the reduction in Council spending. One victim of the cuts was to be Tourist Information Centre which was set to close at the end of 2013. Recognising the importance of such a facility to both local inhabitants and the tourist trade, its running has been taken over by the Trustees of the Priest's House Museum. Now under the direction of the Trustees it is managed by Lindsay who is ably assisted by a team of enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers. Included amongst their various responsibilities is the sale of tickets for the various events taking place at the Museum.

The Museum continues to be vibrant and forward looking and in February 2014 was awarded full Accreditation by the Arts Council, England. The smooth running of the Museum depends on the team of volunteers. There are currently 160 volunteers helping with a wide range of activities from front of house - taking entrance fees and helping the public - to gardening, assisting in the tea room and working with the collections. A volunteer coordinator, Andy Fairhurst, was appointed in December 2014 to look after the volunteers and organise work schedules. If you feel you have time to spare, even if only half a day a week, and would like to join the team please drop in and have a chat with Andy.

The Museum collections are being well used for both educational and research purposes. The "Learning Services" for school groups continues to be popular and topics have been expanded to take into account the new school curriculum. These now include "Stone Age to Iron Age: Life in Ancient Dorset" and well as the Romans. A number of PhD students are using Museum collections as part of their research. Two are examining different aspects of the important collection of painted Roman wall plaster from the Tarrant Hinton Villa while another has been looking at the pottery from the site. We have possibly the largest collection of Verwood pottery in the county and this will form part of yet another PhD project which will look into the development and distribution of this important local industry.

Two new exhibitions open on the 1st April. The first one which will run until the 1st August is "Second World War Stories". This commemorates 70 years since the end of the Second World War and looks at the war's effects on East Dorset. The second is entitled "Treasured Mementos" and is a costume based exhibition of people's treasured possessions and this will run until 23rd December.

Other exciting projects are being planned for the future. The Museum has been awarded funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a project to ensure the history, heritage and contribution of the people of Wimborne Minster and surrounding villages during the First World War is captured preserved and interpreted. This is an ongoing 4 year scheme and Ben Buxton, whom I am sure many will know, has been appointed as freelance project manager. The Museum is also one of the key partners, together with the National Trust, Dorset History Centre and Exeter University in a project which will look at the life and achievements of William Banks using the archives from the Kingston Lacy estate. Exhibitions connected with this will be on display in the Museum in 2017.

The garden and tea room continue to be popular retreats from the bustle of Wimborne and a new selection of mouth-watering cakes and other irresistible goodies are now on sale.

Gill Broadbent

DORSET PLANNING and HERITAGE ADVISORY GROUP - Pilot Scheme

As mentioned in the last newsletter members of EDAS have been asked to participate in a pilot scheme to assess whether an amateur society can perform a useful role in reviewing planning applications. The intention is to use local knowledge to better ensure that the archaeology is best served. The pilot will cover the area of the East Dorset District Council, which excludes Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch. This is NOT an exercise to discourage development, it is meant to complement the role of the Dorset County Council archaeology services, and there is NO intention to undermine or replace this critical service.

These are early days, but we have held preliminary meetings with the EDDC Planning Department and Dorset Archaeology Services. We are in contact with the CBA Local Heritage Engagement Network, who will be providing advice and guidance. We are now receiving a weekly list of Planning Applications from EDDC. We have held our first group session with a number of EDAS members. The next meeting will be on 8th May, when we plan to further develop our procedures. Details to be confirmed.

See next article about the Save Dorchester's Archaeology Campaign, as an example of the threats being placed on our cultural heritage. We need the support of keen members who are interested in this challenge, if you want further information please contact

Andrew Morgan

Email: andrewmorgz@aol.com

Tel: 01202 731162

Save Dorchester's Archaeology Campaign

West Dorset District Council has shocked and appalled archaeologists by insisting that the controversial Charles Street development in Dorchester be allowed to go ahead without an adequate archaeological investigation prior to the bulldozers moving in.

The site lies within the walls of the Roman town, and its archaeology is likely to include vital clues to the town's history, from prehistoric times to the present. Flying in the face of English Heritage's advice, and acting against the spirit of the law where archaeology and development are concerned, the Council has decided to squander a major opportunity to explore and enhance the understanding of Dorchester's past. Instead of a thorough investigation of what remains below ground level, the site is to be destroyed and removed for landfill, after a mere cursory examination.

The Council employed consultants to provide a report which assessed the site as being of only 'medium' importance, despite the fact that it is bounded on one side by the remains of Dorchester's Roman bath-house under the Wollaston carpark and on another internationally important Neolithic henge monument under the Waitrose site.

In desperation Dorchester resident Jerry Bird launched DORCH - Defend Our Rich Cultural Heritage - and started an online petition that is heading towards 3,500 names. In January Peter Walker sent an email about the petition to all EDAS members and I am sure a number of you supported it. The developers have no doubt influenced the council by threatening the economic viability of the scheme if a proper archaeological investigation was required. Laurence Keen, an eminent local archaeologist and former chair of Dorset Archaeology Committee, said the henge was believed to continue under the Charles Street site, which is currently used for parking, and he expected Roman and later material to be present.

English Heritage has expressed concern if there is no full excavation, fearing archaeology would be lost and calling for a revision of underground car parking.

We await an update and can only hope that West Dorset District Council reconsiders its responsibilities regarding the archaeology of Dorchester.

Andrew Morgan

Cranborne Chase AONB - The Foundations of Archaeology Project

We are awaiting confirmation from the Heritage Lottery Fund who will launch the project. We will advise members as soon as we have heard more.

Please contact Geoff Taylor if you are interested, email: geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk

COUNCIL for INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGY

2015 Conference 19th September

EDAS is delighted to have been invited to host the 2015 conference and we will be finalising the arrangement over the next couple of months. It is a one day conference to be held on Saturday 19th September.

The conference will be open to all interested archaeologists; you do not need to be a member of the CIA to attend. We hope that members will support the event.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2015
8th April 2015	EDAS Lecture – Catalhoyuk Neolithic Settlement, with Professor Peter Andrews, Curator of Blandford Museum
13th May 2015	EDAS Lecture – The Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Treasure Act, with Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen, Dorset Finds Officer
14th to 19th June 2015	EDAS Field Trip – Cambridgeshire area. Led by Keith and Denise Allsop. Details to follow.
19th September 2015	Council for Independent Archaeology 2015 Conference, to be held at the East Dorset Heritage Centre, Wimborne

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

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The membership fee is 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 April 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. If you have online banking facilities and would like to pay us direct please let me know and I will provide our bank account details.

Peter Walker

EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM 2015

Please highlight any change of details.

Surname/Forenames

Address and Postcode

..... Telephone No.

E-Mail.....

Individual £8.50, Family £12, Student £5 Cheques payable to EDAS.

Please return form with cheque to:

Peter Walker, 16 Whitfield Park, Ashley Heath, Ringwood, Hants, BH24 2DX,

or email: mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk

or Tel: 01425 471326 for a standing order form.