

Established 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2016

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We hope that you have enjoyed the activities we have arranged over the last year and remind you that any suggestions are always welcome.

We thank all the speakers who have come to EDAS and shared their expertise over the year. We are very grateful to everyone who was involved in the Druce Farm Roman Villa excavation especially the landowners, Ann and Tom Ridout, Lilian our tireless site director, and all the archaeological experts who have given their services and advice. We look forward to another season working on the landscape of the Druce Farm Roman Villa, which **will** be the final year on the site. Lilian is finalising the material for the Worth Matravers Monograph and we plan to publish next year; there will be various events to promote this landmark achievement for an EDAS excavation.

One of the challenges for next year will be our attempt to achieve charity status. We thank the committee for their hard work and enthusiasm, especially Geoff Taylor, Jane Randall and Peter Walker. When we have agreed the revised constitution it will be sent to members for their consideration and formal acceptance before submission to the Charity Commission. We expect this will happen early in the New Year.

We look forward to seeing you at the Christmas meeting on 14th December when Lawrence Shaw will tell us about fascinating new discoveries in the New Forest National Park. As usual there will be complementary mince pies, made by Lyndsey Dedden who recently volunteered to organise the refreshments at our monthly meeting. We thank Dave Stewart for looking after the kitchen so well for a number of years, just one of several members who have taken on this important responsibility.

EDAS Lecture: The Archaeology of World War I by Richard Osgood the Senior Archaeologist with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Richard was instrumental in setting up Operation Nightingale which was developed to utilise both the technical and social aspects of field archaeology to help in the recovery and skill development of soldiers injured in the conflict in Afghanistan. There is a close correlation between the skills required by the modern soldier and those of the professional archaeologist. These skills include surveying, geophysics (for ordnance recovery or revealing cultural heritage sites), scrutiny of the ground (for improvised explosive devices or artefacts), site and team management, mapping, navigation and the physical ability to cope with hard manual work in often inclement weather conditions. This has proven to be a great success and his team have been instrumental in introducing over 80 soldiers to archaeology as part of their rehabilitation programme, several have since pursued academic courses with one getting a first class degree and others are now employed by Wessex Archaeology who supported the initiative. Richard also advised us that the work will be included in the next BBC series of Digging for Britain, hosted by Alice Roberts when a secret prized artefact will be disclosed.

We can only agree with Richard when he stated that the purpose of archaeology is to gain a better understanding of the people and their experience of life. This is especially so with the three World War I archaeological sites that his team have recently excavated. It is commonly believed that ill-trained troops were sacrificed in the trench war on the Western Front, exemplified by the phrase "lions led by donkeys". Richard suggests that the archaeological evidence reveals that attempts were made to provide soldiers with realistic and comprehensive training. During the summer of 2016 members of Operation Nightingale took part in the excavation on Salisbury Plain that explored examples of training trenches that replicated the German Hindenberg trenches on the Somme.



Salisbury Plain trenches, by OGS Crawford

The excavation uncovered extremely well made trenches containing a large amount of material including date-stamped bullet shells, corrugated iron referred to as "wriggly tin", latrines that were still urine stained and extremely smelly, and some trenches still featured revetments to shore up the sides. There were numerous examples of their rations essential for morale, with biscuit tins, and tins of condensed milk essential for a brew of tea. Of course the real story is about the men, who were drawn from across the world to fight for the empire. Richard showed the photographs of two young Trinidadians who had trained on Salisbury Plains but were to perish on their first day of action.

A second site that Richard explained was Mametz Wood in France, attacked by the 38th (Welsh) Division during the First Battle of the Somme. On 7th July the first wave attacked expecting light resistance. However the reconnaissance had been inadequate and they met strong fortifications, with a large number of very experienced German soldiers with strategically positioned machineguns that killed and injured over 400 soldiers before they reached the wood. Further attacks on the next day also failed. Sir Douglas Haig was unimpressed and relieved Major General Ivor Philipps of his command, which was passed Major General Watts, with orders to do what was necessary. He ordered that the Division would attack the wood again with the aim of "capturing the whole of it".

The 10th July attack was on a larger scale than had been attempted earlier. Despite heavy casualties the fringe of the wood was soon reached. The German defence was stubborn and fierce bayonet fighting took place when the wood was entered and the German machine guns silenced. By 12th July the wood was effectively cleared of the enemy. The Welsh Division had lost about 4,000 men killed or wounded in the engagement. It would not be used in a massed attack again until 31st July 1917. The wood still stands today, surrounded by farmland; overgrown shell craters and trenches can still be made out. Richard mentioned that prior to the engagement the commanding officer of the division had decided to give very little training in trench warfare as it was thought that there would be no difficulty in learning that skill in France.

Richard acknowledged the surprising number of poets associated with the attack who have immortalised the waste, including Siegfried Sassoon, of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, who in a red mist made a single handed attack on the enemy trenches in Mametz on 4th July 1916 for which he was awarded a Military Cross.

The poet and visual artist David Jones, who took part in the battle, wrote a vivid description of the fighting in Mametz Wood in his long poem *In Parenthesis* (1937), “And here and there and huddled over, death-halsed to these, a Picton-five-feet-four paragon of the Line, from Newcastle Emlyn or Talgarth in Brycheiniog, lying disordered like discarded garments or crumpled chin to shin-bone like a Lambourne find” (Note: he may have been referring to Bronze Age human remains found at the Lambourn Seven Barrows site).

Robert Graves fought in the battle and described the scene immediately after the battle: “It was full of dead Prussian Guards, big men, and dead Royal Welch Fusiliers and South Wales Borderers, little men. Not a single tree in the wood remained unbroken” (Note: the regiment had been raised under the instructions of David Lloyd George who allowed the usual minimum height requirements to be lowered to accommodate Welshman who were often short in height). The Welsh artist Christopher Williams painted *The Welsh at Mametz Wood* at the request of the Secretary of State for War. Williams visited the scene in November 1916 and later made studies using a soldier provided for the purpose. The painting is in the collection of National Museum Wales.



The Welsh at Mametz, painted by Christopher Williams

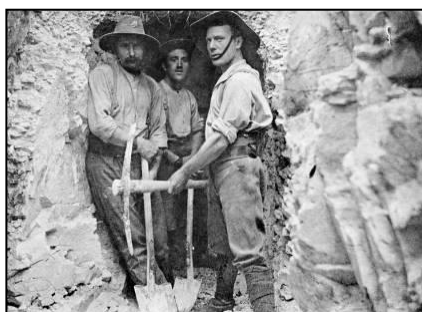
Note: Owen Sheers wrote a play called Mametz which was produced in 2014 by the National Theatre of Wales. The production took place on farmland near Usk in Monmouthshire, and the audience became silent participants; taken through scenes from behind the lines and then walking through recreated British trenches to a place where we were arranged in lines in the manner of the Welsh infantry. On the shrill blast of a whistle we went over the top and marched into the deafening roar of amplified gunfire towards an ancient hillfort acting as Mametz Wood to be met by the bloodied remains of corpses scattered over the Iron Age banks and ditches that had become the German trenches.

Richard explained that the French landowner allowed access to some of the site and his team searched unsuccessfully for the British trenches but they found numerous shell holes which contained much wartime material. In the wood they discovered the earthworks of a large German fortification, another feature unknown to the staff of General Haig. They also found the remains of a German casualty, much of the skeleton had disintegrated but much of his equipment and personal items were preserved. One exception being the belt buckle which became a much desired war souvenir featuring the optimistic legend “Gott Mit Uns”. Various other personal remains were found.



The artefacts with the German Soldier

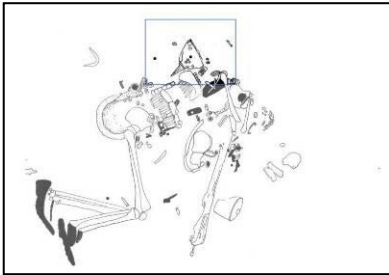
The 3rd Australian Division arrived at Lark Hill on the Salisbury Plains area in 1916 to undertake some elementary training. They were named the “deep thinkers” because they were formed after the tragedies of Gallipoli and the Somme. Led by the highly respected General Monarch, who was a trained engineer, he ensured that his troops had a separate identity and made them wear their bush hat with the sides down. They undertook their main training on Bustard Ground in preparation for the Battle of Messines in 1917, infamous for the detonation of



massive mines under the German trenches. In the past the British advances had usually failed to hold positions taken after an advance but now strategies were developed to fortify such hard won gains. Small scale mine detonations were undertaken during training to better calculate the effect on the surrounding area to minimise the impact on allied troops.

The 3rd Australian Division objective was the southern part of the Messines ridge and the village. On the night before the attack the division suffered a heavy German gas bombardment causing many casualties. But on the day they benefitted from the massive mine explosions in their target area. It was described as a British tactical and operational success but there were 3,379 casualties in the 3rd Australian Division.

At Messines the archaeology team were invited to undertake excavations at the battle site where they uncovered the remains of an Australian soldier. There followed an impressive example of forensic archaeology. They painstakingly examined all the associated material and gradually built up a profile of the deceased. He was obviously an Australian proven by the shoulder titles, button and collar tags. He had two gas masks suggesting a real fear of gas attack. Unusually he had a full back pack, rather than a smaller combat version, the reason being that it held a Pickelhaube, a German spiked helmet, a highly prized souvenir. He was not wearing his tin hat, which he carried under his backpack, proudly demonstrating confidence in his soft bush hat.



Sketch of the Australian Soldier



Australian Shoulder Badge



Gas masks

From the rest of his kit they concluded that he was not in the first wave because he did not have any wire cutters, he had a full complement of rifle rounds so he was infantry rather than a sapper, that he wore summer kit, he was not an officer and he had dark hair. By undertaking isotopic analysis of his teeth they identified that the soldier had been brought up in the Hunter Valley area of New South Wales. The search was now on. After following several false leads the team were eventually able to use DNA analysis to confirm the man as being Alan James Mather. He was given a full military burial at the Prowse Point Commonwealth military cemetery in Belgium.

This was a very well presented and interesting talk, very suitable as we approached Armistice Day. I am sure that most of the audience had distant relatives who had suffered the consequences of this war. We were delighted to provide Richard with a generous contribution for his designated charity.



Alan James Mather

Andrew Morgan

WESSEX ACADEMY for FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY - WAFA

'All you ever wanted to know about Stonehenge'

Date: Sat, 17 December 2016
 Location: Micks Barn, Ash Farm, Stourpaine, Blandford Forum, Dorset. DT11 8PW
 Time: 10:00am - 4:00pm
 Tutors: Julian Richards and panel
 Cost: £35 per day (£30 for CBA Wessex members)

A day of talks and discussion focusing on Britain's most celebrated prehistoric monument.

With Julian Richards and panel.

Places are limited, so please book early.

For further information and costs please check out: <http://www.wafa.org.uk/>

First take your piece of corrugated box board - the “Finding Pitt-Rivers” Project comes to an end

For almost four years Sara and I have been volunteering at Salisbury Museum, first helping to decant the old archaeology gallery to make way for the rebuild and birth of the new Wessex Gallery and then as artefact photographers on the “Finding Pitt-Rivers” project.

Originally it had been estimated that there were 10,000 objects within the archaeology collections; this has since been revised to 13,000. To date:

- over 9,700 objects have been measured and packed,
- over 7,500 photographed with over 3,000 images photo-edited,
- and over 8,000 records are now updated in MODES.

Artefact photography was put on hold after the summer to allow us to concentrate on the making of storage boxes for the Pitt-Rivers contour models and some urns and pots.

Every box is custom-made. The aim is to make sure that each precious object sits snugly in its box and does not move around whilst, at the same time, ensuring that the packing does not crush or cause damage either. All materials used in the box-making process meet museum conservation standards and include acid free tissue paper, jiffy foam, Plastazote foam, glue sticks and gummed linen tape. There is no Sellotape in sight.

It all sounded so simple

Sara and I have been “reluctant” box makers and there has been much angst as well as a lot of cursing as we have learned these wonderful new skills. I have broken several scalpel blades along the way but we have not had any real disasters.

The starting point is always a large piece of acid-free corrugated box board – with either single or double wall depending on whether a box or a lid has to be made. Gloves on and measuring tape at the ready to establish maximum dimensions - ancient pots and Pitt-Rivers contour models are notorious for being irregular and non-symmetrical. The type of box and the appropriate packing materials now need to be considered. For example, how will someone lift the object out of its box in the future without putting it at risk? Some objects are so large, heavy and unwieldy that they require boxes with side flaps or pull-out drawers to make this operation possible.



Cutting the box shape with corner flaps

If this were not enough, we then need to do a complex series of calculations to derive the actual box measurements and draw a template on the board, including gutters for bending, where the corner flaps should be, and allowances for packaging materials. Finally, the object is replaced on the template to make sure it really does fit into the proposed area before the box shape is cut from the board. Otherwise it's a complete waste of time and expensive materials.

Hurrah! We're now at the glueing stage and when this is done we have something which looks like a box. Reinforcing the corners and edges with gummed linen tape is a doddle after what has gone before. Finally, the lid is created by a similar process but using a single layer of corrugated board. For lids, the newly-made box is used as the basis for measurements. Typically, making a box and packing the object has taken us a day. Where the objects are larger, more time might be required.

There is a tremendous feeling of satisfaction and achievement when the object is finally packed. Models are placed on a layer of jiffy foam



Placing an urn excavated from Rotherley into its box (inset the box with packing and lid).

and wedged with bits of Plastazote to make sure they cannot move during transport or handling. Urns and pots rest on a special Plastazote stand and are packed round with acid free foam.

The final box we made (measurements 660 x 640 x 190mm) was for a Pitt-Rivers model of a beaker burial from Rushmore Park September 1884. The lovely model includes a crouched inhumation and a whole beaker pot. Bones from the skeleton (currently in the Salisbury Museum storeroom) have been sampled for the Beaker People project. The complete pot is on display in the Wessex Gallery.

To date, more than 30 models and 9 urns have been boxed. The task will be completed in the coming weeks.



The final box

Transferable skills

Sara and I were novices when we started box-making. Although, we will never achieve the levels of sophistication of boxes made by conservators – some of which are real works of art – we have progressed considerably over the last few weeks. In fact, whenever we have moaned, Jane Ellis-Schön, the Project Curator, has reminded us that we have acquired yet another “transferable skill” which can be called upon in the future as more social history and archaeology objects in museums will need to be boxed up for storage and preservation.

Sadly, the Pitt-Rivers project will finish in February 2017 when the funding runs out so Sara and I are taking a sabbatical for a few months. However, it won't be a holiday for us as we are the volunteer fundraising team for the Priest's House Museum in Wimborne which has been granted a first-round pass and a development grant from the Heritage Lottery fund towards its "Revival" project. The total amount of the project is £ 1.6 million and the Museum will need to raise a considerable amount of money by way of match-funding to be able to submit its Round 2 application.

We both hope to return to Salisbury Museum sometime during 2017.

Vanessa Joseph and Sara Marshall

Druce Farm Roman Villa – The final backfill

On a very cold and misty day we finalised the backfill of the Roman Villa where we have spent thousands of man days carefully excavating this brilliant site. We thank Bernard Cox the tenant farmer for sending his nephew Ed and a very powerful digger with its 3 tonne bucket. We worked from 10.00 until 4.00 filling the trenches and levelling all the spoil heaps across the site. We were pleased when the job was done; Ed admitted he was a bit surprised when he saw the scale of the site and hadn't expected to complete the task in a day.



Instantly filling a trench on the easterly enclosure



The Aisled Hall disappears



In the depths of the SW corner

We must thank Robert Heaton for starting the backfill after the excavation ended early November, especially on the more sensitive areas of the north range. Robert has worked throughout the season opening trenches and shifting spoil heaps, patiently providing the care and attention demanded by his trusty 50 year old JCB, a true exponent of *Zen and the Art of JCB Maintenance*.



Next year we move into the adjacent field, just beyond the hedgerow to the west, where the complex enclosure ditches extend and where interesting anomalies are shown on Dave Stewart's geophysical survey.

For information, Andrew Selkirk of Current Archaeology is finalising an article about the Druce Villa excavation following his visit during the autumn of 2015 and it should be printed within the next few months.

Andrew

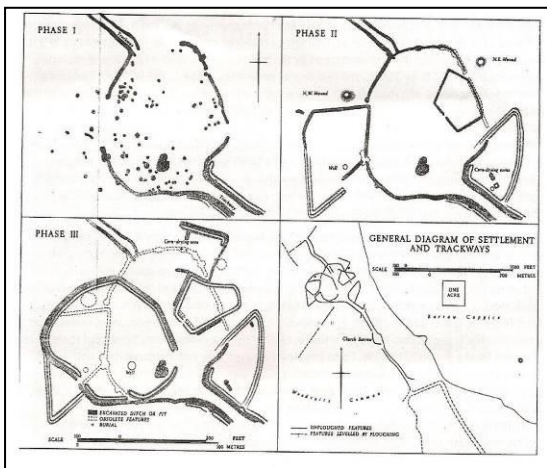
CCAONB Foundations of Archaeology Project: Woodcutts Common Settlement

On Saturday 26th November several EDAS members joined archaeologists Philip Planel and Emma Rouse plus a number of other interested people for a short walk to the site of the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement at Woodcutts Common on Cranborne Chase. It is located in the Rushmore Park of General Pitt-Rivers and was one of the first sites he excavated. The site was located within the hunting grounds of Cranborne Chase and so benefitted from a degree of protection. It has associated tracks and Celtic field system covering an area of four acres. It was encouraging to find a series of intercutting embankments and ditches, albeit these had been reconstituted by Pitt-Rivers after his excavations. The excavation is an example of the best archaeological practises prevalent in his time (mid-19th century), most of which he devised himself. He meticulously recorded what he found, including bone assemblages and non-precious artefacts which had previously been ignored, he made meticulous plans and drawings, and he recorded by context enabling him to recognise relationships and sequences.



The site is a roughly circular enclosure about 300ft across with a gap in the SE. There are two tracks associated with it, one from the NW and the other from the SE each about 20 ft wide. On the east side are two other enclosures and a third on the SW side. This is a small settlement probably occupied by an extended family. The

occupiers were farmers and many agricultural implements have been recovered. Also within the enclosures he recorded four small corn dryers with hypocaust structures. It appears to have been occupied continuously and had been re-developed with at least three phases being identified; from the early first century AD, the late second century AD and the late fourth century AD. The first phase is identified through dating Black-burnished Ware pottery, Durotrigian coins as well as 84 brooches from this period. The phase continued through to about AD180 with the presence of samian pottery and a hoard of 36 coins dating from 74BC to AD180. No coins were found from the first half of the third century but a hoard of 130 coins for the period AD253-296 were found. Coins and New Forest ware pottery indicate occupancy until c. AD360.



There were numerous metal finds including, rings, pins, tweezers, spoons, beads, bracelets, harness items, knives, ploughshare tips and other tools. The remains of in excess of thirteen adults have been found outside the settlement, some within mounds that looked similar to small Bronze Age barrows, other human bones had been widely scattered. The remains of twenty two infants including foetuses have also been recorded. Bones of ox, sheep and pig were most numerous but there were also the remains of horses, dogs, deer and other wild animals.

Whilst the Pitt-Rivers team did record prominent features such as ditches and pits it did not recognise more ephemeral features such as post holes. So whilst a number of hearths are mentioned there is no indication of dwellings within the area apart from a Roman influenced rectangular building with painted plaster from a wattle wall, plus roof tiles. There were two deep wells within the enclosure both benefitting from description stones erected by Pitt-Rivers. Both are labelled Roman and one contained the remains of a Roman Bucket. The deeper with a width of 4 ft was excavated to a depth of 188 foot, but was still dry at that depth. Putlog holes for scaffolding or a ladder were found at regular intervals down the shaft. Philip said the well-shafts had not been lined and concluded that the chalk was very compact and not very permeable. He also suggested that in Roman times the water table was 30 foot higher in these parts. The finds are in the Salisbury Museum and Dorset County Museum.



Andrew Morgan

In Memoriam

Ken Wheatley



Ken holding a Late Bronze Age American socketed axe c. 600BC found at Worth Matravers

We are sorry to announce that Ken Wheatley has passed away. A close friend told us that Ken died peacefully and retained his wit and good humour through to the end.

Ken had been an active member of the society for many years; he and his wife regularly attended EDAS meetings and field trips and supported many archaeological excavations including Bestwall, Worth Matravers and Druce Farm. He was a very experienced metal detectorist who used these skills to help locate metal objects on the site, including material that ended up in the spoil heaps. He was instrumental in getting Lilian Ladle involved in Druce Farm where previously he and other members of the Stour Valley Metal Detectorists had been invited by the landowner. From the collection of material they found he was certain that a Roman Villa must be present and we were delighted when we were able to prove him correct.

We offer our condolences to his family and friends.

EDAS PROGRAMME 2016-2017

| Date | Speaker/Leader | Title |
|---|---|---|
| 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.**

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