



Established 1983

# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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## NEWSLETTER – Mid summer 2017

### From the Chair

**Visit to Stonehenge:** on 8<sup>th</sup> May a group of 30 EDAS members and guests spent the day with Julian Richards exploring Stonehenge and the wider landscape. This was an inspirational visit (starting at 6.15am) and was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants. We thank Julian for sharing his knowledge and amusing anecdotes and Alan Dedden for organising the visit. There were a number of people on the reserve list so Alan will try and arrange another visit next year.

**2017 EDAS Field Trip to Hadrian's Wall:** since 1989 EDAS members have organised an annual field trip, enabling members to explore the historical heritage of areas throughout England and Wales. This year's trip to Hadrian's Wall was the twenty seventh expedition. It was organised by Lilian Ladle and led by Mark Corney, one of the country's leading experts on the Romans in Britain. It was a privilege to spend so much time in the company of an expert who gave us a real insight into the Wall. Thanks to Vanessa the task of writing up the field trip journal has been shared with each day written up by a different member of the group. The journal will be published separately.

Next year we will visit SE Wales. Preliminary planning is progressing well and we should be able to provide an outline programme by the start of the new season in September.

There are no real constraints when organising an EDAS field trip, other than appealing to enough members, so please think about organising one in the future. It doesn't even need to be in the UK.

**Views from Above:** we are very fortunate that EDAS members Jo Crane and Sue Newman have a light aircraft and over several years they have been taking photographs of archaeological features across Dorset and beyond. They have kindly provided the newsletter with a number of great photographs which we will print over the coming months.

**Mystery Object:** Can you help? Vanessa has included a picture of an object made of chalk that needs to be identified, see within.

**Water Meadows:** I am delighted that the first talk of the new season is about watermeadows. From the sixteenth century Dorset was at the forefront of new technological advances that enabled early growth during the hungry months. Many of our river valleys, especially the Frome and Piddle, contain the remains of the associated water channels, which can be seen clearly from aerial photographs.

**Committee Opportunity:** we still have a vacancy on the committee. Please contact me or one of the committee members if you want more information and would like to become more involved. No special skills required other than being prepared to get stuck in and make a contribution. There are just four committee meetings each year.

## A Day in the Stonehenge Landscape with Julian Richards

The popularity of Stonehenge is both a joy and a frustration. How do you make sense of the myriad ideas expounded in print on TV and on line? Monday 8th May provided a very big step in that direction as Julian Richards guided us not only amongst the stones and across the landscape but also through many of the theories. It would not be possible to include all of Julian's commentary so the following is just the highlights.



Gathering at the visitors centre at 6.15am was another example of its popularity - the "out of hours" access is the only opportunity to see Stonehenge without the surrounding mass of visitors - and it certainly makes a difference. It is a pity the A303 is busy even at that hour, but let's hope that becomes a thing of the past in the not too distant future. We started with the beginning of the Stonehenge story - the surrounding ditch and bank and the Aubrey holes. Did the Aubrey holes contain stones (possibly bluestones), or wooden posts, or no posts? All that is known is that many contain cremation burials that were placed in the holes when they were backfilled shortly after being originally dug around 3000BC. This date makes Stonehenge the oldest known cremation burial cemetery in the UK. There is no direct evidence of either stones (blue or otherwise) or wooden posts from any of the various excavations. The stone theory relies on the supposed compaction of the base of Aubrey hole 7. However this observation comes from its re-excitation in 2008 (possibly its 3rd excavation!) and can hardly therefore be regarded either as a secure context or as representative of all Aubrey holes. Scope does exist for future investigation as approximately 21 of the 56 Aubrey holes have never been excavated.



*Photo courtesy of P Derwent*

Next we entered the stone circle. As Julian suggested, we entered through the larger gap between stones 1 and 30 of the outer circle. This is generally accepted as the intended entrance as it aligns with the avenue and you enter facing into the trilithon "horseshoe", looking directly at the largest trilithon through which the midwinter sunset aligns. What a joy it was to see the stones up close and have time to reflect on the scale of the achievement they represent. There are so many unknowns about Stonehenge - who built it, why, was it ever completed, why were the trilithon uprights different, did the altar stone ever stand, and so on. All these questions and many more were addressed by Julian as we roamed around the stones. He also talked about some of the wackier ideas, such as the "D I" that apparently mysteriously appeared in lichen on the outside face of stone 5 following Princess Diana's death. Actually they were the remnants of spray painting "RADIO CAROLINE" across a number of the stones. The lichen is encouraged by the paint removal process! There are traces of the other letters on the other stones, but the middle letters of "RADIO" stand out. Then there are the carvings, from the Bronze Age axe heads and daggers to the modern graffiti, but including "† WREN" in a neat and distinctly gothic style. As Christopher Wren was born at East Knoyle only about 18 miles away, could it be that he visited Stonehenge and left his mark on the stones?



*Photo courtesy of P Derwent*

All too soon the hour was up and we were herded out of the stones by the officials and back on the bus to the visitor centre. At this early hour (approaching 8am) the cafe was not open, but the shop was and we were directed through the shop as normal. Most of us made the short trip into Amesbury for breakfast at The Bell Inn (very good and not expensive - full English for about £5 depending on choices). Then it was back to the visitors centre to start the landscape walk. First stop was the western end of the Great Cursus. This monument also has more questions than answers. The known facts seem to be limited to its date (from a deer antler placed at the bottom of the ditch) - around 3500BC. This was fortunate as typically cursus ditch excavations reveal no finds at all - and even less in secure contexts as they are usually quiet shallow. The cursus was first identified by William Stukeley in 1723 who thought it was a roman chariot racing track. He was so convinced of this that although his field drawings correctly showed the ends of the cursus to be square (and therefore totally unsuitable for chariot racing); his published drawings were altered and showed rounded ends (an early example of alternative facts?). There is no archaeological evidence to support any theory on its purpose. The view of the cursus today has been greatly enhanced by the clearance of the woods at either end. As Julian explained, this resulted from a brief discussion in the early 1980s about felling the section of Fargo Woods across the western end. Today, trying to fell this number of trees on such a protected landscape would be faced with many obstacles. It also paved the way for the clearance of the eastern end in recent years.



The walk continued to the cursus barrows where Julian pointed out the beautiful examples of bell and bowl barrows, and how many others in areas more heavily farmed over the centuries have not retained their surrounding ditches. Then on along the cursus to the eastern end and King Barrow Ridge. Along the way we passed "Monument 1363465" - the remains of the Larkhill WW1 sewage works! 20m outside the eastern end was the long barrow "Amesbury 42" or as Stukeley had it, a grandstand for the race track! This long barrow now exists only as slight earthworks and in record and below ground archaeology, but excavations (including by Julian) have not found a primary burial.

The King Barrows were constructed differently to all others in the Stonehenge landscape in that the bulk of the mounds were built using turfs. Chalk quarried from a surrounding ditch provided only the outer surface. Most barrows have a small earth or turf mound over the primary burial with the bulk of the barrow being the chalk. This only became known when a number of trees on top of the barrows were blown over in the storm of 1987. This allowed a limited investigation of the barrows, but the reason for this different construction remains a mystery. It is these trees, incidentally, that protected the barrows from early antiquarians and hence any burials they contain are undisturbed.

Leaving King Barrow Ridge, we followed the course of The Avenue and experienced the progressive distant view, then disappearance and final gradual reveal of Stonehenge as The Avenue uses the contours of the landscape to produce this very dramatic approach. Whilst this was obviously intended, was it part of a route from Durrington

Walls to Stonehenge? The date sequence does not support this as Durrington Walls went out of use around 2450BC but The Avenue was not constructed until approximately 2200BC.

There is now almost no sign of the A344 across the approach to Stonehenge, except that the fence remains. This is a pity but sadly it is required to control access to Stonehenge itself as the surrounding landscape is freely accessible.



After taking the shuttle back to the visitor centre and a brief lunch, we re-assembled at Durrington Walls. Recent excavations of huts have generated various estimates for the total at Durrington Walls - but actually only 7 were excavated. The high numbers vary from 200 to 1000 but are extrapolations based on the area excavated and, to a degree, geophysics. The massive scale of Durrington Walls is breathtaking. The ditch and bank are about 500m in diameter and they surround not only the houses but also 2 timber circles, the whole area being connected to the river Avon by an avenue. The ditch and bank required a huge amount of labour, and this to "close" the area at the end of its useful "life". As with Stonehenge, there are many unanswered questions - was it the Stonehenge builders camp, if so why there and not closer, how many houses were there, how many were in use at any one time and so on.

Finally, we moved across the road to Woodhenge where we heard that although the plan of the henge is known from excavation and the location and size of the posts are marked by concrete stubs, the form of the wooden structure is not known. Did it have lintels like Stonehenge? Did it have a roof? What was its purpose? How does it "fit in" with all the other monuments? Maud Cunnington excavated a child burial at the centre of Woodhenge between 1926 and 1929. This was interpreted by her as sacrificial because the skull was split. However, the child's skull may not have been fused at time of death so this may not be definitive evidence. The truth will remain a mystery as the bones were taken to London after the excavation and were lost during the blitz.

It had been a fantastic day (even the weather cooperated!). I have received several complimentary emails noting not only Julian's extensive knowledge and patience but also his ability to "tell the story" of this endlessly fascinating landscape. Our thanks to Julian for sharing his enthusiasm for this wonderful place.

***Alan Dedden***

#### **DRUCE ROMAN VILLA – 2017 EXCAVATION SEASON IN PROGRESS**

This season on the Druce Roman Villa excavation we are working in the field adjacent to the field where the villa was sited. We are exploring the unusual enclosure ditches which appear to start in this field and areas where anomalies feature on the geophysical survey undertaken by Dave Stewart.

Like last year we will work a maximum of three days per week on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and continue until we have achieved this years objectives.

No experience required but a reasonable level of fitness is necessary as there is a mile walk to and from the site and the work is quite physical with lots of bending and lifting. You will be expected to bring your own equipment.

if you are interested then please contact our Site Director Lilian Ladle email: [lilianladle@hotmail.com](mailto:lilianladle@hotmail.com) or tel: **01929 553144**



## View from Above - Badbury Rings

Badbury Rings is the iconic multivallate Iron Age hillfort that features on the EDAS Logo, as designed by Len Norris. It is located in an area of outstanding archaeological importance, with several Bronze Age barrows (at least seven are visible) located in the area and it was used as a junction where several Roman Roads meet; from the Roman fort at Lake Farm, Dorchester, Bath and Old Sarum.



*Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane*

Badbury Rings sits 100 m above sea level. In 1998 the RCHME completed a survey and recorded 28 potential hut sites within the ramparts. It seems likely that the hillfort became de-populated towards the end of the Late Iron Age, perhaps as the nearby **Vindocladia** settlement developed. The hillfort was reoccupied in the post-Roman period shown by post Roman finds and as Martin Papworth recently pointed out, the NW part of the outer bank actually clips the Roman road proving it was later. It has been suggested (very unlikely) that this is the site of the critical Battle of Mount Badon when the invasive Saxons were beaten by British forces and their westward migration delayed for nearly 150 years. The battle was first mentioned by the Welsh cleric *Gildas* in his work ***De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*** ("On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain"), written in the early to mid-6th century.

# Chalke Valley History Festival

I have been aware of this festival for years but thanks to a recommendation from Jo Crane this year I decided to make my first visit and booked some talks for the 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July. On the first day I also volunteered to support the CCAONB Foundations of Archaeology project which had laid on a talk by Martin Green about the Archaeology of Cranborne Chase and a series of demonstrations; such as human bone assemblage, geophysical survey by Winchester University, flint knapping by Mark Trevarthen and a talk by Sir General Pitt-Rivers! After lunch I took in two talks, the first by Jim Storr on the Anglo-Saxon Conquest of England. Jim, an ex-military man and now an academic, has been investigating the numerous massive earthworks that were built across the country,



*Soldiers from Napoleonic War. Photo: Steve Smith*

including Bokerley Dyke, Wansdyke etc. He has considered these in terms of the conflict between the invading Germanic tribes and the Britons. My second talk was by the estimable Tom Holland who performed a whimsical folke tale based on The Legend of King Arthur, which included merlin, dragons and the inevitable sword in the stone. Not what I had expected but fun all the same.

On the Saturday the events started early and the site was a hive of activity with hundreds of people involved in various re-enactment groups, from Romans, Romano-Britons, through to Saxons and Vikings, all involved in practical archaeology and demonstrating cooking, weaving, smithying, money making, archery and sword play.

Many provided opportunities for children of all ages to get involved. In the glorious sunshine this was obviously a fabulous place for families. There were numerous military activities going on, including bomb disposal demonstrations and cannons being fired as well as an odd looking German officer marching about. On the Saturday I had booked a stellar line up of speakers, with Nicolas Crane explaining the 10,000 year development of the British landscape within 45 minutes, and the wonderful Bettany Hughes sharing her passion for Istanbul and describing several important female characters. In the afternoon Michael Wood talked about the location of Brunaburgh, the battle which Athelstan won which enabled him to define the extent of England.



*Photo: Steve Smith*

Do check out this festival it is well worth a visit. It was only a 60 minute drive from Poole.

**Andrew Morgan**

## ***Durotriges Project – Bournemouth University Big Dig***

On 5<sup>th</sup> July thirty four EDAS members attended a visit to Bournemouth University's excavation at Winterbourne Kingston. They have been working on this truly remarkable site for six years trying to understand the impact of the Roman invasion on the indigenous population. We were greeted by a

keen Paul Cheetham who explained that whilst the sites uncovered in the previous years were very exciting in their own right, including a banjo enclosure and an exceptionally large settlement of round houses, named Duropolis for a newspaper article, but both sites had been abandoned by about 100BC. Paul was delighted to announce that this year they had found the evidence of a Durotrigan presence at the time of the invasion. He took us to the first trench where a small Iron Age enclosure had been uncovered which dates from the period of the Roman Invasion. It was in the strange shape of a kite (see photo). It contains a series of pits and several burials but as yet there are no signs of any dwellings. One feature of particular interest was a kiln. It is apparent that the site was abandoned soon after the invasion. Over the



*Iron Age*  
*Photo by Sue Newman and Jo*

years since we have been visiting the site we have all marvelled at the apparent simplicity of excavation on a chalk bedrock, just clear back the top soil and all the features show up as brown shapes in the pristine white. But not here, being further down the slope they have encountered the dreaded "clay with flint" deposits and they are not so happy; mattocks rather than trowels when the sun bakes the ground. In fact it is just like we have faced year after year at Druce!



*Bronze Age Site.*

Paul then led us through a field of barley to a second trench which is being managed by our own Dave Stewart. Here they have found a late Bronze Age settlement with some remarkable features. One of the students has excavated quite beautifully a section of ditch with a depth of several metres. This is a monumental feature which stretches for approx. 100 metres across the landscape. There would have been a bank behind of similar proportions created from the ditch fill. The purpose of the feature is not known, and it does not appear to offer any defensive capability, and there are no potential gateways; maybe it was just a powerful statement in the landscape declaiming the status of the people.

*Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane* Adjacent to this trench was another which contained three huge pits aligned almost in a row. These are also of a large size and Paul admitted that their purpose is not known, although one did contain burnt seeds at the bottom, which is common with grain storage pits when they are abandoned.

We then returned to the excavation camp where Damian Evans showed us some of the finds they have found. Not as many as previous years, although several were of great interest.

We thank Jane Randall for organising the visit and Paul and Miles for providing access and taking us round.

***Andrew***

## Does anyone know what I am?

One of our EDAS members found me in his field in the village of Woodlands, a clay area. I am made from a material which looks like hard chalk.

My dimensions

- approx. 9 cm in diameter at widest and 2.3 cm thick
- the pattern diameter is 5.5 cm
- the impression is 1 cm wide and 1 cm deep,
- the hole diameter is 1.8cm

Several parties have been asked to date and draw a blank. Jane Ellis-Schön, who was the Project Curator for Salisbury Museum's 'Finding Pitt-Rivers' Project said I would be probably be recorded as "a decorated chalk object with central perforation." I could possibly be a loom weight although she has not seen one with the extra almost flower like design before. Maybe someone was practising drilling.

Lilian also thinks I might be a loom weight but she has never seen any made of this type of material.

***Please send any ideas to Vanessa Joseph.***





## Practical Archaeology Opportunity – Washing Finds

### Julian Richards - Needs Your Help

A chance find of pottery (a kiln waster dump) during building work at Crockerton, amounting to approx. 120 bags of sherds, requires washing.

This will be at WAFA (near Stourpaine) on Fridays, starting on 2nd June.

Go to <http://www.wafa.org.uk/about-us/> for directions.

Times will be 10.30am to 4pm but any helpers can adjust their times to suit. Any help gratefully received.

Contact Penny Copeland-Griffiths if you would like to help.

By email:- [penny@verwoodpotteries.co.uk](mailto:penny@verwoodpotteries.co.uk), mob, text or call 07769696363 or land line 01985840216.

The pottery is thought to be 17c and includes decorative styles not previously known from Crockerton kilns, so has added importance.

Bring your own lunch, or local pub/village shop in Stourpaine. Tea/coffee making facilities available.



## EDAS PROGRAMME 2017-2018

Date	Event	Who	Title
Wed 13 Sept 2017	Lecture	Michael Heaton	Watermeadows: their history, technology and future
Sun 8 Oct 2017	Walk	Dr David Reeve	A walk round Wimborne to explore the features that remain from the 17 <sup>th</sup> century.
Wed 11 Oct 2017	Lecture	Dan Carter	Potting on the heath: in search of the medieval and post medieval East Dorset pottery
Wed 8 Nov 2017	Lecture	Prof David Jaques University of Buckingham	Blick Mead Mesolithic site: key to the Stonehenge landscape?
Wed 13 Dec 2017	Lecture	Dr Peter Stanier	Dorset Breweries: malting and brewing
Wed 10 Jan 2018	Lecture	Roger Hills	The landscape of Wimborne in 10 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> century
Wed 7 Feb 2018	Lecture	Martin Green	New light on the Knowlton complex
Wed 14 Mar 2018	AGM	AGM & Lilian Ladle	AGM followed by Lilian Ladle talk about the 2017 EDAS Field Trip to Hadrian's Wall
Wed 11 April 2018	Lecture at BU	Tim Schadla-Hall UCL	"The pick and the shovel is the only true discoverer of the past." <i>Our annual lecture hosted by the BU students' Archaeology, History and Anthropology Society</i>
Wed 9 May 2018	Lecture	Dr Robert Bewley	Endangered archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa.

**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/>

To ensure EDAS members are aware of other meetings on archaeological subjects we include a diary for other events held in the area. We cannot be held responsible for the arrangements so please check on the associated web-sites.

## DISTRICT DIARY

Date	Event	Group	Who	Title
Wed 20th Sept 7.30pm	AGM & Lecture	Wareham	Lilian Ladle	The definitive Hadrian's Wall
Fri 6th Oct 7.30pm	Lecture	DCM	Dr David Parham	Shipwrecks of the Bronze Age
Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov 7.30pm	Lecture	DCM	Prof Tim Darvill	Sticks and stones and broken bones – first monuments along northwest Europe Atlantic coastlands
Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec 7.30pm	Lecture	DCM	Prof Richard Bradley	The land and sea 4000-600BC
Fri 2nd Feb 2018 7.30pm	Lecture	DCM	Kath Walker	Jade Axes
Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mar 2018 7.30pm	Lecture	DCM	Dr Catriona Gibson	Bronze Age connections between Iberia and British Isles

### BNSS: Bournemouth Natural Sciences Society

- Events held at 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BN1 3NS.
- <http://bnss.org.uk/>

### BU AHAS: Bournemouth University Archaeology, History and Anthropology Society

- Events held on different days and different times
- Events usually held at Talbot Campus, Bournemouth in Kimmeridge House room KG03 on Talbot Campus.

### CAA: Centre for Archaeology and Anthropology: Seminars and Research Centre Meetings

- Events usually held at Talbot Campus, Bournemouth in Kimmeridge House room F111 on Talbot Campus.

### Dorset Humanists

- Event held at Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW.

### DNHAS: Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society

- Events held at Dorset County Museum
- <http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/events>

### Wareham: Wareham and District Archaeology and Local History Society

- Meetings are at 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise indicated.
- The venue is Wareham Town Hall (on the corner of North Street and East Street).
- <http://wareham-archaeology.co.uk/>