



Established 1983

## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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### NEWSLETTER –October 2015

#### DRUCE FARM ROMAN VILLA - FINAL OPEN DAY

This was an exceptional day for EDAS, the biggest event we have run with well over 850 visitors. There were 23 volunteers on site and we ran 30 guided tours, each taking over an hour. The team worked tirelessly and everyone appeared to enjoy themselves.

At times the queues meant a wait of almost 60 minutes, on top of the one mile trek to the site, but all the visitors remained enthusiastic and nobody complained. I think the sheer numbers and the size of the queues made them realise the significance of the event. Many local people came but several had come from afar, there was a couple from London, others from Plymouth and Totnes, at least two couples from the Southampton area and people from Portsmouth. All the visitors were delighted with the site and on leaving they readily encouraged people who were still queueing. Many talked about the importance of their heritage. There were a handful of exceptions, especially in the car park, where some people were inexcusably rude about the delays and restrictions regarding dogs "you are denying me an opportunity to see my heritage!"

There were several esteemed archaeologists amongst the visitors including Dr Miles Russell, Dr Martin Green, Clare Pinder and Professor Margaret Cox. Miles later wrote "The site is fantastic and you've all done an amazing job getting it cleared, exposed and recorded. Brilliant. Everyone I met and spoke to said what an excellent time they had had and how privileged they were to see the villa".

I have to mention Clare, helped by Sarah, who was a heroine in managing the hordes, she divided them into parties of 20-25 and had them stacked along the track leading down to our field, using her skills as a would be shepherdess. All the guides worked tirelessly throughout the day leading the tours, one after the other with barely a break. Thanks to Lilian, Geoff, Robert, Sue, Phil and Ian who did four tours each with the tireless Vanessa doing five. Special appreciation to Ian and Phil who hadn't led tours before, but really enjoyed the chance to show off the site, and to Bryan who spent the morning with YAC but still got here to lead a tour in the afternoon. Janet coerced the visitors to buy a postcard and sold all our remaining stock! These have been a great success, so again thanks to Vanessa for preparing them. And of course thanks to all the excavators in their trenches; Len, Finn, Mathew, John, Heather, Carole, Sue, Clare and Alan who gave expert advice to complement the guides. We mustn't forget Pam for expertly demonstrating the art of finds washing and Jeremy for helping with the finds display. Carole for driving the landrover and Heather our ambulance driver, even though she failed to find her only patient. Meanwhile down in the car park, we thank Barbara for preparing the road signs and for single handedly directing several hundred vehicles - which at one time were queuing back to the road - and encouraging people as they set off on the hike. John the retired gamekeeper who lives on the farm, was another important member of the team, generally helped guide the cars and made his toilet available for a number of elderly ladies who were in need of relief. We also raised a good sum of money towards the publication costs of the site.

Well done everybody, this was a massive success and a great promotion for EDAS.

**Andrew**

**PS** if you have any good photos of the event please send them to me, we just didn't have time to take many ourselves!

## **EDAS LECTURE - “The Phoenicians: First to circumnavigate Africa and reach the Americas? The Phoenicia ship expedition as an adventure in experimental archaeology”, by Philip Beale FRGS**

Philip Beale is a character lifted from the past, a man with the imagination, the courage and the tenacity to create a real boys’ own adventure. Philip had been an officer in the Royal Navy before working in the City which he left in 2003 to reconstruct an 8<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian vessel which he sailed 12,000 miles across the Indian Ocean from Jakarta to Ghana. This talk was about another adventure when he attempted to prove whether the Phoenicians had been able to circumnavigate Africa.

Philip introduced us to the Phoenicians. They were a group of people who initially occupied a collection of city states in Lebanon, coastal Syria and north Palestine, including: Tyre, Byblos, Sidon, Beirut, and Arwad. Their strength came from their seafaring skills which enabled them to become the preeminent traders in the Mediterranean through to the Atlantic and along the west coast of Africa, and down through the Red Sea giving them access to India and East Africa. Most importantly they formed a strategic alliance with the rulers of Egypt. They were the first to learn how to navigate by the stars, recognising the significance of the Pole Star (giving true North and a means to calculate latitude). They became synonymous with the production and trade of a valuable purple dye made from the shell of murex snails and used for royal clothing, they created a glass industry and they sought out sources for silver and other valuable metals. They are also significant for their alphabet from which most modern phonetic alphabets are derived. They were rivals to the Greeks but were able to compete due to their superior ship building skills. Their trading empire lasted from c. 1200BC to 149BC when Carthage was destroyed by the Romans.

Philip’s interest in the Phoenicians was stimulated by the comment made by the Greek historian Herodotus who wrote that the Phoenicians had circumnavigated Libya (ie Africa) in 600BC. This is 2000 years before the voyage of Bartholomeu Dias who was the first European to have rounded Cape of Good Hope in 1488 AD or Vasco da Gama who circumnavigated Africa a decade later. His research was supported by various learned individuals who were interested in his ideas and supportive his plan to prove the theory by building a reconstructed version of a Phoenician boat and undertake the voyage

With some luck and dedication, supported by other enthusiasts Philip collated the scant information available about the construction of boats from this era. By studying the fragmentary remains of several wrecks they eventually gained enough information to design their boat – to be named The Phoenicia. They decided to build a 50 tonne trading boat based on the Jules Verne 7, a 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century BC trading vessel wrecked near Marseilles which is of Greek or Phoenician origin. The Phoenicians started with the keel, building the side of the boat with planks butted together to form a shell, inserting a frame later for the upper structures. The planks were joined using mortise and tenon joints with wooden pegs holding them together. The joints and seams were sealed with pitch to prevent seepage.



They also visited the eastern Mediterranean in search of ship builders who could build using ancient techniques. He was eventually led to the island of Arwad in Syria, renowned for its ship building tradition. Strangely all the modern shipbuilders thought they used traditional techniques but in practise they built their boats round a frame which was not the Phoenician way. Eventually they found a thoughtful shipwright who was immediately enthusiastic about the project and whom they instinctively trusted. The boat building started when the keel, of Aleppo pine, was laid down in November 2007. The planks were of Mediterranean pine, the frame from oak and walnut. Eight thousand olive wood pegs were hand made.

From the start Philip had been undertaking the critical task of finding generous sponsors and pulling together teams of experts and now he had to focus on the crew and gathering the equipment required for the voyage.

The voyage started on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008 but immediately they were presented with a series of teething problems. The most difficult being that the attachment for the twin rudders was not sufficiently strong and one immediately broke, meaning they only had one for the first leg to the Suez Canal. This first leg also resulted in the loss of some crew who had found the voyage too uncomfortable. After a tow through the Suez Canal the boat set off under sail. They faced more adventures as the wind rose and the rudders frequently broke loose. Not having an engine now became a huge risk and was seen to be a necessity. They were forced into a very long stay in Port Sudan where they undertook several major repairs and where they installed a small diesel engine, so they would have power to move in and out of ports and as a contingency. The voyage was a massive challenge to everybody concerned, and the crew were stretched to the limits of their mental and physical strength. They faced real dangers, as when they were being pushed towards razor sharp reefs or travelling through waters patrolled by heavily armed Somalian pirates. And this was a maiden voyage both for the boat and the crew who had to learn rapidly how to sail this Phoenician reconstruction. Throughout the voyage the delays and complications created logistical and personal problems for the crew members and there was a large turnover, but usually new members were found, often in unlikely places. Three Indonesian sailors, who had been involved in Philip's previous adventure, joined and were critical in the ultimate success of the project. They continued sailing on around the east coast of Africa dealing with mighty storms and a continual stream of challenges that they had to resolve one way or another, sometimes in life threatening situations. They found that under favourable conditions Phoenicia could comfortably achieve a rate of 5 knots. Eventually they arrived at Richards Bay, South Africa and travelled along the coast in short passages enjoying the local hospitality. They set off round the Cape of Good Hope in a gale with winds up to 30 knots and seven-metre seas, and made 150 miles in 24 hours. As Philip entered the harbour at Cape Town he knew that they had proved that Phoenician boats were capable of sailing round Africa.

They left Cape Town on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2009 set for St Helena and the Azores. This leg of the journey addressed another long standing debate, because the sea currents and prevailing winds sent Phoenicia in a North West projection across the Atlantic. Had the Phoenicians actually sailed to the Americas? The course of the Phoenicia eventually took them to within 400 miles of Brazil, before the prevailing winds changed and they were sent eastwards towards the Azores where they arrived after the longest stretch of their journey. The Azores were found by the Portugese in c. 1420 but there is the possibility that they had been discovered much earlier, possibly by the Phoenicians, but there is no substantial evidence to support this as yet.

Continuing their voyage they finally passed through the Strait of Gibraltar; Gibraltar being the site of a Phoenician trading port. Here they learned of a recent discovery of rock paintings in nearby Spain which depict Phoenician trading ships very similar in style to Phoenicia. They sailed on via the Bay of Carthage and Malta until they arrived in Lebanon where they stopped at Sidon, Beirut and Tripoli where a huge reception had been arranged.

On hearing of this the Syrian authorities, who had shown scant interest in the project, changed their minds and made suitable arrangements for a celebration appropriate for the completion of this immense voyage, which ended at Arward on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2010.

In total the circumnavigation covered over 20,000 nautical miles. Philip had achieved his dream.

### **“Never, never, never give up” Winston Churchill**

For further information <http://www.phoenicia.org.uk/index.htm> or buy “Sailing Close to the Wind” by Philip Beale and Sarah Taylor.

**Andrew Morgan**

PS. Philip, who now lives near Wimborne, has offered to show EDAS members round the Phoenicia which is now in dry dock at Gosport. We will make arrangements in the near future. There will be a suitable charge, which will go towards the funds for his next expedition to sail the Atlantic.

## **EDAS have submitted the Druce Farm Roman Villa Excavation**

The event will be held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October....fingers crossed! Sorry but tickets are limited and have been allocated on the basis of time spent working on the excavation.

The submission report of the Druce Farm Roman Villa excavation is available on our website.

## **Priest's House Museum - The One Hundred Year Heritage of the First World War for Wimborne and East Dorset**

The Priest's House Museum project 'The One Hundred Year Heritage of the First World War for Wimborne and East Dorset' aims to uncover the history and the stories of those who lived in our area - the current East Dorset District Council area - a century ago. Details of the men who died in the war are well documented, but we also want to find out about the men who survived and the people who stayed, such as women, many of whom took up jobs left vacant by men.

If you know what your relatives in East Dorset did during the war, or about life in your village or town, we would like to hear from you. We would also like to hear about and record physical remains such as practice trenches, the sites of army camps or airfields, and buildings built or used during the war. The CBA has a scheme, "Home Front Legacy 1914-18" for recording such remains.

We are recording information on our newly-launched website, [www.eastdorsetfirstworldwar.org.uk](http://www.eastdorsetfirstworldwar.org.uk) If you have information, or if you would like to get involved in the project, you can contact us via the website or via my email address.

Ben Buxton

Project Manager (part time)

[bbuxton@priest-house.co.uk](mailto:bbuxton@priest-house.co.uk)

## **EAST DORSET ARCHAEOLOGY PLANNING GROUP – Pilot Project WORKSHOP**

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 7-9pm Priest House Museum, Rear Entrance**

Anybody with an interest in this project and would like to find out how we approach this challenging task is invited to come along to this workshop. This is still a pilot so there is always room for improvement.

**For further information please contact Andrew Morgan, email: [andrewmorgz@aol.com](mailto:andrewmorgz@aol.com)**

## **New Forest National Park Association Exhibition**

Bournemouth University has been working with the New Forest NPA on a project to scan and interpret the forest area using Lidar. They have an exhibition running for three months in the New Forest Centre in Lydnhurst.

For further information: <http://www.wessexportal.co.uk/showcase/special-exhibition-shedding-new-light-on-the-new-forests-past/>

## **Resources and Techniques in Archaeology**

### **Hosted by EDAS on Saturday 19th September 2015**

This event was held at the East Dorset Heritage Centre which proved to be a perfect venue and we have thanked the staff for being so friendly and very helpful before and during the event. The CIA Committee have written to thank EDAS for hosting the event and that they consider it to have been a great success.

EDAS used the Druce Farm Roman Villa notice boards and the display case of special finds prepared by Sue Cullinane. The Dorset County Boundary team also provided display material about their project explaining why the county boundary is such an important and underappreciated heritage resource.

The talks were all well received and generated much discussion between all parties. Several of the speakers had been invited by EDAS to talk on subjects that EDAS members are actively involved with. Professor Tim Darvill had been invited to discuss the significance of the recent changes to the development planning procedures and the impact on local communities. The legislation does recognise the importance of our heritage, including the archaeology, BUT it is imperative that local groups take up the challenge to ensure their areas are properly represented and effectively considered. He referred to the pilot scheme being run by the East Dorset Archaeology Planning Group, set up by EDAS members. He also mentioned the recent discussions about merging the administrations of Poole, Bournemouth and East Dorset area, to create a new conurbation (Wessex?).

Lilian Ladle gave a talk about Druce Farm Roman Villa, and focused on the variety of resources that are used in a complex archaeological excavation. This is not only the volunteers, but also the experts who freely give their advice and special technical services such various geophysical techniques, the recent 3D laser scanning, aerial photography, specialist analysis of artefacts, and conservation of special finds.

One of the highlights of the day was an enchanting talk given by Steve Clark a smiling, gently spoken Welshman from Monmouth who talked about the "Lost Lake of Monmouth". Steve has been a field archaeologist in Monmouth for a long time, and has enjoyed a long relationship with Tim. He explained how the local society has moved with the times and set up a professional archaeology company, and he continues to work both with the local society but also on a professional basis. He explained how the archaeology of the area has been totally reinterpreted recently with the recognition of a lake that was formed at the end of the Ice Age, some 10,000 years ago, behind a blockage on the Wye Valley, and that it survived into the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC – just before the Romans attacked Wales. The lake attracted settlements for many thousands of years with at least one camp of Stone Age hunter-gatherers and Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements along the shore of the lake around upper Monmouth. Eventually the lake broke through the debris blocking the valley and the 'bowl' of Monmouth was drained leaving the wide flood plain. Steve also described one particular site where they found three parallel straight ditches, all of them with semi-circular profiles: two of them being considerably larger than the third. There was considerable discussion as to how those should be interpreted, but Steve has now been persuaded that they are the remains of a prehistoric boat. The two main channels form the two hulls of a catamaran, while the third smaller trench could have been an outrigger.

Hayley Roberts gave an update on her ongoing research about the complex relationship between professional archaeologists and local societies. Local societies often benefit hugely from the support and advice freely given by enthusiastic professionals. But there are occasions when the amateur is seen to be taking work away from the professional, and sometimes a fear that the amateur does not work to the same standards. However she recognised that many local societies are capable of working to the highest professional standards (like EDAS) and that they benefit from being more flexible in the time they can give to a project, they don't have to work to financial constraints. Hayley has been able to interview many EDAS members and taken on board our experiences, both good and frustrating.

Other speakers included Philippe Planel who gave an overview of the Cranborne Chase AONB: Foundations of Archaeology Project, listing the objectives of the project. He explained how wants to help local communities become more aware of their heritage and encourage them to get involved. Katherine Barker shared her boundless enthusiasm with things relating to the Dorset County Boundary and St Aldhelm. She told her audience of the latest developments with this group, including the development of procedures to analyse and record boundary features, and the work underway to identify boundary features defined within Anglo-Saxon charters. This is a rather unique exercise in that it is multi-disciplined and brings together history, archaeology and natural history. Kevin Barton who told us of his continuing work of resistivity surveys in Ireland. He covered the area around the New Grange

Passage Tombs. The whole area was a protected zone and had been surveyed by Lidar from the air, but he followed up an indication from the Lidar survey and discovered a long feature with terminals which could be a passage tomb. He described some community archaeology in Norway around Trondheim. This was an area where the Battle of Stiklestad had taken place in AD 1030 where local chieftains were being put down by Christian kings, enabling Norway to become a united kingdom. Two linear features were surveyed followed up by excavations which revealed two rows of post holes. However the radiocarbon dates came out over a very wide range suggesting that the site may have begun in prehistory as a long barrow but continued to be a ritual site long after the battle had taken place.

Bob Randall who is finalising the design of the Mk2 Resistivity Meter which the Council hopes to have ready for sale in 2016. This is designed to work with an Android tablet computer, so that it will be possible to see the results of the survey whilst in progress. Previously it was only possible to take one reading at a time from the twin probes but the new design can take up to three readings.

After the conference members were offered the opportunity to visit the Priest House Museum for a reception and tour of its facilities. David Morgan Chairman of the trustees welcomed the party and James Webb the assistant curator gave a brief history of our local museum, before they were led around the galleries and the research facilities.

The full weekend was completed with a visit to Druce Farm Roman Villa when 40 visitors were shown round the site. Many had archaeological experiences, some having worked on other Roman Villas and were keen to share their opinions. The CIA has promised to make a nice donation towards the project.

***Andrew Morgan***

## **Cranborne Chase AONB - Foundations of Archaeology Project**

### **Winkelbury - Sunday 25 October 2015**

Adrian Green whetted our appetite for a closer inspection of Winkelbury when we viewed the site from the Ox Drove on the recent and hugely informative Pitt-Rivers walk.

So here's the plan: we meet at 10.00 on 25 October at Berwick St John village hall (Water St - signposted from centre of village) and then make our way up to the top of the hill in a limited number of cars to walk and evaluate the site.

We would like to approach the site 'tabula rasa', as indeed did the General had to, and, only later, in the comfort of the village hall (where some sustenance will be provided to top up anything you may have brought with you), will we review the evidence about the site and identify how we might wish to proceed - whilst we 'discuss our lunch' (19<sup>th</sup> century antiquary-speak!).

General Pitt-Rivers, with his military background, concentrated on the military and defensive nature of the earthworks, but is this how we would necessarily evaluate the site today?

Please note that numbers will unfortunately once again be limited, so book now, preferably by email, to avoid disappointment. Please also note that this event will involve rough walking away from paths.

There will be no charge for this event. We will provide all the necessary equipment but feel free to bring sketching pads, digital cameras or tablets to help record your impressions.

Serious footwear and weatherproof clothing are essential.

You can book simply by email [philippeplanel@gmail.com](mailto:philippeplanel@gmail.com) or by leaving a voice or text message on my mobile: 07983279825.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### 2015-2016 Programme

Date	Speaker	Title
<b>Wed 14th Oct 2015</b>	Donald Henson, University of York	"Between the lake and forest: Early post-glacial settlers at Star Carr"
<b>Wed 11th Nov 2015</b>	Martyn Barber, English Heritage	"The Battle for Stonehenge: the aerodrome, the monument and the landscape"
<b>Wed 9th Dec 2015</b>	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"
<b>Wed 13th Jan 2016</b>	Stephen Fisher Maritime Archaeology Trust	"Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War"
<b>Wed 10th Feb 2016</b>	Dr. John McNabb, Southampton University	"New Insights into Human Evolution"
<b>Wed 9th Mar 2016</b>	AGM	Members evening
<b>Wed 13th Apr 2016</b>	Jane Ellis-Schön Salisbury Museum	"Finding Pitt-Rivers" <b>Note: this lecture has been chosen as our annual joint lecture with the Bournemouth University Students' Archaeology Society. It will be held in a lecture theatre on campus.</b>
<b>Wed 11th May 2016</b>	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.**