



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 – Mid Summer 2015

EDAS Lecture: ‘The Treasure Act and Portable Antiquities Scheme’, by Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen

Ciorstaidh is the Finds Liaison Officer for Dorset under the Portable Antiquities Scheme (“PAS”). The Scheme, and position, wouldn’t exist without the Treasure Act 1996 (revised), which is where Ciorstaidh’s presentation began.

The previous law of Treasure Trove had a rather unclear definition of treasure as items which were substantially of precious metal and which had been buried with the intention of recovery. The Treasure Act 1996 (revised) gives much clearer definitions and was written in the context of the huge amount of finds being made by metal detecting enthusiasts. Other than coins, treasure includes any object that is at least 300 years old and contains at least 10% silver or gold by weight, as well as any group of 2 or more metal prehistoric objects. All the items pictured are now defined as ‘treasure’, whereas previously they would have been considered as casual losses.



For coins, treasure is defined as coins at least 300 years old from the same find where there are 2 or more of at least 10% silver or gold, or where there are at least 10 items if the coins are of made of base metal. Additionally, objects associated with treasure are also included, such as the pot used to hold a coin hoard. All the items pictured below are now classed as treasure but wouldn’t have been before 1996.



Hoard of Roman bronze coins and Bronze Age metalwork, plus items associated with treasure thanks to the 2 Roman brooches found with them.

The re-definition of treasure means, of course, that many more finds are being reported. Finds of treasure have to be reported to the Coroner within 14 days of discovery. Finds from archaeological excavations are subject to the same rules as those found using a metal detector or, indeed, for anything found in other ways. Finds should be reported to the local PAS Finds Liaison Officer (“FLO”), who will identify the object(s) and check whether they really are treasure before passing details to the Coroner. If a museum wishes to acquire an item of potential treasure,

the coroner will hold an inquest to determine its status and a fair market value will be determined by the independent Valuation Committee (technically the British Museum has first call, but they usually defer to local museums). The acquiring museum will then pay the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the find, and they pay it to the finder and landowner as a reward. I know from my own research that every effort is made to ensure that valuations represent a fair market value of the objects as found (i.e. before any conservation work that may be needed), a difficult job for unique items or where the level of rarity has been altered by the find itself.

Often, finders are happy to donate their finds. Private collections are also sometimes donated to museums when finders age or die. This is a further valuable resource as long as records have been kept of provenance. Items which are not treasure, or which are not wanted by a museum, are returned to the finder, who is given advice on conservation and storage.

This even-handed approach to treasure was obviously intended to encourage reporting of finds and has proved very successful, allowing many more items to be properly identified and recorded. Even more successful, in numerical terms at least, is the voluntary reporting of non-treasure finds to PAS who identify and record them. The Portable Antiquities Scheme started with 6 pilot areas in 1997, 5 more in 1999, and was expanded to cover the whole of England and Wales in 2003. It now has 36 FLOs, like Ciorstaidh, with a small central team at the British Museum. A quick look at the database (<https://finds.org.uk/database>) tells me they have now recorded an amazing 1,094,098 objects, of which 10,699 are from Dorset. Some of the finds recorded from Dorset are shown here, but it's worth having a look yourself as the database is open to all and has good search facilities. Ciorstaidh holds 'Finds Days' to encourage reporting and promote the scheme; see <http://www.dorsetforyou/Dorset-Archaeological-Days>.

Dorset finds range from the Palaeolithic to recent, although resources mean the more modern items are not recorded unless they are in some way 'special' or important. As you can see from the photographs, as well as metal objects there are often finds from flint collectors and gardeners! Palaeolithic objects from just after the last Ice Age are quite rare but by the Neolithic there are rather more items on the database (the very large axe is actually from Somerset, found just under a shed). Perhaps oddly, flint arrowheads are fairly uncommon here, whilst prehistoric pottery is rare as it doesn't survive well.



Middle Palaeolithic hand axe



Mesolithic flint axe



Neolithic polished flint axe

There are, not surprisingly, more Bronze Age and considerably more Iron Age objects, before the large explosion of material culture in the Roman period. Coins are usually relatively easy to identify as there are a vast range of books and catalogues. Iron Age staterers from Dorset have no inscriptions, just a very stylised horse and wreath, originally derived from Greek coins. Roman coins have, of course, a huge range of information and messages. Early Medieval objects are fairly uncommon from Dorset but, like the later Medieval objects, show the importance of horses. There are also a lot of religious objects in the Dorset finds database, notably pilgrims' souvenirs (from the 'shrine shops'!), though religious symbols tend to be hidden later on, especially Papist ones.



Iron Age figurine



Iron Age silver stater



Roman frog brooch



Early Medieval harness pendant

The finds database is available to anyone to check on their own finds or do research, although registering with PAS as a researcher does give some enhanced functionality. So far, 451 research projects have been done or started, including 122 Masters degrees and 95 PhDs but there is considerable scope for more. Allowance does, of course, need to be made for bias in the records. For example, there are areas which are topographically difficult to reach or areas with well supported metal detecting clubs. PAS conducts and publishes its own research too and makes efforts to expand the database beyond finds reported to them. For example, details of all the known Roman coin hoards have been added and an intern has been hired to record all of Martin Green's collection.

Funding and resources are, of course, an ongoing problem and constant effort is needed to continue to build and maintain this valuable archaeological resource. Most of the funding comes through the British Museum, which has cut its contribution by 6% in line with its own cut. Volunteers are one avenue, and the scheme has recently been awarded funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the volunteer base providing support to the FLOs. A good part of Ciorstaidh's work involves travelling, e.g. to metal detector club meetings, reducing the time available to meet finders, so she is keen to recruit self-recorders who receive appropriate training and support to continue the high standard of recording that is needed.



An important example of the success of the scheme and maintaining good relations with finders is the discovery of the Tarrant Valley lunula in 2014. 'Lunula' means little moon in Latin, and these crescent-shaped gold objects date from the Bronze Age, probably the early part over 4,000 years ago. The decorative marking does seem to resemble that on Beaker pottery. They are thought to be personal adornment, like necklaces, although their small size and angled terminals suggest they hung from something else, rather than just fitted around the neck. There are only 3 of these on the PAS database and the Tarrant Valley example, despite being

broken (probably plough damage), is the most complete – over three-quarters in the large piece above. They are most common (if not very!) in Ireland but have also been found in Cornwall, Brittany, Scotland and Wales, with only 13 in total from mainland Britain. None were known from Dorset, or indeed from Wessex, so this is a rare and important find. Whilst of skilled workmanship, our example is thicker and a little less accomplished than most examples. It weighs half as much as all the Bronze Age gold previously found in Wessex. The prompt reporting of this find, and accurate location information (modern detectors have inbuilt GPS) allowed further archaeological intervention. A 2x2 metre excavation found nothing below plough depth but did result in a further small piece being discovered, whilst a geophysical survey revealed one possible anomaly that needs further investigation. Further study is also being made of the location in its landscape context; in one direction it is possible to see the coast. Dorset County Museum hopes to acquire the lunula, with the help of a generous donation to meet half of the cost.



Incidentally, none of the above applies to finds in the sea or on the seashore (below high water level). This is known technically as 'wreck' and has to be reported to the Receiver of Wreck. It is often thought that detecting on the beach, or just beachcombing, doesn't need permission but, in fact, all land has an owner.

Ciorstaidh's enthusiastic and informative presentation was very well received. If you have any finds you wish to have identified or recorded, or want to do some research or be involved in PAS' work, please contact her: c.h.trevarthen@dorsetcc.gov.uk.

Geoff Taylor

DRUCE ROMAN VILLA EXCAVATION

SITE VISITS

Throughout the season we have welcomed members from numerous clubs and societies, the largest group being 71 people who visited one Friday evening and were associated with the DNHAS. Members of the ARA and the CIA will also visit in due course. We will hold two OPEN DAYS this season. The first was held on Sunday 19th July, when contrary to all the wretched weather forecasts, we enjoyed a lovely sunny day. We had over 160 visitors and they made generous donations. Several stayed for a few hours to soak up the atmosphere of the site -before they paid their ransom and were released. Thanks to all our great team of volunteers who made this such an enjoyable experience.



This has to be our final year at the villa and the **FINAL OPEN DAY** will be held on **Saturday 5th September**. This will be heavily advertised and we expect a large number of people, many will be revisiting the site.

This is a very interesting site that has attracted interest from a wide range of experts, and is therefore extremely significant for EDAS. Don't miss this opportunity to visit the site. Details will be sent to all members via email and via our website.

SCHOOL VISITS

After the great success of last year we decided to continue with the school programme, and focus on the younger pupils, to encourage their natural enthusiasm for the past. It is proving a great success and we thank Sue Cullinane and Bryan Popple for all the hard work they are putting into this very rewarding activity.



All the schools have given permission to use the photographs.

PRIEST HOUSE MUSEUM

DESIRABLE COUNTRY VILLA WITH ALL THE COMFORTS OF ROME ... NEAR DORCHESTER

◆ Stylish detached residence located on a hillside overlooking the River Piddle ◆ large rooms with magnificent mosaics ◆ aisled hall and workshops ◆ surrounded by fertile farmland ◆ access to a good road ◆ pleasing views on all sides ◆ extended and refurbished to suit the latest fashions.



Villa by G. C. Clarke, 1840s

FIND OUT MORE:
Visit the new EDAS display at the Priest's House Museum, Wimborne

On Saturday 14th July EDAS supported the PHM Open Day and Finds Surgery, using the display material we have prepared for Druce Farm.

A number of people enjoyed the exhibits including Claire Pinder, Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen – she and husband Mike operated the finds surgery - and the Deputy Mayor of Wimborne whose son is an archaeologist. Several people were so impressed they turned up the next day at our Druce Farm Open Day.

Thanks to Vanessa, Jan and Bryan for supporting this event and thanks again to Sue for the display material.



EDAS Druce Farm Display



PHM EDAS Display Cabinet

A Digging Widower's Lament!

It was my own fault. Thinking back, the crunch came in the early 1970s when Lilian was pushing a pram into Wareham from our old house in Folly Lane. Every day, in North Street, she (sometimes we) would pass a little excavation being carried out by Southampton University. Lilian's interest was piqued so I said "Go and ask them what they're doing!" She took me at my word. The man in charge of the University's diggings, Dr David Hinton, was a true enthusiast and touched by my wife's interest (I suspect it was unusual for passers-by to talk to him) he encouraged her. The die, as they say, was cast. Lilian had always been a voracious reader and now the archaeology publications began to trickle in. The trickle soon became a flood and before long I was taking out a second mortgage to service my debt with Oxbow books.

My next slither down the treacherous path to isolation, loneliness and penury came a little later. Researching the history and archaeology of her adopted home town led Lilian to undertake a few 'watching briefs' on small developments. The foundations for a conservatory here the ground clearance for an extension there – her experience increased exponentially. I joined her and her friends on the route of the Wareham bypass filling buckets with Roman pottery from the kilns. It could have been worse (it would be). Then in the early 1990s the blow fell.

One day the phone rang, it was the County Archaeologist. There was to be a massive gravel extraction on the Bestwall peninsula and it had no condition for archaeology, would she be prepared to undertake a watching brief? I heard her voice say - "So, what will happen if I don't do it?" Apparently any remains that might be present on the huge site would be totally lost. Her answer was a foregone conclusion. "Yes, I'll try!" Those three words were the precursor to my decades of exclusion from the dark arts.

At first she was a tiny one woman operation. Could this be my wife in her fluorescent coat and hard hat like some sort of mini-navvy? She wheeled her wheel barrow (through fields broad and narrow), containing a spade and a trowel, under the towering, lunging steel arms of excavators, dodging the crushing tracks of bulldozers, apparently oblivious of any danger. Within a couple of years she was hiring consultants, managing staff and students and discussing future plans with the directors of a multi-national company. I was all at sea (usually fishing).

Year on year the project expanded. When, eventually, it was finished and written up worse was yet to come. An old football field at Worth Matravers, was it seemed, a treasure-house of three-thousand year old junk buried in a sort of giant cess pit. Years of digging ensued. After this a cursory visit to an innocent field at Druce Farm revealed that it had once been the country house of some Roman aristocrat. Yet more years of incessant excavation. An infinity of dirt, data and digging stretched, like a lithe yoga instructor, away into the future. The words "We'll definitely be finished next week! – next month! – next year!" no longer held any meaning for me.

Over the years I had become used to long waits for my lift from work. I was inured to bin bags full of human bones in the porch. I learned to ooh! and aah! in all the right places when some fragment of pot resembling nothing more than a bit of broken 20th century drainpipe or a fragment of digestive biscuit was presented for my approbation. I even began to sound knowledgeable when I met an army of her like-minded, weird (they were to me) and equally keen (perhaps fanatical?) friends and associates.

Above all I tolerated countless lonely evenings as she attended meetings, discussions and lectures. It was a toss-up whether this was worse than actually tagging along to join in the archaeological activities. I was even forced to do more fishing than usual just to keep me (sort of) sane. It's a hard world isn't it?



Mike with a new friend

Dr Mike Ladle

EAST DORSET ARCHAEOLOGY PLANNING GROUP – Pilot Project

Last year Professor Tim Darvill arranged a series of informal meetings, with professional and amateur archaeologists from across Dorset, to consider the impact of the National Planning Policy Framework on the planning application process, with particular focus on the threats facing our archaeological heritage. It was recognised that members of amateur archaeology societies, by definition, should be well positioned to provide detailed knowledge about their local archaeology. If this knowledge could be harnessed then it would benefit the decision making process when assessing planning applications. It was decided to proceed by setting up a pilot project to cover the area of the East Dorset District Council (EDDC).

Although this is not an EDAS initiative it was inevitable that EDAS members would be heavily involved and appropriate they accept responsibility for this area. A small group has been set up, and we are developing the procedures and the criteria for identifying when archaeology could be at risk. If successful we expect that other groups will be set up to cover more of Dorset.

To ensure all parties are aware of our intentions, we held preliminary meetings with representatives of the EDDC and Steve Wallis, the county archaeologist responsible for assessing planning applications.

We started in April when we just gained familiarity with the weekly lists of planning applications sent out by EDDC. From 1st May we have been responding to the EDDC with our recommendations. By 17th July we had assessed approximately 336 planning applications and made a recommendation that archaeology needs to be considered on 26 of these (c.8%).

It is still early days and anybody with an interest in the exercise, whether to join us or to share their practical knowledge or experience, is encouraged to make contact and is welcome to attend the next meeting which will be held at:

The Priest House Museum, Wimborne, the Learning Centre, at 2pm on Friday 28th August 2015 TBC.

For further information please contact Andrew Morgan andrewmorgz@aol.com

EDAS VISIT – Grove Prison, Portland

EDAS members have been invited to enjoy a guided tour of the Grove Prison Museum, Portland. In November 1848, Portland's prison was opened its purpose was largely for the use of convict labour, to help construct the breakwaters of Portland Harbour and its various defences. The convicts were to "undergo a period of probationary discipline and be employed in the construction of the breakwater prior to their removal to the Australian colonies." The terrible conditions, resulting in the death of many prisoners, would eventually result in penal reform in the UK. It later became a Borstal for Young Offenders.

We have yet to set a date so could anyone interested in viewing the Museum, which has free admission, please contact Karen on karen.winsor757@btinternet.com.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2015-2016 Programme

Date	Speaker	Title
Sat 5th Sept 2015	OPEN DAY – Druce Farm Roman Villa, see website for further details	
Wed 9th Sept 2015	Philip Beale FRGS	“The Phoenicians: First to circumnavigate Africa and reach the Americas? The Phoenicia ship expedition as an adventure in experimental archaeology”
Sat 19 th Sept 2015	Council for Independent Archaeology 2015 Conference - to be held at the East Dorset Heritage Centre, Wimborne	
Wed 14th Oct 2015	Donald Henson, University of York	“Between the lake and forest: Early post-glacial settlers at Star Carr”
Wed 11th Nov 2015	Martyn Barber, English Heritage	"The Battle for Stonehenge: the aerodrome, the monument and the landscape"
Wed 9th Dec 2015	Prof Tony King, Winchester University	“Two villas in Somerset and one in Hampshire: excavations at Dinnington, Yarford and Meonstoke and their contribution to Romano-British archaeology”
Wed 13th Jan 2016	Stephen Fisher Maritime Archaeology Trust	“Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War”
Wed 10th Feb 2016	Dr. John McNabb, Southampton University	“New Insights into Human Evolution”
Wed 9th Mar 2016	AGM	Members evening
Wed 13th Apr 2016	Jane Ellis-Schön Salisbury Museum	“Finding Pitt-Rivers”
Wed 11th May 2016	Dr Alex Langlands, Winchester University	“Mapping the Genius Loci: Exploring the Character of Space and Place in the Ordnance Survey”

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