



Established 1983

## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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### NEWSLETTER – December 2015

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*



This has been a very successful year for the society, with a variety of events for members to enjoy. We organised a strong programme of lectures covering a wide range of topics and each was well attended. The excavation of the Roman Villa at Druce Farm continued and many members enjoyed nearly six months of back-breaking labour. It offered opportunities to share our enthusiasm for archaeology: the school programme continued, enabling another 150 children to enjoy their first experience of practical archaeology; we were visited by societies from all over Dorset and the South West; and the Open Days were a great success with approaching 1000 visitors at our Final Open Day when they politely queued for over an hour. We hosted the 2015 annual conference of the Council for Independent Archaeology and received sincere praise from all the attendees after their second slice of afternoon cake. The annual field trip to Bury St Edmunds and Suffolk was very well organized, stimulating and enjoyable, giving us the opportunity to visit several sites of national importance and provided us with a last supper that will be long remembered. And on top of all that we have recorded another increase in our membership.

We offer a warm welcome to all members and remember all the old friends who created this wonderful society.....and send a special hug to Della.

#### **EDAS Lecture - The Battle for Stonehenge: the aerodrome, the monument, and the landscape by Martyn Barber (Historic England)**

*Martyn has kindly provided this summary of his fascinating talk.*

This talk was largely based on research undertaken in the course of Historic England's recent project focused on the landscape of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site, recently published as a book called 'The Stonehenge Landscape', as well as a large number of detailed reports which are available for free download through the Historic England website (see link at the end).

The project began in 2010, and was mainly undertaken to address some gaps in our knowledge, as well as to help inform the displays being planned for the new visitor centre at Stonehenge. Our approach was to use non-intrusive techniques – earthwork survey, geophysics, aerial survey, laser scanning, and architectural survey as well as documentary research – in order to tell the story of the development of the Stonehenge landscape from the time of its first inhabitants down to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Normally my contribution to a project like this would be the aerial survey – the mapping of archaeological sites across the entire World Heritage Site from over a century’s worth of aerial photographs. Fortunately, this had already been done 15 years ago, so I was able to take a slightly different approach. An awful lot has happened in the Stonehenge landscape over the last hundred years or so, much of it captured on the thousands of aerial photographs that exist – Stonehenge itself was first photographed from the air in 1906. Instead of using all those aerial photographs to look for the surviving, fragmentary remains of the more distant past – the ‘revenants of the Plain’, to borrow Edith Olivier’s phrase – I used them alongside the tremendous wealth of published and unpublished information to look afresh at some of the key episodes in the more recent history of both the monument and its landscape.

Here, I’m just going to briefly summarise a few incidents – times when prehistory and the 20<sup>th</sup> century ran up against each other – as a way of highlighting some of the processes at work in the landscape. Much more can be found in the two (free) reports available from the website.

### **(i) restoring Stonehenge**

Stonehenge is a monument of Neolithic origin which saw more change during the 20<sup>th</sup> century than at any time since the Bronze Age. The chief structural materials present on site today are earth, chalk, sarsen, bluestone and concrete, along with lesser quantities of iron and lead. Knowledge of what has happened at the site over the last 150 years or so is variable – for example, the word ‘concrete’ didn’t appear in any official guidebook until the present millennium, more than a century after it was first introduced to the monument. It is presumed that visitors are most likely to be interested in prehistory, but it was the introduction of concrete that helped make the monument look more it was believed to have been in the Neolithic.

The first intervention happened in 1881, at the behest of the then-owner Sir Edmund Antrobus (3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet) and his architect John Jenkins Cole. Long-running attempts to pass legislation aimed at protecting ancient monuments had changed the way people looked at Stonehenge – what had been a romantic ruin was now seen by some as an accident waiting to happen. However, Antrobus was a firm follower of the anti-restoration ethos of John Ruskin and William Morris. While archaeologists increasingly wanted to excavate, restore, and enclose Stonehenge, Antrobus was opposed to both restoration and excavation, and insisted on the monument remaining freely accessible to all. The only intervention he allowed was the use, by his architect, of some timbers to prop up a couple of leaning stones, to ensure the safety of any visitors.

Antrobus’ principles were overturned just two decades later by his own son, also Sir Edmund (the 4<sup>th</sup>). The spur to action was the collapse of a stone and its lintel, but not the ones that had been propped. Neither was the fallen stone the one that was ‘restored’. Instead, in a programme of work led by the Arts & Crafts architect Detmar Blow, Stone 56, the tallest standing stone within the monument was hauled upright from its leaning position and set in a concrete foundation, changing the appearance of Stonehenge at a single stroke. This massive leaning stone had been a central feature of many of the most famous depictions of the monument – as some contemporaries pointed out, no-one could ever again experience the monument painted by Turner and Constable.

More ambitious work began in 1919, after Stonehenge had passed into state guardianship. The Office of Works and the Society of Antiquaries together began an ambitious programme of excavation and restoration. The excavations, led by William Hawley, ran from 1919 to 1927. The restorations ground to a halt before the end of 1920. The problem was the realisation that the concrete and heavy lifting gear were not helping to push Stonehenge back into prehistory, but were instead creating something new. When the first stones were lifted and straightened, and their stoneholes excavated, it wasn’t clear where they should go back – it was left to Hawley’s judgement, as was the height at which the lintel should rest above ground. Moving on to the massive stones of the north-eastern facade, straightening the leaning stones to what was presumed to be their original perpendicular state meant that their lintels no longer fitted with the adjacent stones, so they had to be adjusted and concreted in place as well.

Much more had been planned, but it didn’t happen – at least, not until the 1950s, which is another story...

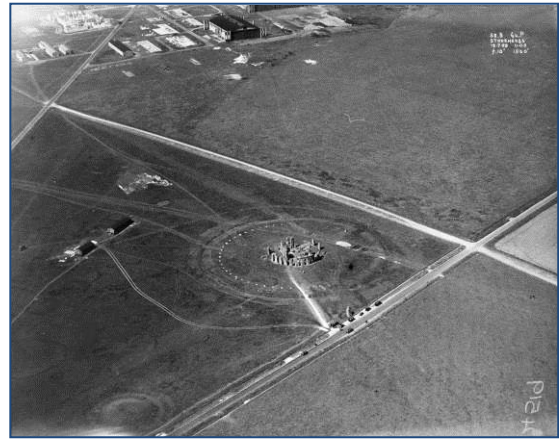
### **(ii) the aerodrome**

The militarisation of Salisbury Plain really got underway towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the acquisition of large areas of land for military training. This impinged most closely on Stonehenge during the First World War. From 1917, until it was closed in 1921, Stonehenge had a military aerodrome as a near neighbour.

Established in October 1917, the aerodrome was initially a Royal Flying Corps base until January 1918, when the RFC were joined by the Royal Naval Service in the form of a training flight of massive Handley Page bombers, the RFC and RNAS contingents operating side-by-side until April 1918 when the two services officially merged to form the Royal Air Force. When the RNAS arrived in January 1918, the aerodrome was re-designated the No. 1 School of Aerial Navigation and Bomb Dropping, and served as a training establishment for experienced pilots and observers.



*taken by the RAF in 1921. Stonehenge (bottom left) and a WWI practice trench (towards top left)*



*taken by the RAF in 1928, showing Stonehenge with the partially dismantled aerodrome in the background*

Today there is little indication on the ground that there was ever an aerodrome there, mainly due to the efforts of archaeologists during the inter-war period to remove all trace of it. After the war, the aerodrome became the focus for arguments about what constituted unacceptable modern intrusions in the Stonehenge landscape – it prompted the first ever calls to restore the landscape, but not to the way it had been before the war. Instead, there were demands that the monument should be provided with a more ‘appropriate’ setting. That setting was a combination of current archaeological opinion and expectations based on familiar representations of the stones – a primeval pastoral setting -comprising rolling grass-covered chalk downland populated mainly by sheep and barrows, ‘untouched, unploughed, centuries old, solemn and silent’ in the words of Richard Jefferies; ‘freed of discordant elements’ and moved ‘further away from the restless and commonplace current of everyday life’ according to the Office of Works..

The aerodrome was closed in early 1921 and the buildings auctioned off. By 1927 they were, for the most part, still standing – their owner had successfully sidestepped the demand that they be pulled down, and instead was using some for animals, while others were rented out as accommodation. The buildings and much surrounding land were bought as a result of a national appeal, launched in 1927 but which took more than 2 years to reach its target. The aerodrome buildings were removed, the occupants rehoused, and the land handed over to the National Trust.

### **(iii) people**

The desire to remove all traces of the modern age from the landscape (well, some of them anyway) had other casualties as well. In 1927 a tea room had been built in Stonehenge Bottom, close to the junction of the A344 and the A303. The organisers of the appeal presented it in their publicity as the thin end of the wedge – an example of what might happen to Stonehenge if the land around it remained in private hands. Consequently, a little over a decade later it was dismantled, adding to the growing stock of 20<sup>th</sup> century earthworks in the landscape – an archaeological site created by archaeologists.

Apart from aesthetic concerns and its proximity to the stones, the tea-room was also unpopular for other reasons. As the tea-room industry developed alongside private motoring, it was heavily implicated in the perceived erosion of established standards and norms surrounding class and gender – tea-rooms weren’t just a Stonehenge problem. This brought to the fore (again) concerns about the kinds of people visiting Stonehenge and their reasons for doing so – in particular what archaeologists, the authorities, and other visitors might regard as ‘the wrong sort of visitor’. This was a longstanding bone of contention, with a history going back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and probably earlier). It really came to prominence towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sir Edmund Antrobus proved resistant to the demands of the archaeologists and archaeological societies who saw themselves as the natural guardians of the site. They increasingly argued for enclosure and restricted access in order to reserve Stonehenge for those deemed to have, as one put it, ‘an intelligent interest’ in the stones, and keeping out those troublesome tourists, day-trippers and, of course, the locals.

The barbed wire first went up in 1901, at the same time as the straightening of Stone 56. This use of barbed wire was, at the time, of uncertain legality – a recently-invented means of controlling the movement of animals by inflicting pain, it was also frequently mentioned in press coverage of the Boer War where it was deployed extensively by both sides, prompting the first accounts of British troops ‘hung on the wire like crows’. At the same time, an admission charge was introduced. This served two purposes – for an owner interested in selling (the 4<sup>th</sup> Sir Edmund), it demonstrated to potential purchasers that the site could generate an income; for the supporters of enclosure, it ensured that admission was restricted to those who could afford the price of admission.

Despite the fences and fees, of course, the number of visitors continued to increase, as did expressions of concern about their quantity and quality, concerns that weren’t restricted to the days around the solstice. Consequently attempts to manage the monument and its landscape have always had to address the need to manage both visitor numbers and their expectations – to present Stonehenge in an ‘appropriate’ setting. However, that setting is no closer to looking the way it might have in prehistory than it did in 1900.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sir Edmund Antrobus, probably the last private owner to leave the monument pretty much as he found it, a few timber props notwithstanding, always insisted that archaeologists were the most responsible for mischief at archaeological sites – they dug holes in barrows, they restored things according to passing theories about how they might once have looked, and they hammered and chiselled ‘samples’ of the stones at Stonehenge – and “if the ancient monuments were placed in their hands they would do still more”. In his terms, then, the amount of mischief occurring at and around Stonehenge since it entered guardianship in 1918 has been considerable and, of course, it continues...

Further reading – the book, ‘The Stonehenge Landscape: Analysing the Stonehenge World Heritage Site’ by Mark Bowden, Sharon Soutar, David Field and Martyn Barber, is available from all the usual outlets.

The detailed reports can be found at <http://research.historicengland.org.uk/> - just put ‘Stonehenge’ in the search box and take your pick. Martyn has also featured on a radio broadcast on the subject:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02lxjw0>

***Martyn Barber***

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

**Next Meeting Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016 TBC  
Priest House Museum, Learning Centre**

We have decided to continue the pilot to next May, a full 12 months, which should be sufficient time to properly evaluate whether we have met our objectives and made a useful contribution to the archaeology of East Dorset.

The most recent development is that we have been invited to speak to the Ferndown Town Council Planning Committee about the archaeology of Ferndown.

Anybody with an interest in this project who would like to find out how we approach this challenging task is invited to attend our next meeting. If you prefer you can restrict your involvement to assessing planning applications for your local area.

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)**

## EDAS Visit to Grove Prison Museum - 30th October, 2015

A small but select group met at the Grove Prison Museum, Portland for a guided tour by Curator & founder John Hutton, a former Prison Officer, who is extremely informative on life in the Borstal/Young Offenders Institution & more recently re-named Adult/Young Offenders Establishment.

Opened in March, 2014 & consisting primarily of one room in the old Deputy Governor's house, the museum is packed full of all manner of memorabilia dating from the founding of the Prison in 1848 to present day & contains items ranging from the different uniform buttons worn on Prison Officer's tunics over the years to rifles used to keep Prisoners in check whilst working the stone quarries.

Our visit, lasting approximately 90 minutes, was interesting & enlightening. John is an enthusiastic guide with a yarn or two to tell which made for a most enjoyable visit.



When next on Portland I thoroughly recommend incorporating a museum visit. Opening hours are limited, typically 10 - 2 p/m, Thursday - Sunday, entry is free although a donation box is provided.

The gardens in which the museum stands are beautifully kept, although a little poignant, as they contain several headstones of former Prison staff, some quite young when they passed away.

Finally, our afternoon was rounded off with a visit to the nearby Sugarloaf Tearooms, another good recommendation, for a much needed cuppa & of course you have to have a crumb or two to accompany it!

**Karen Winsor**

### **YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU**

*There is an opportunity to become more involved with running the society, next year there will be three vacancies on the EDAS Committee. There are four meetings per year, all held at the Priest House Museum, Wimborne. All we are looking for is a desire to get stuck in and make a contribution.*

*We are also looking for a new editor to produce the newsletter, this doesn't have to be done by a committee member.*

*If you would like further information then please speak to one of the committee members or contact Andrew Morgan at [andrewmorgz@aol.com](mailto:andrewmorgz@aol.com)*

## An Invitation to Athelhampton Manor House

After visiting the Druce Farm Roman Villa last summer, Patrick and Andrea Cooke were so impressed that they invited members of the excavation to visit their home. This happens to be Athelhampton Manor House and Gardens, a spectacular 15th century Tudor country house situated near Puddletown, Dorset. Through his friend Phil D'Eath the visit was arranged for 26<sup>th</sup> November.



The hall is a Grade I listed 15th-century building set in 60 acres of parkland, and is open for public visits.

Sir William Martyn had the current Great Hall built in about 1493. A West Wing and Gatehouse were added in 1550. In 1891, the house was acquired by the antiquarian Alfred de Lafontaine, who carried out extensive restoration to the interior and added the North Wing in 1920–21 for the servants' quarters. This is the warmest part of the house and where the Cooke family now live.

At the same time de Lafontaine engaged Inigo Thomas to create one of England's great gardens as a series of eight walled gardens with numerous fountains and pavilions, plus a balustraded terrace with statues. One of the gardens contains 12 giant yew pyramids set around the pool near the great terrace..

Patrick explained that Athelhampton has been owned by three generations of his family and he shared some anecdotes of his childhood on the manor. A serious fire in late 1992 destroyed most of the attic and first floor of the south wing.

The house has been used for several films and television programmes, most notably the 1972 film *Sleuth* starring Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. This paid for numerous major repairs to the property.



One special treat was the gallery at the top of the house used to exhibit several paintings by the Russian artist Marevna who once lived in Paris where she was one of the first women to discover Cubism. Between 1948 to 1956, she lived and worked at Athelhampton House.

We even used the luxurious in-house cinema for a photographic presentation "Images from Druce Farm Roman Villa 2011 to 2015".

The visit was really enjoyable and Patrick the perfect host and guide. He even suggested that there were earlier structures buried in the grounds which he thought are possibly an earlier church. The site probably has Saxon origins and was mentioned in the Domesday Book, the name being derived from Aethelhelm's Farm. Maybe one day we will return and investigate further.

We thank Patrick and Phil for organising the visit.

**Andrew**

## MINSTERGATE DEVELOPMENT – Archaeological Assessment



On 28<sup>th</sup> October a group of EDAS members were invited by John Lehry, working for the developers Bloor Homes, to visit the archaeological investigation being undertaken by Wessex Archaeology as part of the Minstergate development on the Cranborne Road to the north of Wimborne. This is the second phase of a very substantial development, you will recall that we visited the area for the first phase last year (see EDAS Newsletter November 2014).



The initial geophysical survey and some trial trenches were undertaken by Bournemouth Archaeology, then the site was stripped and Wessex Archaeology given responsibility to undertake the full assessment.

The results are still being processed but there were no permanent settlements in the area. But the excavation has identified a number of ditches corresponding to field boundaries, especially along the Cranborne Road corridor and a number of kiln sites many of which were used for processing iron. There are limited artefacts but the pottery sherds cover the Saxon period to the late 14th century when the area may have been abandoned. There are some good worked flints that are probably from the prehistoric period.

We were the guests of Bloor Homes and we thank John Lehry for arranging the visit. One particular point of interest being when he explained that Bloor Homes is very sensitive to the potential archaeology that may be revealed during any development whatever the size and he stated that the company almost invariably undertakes a proper assessment of every site to ensure any archaeology is recorded effectively.

John also stated that Bloor Homes has no particular policy regarding any finds which are handed to the county archaeology representative. It was agreed in principle that any finds would best be archived at the local Priest House Museum. Gill Broadbent will investigate further.

We thank Pete Scriven for organising the visit.

**Andrew Morgan**

## Obituary

Della one of our founder members and much loved wife of John has sadly passed away after a few years of a bravely borne illness on the 14<sup>th</sup> November. Della will be remembered for her tireless dedication to our society as membership secretary amongst the many rolls she played in perfect harmony with John. They were a team, devoting time and energy to the furtherance of E.D.A.S.

Della was always in the forefront of various projects over the years from Day Schools, walks and the annual BBQ.

Her enthusiasm and sense of humour never faltered. We remember her warmth and generosity when many of our early meetings were held at Wigbeth Cottage. Always making sure we were well refreshed and ready for the evening ahead.

Her knowledge of all things from gardening, animal husbandry and cooking were a deep source of information if you needed advice.

If you visited Della in her garden at a fruit harvesting time she would insist that you did not leave unless you had a basketful of goodies.

There will be a great gap in our lives from now on and we send John and his family our deepest sympathy in the knowledge that dear Della will always be remembered by us all.

**Len Norris**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Note-1:** the date of our February meeting has been brought forward by a week because of Lent which starts on Ash Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February.

**Note-2:** our April meeting will be held at Bournemouth University. The lecture about Pitt-Rivers has been chosen for our second joint lecture with the Students' Archaeology and Anthropology Society.

## 2015-2016 Programme

Date	Speaker	Title
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 3rd 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" <b>Note: this lecture will be held in a lecture theatre on Bournemouth University Talbot Campus.</b>
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.**