

Established 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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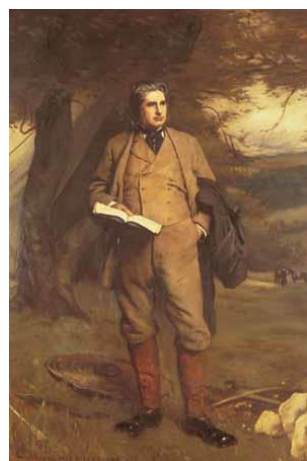
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NEWSLETTER – MAY 2016

EDAS APRIL LECTURE: FINDING PITT-RIVERS by Jane Ellis-Schön, the Project Curator for Salisbury Museum

This was the second annual lecture to be held at Bournemouth University and hosted by the students' Archaeological, Historical and Anthropological Society. Again the event was very well attended with a good number of enthusiastic students, lecturers and a good contingent of EDAS members. The purpose of the event is to develop our relationship with the archaeologists of tomorrow.

Jane Ellis-Schön is the Project Curator for Salisbury Museum's 'Finding Pitt-Rivers' Project funded by Arts Council England. Jane's introduced the project, which has given the opportunity to reappraise an iconic collection of archaeology. She provided a background to Pitt-Rivers and how he gained an interest in archaeology and became master of the Rushmore estate. Pitt Rivers was not content merely to dig sites and record the bare facts of his discoveries; he wanted to extract the maximum amount of information from his material, for instance he measured all the human bones that he excavated. He put together a very dedicated team of experts who were able to prepare plans and make detailed and extremely thorough records of the excavations and the finds. He also used local labourers who became very experienced and competent excavators. He is rightly regarded as the father of archaeology.



After the death of General Pitt-Rivers' grandson in 1966, the collections housed at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham, were closed to the public. They were at risk of being dispersed but thankfully they were transferred to Salisbury Museum. Jane and her team of volunteers have been cataloguing the finds and many of them are now proudly displayed in the recently opened Wessex Gallery at Salisbury Museum. If you haven't visited recently then you are in for a treat.

Andrew Morgan

Don't forget that you can keep in touch with EDAS activities via Facebook

 <https://www.facebook.com/dorset.archaeology>

PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM: ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP UPDATE

SIMONS GROUND BURIAL URN COLLECTION

Two years ago the archaeology volunteers at the Priest's House Museum were faced with months of carefully and meticulously brushing and re-boxing 200 trays of pieces of Roman wall plaster from the villa site at Tarrant Hinton. At the time we thought that this was the worst the Museum collections could throw at us. How wrong could we be! Here we go again with an even tougher job - cleaning, recording 100 orange boxes of Bronze Age urn fragments complete with accumulated dust, mouse droppings and yellowed 1970's newspaper (albeit from the weightier tomes of The Times and Telegraph).



Val, Pauline and Christina clean fragments

The urns come from what is possibly the largest urnfield site found in England to date and is of great importance. The site is in the area of Simons Ground in the parish of Hampreston near Wimborne and was excavated in the years between 1967 and 1969. The complex of four barrows and associated urnfields belonged to Deverell-Rimbury communities of the mid to late Bronze Age with radio carbon dates ranging between 1200BC to 500BC.

During the excavation 297 whole or fragmentary urns were recovered. The burial of the urns appears not to have followed a set pattern with some being buried upright, others inverted and a few covered with capstones. The urns cover a range of shapes and sizes, the three major types identified being globular urns, bucket urns and barrel urns. 138 of the urns contained cremated human remains, 19 of which contained bone from multiple individuals. It is thought that some vessels, especially the smaller urns, were used for offerings buried with the deceased. Residues were found in a number of vessels and others had either been repaired or showed signs of firing cracks. It is considered therefore, that rather than being made specially to hold the cremated remains, the urns were either rejects or had been used previously for domestic purposes and were merely convenient containers in which to bury the remains.

From the 1970's, with the exception of 9 urns which are in the hands of the British Museum, the urns had been in storage in Dorchester and because the Priest's House Museum now has space in which to store them, they were returned to the Museum last October. However, their return has posed a number of problems. The fabrics of the urns are very fragile due to the fact that the technology of the time was not advanced enough for the clay to be fired to high temperatures. Also they have not been touched since the 1970s and many have not been stored in ideal conditions. Some were consolidated after excavation and are reasonably stable but many more fragments were merely put in brown paper bags complete with the soil and root fragments with which they were originally found or wrapped in newspaper. Worse than these though are the fragments that have been stuck down onto sheets of brown wrapping paper, obviously thought back in the 1970's to be the best way to conserve fragile pottery fabrics!



Globular urn



Bucket urn with cremated remains

So what to do? The first thing was to ask for help from the experts and then come up with a plan! Under the guidance of conservation expert Helen Jaeschke who paid us a visit last year to inspect the problem, each urn fragment is being carefully brushed to remove any dust and foreign bodies and laid flat in appropriate finds bags and then boxed. At present the sheets of brown paper with their attaching sherds are being treated in the same way, firstly being brushed with soft paint brushes and the accumulated dust gently vacuumed off. Once this has been done it is hoped that the glue sticking them down can be analysed and a solvent found so the fragments can be lifted and stored in a more appropriate way.

The work is well underway but it is very slow and time consuming. To date we have completed about 15 of the 100 trays and I expect we will be found with paint brushes and vacuum in hand for many more months to come.

Some of the urns from Simons Ground are on display in the Archaeology Gallery at the Museum but if anyone would like to come and see the work we are doing please let me know. We are usually upstairs in the Open Learning Centre each Tuesday.

Looking to the future; since the publication of the monograph in 1982 no further work has been done on the collection. At the Museum we are now actively investigating the possibility of putting together a project to re-analyse the site and finds in view of current thinking and the new methods of scientific analysis now available.

Gill Broadbent

Hon Keeper Archaeology

Date for your diary:

EVENING WITH PHIL HARDING

Saturday 10th September 2016

Allendale Centre, Wimborne.

Tickets £10

All proceeds from this event will go towards the conservation of the Simons Ground Burial Urn Collection at the Priest's House Museum.

Phil has kindly agreed to enter into the spirit of the evening so this is your chance to ask questions and find out what it is really like to dig at some of Britain's most iconic sites.

(more details to follow)

2017 FIELD TRIP

This is an opportunity to join a guided tour of Hadrian's Wall, organised and led by Mark Corney, one of the country's leading experts. All members will be staying in the Beaumont Hotel, Hexham with the following costs:

Dinner/bed and breakfast (2 sharing twin/double room) £130 per night (£780 for two)

Single £85 per night (£510). There will be an additional charge for Mark Corney which will depend on the numbers attending (probably in the region of £40 each)

There are limited places left – **please let Lilian know if you want to go** lilianladle@hotmail.com or tel: 01929 553144



EDAS is pleased to support the Wimborne History Festival.

This is a new event, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, East Dorset District Council, Wimborne Town Council and Wimborne BID, that aims to engage the local community in learning, appreciating and enjoying local history.

The festival culminates in a two-day event on 16th and 17th July 2016 with activities in Wimborne town centre and on a festival site at Lake Gates, just outside the town. Activities include re-enactments, participatory events, oral history, storytelling, displays, craft demonstrations and workshops, lectures talks and walks. In the lead up to the festival weekend projects with schools, heritage organisations and outreach work will increase learning opportunities for local people and a specific oral history project will record memories of the area for future generations.

The festival will cover all periods of history, as they appertain to Wimborne and the surrounding area. The key focus in this first year will be on Roman History.

The festival is a collaboration of 19 partners and 12 or more supporting organisations - including EDAS, local councils, community groups, heritage and cultural venues, historical societies and associations and local business networks.

For more information or to find out about volunteering opportunities go to:

www.wimbornehistoryfestival.org.uk



Wimborne History Festival - EDAS members help local school return to the Bronze Age

During March, pupils at St Michael's Middle School in Colehill enjoyed assembly with a prehistoric twist, courtesy of the new Wimborne History Festival, when archaeologist Julian Richards brought the Bronze Age to life.



A team of children from St Michael's 'Forest School' have been working hard with Julian and volunteers from EDAS and FOAM (Friends of Ancient Monuments) to clear scrub and vegetation from a Bronze Age Barrow in the school grounds, enabling it to be viewed from the school buildings. Work on the barrow is being undertaken with the kind permission of Historic England.

Over the last few weeks, EDAS members have provided almost all of the workforce liaising with Julian Richards and Keith Miller (Inspector of Ancient Monuments) where necessary. They have cleared all the smaller trees, bushes and undergrowth, as well as several larger trees. The project has stopped for the moment while the situation is assessed and, funds permitting, tree surgeons remove the larger trees that are left. It is likely that final clearance of any remaining growth, and removal of leaf mould to better define the ditch, will be done in the autumn. A weatherproof informative sign explaining the barrow is also planned.

This project is the first of many to get underway as part of the new Wimborne History Festival, which culminates in a thrilling two days of events in and around Wimborne on 16th and 17th July.



Alan Dedden, Pete Scriven and Geoff Taylor



Alan and Dave Stewart



Alan, Geoff, Pete and Vanessa Joseph

It's a great opportunity for pupils to help preserve their Bronze Age burial mound and to bring them face to face with the prehistoric past. Intriguing Bronze Age finds from the Priest's House Museum collection in Wimborne will be used to show the children what might be found inside the barrow. With these insights the pupils will then work with Horrible Histories illustrator Martin Brown to design a unique interpretation panel giving future schoolchildren and visitors a better understanding of the barrow and its purpose. In addition, the school's Eco Club, with expert advice and assistance from local horticulturalist Jennifer Trehane, will be planting flowers appropriate to the period around the barrow and in the school grounds.



St Michael's Forest School Team, kitted out for work on the barrow, with (l to r) Andy Lovering, Forest School Leader; Cllr Johnson, Colehill Parish and East Dorset District Councils; Keith Miller, Historic England; Ron Jenkinson, Headteacher St Michael's Middle School; Julian Richards, Archaeologist; Geoff Taylor, EDAS; Cllr Peter Scriven, Colehill Parish Council & Priest's House Museum; Lindsey & Alan Dedden, EDAS; Rachel Stammers Wimborne History Festival Volunteer; Christine Miller.

Vanessa Joseph

EDAS WALKS PROGRAMME

Sunday (am) 17 April 2016: Christchurch Blue Plaques Walk with Sue Newman & Mike Tizzard

A small number of members turned out for what turned out to be a rather inspirational blue plaque walk round Christchurch. First we have to congratulate EDAS members Sue Newman and Mike Tizzard who as members of the Christchurch Local History Group recognised that there was a need to help the local community better



appreciate the complex cultural heritage of this ancient settlement. They ensured that as part of the Borough Council's Millennium Project they should place blue plaques around the town to commemorate its hidden stories. Working mostly on their own and battling against general apathy and some resistance: they identified places of interest, they designed the plaques and wrote meaningful descriptions. Then with the help of a local architect they arranged for the positioning of 19 blue plaques. Members of the Christchurch community and all visitors interested in its cultural heritage should applaud their efforts.

A pamphlet describing the walk, with map and explanation of each plaque is available from the Christchurch Tourist Information shop. To give a flavour I will mention a few of the special places we visited.

The first blue plaque was outside Waitrose supermarket celebrating a remarkable archaeological site excavated during the late 1970s in the area now covered by the carpark. It is a complex site with evidence of occupation from Neolithic times, with two Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age ditches and the cemetery of 30 Jute warriors buried with their weapons. Infuriatingly the excavation team, of which Mike was a member, had to rush to complete their work, only to find a two week hiatus before construction work started. Development taking precedence over archaeology.

It must be remembered that although Christchurch became a backwater for most of its history, its origins were anything but and as Tweonea (Twynham) it was one of the Saxon burghs (fortified towns) established by Alfred or his son Edward, late 9th or early 10th century, to withstand Viking attack. It is built on a spur of land formed between the rivers Stour and Avon.

Another plaque showed that at the roundabout at the head of High Street was located an animal pound, where stray animals were kept awaiting payment of a fine. Sue mentioned that there is evidence from the rolls of medieval courts of complaints made about people allowing pigs to stray anywhere and of dungheaps blocking alleyways. A strong defensive wall ran at right angles to the High Street across the neck of the spur where the northern gatehouse called Bargate provided access to the town; it was removed in 1744 but the name remembered in the road running northwards from High Street.



Another blue plaque is displayed in the entrance to the ugly shop front of Superdrug. But in 1793 this was the site of Robert Cox's House and he gained a monopoly on fusée chain manufacture in Britain, supplying watch, clock and chronometer makers throughout the country. Some of these chains were so fine they could literally pass through the eye of a needle. Fusée chains were exported as far as America. Interested see Sue's book "The Christchurch Fusee Chain Gang".



Bookends in the High Street was the house which John Clingan gave in trust to benefit the poor, the trust income being used to fund apprenticeships for local children in occupations from dressmaking, carpentry and tailoring to a life at sea. Amazingly the trust, established in John Clingan's will in or around 1716, still exists today, serves the same purpose and is still based in Christchurch in Bridge Street.

There are numerous other blue plaques on route to the Town Quay where we find Place Mill the best-preserved Saxon building in the town. It is so called because it sits at the place between the waters of the River Avon and Stour; the mill is a Saxon site later recorded in the Domesday survey. The mill is unique, being the only freshwater tide-mill linking two main rivers. It was in use as a mill until 1908.

The blue plaques help bring the story of Christchurch to life. Unfortunately many of the buildings they refer to have been demolished or abused by short sighted development, a sad reminder that our heritage has always been at risk and is easily destroyed whilst we are looking the other way.

Andrew Morgan

Sunday (pm) 17 April 2016: Christchurch Priory tour guided with Mike Beams



The impressive edifice that is the present day Priory at Christchurch is the result of many periods of construction and redevelopment over the centuries and is today the longest parish church in England.

Five members of EDAS together with members of the local Christchurch Antiquarians society were privileged to be taken on a conducted tour of the Priory by someone who knows it well, Mike Beams the Property Manager. In Mike's knowledgeable hands we explored the Priory, from the depths of the crypts to the spiral staircase up to the interesting museum.

We perused the 39 misericords, the earliest of which dates from the middle of the 13th century and viewed the 19th century memorial to Percy Bysshe Shelley and his wife Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. We saw the lovely medieval floor tiles, well protected from modern footfall and the Kaiser's signature from when he visited in 1907. Also of interest is Pugin's finely carved oak altar table located in the North Transept. Pugin thought so highly of Christchurch Priory that he chose it for the burial of his wife, the position of her resting place now marked by a black marble slab inlaid with a beautiful brass cross. The Priory also contains the tomb of the last Plantagenet, Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury who was executed on the instructions of Henry VIII in 1541.



Construction of the Priory began in 1094 under the direction of Ranulf Flambard during the reign of William Rufus on the site of a priory of 24 secular canons which is known to have existed during the reign of Edward the Confessor. By the middle of the 12th century the heavy rounded arches of the nave and transepts that can be seen today would have been standing together an apsidal quire which was later altered in the 15th century.

It is from this time that the legend of the Miraculous Beam is said to have originated, a legend that attracted pilgrims from far afield. The story goes that during construction a beam was found to have been cut too short when it was hoisted into place. The workmen with the exception of one mysterious carpenter who had worked and eaten alone, lowered the beam, went home and left the problem for the morning. When they returned the following day they found the beam had miraculously lengthened and had been fitted in place. The mysterious carpenter was never seen again and it came to be believed that it was Jesus Christ who had intervened. The beam in question is said to be the one that can be seen today in the Priory's ambulatory.

In 1150 the Priory was reconstituted as a Priory of ordained Canons of the Order of St Augustine of Hippo. Expansion and redevelopment of the building continued apace into the 13th and 14th centuries in the styles of the day, Early English and then Perpendicular Gothic. Work on the Lady Chapel started towards the end of the 14th century and its pendant vaulting is thought to be the first of its kind in England. It is not known whether the old central Norman tower collapsed or if it was taken down as part of the redevelopment of the Priory but a new tower in the Perpendicular style was added between 1470 and 1480 at the western end of the church.



The last major development undertaken in the church was the building of the Salisbury and Draper Chantries in the ornate Tudor Renaissance style early in the 16th century before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII.

The last Prior of Christchurch, John Draper, surrendered the priory on 28 November 1539. He was granted a pension of £133-6s-8d and the use of Somerford Grange for life and demolition of the monastic buildings commenced shortly afterwards. However, following a plea from the townspeople supported by Prior Draper, the church was saved from demolition and granted, together with the churchyard, to the churchwardens and inhabitants of Christchurch to be used as the Parish Church in perpetuity, a grant that was confirmed by James I on 12th February 1612. However, the story of building work does not end in the 16th century but continues today. The fabric of the building is limestone from the Isle of Wight and in many areas has not stood the test of time. Large sections of the stonework are showing signs of erosion and are in need of attention. Some already has been replaced but much more needs to be done. Conservation on such a vast scale is a costly task but unfortunately the

Priory does not receive any grants to maintain the building and is reliant on donations. It is hoped that an application for a Heritage Lottery Grant will be successful so that repairs can be carried out to maintain such an imposing building with its centuries of history for many years to come.

Gill Broadbent

Behind the scenes on the Finding Pitt-Rivers Project

- *"Don't forget the photo scale!"* -

We were very flattered when Sophie, Countess of Wessex said "I understand that some of you are good with a box Brownie ..." - a reference to the fact that Sara and I, as artefact photographers, had been urgently photographing the objects to be placed on permanent display in the new Wessex Gallery of Archaeology at Salisbury Museum.

That was in May 2014. Since then, we've been back in the freezing store room most Wednesdays helping to "find Pitt-Rivers" by recording the many other objects from his collection that are currently behind the scenes.

To date, we have photographed hundreds of artefacts ranging from Neolithic flints through medieval horseshoes to Pitt-Rivers' handwritten labels - often on torn-off letterheads dating and invitations from the 1880s. Each digital image must include a photo scale to record dimensions and one of the worst scenarios is to have placed the object and taken the perfect shot – usually after much effort – and forgotten to include the scale.



Sara busy recording. Clear and accurate documentation is very important as we often take up to 200 photographs in a day.



Vanessa holding a gold armlet of unknown date which weighs 558g. It came from Wales and is an unmistakable symbol of power and status. It was real treat for us when this armlet was placed beneath the lens.

Over the last couple of years, we have pioneered an exciting array of props including numerous plastazote cut-outs which allow us to painstakingly place artefacts either to show off their most important features or to stop them falling over mid-shot. Urns and other ancient vessels are often challenging since tripod work and careful positioning are required to ensure that a view of the inside rim of the pot is achieved. We are very pleased with the end results, some of which are already on Salisbury Museum's new Collections web site.

Of course, it's not all glamour ... lowlights include Roman nails and cleats – hundreds of them – and animal bones. Does anyone know the size of a Kerry cow? Pitt-Rivers often wrote notes comparing dimensions of animal bones in relation to Kerry cows.

The Finding Pitt-Rivers Project gives us, as volunteers, the perfect opportunity to increase our knowledge, learn to recognise a wider variety of objects and handle the truly eclectic range of objects collected by Lt.-General Pitt Rivers himself.

Favourite items include: shale objects and early Medieval bead jewellery (Sara) and Bronze Age collared urns and ancient "bling" (Vanessa).

Vanessa Joseph and Sara Marshall

EDAS PROGRAMME 2016-2017

Note: there has been a change in the programme. Alex Langlands has taken up a position at Swansea University and is not able to travel to Wimborne for his talk scheduled for May. We are delighted that Lilian Ladle will step into the breach and will give a talk to update us about the EDAS excavation of the Druce Farm Roman Villa.

Date	Speaker/Leader	Title
Wed 11th May 2016	Lilian Ladle	Druce Roman Villa. Lilian will bring you up to date with the exciting developments of the EDAS excavation of this interesting Dorset Villa.
Wed 14 Sep 2016	Zoe Barras, A to Z Archaeology	100 Ways to Die: the diseases and disfigurements of ancient times
Sun 9th Oct 2016	David Reeve	EDAS Walk: Rediscovering Wimborne's Saxon Foundation: a walk around the Town's early boundaries
Wed 12 Oct 2016	Dr. Miles Russell, Bournemouth University	Finding Duropolis: a new type of Iron Age settlement for Dorset
Wed 9 Nov 2016	Richard Osgood, Operation Nightingale	The Archaeology of World War I
Wed 14 Dec 2016	Lawrence Shaw, New Forest National Park Authority	Shedding light on the New Forest's history: the results of LIDAR and other surveys
Wed 11 Jan 2017	Prof. Peter Andrews, Natural History Museum & Blandford Museum	An ape's view of human evolution: our fossil ape relatives and how they lived
Wed 8 Feb 2017 at the University	Prof. Tim Darvill, Bournemouth University	A tomb with a view: new investigations on Cotswold-Severn long barrows
Wed 8 Mar 2017	AGM	Members' Evening
Wed 5 Apr 2017 - NOT 2nd Wednesday	Martin Papworth, National Trust	The late great Medieval manor house of Kingston Lacy
Wed 10 May 2017	Kris Strutt, University of Southampton	Atomic magnetism, current & dielectric permittivity: how Physics has the potential to transform Archaeology: new discoveries from geophysics at Old Sarum and other sites

Note: unless otherwise stated all lectures are from 7.30 – 9.30 pm and are held at **St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.**

<http://www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk/>