

# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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## NEWSLETTER – February 2020

### Editor's Notes

Many thanks to those people who gave me some feedback on the last newsletter. I would, of course, always welcome more, especially if accompanied by something to include in the newsletter. From written comments and a few people I've spoken to, the Pharaoh Rocher joke gained 2 groans and 4 laughs. I hope to better that balance this month, and in future if I can find more relevant **funny items** to include – perhaps you can send me any archaeology/history jokes or cartoons you see?

We are very pleased to be able to welcome Prof. Josh Pollard from the University of Southampton for our **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Archaeology Lecture at Bournemouth University – poster and map on next page**.

Josh has spent over 20 years investigating the prehistoric archaeology of Wessex, and has helped run several major projects, including the Between the Monuments Project at Avebury and the ground-breaking Stonehenge Riverside Project. Avebury is one of the most important Neolithic and Bronze Age landscapes in Western Europe, and Josh will cover the nature of human settlement there, how it adjusted to changing environmental and social conditions and the demands of building the great prehistoric monuments.

Thanks to Monique Goodliffe for the summary of her presentation last month on '**The Aristocrat and the Ironmaster**'.

If you were wondering what's going on behind the hoardings at the **Priest's House Museum** in Wimborne, Vanessa has provided an update on this exciting project.

I can claim no knowledge of **Native American rock art** but thought the article below was a good contrast to the usual newsletter items. It's a slightly edited part of a longer article by Jan Elkins in the AVAS Annual Newsletter of December 2019. Many thanks to Jan.

**Weblinks and Highlights:** Alan continues to provide links to interesting archaeological and historical news, and **would be very pleased to get suggestions from you** (to [alan.dedden@gmail.com](mailto:alan.dedden@gmail.com)). He also provides a useful commentary on the news items that stood out for one reason or another. After several over-hyped items last month, this month's highlight points to another reason why the news might not be entirely correct.

The inaccuracies and over-stated interpretations last month also triggered the thought that we should write a bit more about being careful what news you believe, so this month we have a follow-up: '**It Ain't Necessarily So**'.

There's also the second in the series of short articles on **Remembering the Romans** and a rather longer **View from Above** than normal, based on Sue & Jo's aerial view of Rawlsbury Camp.



## THE SIXTH ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGY LECTURE

Organised by East Dorset Antiquarian Society and  
hosted by Bournemouth University,  
Archaeology, History and Anthropology Society



# SETTLEMENTS and MONUMENTALITY in the AVEBURY LANDSCAPE

Speaker: Josh Pollard

WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

at 7.30 pm

KG01- LECTURE THEATRE,  
KIMMERIDGE HOUSE  
TALBOT CAMPUS,  
BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY,  
FERN BARROW, BH12 5BB

Kimmeridge House is circled in red on the map below with the Visitor Car Park in the ellipse (parking is signposted and we anticipate that some students will be on site as guides).



## THE ARISTOCRAT AND THE IRONMASTER: A NINETEENTH CENTURY MARRIAGE

This is the story of Lady Charlotte and Sir John Guest. Specifically it is the story of their very successful partnership, which lasted from 1833 until 1852. Charlotte was just 21 when she accepted the hand of John Guest, who was 48 at the time.



Josiah John Guest, born 1785, came from South Wales. His forebears were of humble origin, but by 1833 he was very wealthy and successful. He had enormous energy and was a shrewd businessman, keen to learn and even to invent new ways of working to maximise profit for the Dowlais Iron Company. He assumed full managerial responsibility there in 1815 when there were 5 blast furnaces at the Works and an output of 15,000 tons. By 1825 there were 12 furnaces and, in 1830, production reached 27,647 tons, overtaking Cyfartha, one of its main rivals. He was ambitious socially too, and knew that to gain recognition and power he needed to move out of the valleys. From 1826 to 1831 he was MP for Honiton and in 1832 he became Merthyr Tydfil's first MP when it was enfranchised.

**Note:** Sir John Guest formed close relationships with the great Victorian engineers, most notably Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Dowlais iron was used in the construction of the Great Western Railway and the SS Great Britain. Dowlais supplied iron rails throughout Britain, but also exported them around the world. From the 1830s, rails were sold to the USA and in the 1840s he expanded in Europe with major sales to Russia and Germany, a contract made in 1844 to supply 50,000 tons of rail to Russia was described by Charlotte as “the largest contract of the kind ever made”.

By 1833 John had been a childless widower for 15 years, then was introduced to Charlotte by one of his business partners. She was the daughter of the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Lindsey and proud of her aristocratic lineage. Brought up in the small village of Uffington in rural Lincolnshire, she spent time in London during ‘the Season’ to learn the niceties of Society. In contrast, at home she was concerned to have what she regarded as a man’s education. She read voraciously, learnt several languages and used her brothers’ tutors to help her. Charlotte was ambitious and had dreams of achieving great things, though in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that was unlikely to be possible for a woman.



Charlotte’s father died when she was 6, and her mother remarried 3 years later. Charlotte’s stepfather, Peter Pegus, was controlling, abusive and probably alcoholic, and by the time she was a young woman she felt trapped. Her romance with her brother’s Latin tutor had been abruptly ended by her parents, who then tried to marry her off to a 67 year-old whom she would later call a “mutilated being”. She was feeling very low arriving in London in May 1833 for the Season.

John Guest was obviously impressed with his partner’s choice of a possible bride, and he spent the next 3 months wooing not only Charlotte but also her parents and her half-sisters. Lady Lindsey and Mr Pegus were not enthralled by the idea of their daughter marrying into trade, but Charlotte had fallen for this kind and gentlemanly industrialist and was happy to accept him. By the end of July they were married and, after a brief honeymoon, the couple made their way to the wilds of South Wales.

It could have been a disaster – a 21 year-old from the flatlands of Lincolnshire with very little knowledge of her new husband going to live in a country of hills and smoky ironworks. How did John Guest imagine that she would cope with living 50 yards from a huge industrial operation and close to hundreds of unsanitary workers’ dwellings? In fact, from the very first morning when John Guest took Charlotte on a tour of the Works, she developed an interest in the business which would last throughout and even beyond the length of the marriage. It was a partnership as much as a loving and sexually fulfilled relationship. Charlotte vowed to accompany him on all his travels and she kept that promise. She relied



on him for his kindness, affection and the stability which wealth could bring. John came to depend on her ability to act as his personal assistant, to manage him when his feathers were ruffled and to advance his position in Society.

This was a companionate marriage, of a kind which is familiar to us now in many ways. Of course, it wasn't modern in other ways – women had no rights in marriage and were property, handed over from father to husband. There was no divorce without an Act of Parliament and, if anything did go wrong, women had no right to custody of the children. But, though John Guest was demanding of his wife and could be

insensitive to Charlotte's needs, he was also tender, attentive and tolerant and he made her very happy. He encouraged her to take on more and more of a role in the business, though it was very much on his terms, and facilitated her success as an intellectual by underwriting her great achievement in translating the Middle Welsh tales and producing the influential *Mabinogion*.

As a couple they achieved a great deal. They established the Guest Dynasty so that there was family to inherit their vast wealth. They had 10 children, who all survived into adulthood, which meant that Charlotte was pregnant for 7½ years (she had one miscarriage). Whilst the births themselves were relatively easy, the pregnancies were miserable and Charlotte often felt unwell and depressed by her condition, though she never let it stop her. She travelled with John, looked after the children when they were ill, did the house and Works' accounts, wrote business letters, learned Welsh, translated *The Mabinogion* and acted as hostess to a stream of visitors.

This marriage is also the story about class and upward mobility. John Guest, the grandson of a yeoman farmer, transformed himself into one of the richest industrialists in less than half a century. Charlotte worked hard during the Season to establish the Guests as members of Society, a position she had relinquished by marrying someone in trade, and succeeded. In 1838 they bought a house in a fashionable part of London and shortly afterwards John was made a baronet. They had a country house by the sea in Wales, numerous other properties in Wales and, in 1846 after years of estate hunting, they purchased Lord de Mauley's 11,000 acre Canford Estate. They then spent a fortune transforming it into a suitably grand residence with the help of the designer of the Palace of Westminster, Sir Charles Barry. The Guests had arrived.

In South Wales, the Dowlais Iron Company was very much John Guest's consuming passion. Whenever he could he was down at the Works, both in the office and on the shop floor; he knew every detail of the business and was always a hands-on manager. But Charlotte must also be credited with its great success. She took delight in learning about every aspect of the business, spent most afternoons at the Works in addition to doing the accounts and acting as her husband's secretary. She became more and more involved and John came to increasingly rely on her sound judgement of people. In the 1840s, Charlotte developed a passion for the education of the workers and established schools for all ages in the community. The work, begun by John Guest in 1828, was vastly expanded under her command – she personally organised the curriculum, took turns in the teaching and conducted the examinations.

There were times when John Guest threatened to give up being an MP but Charlotte always encouraged him to continue to represent the people of Merthyr Tydfil. Under Charlotte's influence it seems that John Guest became more of a liberal Whig than when he began his career, though neither of them would countenance worker unrest, especially if it was violent. In 1839, for example, the Chartists were given short shrift by the authorities and the Guests both agreed with the Establishment stance. They saw themselves as philanthropists, and had faith in the loyalty of their workforce, but would brook no real challenge to their authority. There were many problems which they had to face, but it is striking how they worked always as a team and relied on each other to overcome difficulties.



Dowlais Ironworks, by George Childs 1840

Lord Bute, their landlord in Dowlais, was driven to a deep and almost irrational hatred of John Guest as he felt he was losing out from the rather favourable terms of the original lease for Dowlais. He made it his mission to thwart the Dowlais Iron Company and John Guest in every way he could, both politically (Bute was a Tory) and financially. He stood in the way of any of John Guest's projects, such as the Taff Vale Railway, and charged exorbitant sums for the use of his port. He secretly underwrote *The Merthyr Guardian* so that it could print vicious attacks on Guest, then opened up an ironworks nearby to be in direct competition with Dowlais. The lease on Dowlais was due to end in 1848 and Bute made the renewal terms so difficult that the Guests thought that they might have to give up the ironworks altogether. The negotiations went on for almost a decade and were only really resolved because Bute died in 1848. A copy of the renewal reached the Guests 4 years later as John Guest was on his death bed.

In the late 1840s John Guest developed kidney disease and underwent many painful and primitive operations to try to remove kidney stones. He seemed to be given brief respites from pain, but gradually became worse in the last year of his life. Charlotte started to take more responsibility for business decisions, but John Guest was very unwilling to give up control. There was Canford to consider, and all that went with keeping an estate of that size running, and Dowlais was in difficulties, especially from a lack of orders.

John died at the end of November 1852 in Dowlais - he had asked to be taken back to Wales. Thousands (*The Times* estimated as many as 20,000) thronged the streets of Dowlais as his coffin made its way to St John's church. Ironmasters Hill, Bailey and Crawshay were pallbearers. Charlotte, contrary to Victorian custom, was at the head of the procession with 4 of her sons – not Ivor, the eldest, who was in Europe after being expelled from Harrow.

In January, on a dark night, she returned to Canford with the children, totally bereft. Stepping out of the carriage she went into the library where luckily there was a light. She drew the cloth from the bust of her late and beloved husband. "I flung my arms around it and remained clasping it for some minutes kissing the cold lips – not colder than his own when I kissed them last – and shedding torrents of passionate tears. And this cold marble is now all that is left me." she wrote in her journal.

In the month after her husband's death, she welcomed a new tutor to the house to help Ivor get into university. His name was Charles Schreiber and Charlotte fell in love with him and they married in April 1855. Having run the Dowlais Iron Company since the death of her husband, she now gave up all interest in it and over the rest of her very long life became a passionate collector of fans and ceramics. The couple travelled all over Europe collecting; 12,000 pieces of porcelain were donated to the V&A in 1884.



Charlotte outlived her second husband and lived to the age of 83, dying in 1895. She was buried at Canford Magna church where her son, Lord Ivor Wimborne, continued to live.

**Monique Goodliffe**

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## BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE PRIEST'S HOUSE MUSEUM

Over the last few months there's been a lot happening behind the hoardings. Here's a flavour of some of the activities:

Last week, the elements of the new frontage arrived. Everyone who has had a sneak preview is delighted with the final result. To see more go to one of the links below (the first is an MP4 movie, the second the same but on 'Quicktime'; apologies for the typo in the film's title in these early versions):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1ekr9lxbd57ehun/PRIET'S%20HOUSE%20MP4.mp4?dl=0>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/h125s69331j4cy4/PRIET'S%20HOUSE%20MOVIE.mov?dl=0>

Walls are now being plastered or painted. The lift has been installed. Floors have been levelled and ramps are being installed to make access easier for all abilities. (I walked around the top floor of the museum building last week and some doors are now only half visible from one side due to the revised floor levels, though such views will ultimately be hidden behind displays). The contractor, Greendale Construction, has told the Trust that they will hand the site back to them late March.

### **A chance to do some archaeology**

The 'opening-up' of the building by the contractors to reveal and conserve the historic fabric gave the Trust the chance to do some archaeological investigations and record aspects which would be destroyed by the subsequent building works. Keith Childs excavated the museum entrance area. Several previously unknown construction phases were revealed; the oldest – the original south wing – dates from the late Elizabethan period c.1600. There were several early Georgian phases, including a single storey extension over the original open courtyard at the front before that was changed to the building that exists today. Upstairs, there is some well-preserved timber framing and a wealth of other interesting features made from a variety of building materials. Although most of the ground floor features will be covered up, visitors to the museum will still be able to see much of the historic fabric in the upper level.

The fit-out of the Museum and Information Centre (both of which form parts of the Grade II\* listed building) can now begin. We expect that the Information Centre area, which includes new retail space, will be open for 6<sup>th</sup> April, in time for Easter week. This will allow space to be freed for the museum to start its "recant" project where the artefacts stored over the last few months are returned to the museum. This will allow the Collections Officer to select the final objects to be displayed in the new exhibition space.

Behind the scenes a team of volunteer researchers has been undertaking background research on themes and artefacts related to new galleries, which will depict a variety of aspects of life in East Dorset from past to present times. The exhibition designer, Smith & Jones, is creating the graphic panels associated with the new exhibitions and displays. The Education Team, already busy delivering outreach sessions to schools across Dorset, is working on ideas for interactive screens and object handling stations in the new galleries. There is still plenty of work to be done!

Finally, the Iron Age TB skeleton, the earliest identified case of Tuberculosis from Britain, will be displayed in the new Life and Death gallery. More on him in a future newsletter.



A new vision panel will reveal previously hidden black and red striped plasterwork which dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

A discrete Georgian panelled room is being restored, thanks to a fund from the Georgian Group which administers the F.E. Cleary Heritage Fund, a small charitable trust whose aim is the conservation of Georgian architecture.



***Vanessa Joseph***



## NATIVE AMERICAN ROCK ART

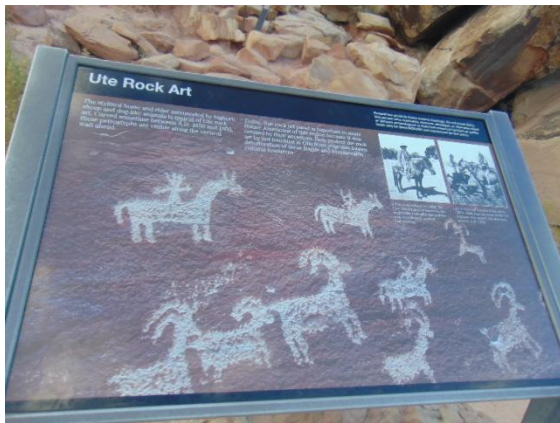
In August last year my husband and I travelled around the Moab area of Utah, starting in Arches National



Park – the largest concentration of natural stone arches in the world. Past some of the arches, we walked up a pathway to the Wolfe Ranch, where disabled Civil War veteran John Wesley Wolfe and his oldest son, Fred, settled in 1898, though the current buildings date from 1906.



Continuing along the path, I came across my first panel of Native American rock art – really exciting, especially as I was celebrating my birthday. The petroglyphs were created by the Ute between 1650 and 1850 - the art couldn't have been any earlier than that because on it there were images of horses, and they weren't introduced by the Spanish until about 1600. Apart from the horses, there were also bighorn sheep and some smaller animals that could have been dogs. The panel appeared to be in quite good condition and I felt very lucky to see it.



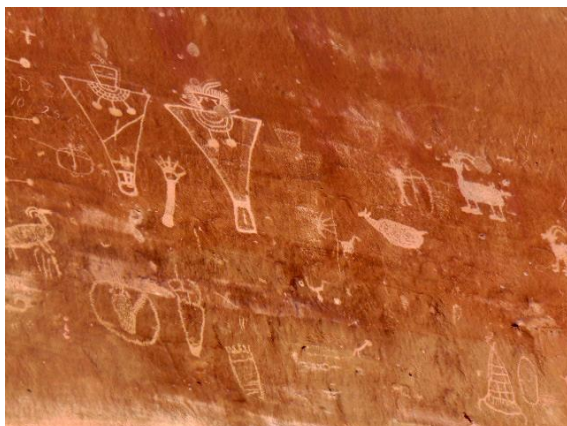
We then drove to Potash Road outside the Park (Highway 279), renowned for its rock art, and finally discovered some adorning a massive rock face. The more we looked the more we saw; the light coloured sandstone was alive with a multitude of different shapes and figures created by the Puebloan people between 1,250 and 2,000 years ago. Along with spirals and ancient hunters, there were rectangular bighorn sheep, centipedes and snakes. Also, there was the "remnants of a shaman-like figure (with a headdress or horns) thought to be the insignia of supernatural powers". It was truly amazing and we stood admiring the artwork until the light began to fade (and the mosquitoes began to bite!) and then returned to Moab.



After further travels, towards the end of our trip, we returned to the Moab area and Sego Canyon; I'd been told that this was a place I could not miss as it had "one of the region's most impressive overviews of prehistoric and historic American Indian rock art", all in one location. Here the figures dated from the Archaic period (about 4,000 years ago) to the Ute period (c.400-700 years ago) and, unusually, it had both petroglyphs and pictographs on display together.

Having parked the car along the canyon, we didn't have far to walk to see our first panel of rock art, which stood out beautifully and was decorated with white bison and circles that had been created by the Ute. As we stood admiring the work we realised that some of their artwork had been painted on top of previous work from earlier cultures, which we could just make this out in the mid-morning light. The second panel we came across was mostly images created by the Fremont people. Their 'bucket head' figures had complex collars and headdresses, and were said to be influenced by their ancestral Puebloans. Like the first panel, these had also been engraved over some much earlier work. This time the faint red paintings were of the Archaic Barrier Canyon people.

Continuing on our walk we rounded the corner and came across the third and final panel. It was adorned with scary red figures that were "almost life size" with "haunting, hollow" eyes. Whilst some of them held snakes, others had small animals perched on their head or shoulders. Then, underneath these, were paintings of big horned sheep which were typical of both the Puebloan and Fremont periods. In total there were nineteen painted anthropomorphs created between 2,000 and 4,000 years ago. Across the way, on private land, were more of the Barrier Canyon figures. These large, ghostly figures were magnificent and to me were the highlight of our trip. Unfortunately though, amongst the rock art, there was also a lot of modern day graffiti. Whilst it is hard to protect the rock art in such an isolated spot, without that protection there will be nothing left to see in the not too distant future.



Sadly, Sego Canyon was our last stop in Utah but I couldn't complain. We had seen everything that we had set out to see plus a lot, lot more and my hunger for rock art was fulfilled.

### ***Jan Elkins***

Richard Poore, who died in 1237, is buried in the little church of St. Mary's in the small Dorset village of Tarrant Crawford. But who was Richard?

He was probably the most important Bishop of Salisbury, as it was he who designed and had New Sarum, or Salisbury, built from scratch in 1220. That meant he could take his clergy and followers down from the windswept hillfort of Old Sarum to the new city and the beginnings of the cathedral. After a period as Bishop of Durham, he chose to be buried where he was born, though it is said that his heart was buried in Salisbury Cathedral. His statue is on the west front of the cathedral holding a model of the building.



## January Weblinks

### Warrior Women Burial Appears To Confirm Greek Stories Of Amazons

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/tomb-containing-three-generations-amazon-warrior-women-uneearthed-russia-180973877/>

### Hoard Of 1200 Year Old Gold Coins Found In Israel

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-7840507/Hoard-1-200-year-old-Arabian-Nights-gold-coins-discovered-Israel.html>

### Study Points To Overhunting Of The Walrus Caused Collapse Of Norse Greenland

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/06/walrus-shortage-may-have-caused-collapse-of-norse-greenland>

### High Status Roman Graves Found In Somerset

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/07/archaeologists-discover-graves-high-status-romans-somerton-somerset>

### Carrawburgh Fort On Hadrian's Wall Gifted To The Nation

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/09/hadrians-wall-fort-gifted-to-englands-historic-sites-collection>

### Massacre In A 5th Century Swedish Ring Fort

<https://www.world-archaeology.com/issues/the-sandby-borg-massacre/>

### Historic England Selection Of 10 Archaeological Finds Of The Decade

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-50895746>

### Australia's Largest Carnivorous Dinosaur Found At Winton Field

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-15/winton-dinosaur-australias-largest-carnivore-uneearthed-theropod/11867092>

### World Authority On Stegosaurus Susannah Maidment Talks To Jim Al Khalili

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000d705>

### Evidence Of Neanderthals Diving For Clams To Make Tools Found In Italy

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/jan/15/neanderthals-dived-for-shells-to-make-tools-research-suggests>

### Was An Ancient Scorpion The First Land Dwelling Animal?

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/jan/16/ancient-fossil-may-prove-scorpion-was-first-land-dwelling-animal>

### Scientists Claim Asteroid Strike Responsible For Dinosaur Extinction

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-51150001>

### Rare Assyrian Carvings Found In Northern Iraq

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/01/rare-assyrian-carvings-discovered-iraq/>

### Devil's Trail Footprints Found To Be Neanderthal

<https://www.sciencealert.com/hundreds-of-thousands-of-years-ago-neanderthals-left-their-footprints-on-an-active-volcano>

### Medieval Finds Recovered From London Cesspit

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/26/medieval-treasures-sludge-cesspit-london>

### Newport Ship Rebuild And Future Plan

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-51187955> (includes links to other, unrelated, interesting items)

### George III Collection Of Military Maps Goes Online

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/jan/28/george-iiis-vast-collection-of-military-maps-goes-online>

### Late Iron Age Warrior Grave Found In West Sussex

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/01/29/grave-of-ancient-iron-age-warrior-uneearthed-in-incredibly-rare-discovery-12137943/>

## Web Link Highlight January 2020

You may wonder why I included the item on the Swedish Ring Fort massacre, as it is far from a new report. The listed item is actually dated 25th July 2019 and it had previously been covered by the BBC in April 2018 (the excavations had been going on since 2010). Despite this, it only came to my attention when having lunch with my wife's Swedish nephew and his wife (they were over here for a family funeral). So, it is now included because, as with many excavations, not only is it an interesting story of what has been found and understood, but also because of the unanswered questions. Who were the attackers? Why did the massacre happen? What happened to the women and girls? Is this an isolated example or are there other such cases in Sweden?

The link to 'The Life Scientific' was included because this programme featured Susannah Maidment talking about her career hunting dinosaur fossils, and tells a part of the story we do not get when the finds are reported. A good listen.

I first came across the item on the 'Devil's Trail' footprints posted by the Daily Mail the same day I exchanged emails with Geoff on the article below - 'It Ain't Necessarily So'. The supposition that the footprints were made by Neanderthals seemed to be based simply on the date assigned to their creation (50,000 years ago), on the basis that Homo Sapiens had not made it into Europe by that date - or even existed. Even with my limited knowledge this did not sound right, so I then looked back at some previous weblink items and quickly found an item listed in the June 2019 weblinks

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-48913307>) reporting that a Homo Sapiens skull found in Greece dated to 210,000 years ago. These humans apparently did not continue in Europe, but did last until around 170,000 years ago. However, another migration can be dated to between 90,000 and 125,000 years ago from a skull found in Israel.

Then I did some more research and found other articles on the footprints and all became clear - the Daily Mail article erroneously gives the volcano eruption date as 50,000 BC when, in fact, it should be 350,000 BC! This error is repeated twice in that article, so the listed item is from another source. I make absolutely no comment about the accuracy of the Daily Mail, or how good (or even interested) its proof readers and editors are at spotting such gross errors. It's also interesting that, at the time I looked, there were 113 comments posted on this article, all about walking through lava and not a single comment about the date error. If you want to see it go here: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-7922919/Fossilized-devils-trail-Italian-volcano-Neanderthals-new-evidence-reveals.html> (but they may have corrected the error by the time you read this - or is this also optimistic?).

**Alan Dedden – Please send your weblinks to him at [alan.dedden@gmail.com](mailto:alan.dedden@gmail.com)**

## IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

The last newsletter covered a number of areas where stories based on limited or uncertain historical or archaeological information become bigger and more certain. For example, the story highlighted by Alan about the supposed temple found in Israel that was said to be the home of the Ark of the Covenant. Even a cursory look at the evidence shown would suggest this was stretching interpretation to breaking point. As Alan said, any possibility of linking a find to the Ark of the Covenant might be exploited to publicise an excavation, and using a reference to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* adds popular interest.

Of course, this isn't limited to stories originating many centuries ago. Academic writers have shown that the presumption of a strong element of truth about the past adds credibility, and that a feeling of historical accuracy sells cinema seats, TV programmes, books, and so on. The most obvious ploy, and one that can be shown to work, is to say that it's 'based on a true story', despite this saying nothing about how many of the real facts remain. An article in the April 2019 newsletter looked at the Zulu Wars, particularly the battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1879. The film *Zulu* (1964) really brought Rorke's Drift to life for us, despite considerably twisting many of the well-documented facts. On the other hand, *Zulu Dawn* (1979) stuck much more closely to the facts about Isandlwana but, despite an equally dramatic story, is hardly remembered. A film producer has said that the films that are most accurate about the past are more useful in curing insomnia than teaching history.



A really good story can develop over the years into something else, as amply demonstrated by Miles Russell's December presentation on the evolution of the King Arthur legend. As Alan put it, "Take a vaguely remembered (or not well documented) story, add in elements from other similar stories and embellish it to appeal to, or reflect, current idioms. Then, after the changes that will occur over time due to retelling, different emphases and maybe translation errors, you have a new story that only distantly reflects the original seed story. Trying to now discover the real events that lay behind the story will probably be little better than guesswork."

From this end of the telescope it is often difficult to find the culprit for the 'less than rigorous examinations of the evidence'. Is it down to archaeologists trying to justify their work to their funders (or, in some cases, political masters), or is it the filter of the mainstream media stripping out all supporting evidence and references, leaving us with little more than the sensational headline and story? Almost certainly both are factors in many cases, but perhaps it's simply naivety or a lack of knowledge about other subjects (like simple sums!). The May 2018 newsletter had a Weblink to a story about a medieval dice with two 5s and two 4s, but no 1 or 2 (<https://www.livescience.com/62273-cheating-medieval-dice-norway.html>). As Alan pointed out, the duplicated numbers are on adjacent faces, and are therefore very obvious when the dice is rolled, yet the archaeologists claimed it was for cheating. The probability of getting caught is quite high, even for one throw and a single observer; for more throws or observers it rapidly approaches certainty. It is much more likely to be a maker's showpiece or for a game we don't know. (And, yes, we know that the singular is actually "die", but that would make it harder to understand.)



For the news revealed in our Weblinks it is often possible to find the original publication in academic journals, such as *Nature*, but these tend to be very dry and lacking supporting graphics. To do that for all the weblinks would, though, be very time-consuming and we've taken the view that those with a particular interest will follow up themselves. This newsletter isn't an academic journal of course, and the weblinks are intended to point members towards stories they may have missed.

Does it matter if we take the stories we're told at face value and without question? As Andrew said about the quote from Michael Wood in Miles' book on the legend of Arthur, "...it seems to me that among ordinary people the legend has become more important than the history ... ending up far more wonderful than mere historical fact ...". Perhaps that goes beyond what happens with most of the stories we hear about the past, though there are people who believe that the legend of Arthur is true. More importantly, people's knowledge about the past is shaped by what the various media tell us.



You clearly can't check up on everything that you hear or see, and certainly can't even consider doing the amount of research Miles has done on the Arthur legend. However, we think that it is important to be critical of reports about archaeological and historical discoveries, especially those that seem sensational or too good to be true. Always bear in mind that 'it ain't necessarily so' and, wherever possible, try to see if an interpretation accords with the evidence.

If you have a good example of an overly hyped history or archaeology story, we'd love to hear it. Or do you have views on what we've said above?

Or perhaps you could follow up on the story below and try to find an answer to the questions below (this isn't a test; we don't know the answers):

- The most successful Roman charioteer we know about was born c.AD 104 – Gaius Appuleius Diocles, a Spaniard by birth. A monument is said to have been set up in Rome when he retired to *Praeneste* (now Palestrina) in AD 146, which records winnings of almost 36 million *sesterces*. The original story in 2010, apparently from an American academic, put the modern equivalent of the winnings at \$15 billion on a rather questionable and poorly explained basis. That figure was taken up in ever more breathless articles about Gaius being the wealthiest sportsman ever.
- Wikipedia uses the prices of grain to give an equivalent today of \$7.3m (we've not checked the figures but they look wrong), but then says an equivalent purchasing power would be \$60-160m without stating the basis. That does seem more believable: Geoff says that 36m *sesterces* is 360,000 *aurei* containing 2,600kg of gold, worth \$120m (about £95m) today, though that isn't necessarily an equivalent purchasing power.
- The other issue is that Geoff has a record of the inscription, ostensibly that above, which is given a source reference in one of the articles online (*CIL* 6.10048; see p.10 of January newsletter for what this means). He recorded the inscription, from Rome, as an epitaph giving the age at death (not retirement) as 42 years, 7 months and 23 days, but no longer has access to the source.
- Just putting Gaius' name in Google will find most of the above and much more. Are the articles all wrong and did he die, rather than retire, in AD 146? And what would be a reasonable modern equivalent to his winnings?



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Bush Fire humour from my sister in Australia.  
OK, it's not archaeological, but it is topical.



## REMEMBERING THE ROMANS II

In the first article of this series, I wrote about inscriptions and epitaphs from Cisalpine Gaul, the Roman *regiones* either side of the River Po, and from Northern Peninsular Italy (“NPI”), the regions south of there and north of Rome.

I said that Roman epitaphs are useless in looking at Roman mortality as they don’t reflect the whole population. Even a cursory look at the Cisalpine Gaul data shows very few children under 5 with epitaphs, but apparently high numbers for youths and younger adults. A simple comparison of ages recorded in Rome shows a life expectancy of 23 from the Latin ones but 51 from those written in Greek; clearly a different selection of actual deaths. Cisalpine Gaul might have had a population of a million, yet their deaths over two or three centuries are represented by just 2,394 epitaphs (and only 608 of them show ages). All the same, it was felt for a long time that this information was useful in looking at Roman mortality, though not for the last 40 years or so.

But if you can’t use the epitaphs, how can you tell the level of mortality at different ages, and hence the likely proportions of epitaphs by age? The Romans didn’t keep statistics, but they did have a census every so often and, remarkably, a series of census returns from Egypt covering about 700 people have survived. Other information from around the Empire starts to build a picture of births and deaths, but it will always be what is plausible to fit what we know, rather than accurate.

Model mortality tables exist for different situations and a few seem to fit. Whichever of those you choose, the level of childhood mortality was terrible – perhaps one third of children not reaching the end of their 1<sup>st</sup> year and almost half not seeing their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. After that, deaths each year seem to have been fairly constant numbers from the decreasing numbers remaining (i.e. a higher proportion each year). Only about 8.5% of people reached 70; today it’s about 10 times that. One consequence of the high mortality that I find almost unbelievable is that, on average, Roman women reaching childbearing age had to have at least 5 children if the population wasn’t to decline.

DM  
FLORIO · ANN · VII  
HEDISTO · ANN · VI  
DAPHNE · ANN · XXV  
RHOE · ANN · VI

An epitaph that, sadly, shows the not uncommon consequence of having many children in Roman times, even more tragic in that they had survived the dangerous early years. Daphne may well have had children of her own, perhaps even these since Roman women tended to marry quite young.  
CIL 5.1217 X



An American family’s 5 children; the minimum each Roman woman had to have on average.

The epitaph above was number 1217 in volume 5 of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* for Roman *regio* X, i.e. Venetia (academic publications don’t give the region). Most gravestones, unlike this, show the name of the dedicator and often their relationship to those commemorated. Sentiments or descriptions are also very often included, such as ‘a loving wife’ or ‘member of the Council’.

DM stands for *Dis Manibus*, variously translated as something like “to the spirits of the departed”. It’s an indicator of a pagan burial; Christian ones didn’t use it and may have something like *Memoriae* – “in memory of”. In fact, we ignored Christian epitaphs in our numerical analysis as we wanted to look at pagan commemoration patterns, which are more likely to reflect regional differences. Abbreviations were common as a means of keeping the cost of the gravestone down. ANN VI could be for *Annorum VI*, or “of 6 years”, common in the 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries if engraved in full. After that, full inscriptions tended to be VIXIT ANNOS (or ANNIS) VI for “lived 6 years”, abbreviated as VIX.ANN., V.A., and so on. ANN, AN or even A might be either.

I’ll look further at dating next time and begin to consider the biases in commemoration.

**Geoff Taylor**

## **View from Above No 25: Rawlsbury Camp**

*Photo by  
Sue Newman  
and Jo Crane*



The aerial photograph looks east over Rawlsbury Camp, sometimes known as Rawlsbury (or Rawlesbury) Rings, a small bivallate Iron Age hillfort about 8km west of Blandford. It's on a prominent spur from the chalk escarpment running westwards down from Bulbarrow Hill, though still at about 240m above sea level and overlooking Blackmore Vale. There are extensive views of 'Hardy Country' from the hillfort, with one website claiming that 5 counties can be seen on a clear day.

The interior of the hillfort is about 1.6ha (4 acres), with small depressions in the southern part probably marking occupation; the whole earthwork covers around 3ha. The inner rampart and ditch are thought to be later additions to an original univallate hillfort, with slighter defences than the later work. The inner rampart is now up to 1.5m higher than the interior, with its ditch up to 9m wide and 5.7m deeper than the rampart. The double set of defences are close together except at the southern corner (right on the aerial) and along the northern side (left, above the road), where the berm is up to 20m wide.

One site suggest this hillfort wasn't particularly defensible, as it is lower than the top of Bulbarrow Hill, but the Royal Commission and Pastscape/Historic England strongly disagree and also feel that the hillfort's complex entrance suggest quite a late date in the Iron Age. The land falls away quite steeply, especially to the north and south-east, whilst the spur at the east leading up to the summit is quite narrow. Here, the single entrance seems to have been highly defensible, with out-turned ramparts and a possible barbican or outwork, now mutilated by various trackways and diggings. There are also cross-dykes on the east which may be related to the hillfort.

The road, seen disappearing into woodland on the aerial photograph, has destroyed some of the northern part of the hillfort, and some of the trackways are clearly visible, one at least apparently medieval but not clearly identified. The hedge running across the centre marks a parish boundary. As far as I can tell, the hillfort has never been excavated, except that some trenches were dug as part of army manoeuvres in 1951 and Iron Age pottery was found. Roman pottery and coins have also been found in the hillfort and nearby fields.



It is said that the fort was used as one of the 'Armada Beacons' in 1588, and as a hilltop telegraph station during the Napoleonic Wars. I haven't been able to find very solid references to these and it may be that they refer to the summit of Bulbarrow Hill itself, which has been used for communication towers since 1942. On what is described as the highest point in the hillfort, which seems to be above the entrance, there's a circular stone plinth, described in some places as a seat. It has been suggested as the remains of some sort of signalling device.

However, a large oak cross was set up on the plinth in 1966, apparently by Rev. Baillie, vicar of Milborne St. Andrew, for an open-air Evensong Service. It seems to me quite likely that the plinth was built to support the cross. One site says that 3,000 people gathered there on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1966 in torrential rain, and photographs on the internet suggest large gatherings there from time to time



since. The further photograph here (© Anthony Houghton) shows that the cross was dilapidated and apparently on the point of collapse, damaging the plinth, in 2011. The new cross shown was erected by 2015 at the latest (© Marilyn Peddle). The cross is visible on Google Earth, though not clear on the aerial photograph. Neither plinth nor cross seem to be mentioned in any of the official literature, even though they may



well break the terms of the ancient monument schedule.

This is one of the many hillforts surveyed by Dave Stewart, who can no doubt correct anything that's wrong.

*Jo Crane/Geoff Taylor*

## EDAS PROGRAMME

Unless otherwise stated, all lectures are from 7:30 – 9:30 pm at St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE. <http://www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk/programme.html>

<b>Wed 12<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Lecture	<b>Josh Pollard University of Southampton</b>	Settlement and monumentality in the Avebury landscape <b>AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>Wed 11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Lecture	<b>AGM and members' talk</b>	The Druce Neolithic Site – Lilian Ladle and Andrew Morgan
<b>Wed 1<sup>st</sup> April</b>	Lecture	<b>Francis Taylor CBA Wessex</b>	Discovering the Maya (esp. Tikal & Copan sites) <b>NOT SECOND WEDNESDAY</b> <b>CHANGE FROM PRINTED PROGRAMME</b>
<b>Wed 13<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Lecture	<b>Tim Darvill Bournemouth University</b>	Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones

## DISTRICT DIARY

The diary of what I hope are interesting events in the area depends partly on information received from the organisations concerned, some of which organise events at fairly short notice.

**Your information is also welcome – do let me know of any events.**

**PLEASE CHECK RELEVANT WEBSITES/CONTACTS FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION BEFORE VISITING.**

<b>Wed 5<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Living with Monuments - around Avebury, c.4,000–1,500BC	<b>AVAS</b>	Lecture by Prof. Josh Pollard, University of Southampton
<b>Fri 7<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Forests, Fruit & Fossils – illustrated reconstructions of the world of our fossil ancestors	<b>Blandford Museum</b>	Prof. Peter Andrews and Flick Baker Blandford Parish Rooms, 7pm – see poster above
<b>Sat 15<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Inflatable Museum at Blandford Forum	<b>County Museum</b>	Dorset County Museum on tour – see p.11 October Newsletter
<b>Wed 19<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Chedworth Roman Villa – what’s new?	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lecture by Nancy Grace, National Trust archaeologist
<b>Thu 20<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Portable Antiquities Scheme & the Treasure Act	<b>Blandford Group</b>	Lecture by Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen, PAS Finds Officer, Dorset
<b>Sat 29<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Inflatable Museum at Lytchett Matravers	<b>County Museum</b>	Dorset County Museum on tour – see p.11 October Newsletter
<b>Wed 4<sup>th</sup> March</b>	The earliest farming villages in the Middle East	<b>AVAS</b>	Lecture by Sarah Elliott, Bournemouth University
<b>Sat 14<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Insights into the way of life of our ancestors: geochemical analysis of archaeological materials in the field	<b>BNSS</b>	Dr. Sarah Elliott, Bournemouth University
<b>Wed 18<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Golbekli Tepe - a Prehistoric Ceremonial Site in Turkey	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lecture by Tim Darvill, Bournemouth University
<b>Thu 19<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Australian Aboriginal Art – from 20,000 years ago to modern	<b>Blandford Group</b>	AGM & Lecture by Edrys Luprian
<b>Sat 21<sup>st</sup> March</b>	Inflatable Museum at Corfe Castle	<b>County Museum</b>	Dorset County Museum on tour – see p.11 October Newsletter
<b>Sat 21<sup>st</sup> March</b>	Bronze Age CSI: A very cold case from Knowlton	<b>BNSS</b>	Gabrielle Delbarre, Bournemouth University
<b>Wed 1<sup>st</sup> April</b>	Tba	<b>AVAS</b>	Lecture
<b>Wed 15<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Life, death and feasting – 6000 years of occupation at Worth Matravers	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lecture by Lilian Ladle
<b>Thu 16<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Finding Nero (and other Emperors)	<b>Blandford Group</b>	Lecture by Miles Russell, Bournemouth University
<b>Wed 20<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Music in Every Home – the disc vs. the cylinder	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lecture by Gordon Bartlet, specialist in restoring mechanical musical instruments <b>IN WAREHAM MASONIC HALL</b>
<b>Thu 21<sup>st</sup> May</b>	Pre-Colombian Peru	<b>Blandford Group</b>	Lecture by Tim Brown
<b>Wed 17<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Portland – Isle of Fascination	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lecture by Stuart Morris, local historian and author

## Archaeology Societies

- **Avon Valley Archaeological Society:** <http://www.avas.org.uk/>  
Meetings at Ann Rose Hall, Greyfriars Community Centre, Christchurch Road, Ringwood BH24 1DW, 7:30pm 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of month except June, July & August. Visitors £3.50; membership £10 pa.
- **Blandford Museum Archaeology Group:** <http://blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk/arcaeology.html>  
Meetings at Blandford Museum, Bere's Yard, Market Place, Blandford Forum, DT11 7HQ, normally 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month (although the Museum is being refurbished from November 2019 – please check for alternative meeting location). Visitors £4; membership £10 pa.
- **Bournemouth Natural Sciences Society:** <http://bnss.org.uk>  
Events at 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BN1 3NS; lectures Tuesday 7:30pm/Saturday 2:30pm.
- **The Christchurch Antiquarians:** <https://christchurchantiquarians.wordpress.com/>  
No lecture programme but involved in practical archaeology projects. Membership £10 pa.
- **Dorset Natural History & Archaeology Society:** <http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/events>  
Events at various locations in Dorchester, usually ticketed
- **Wareham and District Archaeology & Local History Society:** The website is no longer updated; for information contact Karen Brown at [karen.brown68@btinternet.com](mailto:karen.brown68@btinternet.com)  
Meetings at the Town Hall, Wareham (corner of North Street & East Street), normally 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.

## Bournemouth Natural Science Society 2020 Lecture Programme

(Tuesdays @ 7:30, Saturdays @ 2:30)

<b>FEBRUARY</b>		
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup>	The Art and Skills of Digital Wildlife Photography	Mike Read
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	The Arts & Crafts Movement Locally	Gordon Le Pard
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Centenary Celebration Open Day 2-4pm	
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	William Herschel and the Rings of Uranus (8pm)	Dr. Stuart Eves
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Tectonic Drift and the Rise of Madagascar	Ashley Leftwich
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	The growing and cultivation of Tropical Orchids in the UK	Ken Griffiths
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Big Cat update	Jonathan McGowan
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup>	John Cresswell: Archetypal Researcher and Historian	Steve Limburn
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Calendars: Cultures and Clocks	James Fradgley
<b>MARCH</b>		
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Written in Stone: a social, sentimental & architectural history	John Hubbard
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Science Lecture - tba	tbd
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	How well can you hang a picture frame?	Sharon Docherty
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Insights into the way of life of our ancestors: geochemical analysis of archaeological materials in the field	Dr. Sarah Elliott
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	100 Years of Bournemouth News 1920-2020	Hattie Miles
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Bronze Age CSI: A very cold case from Knowlton	Gabrielle Delbarre
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Dorset after Dinosaurs	Mike Earle
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Cassini at Saturn	Prof. Carl Murray