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East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk

mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk

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

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edited by: Andrew Morgan, email: andrewmorgz@aol.com, tel: 01202 731162

NEWSLETTER – February 2018

Note:

February Talk: It is a great pleasure that this month we will enjoy a talk from EDAS member Martin Green who will speak to us about the latest findings from the Knowlton area, one of the most important archaeological sites in Dorset.

Stonehenge Visit 10th May: this trip is now fully booked with 30 participants.

Newsletter: I am delighted to publish an article by EDAS member Karen Brown about a find she detected whilst working on the Druce Roman Villa excavation. It is an example of the subsequent research she undertakes to understand the full significance of a find. I hope this will be the first of a series of regular articles about artefacts she has found and their background story.

Field Trip 2016 9th–16th June: this is now fully booked with 25 participants.

Committee Issues: just in case you are still thinking about it we have vacancies for two new committee members, if you are interested please contact one of the committee for further information. Application forms were sent out with the January Newsletter but are available on request. We typically hold four meetings per year and I can say honestly that they are great fun and very rewarding (uncross fingers). If you're really keen you can stand for chairperson!

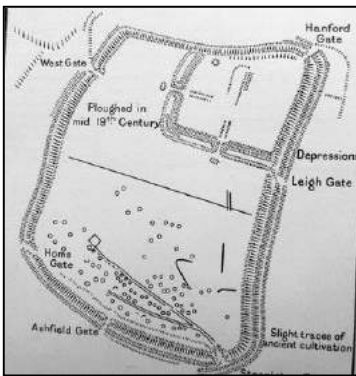
EDAS Lecture: 'The Archaeology of Wessex from the Air' by Jo Crane (with Sue Newman and, of course, G-WSSX)

Most of the aerial photographs Jo showed us result from targeting specific areas. In fact, the 23 hillfort photographs in Dave Stewart & Miles Russell's book, *A geophysical survey of Iron Age Dorset*, were taken by Jo & Sue in two 2-hour flights – following a somewhat erratic flight-path. Some pictures are, though, more fortuitous as they spot new archaeological features revealed by changing conditions. Even the selection of photographs in this summary show just how different the ground can look in different seasons and weather.

G-WSSX is relatively small and weighs in at just 270kg unladen, technically making it a microlight. That makes it relatively cheap to fly, as aircraft go, except for when their engine blew up in 2013. The potentially fatal experience has clearly not put Sue & Jo off continuing to record archaeology in Wessex and, on occasion, to photograph sites that haven't been clearly pictured before or have only been partially revealed.



The potential of aerial photography in archaeology was first properly realised by OGS Crawford in the early 20th century, with his publication of *Air Survey and Archaeology* in 1924. *Wessex from the Air* followed in 1928 and revealed many new sites or allowed them to be more fully appreciated. For example, his photograph and plan of Hod Hill gave, amongst other things, the locations of a large number of Iron Age hut circles. Many of these were ploughed over later, with only one corner of the hillfort untouched (more can, of course, be seen on Jo & Sue's aerial photograph when viewed at a larger size).



The basic principle of crop marks is well known: vegetation grows more strongly and higher over a filled-in ditch which provides deeper and wetter soil, less well over features like buried foundations which are shallower and drier. Very dry periods usually provide the best conditions and a low angled sun shows the crop marks up most clearly, and can also reveal features that survive only as small differences in ground height. Other conditions can also reveal archaeological remains, such as light blown snow or differential melting of frost on the ground. The photograph of Stonehenge (left) in the snow, from before when the road was closed, clearly shows The Avenue to the right. At this scale you can just about see how popular the path is despite the weather. Casterley Camp (right) shows the marks of occupation, well into the Roman period, revealed by the rarer differential thawing, despite the area being ploughed up to 2006.



Of course, not everything seen from the air is ancient, even if it looks as if it might be, such as the fake Stonehenge remains left over from a film of *Transformers*. Crop circles aren't uncommon. Whilst often beautifully designed and executed, they're a real problem for the farmers, especially in the archaeologically rich areas on Cranborne Chase and around Stonehenge and Avebury. Rather than aliens, they often contain people out for a walk or picnic, perhaps having made further paths trampled through the crops. Then there are the much more recent archaeological remains, often seen in photographs of ancient sites, like the one at the right showing Bokerley Dyke

running across Martin Down. The elongated white mark (right) is a ploughed-out long barrow whilst the straight lines (top left) are rifle ranges.



More modern remains can, of course, be every bit as fascinating as the ancient ones, to me at least. For example, there are a number of bombing ranges in Wessex from WWII, such as the Crichel Down range on Launceston Down and the Ashley range in the New Forest. Although a lot of the bomb craters have been filled in, many can still be seen, as well as sighting lines and targets like the 200m diameter concrete 'Wall Target' top right on the photograph of the Ashley range (left). Holes may not be bomb craters, of course, like the dolines, or sink holes, by Hardy's Monument. As above, care is needed in interpreting what is seen: the right hand picture isn't the remains of a settlement but a natural feature.



Jo's presentation gave me too many fascinating aerial photographs to easily choose ones to include here, but I thought showing the left hand one would give a good view of the 'marks' in crops. It's of an Iron Age settlement on Gussage Down that was extensively excavated in the 1970s. The middle one is just a really clear view of an Iron Age hillfort that you might not have seen – it's Yarnbury Castle, near the A303 north-west of Salisbury and mainly occupied 300-100 BC. To the right are just a few of the many barrows along the Dorset Ridgeway, but particularly Broadmayne Bank Barrow, longer (180m) and narrower than the 'usual' long barrows.



Even the small selection of photographs here should convince anyone, if they needed convincing, what a wonderful landscape we are fortunate to live in and near. But I thought I'd finish with pictures of excavations which, of course, can sometimes be the result of finding sites from the air. The first shows just some of the hut circles found at Bournemouth University's Winterbourne Kingston 'Big Dig', which led to the name *Duropolis*. The other two are, of course, of our own Druce Farm excavations, firstly of the villa in 2014 and then from 2017 of our work in the adjoining field.



Our grateful thanks to Jo, Sue and G-WSSX for a fascinating presentation and, of course, for stepping in at short notice when our booked speaker couldn't make it.

Geoff Taylor

View from Above No 8: Pilsdon Pen Hillfort (NGR:34131013)

Pilsdon Pen Hillfort is located 7 kms west of Beaminster. It was constructed at the end of a spur, which at 277m (909ft) is the second highest point in Dorset. It is multi-vallate with two sets of bank and ditch and a final counterscarp bank. It is oval in plan and contains an open area of 3ha.



Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane

Surveys were also carried out by the National Trust in 1982 and by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1995. The remains of 14 roundhouses were uncovered near the centre of the hill fort.

There is a rectilinear structures in the centre of the fort which may be a medieval pillow mound constructed for breeding rabbits. There is no clear evidence to distinguish the other mounds which may be pillow mounds or burial mounds, and the acid soil causes almost all bone and pottery to be in very poor condition.

Andrew Morgan

Detected No 1: King John Silver Penny – Druce Farm 2017

Every find tell a story; and Druce Roman Villa certainly had a few surprises for me last summer. My detector gave off its familiar ‘bleep’, and the first thing that came to mind was whether it was another gun cartridge or a nail. It was my last visit to the site for the year, and I was in for a lovely surprise. Before my eyes a face appeared. I was probably the first person to see it in over 800 years. It was the portrait of King John, on an Irish silver penny, dating from between 1207 -1211.



John's coinage in Ireland as King of England amounted to about 10 million pennies (40,000 pounds) and was primarily to fund his military exploits in France. These coins circulated in England, and all across Europe. They were the struck to the same standard as the contemporary English pennies, and were accepted as such. This one was minted in Dublin by Roberd

During the 1170's the Anglo-Normans had gradually taken over Ireland. Prince John, who was then Lord of Ireland, was sent by his father Henry II to suppress the barons who had become too independent. From the moment he set foot in Ireland in 1185, the seventeen-year-old John displayed a self-assured arrogance towards his intended subjects. Upon his arrival in Ireland, John and his retinue were greeted by numerous Gaelic Irish leaders. It is said that upon seeing these strange long bearded kings, John and his retinue laughed and pulled them about by their beard. The Irish then complained to their overlords and accused John of being "an ill-mannered child... from whom no good could be hoped". Unfortunately for John, his ambition outstripped his ability. This would-be king alienated many of the island's resident élites (Irish and English), lost most of his army in battle or through desertion, and limped back to England penniless, less than eight months after his arrival.

Despite his initial bad reputation, in later years he was able to achieve a good relationship with the Irish; and in the end he found Ireland to be his most loyal ally. He had brought to heel the most powerful of the Anglo-Norman Lords who defied him, and ended the violence and cruel exploitation of the native Irish by the Norman barons. He also attempted to give equal rights to both Normans and Gaels, and laid the foundations of government and a state run church that would exist well into the twentieth century.

Karen Brown

Druce Roman Villa Diary - Musings from my ditch

I say “my ditch” because when I started the 2017 Druce season Lilian said “you like ditches, don’t you Vanessa?” and placed me in a particular area of the Inner Enclosure. Little did I know that between May and the beginning of November, I was to spend all but two days in Ditch 1605 working on section after section. My initial placement had proved so fruitful in finds that Lilian decided to redeploy most of the manpower at the time from the Outer Enclosure (sterile, few finds) to the new area. When Lilian found some lovely pieces of pot in the section next to mine, and then Phil found the turquoise glass vase further up the field, we were hooked.



Lilian's pot - a sign of things to come

First, however, there was the dreaded “hoggin” to contend with – a horrible fill which comprises clay combined with mixed gravels in such a way that it turns rock hard when dry. As the summer was good with little rain, much of my time was spent wielding Geoff’s mini-pick (which he has undoubtedly had to re-sharpen) to get through this layer to more interesting fills. As more sections were excavated, it became obvious that the stratigraphy of Ditch 1605 was quite complex: layers sometimes appeared to be above, beside and below other layers and often the fill varied from north to south and from east to west. After much discussion, popping our heads out of respective holes like meerkats, Lilian and I decided that the ditches were being filled in from both sides at the same time, rather like two parties standing on either side of a hole emptying in different barrowloads of household rubbish and construction site debris.

In all cases, the excavating task became far more satisfying when the chalk level was finally reached: plenty of black-burnished ware from cooking pots; large bits of flagons; pieces of glass of various colours and thicknesses (far more glass than we had found in previous years); and sherds of fine ware and Samian. Finds were generally more high status than those we had found on the villa field. Many of them date from the late first to early second century and prove that the Romans were occupying the land around Druce for a long time before the villa complex was built.



Late 1st century glass - the colour went out of fashion in the 2nd century



Worked shale found in the baulk of the last ditch.

Finally, Lilian decided to go for gold and eliminate the baulk between various ditch sections to create one continuous ditch section – this was my task for the autumn whilst everyone else was deployed to the lower part of the field. The final ditch section was approximately 9.2 metres in length and it was a day of great rejoicing on my part when I finally knocked through that last baulk and reached the chalk bottom.



*The final section of baulk –
it took another day to remove it*



*Ditch 1605 spruced up –
9.25 metres of gleaming chalk*

THE VITAL STATISTICS

Alan Dedden kindly worked out some statistics which made me feel rather good.

Approximately **23.2 tons or 878 buckets** were shifted (based on a soil/clay/flint mix) in this part of Ditch 1605. Since I excavated and recorded 7 of the 11 sections, I reckon I shifted approximately 65% of the spoil on my own. That's a lot of buckets and I did lose weight despite Lindsey's best efforts to feed us!

Vanessa Joseph

January Web Links – compiled by Alan Dedden

Hidden Writing In Mummy Cases Revealed :

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-42357259>

2,700 Year Old Seal of Governor of Jerusalem

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/israeli-archaeologists-find-2700-year-old-governor-of-jerusalem-seal-impression/ar-BBHM2Xx?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

Mesoamerican Shrine to Foundation Myth (and links to other stories)

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/ancient-mexican-structure-is-a-‘miniature-model-of-the-universe’-say-archaeologists/ar-BBHT5ax?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

Amazing Lower Palaeolithic Site in Israel

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/07/stone-age-hunter-gatherers-paradise-discovered-in-israel>

Blackbeard's Reading Habit?

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/incredible-blackbeard-discovery-stunning-find-on-buccaneers-ship-reveals-pirate-reading-habits/ar-BBI8Bn5?li=AAmiR2Z&ocid=spartandhp>

Part of Amenhotep III Statue Found in Car Park

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/ancient-egypt-feet-of-stone-statue-of-famous-pharaoh-discovered-in-parking-lot/ar-BBI8Ovt?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

Builders Discover Tomb of Ming Emperor's Nanny

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/tombs-found-under-bleeding-rocks-could-belong-to-beautiful-royal-nanny-of-ming-emperor/ar-BBIb0uN?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

Liao Dynasty Palace Discovery (and video of a Yorkshire "Woodhenge")

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/ancient-china-1000-year-old-royal-palace-discovered/ar-AAuzagV?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

How Did Trees Survive in the Antarctic 280 Million Years Ago?

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/scientists-return-to-antarctica-to-study-280-million-year-old-fossil-forest/ar-AAuFEfw?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

Aztec Killer Bug Found in DNA

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/16/mexico-500-years-later-scientists-discover-what-killed-the-aztecs>

DNA Analysis Proves Egyptian Mummies Are Half Brothers

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/techandscience/ancient-egyptian-mummies-from-4000-years-ago-shared-a-mommy-dna-from-teeth-reveals/ar-AAuM26B?li=AA59G2&ocid=spartandhp>

Huge Cave System Helps Explain Mayan Civilisation

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/worlds-biggest-flooded-cave-found-in-mexico-explorers-say/ar-AAuNOD0?li=AAmiR2Z&ocid=spartandhp>

Egyptian Archaeologists Search for Tutankhamun's Wife

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/egyptian-archaeologists-begin-search-for-tutankhamuns-wife-in-the-valley-of-the-kings/ar-AAuR9z0?li=AAmiR2Z&ocid=spartandhp>

435 Million Year Old Starfish Discovered in Dublin Museum

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/techandscience/meet-the-435million-year-old-starfish-which-lived-in-an-ancient-ocean-in-galway/ar-AAuSRYK?ocid=spartandhp>

Garden Preserved for 300 Years under the Lake at Stourhead

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/video/viral/adults-vs-kids-basic-math/vi-AAuRWcA?ocid=spartandhp>

Hiker in Ireland Discovers Bones in Cave Dated to the Neolithic

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newsireland/human-bones-discovered-in-irish-cave-reveal-ritual-site/ar-AAv0lMu?li=AA9SkI&ocid=spartandhp>

Dog Walker in Somerset Discovers an Iron Age Skull

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/decapitated-iron-age-skull-found-by-dog-walker-is-likely-evidence-of-ancient-ritual-sacrifice/ar-AAv3OI1?ocid=spartandhp>

Remains of the Last Slaver Found?

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/shipwreck-discovered-in-alabama-may-be-remains-of-last-boat-to-bring-slaves-to-us/ar-AAv5nr6?ocid=spartandhp>

Another Israel Find - 200000 Year Old Human Jaw

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/jan/25/oldest-known-human-fossil-outside-africa-discovered-in-israel>

Examining Roman Cremation Remains at the Museum of London

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/26/cremation-urns-dusty-bones-tell-tale-death-roman-london-museum>

Roman Era Tomb Found in Gaza Garden

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/offbeat/gazan-unearts-ancient-graves-in-vegetable-patch/ar-BBIkwHD?ocid=spartandhp>

EDAS PROGRAMME 2018

Date	Event	Who	Title
Wed 7 Feb 2018	Lecture	Martin Green	New light on the Knowlton complex
Sat 10 Mar 2018	EDAS Seminar	Lilian Ladle and team	Worth Matravers Excavation Seminar 2.00-5.00pm Harmon's Cross Village Hall Details to follow.
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.
Thurs 10 May 2018	Visit	Julian Richards	Stonehenge – Access to the Stones Contact Alan Dedden
Sat 9 th – 16 th June 2018	Field Trip	Geoff Taylor & Andrew Morgan	An exploration of the archaeology of SE Wales

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/>

DISTRICT DIARY

This is a diary of interesting events held in the area. We cannot be held responsible for the arrangements so please check on the associated web-sites.

2018 Programme				
Date	Event	Group	Who	Title
Fri 2nd Feb 7.30pm	Lecture	DNHAS Brownsword Hall	Kath Walker	"Scandinavian Type" Flint Axes in Britain
Tues 13 th Feb 7.30pm	Lecture	Shaftesbury	Julian Richards	Stonehenge – fact and fantasy (to mark publication of his new book)
Wed 21st Feb 7.30pm	Lecture	Wareham	Andrew Morgan	Archaeology of the Peloponnese – a Greek Odyssey
Fri 2 nd Mar 7.30pm	Lecture	DNHAS DCM	Dr Catriona Gibson	Bronze Age connections between Iberia and British Isles
Wed 21st Mar 7.30pm	Lecture	Wareham	Peter Cox	The archaeology of the Wessex pipeline in Dorset
Fri 6 th April 7.30pm	Lecture	DNHAS Dorford Centre	Prof Sir Barry Cunliffe	
Wed 18th April 7.30pm	Lecture	Wareham	Mark Corney	Hillforts after the Romans

AVAS: Avon Valley Archaeological Society

- at Ann Rose Hall, Greyfriars Community Centre, Christchurch Road, Ringwood BH24 1DW
- <http://www.avas.org.uk/>

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 various locations in Dorchester, now ticketed
- <http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/events>

Shaftesbury & District Archaeology Group:

- St Peters Hall, Gold Hill, Shaftesbury.

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/>