



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – November 2018

Worth Matravers Archaeological Excavation

LIFE, DEATH and FEASTING

- 5,600 YEARS of OCCUPATION -

CONFERENCE

Saturday 1st December 2018

1.30 to 5.30 (doors open 1.00pm)

Dorford Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RR (opposite Top of Town car park)

Activities on the site spanned nearly 6000 years from the first farming colonists to a community who buried their dead as the Saxons were taking over Dorset. The major archaeological deposits included an Early Neolithic enclosure, a Late Bronze Age house, Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age refuse-disposal activities, Late Iron Age houses, a Roman barn and a post-Roman cemetery. The living left their signatures in the huge amount of 'rubbish' which covered the site and the dead were sometimes casually strewn about, buried among the living as well as in a small cemetery.

The speakers will describe the excavations and explain the importance of the site both regionally and nationally, they include: Lilian Ladle (Bournemouth University & EDAS), Professor David Hinton (Southampton University) and Professor Niall Sharples (Cardiff University, see programme overleaf).

The event will launch the book which details this amazing excavation, undertaken by a small team of dedicated amateur archaeologists from the East Dorset Antiquarian Society (EDAS) with help from professional colleagues, at a small housing development on the north edge of the Purbeck village of Worth Matravers.

Please note: "Multi-period Occupation at Football Field, Worth Matravers, Dorset: Excavations 2006–2011", written by Lilian Ladle, is published as a BAR Monograph and will be on sale with a special 35% discounted price of £39.75 (cash or cheques only)

FREE ENTRY (donations welcome)

Worth Matravers Archaeological Excavation

PROGRAMME

- 1.30 Introduction:
 - Andrew Morgan (Chairman of EDAS)
- 1.40 Archaeology, Purbeck and the 1990s excavation at Worth Matravers
 - Prof. David Hinton (Southampton University)
- 2.20 Life, death and feasting: excavations at Football Field 2006-2011
 - Lilian Ladle (Bournemouth University and EDAS)
- 3.00 Refreshments Break
- 3.15 Middens: problems of definition, chronology and geography (or huge fun on an enormous pile of s***!!)
 - Prof. Niall Sharples (Cardiff University)
- 4.00 Special Finds: revealing the stories behind some artefacts
 - Andrew Morgan (EDAS)
- 4.15 Kimmeridge Shale: from working to wearing
 - Sue Cullinane (EDAS)
- 4.30 Iron Age Animals and Post-Roman People
 - Dr Clare Randall (Context One Archaeology)
- 5.15 Q and A
- 5.30 Close

This is the largest and most important archaeological project undertaken and completed by members of EDAS. The field work lasted six years and the vital post-excavation work took over seven years to complete. Preparation of the monograph was a huge effort by Lilian Ladle who demonstrated a conviction and level of dedication that is quite remarkable and has cemented her place in the pantheon of amateur archaeologists in the country.

We have organised the conference both to launch the monograph and also to continue our efforts to share the work with the community at large.

Do support the conference and take the opportunity to buy the monograph at a special 35% discount.

Notes:

The EDAS October lecture: by Abi Coppins "The Honour of the Nation: Black Prisoners of War at Portchester Castle 1796-1814" turned out to be a real treat and provided a thoughtful insight into our social history. It proved very popular on the night and provoked a host of questions easily handled by Abi who demonstrated a depth of knowledge about this period.

The EDAS November Lecture : is by Dr Margaret Cox on 'The Lost Soldiers of Fromelles: Naming the Dead, 1916-2020" which is a very suitable lecture as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, and reflect on the tragedy of war.

Day visit to Salisbury Museum: Vanessa arranged a thoroughly enjoyable guided tour of Salisbury Museum by the Director Adrian Green. He gave us the opportunity to handle special finds, including stone axes and antler picks and see precious books in the library and the artefacts from a recently found Middle Bronze Age hoard. Thank you Adrian and Vanessa. See page 6.

Bournemouth University: the second Pitt Rivers Lecture *"Long before Brexit: Reflections on cross-channel connections between the fifth and second millennia BC"* by the distinguished prehistorian Dr Alison Sheridan on Tuesday 30th October. It was great to see a number of EDAS members in the audience. Alison Sheridan is an excellent speaker and her talk on the connectivity with continental Europe was a real treat. Next year's lecture promises to be of similar interest. **DO NOT MISS IT.**

2019 Field Archaeology: work at Druce Farm will end this year. We are looking into options for next year and hope to provide opportunities for new and experienced field archaeologists.

Vacancy - Newsletter Editor: I have been editing the newsletter since May 2011 when John Day, the previous chairman, encouraged me to take it on. Those who remember John will understand it was a request I couldn't refuse. It is now time for a change and I would like to hand it over. Please don't be shy I'm happy to discuss with anybody who is interested.

Thank you to those who have provided feedback but keep the comments coming we want to know what you think about the newsletter and the society any ideas how we can improve it.

Andrew Morgan

EDAS Lecture: *The Honour of the Nation: Black Prisoners of War at Portchester Castle 1796-1814* by Abigail Coppins

Abi first discovered the somewhat surprising facts revealed in her talk about 10 years ago, when working for English Heritage at their Fort Brockhurst store near Gosport, one of the ring of 'Palmerstone Forts' protecting Portsmouth. She was endlessly repacking the huge amount of bone found in the Portchester Castle excavations, when she took a break and looked in some of the other boxes. What she found became the basis of her MA at Southampton University, of a new exhibition at the castle and of research which continues to this day in the National Archives at Kew.

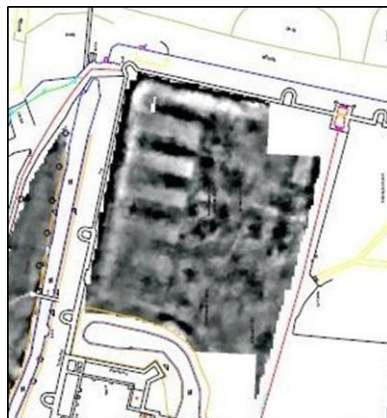
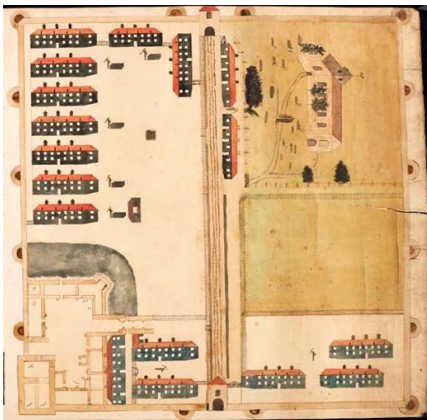


Would you be surprised to learn that there were black and mixed-race soldiers, with some of their wives and children, imprisoned in the castle during the 1790s? Or that the French had abolished slavery in 1794, following the French Revolution, so that the soldiers were free men who had chosen to fight for France against Britain? I, and I think most of the audience, certainly were.

Portchester was a late Roman Shore Fort, became a Saxon settlement and had a medieval castle built into it later. In 1632, though, it was sold by Charles I to a local landowner, after which it was leased to the Crown periodically from the 1660s as a prison, particularly for prisoners of war. We tend to think of POWs as a 20th century phenomenon, but they have always been a part of warfare. The first POWs at Portchester were from the Second Anglo-Dutch War of 1665-7, around the time when handling them was becoming properly regulated. By the time of the Britain's French Revolutionary war from 1793, after Portchester had held POWs from at least further 3 conflicts, captivity had been agreed as temporary until prisoner exchanges could be arranged. Some prisoners were even allowed parole in local communities.



By 1793 there were 12 war prisons, including Forton near Gosport, with POWs held at any one time over the next 20 years in the region of 70,000-100,000. At Portchester, up to 8,000 prisoners were housed in the castle keep and 8 barracks, known both from contemporary maps and recent geophysical survey. Captives could also be held in one of about 50 prison hulks in the harbours at Plymouth, Portsmouth or Chatham. Up to 8,000 POWs were in 12 hulks near Portsmouth, also administered from Portchester.



The war was global, and the Portchester records show prisoners from many European countries, from North America and from the Caribbean (nationality was less 'solid' then and many were fighting on what we would see as the 'wrong' side). Over 2,000 black or mixed-race POWs arrived at Portchester in October 1796, along with over 300 white prisoners and 100 women & children. They were mainly from the French garrison of St. Lucia, which had surrendered to the British in May, though some had been captured on other Caribbean islands. They had suffered a difficult journey since leaving St. Kitts in July, with around 300 deaths on the way, and many arrived in poor health.



We should not see this as due to mistreatment or discrimination, as doctors were on the ships and hospital ships amongst the convoy. Perhaps unexpectedly, the black prisoners were treated with some care and consideration, given extra food to help them to recover and clothing to help cope with the colder weather. Discrimination did occur, particularly as other prisoners began to steal the black POWs' clothes. To help protect them, Dr. Johnston, commissioner for prisoners of war at Portchester, arranged for the black prisoners to be transferred to 2 new prison ships moored near to the castle. Whilst the prison hulks have had a bad reputation, this seems not have applied here as the ships were cleaned and painted.



In fact, prisoners of war were generally well treated by the British, contrary to 'fake news' promulgated by the French. They were clothed and fed well, provided with medical facilities and with space to exercise and to undertake other activities (the picture apparently shows them baking their own bread), and there was even a prison theatre. I believe they were also given a small allowance to be able to buy further supplies; certainly there was a market for the POWs in Portchester



(shown in the second picture). Of course, prisoners were able to make craft items to sell; that some were made of ivory suggests they had sufficient money to buy it to carve.

But there was discrimination. There were black officers amongst the prisoners, including General Marinier and Captain Louis Delgres. As with the other black POWs, they had joined the French Army to fight against the British because, after the revolutionary French abolished slavery in 1794, that also meant fighting the slave trade that the British Empire still supported. In fact, General Marinier had been instrumental in removing slavery on Guadeloupe. Officers like him would, under parole, usually have been given an allowance to live freely in the community with their families in one of the 60+ 'parole towns', of which there were at least 6 in Hampshire (though only Weymouth in Dorset). However, and despite Dr. Johnston's pleas, the black officers were instead moved to Forton Prison as the Admiralty and General Pitt, in charge of Portsmouth defences, said they were "... violent in their behaviour and savage in their disposition".



Prisoner exchange meant that the black POWs started to be sent to France from late in 1797, although new black intakes continued to arrive at Portchester. Discrimination in France was considerably worse than in England, with many black officers stripped of their ranks, and all the black POWs being sent to the Île-d'Aix, in the bay south of La Rochelle. There they were neglected and virtually starved. Eventually, many were formed into the 'Black Pioneers' regiment that fought in Italy, possibly Germany and even in Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign. Abi told us



that she had found it very difficult to discover details of the fate of individuals, even of General Marinier, but Captain Delgres proved easier to find: he returned to the Caribbean before the end of the century and became involved in Haiti's struggle for independence. Slavery in the Caribbean started to be re-introduced by Napoleon from 1802 and Louis Delgres then fought against the French. With his followers of 400 ex-slaves, he was cornered in Fort St. Charles, Guadeloupe; with no escape they lit the gunpowder stores and committed suicide rather than be captured and re-enslaved. He now has a commemorative plaque in the Pantheon, Paris, and a memorial on Guadeloupe.

This sad end probably mirrors that of many of the black prisoners of war who were held at Portchester and, on the whole, treated honourably by the British. They are, nevertheless, important to the history of race and diversity in this country and, indeed, internationally significant as part of the struggle against slavery. Abi's research and her presentation highlights an important, but mostly forgotten, piece of our history. The subject was clearly of considerable interest given the half an hour or more of questions that followed the talk, which I've tried to reflect in this summary.

Geoff Taylor

Visit to Salisbury Museum - Thursday 20th September

A group of fifteen EDAS members were privileged to enjoy a behind the scenes guided tour of Salisbury Museum led by the museum director Adrian Green. The numbers had to be limited due to the labyrinth of



small rooms he took us into. Adrian explained the history of the museum buildings and the museum itself. Adrian then led us through the museum labyrinth and showed us a succession of wonderful artefacts from the archives and some impressive volumes held in the library.



Some of the artefacts held in the archives:



Two mammoth teeth



A length of mammoth tusk and the femur from an Auroch



Middle Bronze Age palstave axe



Sensational Middle Bronze Age bronze torque found with three exquisite finger rings

We were then left to enjoy the exhibition of the “Hoards: A Hidden History of Ancient Britain” and wonder about the museum and enjoy the Wessex Gallery which holds the Pitt Rivers Collection.

Thank you Vanessa for arranging a very enjoyable visit and thank you Adrian for being such a generous and enthusiastic host. Maybe this trip can be repeated in the future.

I can also recommend the little café there which served simple but well-made food for a convenient lunch. If you haven't visited this museum or Devizes Museum then you are in for a treat **GO IMMEDIATELY**.

Andrew Morgan

SALISBURY MUSEUM OBJECT OF THE DAY

For me the most wonderful artefact on display has to be this highly polished jade axe dating from the Early Neolithic, 4000–3000BC.



This is an object of startling perfection and exquisite beauty. It has been shaped by a master craftsman and highly polished over hundreds of hours to create an object with a pure aesthetic quality. It transcends time and demonstrates shared human values of beauty and perfection across six thousand years. It allegedly came from a barrow near Stonehenge.

The term jade covers a group of tough green minerals which include: jadeite, nephrite and eclogite. This axe being made of eclogite.

Axes like this were traded and exchanged over long distances. They are highly polished and it is unlikely they were intended for utilitarian use. They were treated as a precious object and probably were powerful tokens of power and privilege long after they were originally made. It has not lost its power, demonstrated in the way it is reverentially displayed in the museum and the awe we feel when we view it.

Andrew Morgan

October Weblinks

Viking Sword Found In Lake

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-6241243/Eight-year-old-girl-pulls-pre-Viking-era-SWORD-bottom-lake-Sweden.html>

Archaeological Evidence Of An Ancient Drug Trade?

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/did-archaeologists-just-discover-evidence-of-ancient-drug-trade>

Ancient Shipwrecks Found In Eastern Aegean

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-greece-ancient-shipwrecks/ancient-shipwrecks-found-in-greek-waters-tell-tale-of-trade-routes-idUKKCN1ML1MJ>

Viking Ship Found In Norway

<https://www.livescience.com/63829-viking-ship-cemetery.html>

Neanderthal Child Eaten By Bird

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-6261997/Was-Neanderthal-child-eaten-giant-bird.html>

Museum Of Wales Refurbishment Complete

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/oct/18/st-fagans-welsh-history-museum-revamp-completed>

Viking Era "Thor's Hammer" Amulet Found In Iceland

<https://www.insideedition.com/viking-era-amulet-named-thors-hammer-first-its-kind-discovered-iceland-47645>

Oldest Ever Shipwreck Found In Black Sea

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-6305115/The-worlds-oldest-shipwreck-2-400-year-old-Odysseus-ship-bottom-Black-Sea.html>

Fake Dead Sea Scroll Fragments

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/dead-sea-scrolls-face-museum-of-the-bible-washington-artefacts-a8596636.html>

Excavations Ahead Of HS2

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/oct/26/story-of-a-nation-hs2-rail-archaeological-dig-begins-in-uks-biggest-excavation>

Intact Pompeii Skeletons Found

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-6312519/Dig-Italys-Pompeii-volcanic-site-yields-5-skeletons.html>

Vesuvius Eruption Later Than Thought?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-45874858>

Alan Dedden

EDAS PROGRAMME 2018 - 2019

Date	Event	Who	Title
Sat 1st Dec 2018	EDAS Seminar (2-5pm)	Various	Launch of the Worth Matravers Excavation monograph with Prof Niall Sharples and David Hinton.
Wed 12th Dec 2018	Lecture	Phil Judkins	Chess - The Air War Over Britain and Germany
2019			
Wed 9 th Jan 2019	Lecture	Kath Walker,	Neolithic Imports or Collectors? - Continental axe-heads in Britain by
Wed 13th Feb 2019	Lecture	Ben Buxton	Orkney and Beyond
Sat 13th Mar 2019	EDAS AGM	AGM followed by Geoff Taylor and Andrew Morgan	2018 EDAS Field Trip: archaeological adventures in SE Wales
Wed 24 th Apr 2019	Lecture	Mark Corney	Annual Bournemouth University Lecture – Title to be confirmed
Sun 28th Apr 2019	Guided Walk	David Reeve	Wimborne – the final walk by David revealing the historic town of Wimborne through the C18 and C19th
Wed 8 th May 2019	Lecture	Dave Stewart	Once Upon a Hill: a study of Dorset hillforts

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

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.

Blandford Museum

- Events held at different venues

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/>