East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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NEWSLETTER – November 2020

Editor's Notes

For our second Zoom lecture, we were very pleased to be able to hear from the well-known Dr. Andrew Birley, Director of Excavations for the Vindolanda Trust, on 'Recent Excavations at Vindolanda and Revealing Magna Roman Fort'. This was to have been our 7th joint lecture with Bournemouth University but using Zoom did, at least, mean that Andrew didn't have to make the 750 mile round trip. I'm pleased that we had 74 connections, so probably approaching 100 people watching, a tribute to this excellent presentation on a subject of wide interest.

Unfortunately, I must apologise that personal circumstances have meant that I haven't been able to complete the usual summary of the presentation, though it will appear. There are, though, articles about 'Wall Country' in the last newsletter and in the June 2020 Interim issue, and I'm grateful to Bryan Popple for sending another for this edition from his time excavating at Vindolanda: **Hadrian's Wall Country: a feature to the north of the Wall**.

EDAS is of course, very much still here and operating, in some ways reaching more widely than before this difficult period. Read more about that in Andrew's item, **EDAS Update from the Chair**.

The Museum of East Dorset (previously the Priest's House Museum) finally opened its doors again last week after more than 12 months of refurbishment. Vanessa commented on how ironic it was that, after 9 days, they are forced to close again due to the latest lockdown restrictions. One of the museum's most significant artefacts is the Iron Age TB skeleton which is now being displayed in the new Life and Death gallery. EDAS members are the first to read the results of the stable isotope analysis conducted on the skeleton pre-COVID in Vanessa's article: **Origins of the earliest known case of TB**. Historic England has kindly agreed to support the Museum of East Dorset by publicising the results to the archaeology world.

I'm pleased to welcome back **View from Above**, no. 31 in the series based on the aerial photographs taken by Sue Newman and Jo Crane. I'm also grateful to Jo and Sue for **Egypt 1: Cairo & Alexandria**, intended partly as an introduction to some longer ones on the country and its temples which will appear when there's space. It's from an article by them in the AVAS Annual Newsletter of December 2019, part of a longer description of their tour of Egypt.

The short articles on **Remembering the Romans** continue with number VIII and, with my thanks to Neil Meldrum, we have the 4th in his series of longer articles on human evolution, **Humankind Finds Spirituality**. Last in this roundup, but by no means least, comes Alan's continuing series of **Weblinks** and **Highlights** to give you wider links to interesting historical and archaeological news.

Geoff Taylor

Feedback and contributions to geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk; don't Just 'REPLY'

EDAS Update from the Chair

Dear EDAS Members,

First and foremost thank you to everyone for remaining loyal to the society during these strange and demanding times. We are fortunate to live in an area with a low incidence of infection and I pray that nobody has contracted the virus or suffered too much from the ongoing restrictions.

As you know the society remains busy and I am sure you have enjoyed the bumper editions of the EDAS Newsletter published by Geoff. We have continued with our monthly lecture programme, now delivered over the internet using Zoom; I must say that this has proven very successful. We publicise our talks with several societies and for the last talk, Vindolanda by Andrew Birley, we had nearly 100 people in the virtual audience. Many were Zoom novices so don't be intimated by the technology, it is easy to use and the event can be quite sociable. It is inevitable that the remaining talks listed in the 2020-21 programme will have to be delivered by Zoom. Due to the enthusiastic response from members and friends of the society, we will be looking into filming all future live talks for broadcasting to people who can't attend the meetings in person.

We continue working on various projects, not least Druce Roman Villa – Lilian acknowledges that she has benefitted from social distancing in this respect, allowing her to focus on writing the monograph; it remains on schedule to be published next year. We continue, like Sisyphus, to encourage completion of the long overdue report on the Minchington Roman Villa, and have assurance from Christopher Sparey-Green that one day this will be achieved. It is an interesting site and we will do everything possible to ensure it is published. We are also in contact with Robert Lancaster regarding publication of the small Wareham Pipe Kiln project. The mantra of "Don't dig unless you publish" should be the first principle of archaeology. Chasing old projects is a frustrating task……

This summer we accepted a request to provide expertise for a small community project at Wimborne All Saints. We have surveyed a neglected graveyard and undertaken a small archaeological investigation to find evidence of a church demolished in 1733. This is an interesting project, and it is unfortunate it could not be opened up to more members, but it is a small and sensitive site. We are indebted to Peter Shand for clearing the undergrowth and to Alan Dedden and Ian Drummond for running the project. We will write a small report for the local Parish Church Council and make it available to EDAS members. When circumstances allow we will give a talk about our findings.

Although not EDAS activities, it is always interesting to hear of the critical work done by EDAS members in the community, not least Vanessa, Sara and several other members who have supported the resurrection of the Priest's House Museum as the Museum of East Dorset.

We all miss our monthly meetings and the chance to catch up and exchange experiences, but the Society remains active. We continue to provide a service to our members and to the local community, we actively engage with other organisations and constantly look for future opportunities.

Thank you and keep well,
Andrew Morgan

ZOOM LECTURE: Wednesday 11th November 7:30pm
Wayne Bartlett: AD871 - The Year of Nine Battles
Members get the ZOOM Link ID & simple instructions by email a few days before. Non-members can request it from Andrew Morgan: andrewmorgz@aol.com

Origins of the earliest known case of TB in Britain show that the Iron Age man was a migrant from continental Europe

Archaeological excavations at Tarrant Hinton, Dorset, between 1967 and 1985 uncovered a variety of evidence for settlement between the Iron Age and the Roman period. Possibly the most significant discovery was the skeleton of an Iron Age man whose spine displayed signs of tuberculosis (TB). The man, who died between 400 and 230 BC, is in fact the earliest case of TB ever found in Britain. More recently, chemical analysis of the man's bones and teeth, carried out on behalf of the Museum of East Dorset, has finally answered some key questions about his origins. The results show that the man arrived in Dorset as a child, around the age of 8. His family came from an area of Carboniferous Limestone outside Britain, somewhere to the south or west. The skeleton will now be on permanent display at the newly-refurbished Museum of East Dorset in Wimborne.

Professor Alistair Pike, Professor of Archaeological Sciences at the University of Southampton, helped build a picture of the man using mass spectroscopy to investigate stable isotope ratios (carbon, nitrogen, strontium and oxygen). This type of analysis works on the principle that whilst everyone's bones and teeth are made up of the same chemical elements, differences in the precise form of these chemicals can provide information about a person's diet, and also the source of their drinking water, when their teeth were forming in childhood. Samples were taken from the tooth enamel of three molars, whilst collagen was extracted from rib and long bone fragments.

Carbon and nitrogen isotopes indicated that the man ate a mixed diet consisting of plants (cereal crops and other vegetables) grown on chalkland, whilst the bulk of his protein came from cattle and sheep. His diet was less varied than that of other Iron Age people as there was no evidence of marine or freshwater fish or of pig.

Strontium isotopes showed that the man was living on the southern British chalklands between the ages of 8 and 14, when his third molar (wisdom tooth) was developing. However, the oxygen values for the two earlier molars suggest a non-local origin before the child was weaned on to solid foods. The combined strontium and oxygen isotope analyses suggest a high probability that the man spent his early childhood in an area of Carboniferous Limestone to the west of Britain. This type of geology is found in South or West Ireland, on the Atlantic coasts of South West France and in the Cantabrian Mountains of Northern Spain.

Dr Simon Mays, Human Skeletal Biologist for Historic England said: "We know from the DNA evidence that this person would have got his TB from another person rather than from infected meat or milk. Human-to-human transmission is favoured by crowded city living, but the fact that we find TB at this early date reminds us that the disease could still survive in the rather sparse human populations of the prehistoric past. Finds of diseased skeletons in Continental Europe tell us that tuberculosis was present there for thousands of years before our Tarrant Hinton man was born. The isotope evidence is tantalising. Perhaps he caught his disease in mainland Europe. But it could equally well be that TB was already well-established here by the Iron Age - it does not often show on the bones and we do not have very many skeletons from this period."

Professor Alistair Pike commented: "The recent global Coronavirus pandemic has shown how the long-distance movement of people can rapidly spread disease and this will have been no different in the past.

By using isotopes to trace prehistoric people's origins we hope to determine when, where and how far the diseases of the time were spreading."

James Webb, Acting Museum Director, said: "We know that the Iron Age man lived in a small farming settlement and was aged between 30 and 40 years old when he died. He had advanced tuberculosis in his spine (also known as Pott's disease), so he must have been in considerable pain. The changes in his spine would have taken several years to develop and would have resulted in approximately 60˚ kyphosis (curvature of the spine). His mobility and daily functioning would have been impaired. The man would have needed to use a stick or crutch. The indication is that his community must have cared for him despite his illness, for him to have survived so long.

The results shed more light on Iron Age society. They also show that local people had access to the Atlantic sea routes which linked the coastal communities of Europe. The knowledge gained will help the Museum of East Dorset to develop new education sessions and resources around the Iron Age skeleton, which will be on permanent display in the refurbished museum."

The research was made possible by a 'Small Grant Big Improvement' grant of £1,000 from South West Museum Development. The project, entitled 'The Iron Age TB skeleton – going beyond the glass case', has enabled the Museum of East Dorset to draw new conclusions and improve the interpretation of this significant and nationally-important artefact for a range of audiences.

Vanessa Joseph

Leopard Mosaic gets temporary export bar extension

(Based on BBC website live reporting Monday 19 October)

An 'internationally significant' Roman mosaic has had its temporary export bar extended to 16th January next year while a museum tries to gather enough funding to cover the £135,000 asking price. The 1,600-year-old floor panel showing a leopard attacking an antelope was unearthed by archaeologists in Dewlish, Dorset, in 1974.

Dorset County Museum said it had "substantial commitments" to the piece and was working closely with Arts Council England and the British Museum. They hoped to secure a "significant grant" through the V&A purchase grant fund.

It's a pity that the museum didn't act when the mosaic was first sold, for £28,000. In any case, many thanks to all the members who responded to last month's request for objections to the sale to be sent to the Export Licencing Unit, etc. We await information on any fundraising campaign.

The latest **CBA Wessex newsletter** can be found here, with some useful information, including a topical lecture by Prof. Carenza Lewis and the Wiltshire Museum's annual conference (online).

Also, the **7th CBA Wessex Quiz** on identifying places is here. I think this is the most interesting one so far, covering places just outside Wessex and, to me at least, the hardest yet.

Humankind Finds Spirituality

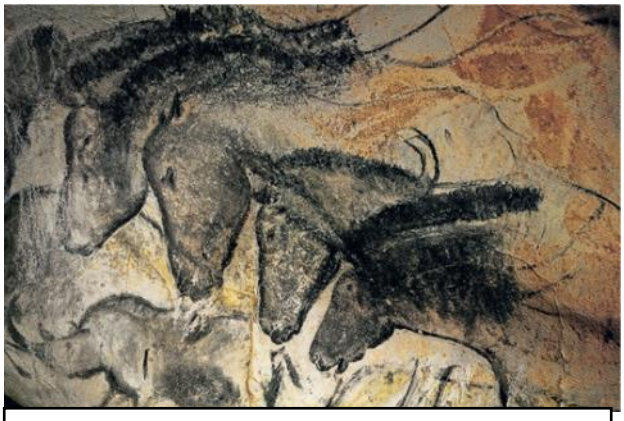
In my last article I talked about the development of pictorial art in the Upper Palaeolithic era. In this one I will try to offer some explanations as to what all this art meant to our Upper Palaeolithic ancestors, and how it might have instigated or coalesced into a form of religious belief. These are very difficult questions.

The "Pregnant Mare" painted *c*.20,000 years ago over 100m along a difficult passage in the Cueva de la Pileta, near Ronda, southern Spain.

Cave art presumably illustrated some form of compulsion in the human mind to create images, but the strange thing is that it seems that many of these images were clearly not for general public consumption. In the main they were created in the most inaccessible, darkest and deepest enclaves of caves; not only almost inaccessible but pitch black. The lamp was invented around this time, and presumably a portable lamp would have enabled a determined individual to explore the inner reaches of these caves. But what would have persuaded somebody to create art in these inner reaches, lying on his back or even upside-down, is anyone's guess.

The human population of the whole of Europe and probably much of western Asia in the period between 40,000 and 15,000 years ago, the height of the last phase of the Ice Age, was probably no more than 100,000 at any given time. Humankind would have been very thinly spread indeed. It is likely that the population in the region with the most cave paintings so far discovered, south-west France and northern Spain, would not have exceeded 10,000 at any time. This region probably had a more conducive and less icy climate and, accordingly, the highest density of population, but these numbers are still exceedingly small. Communication between groups would have been intermittent at best, and the spread of culture probably painfully slow.

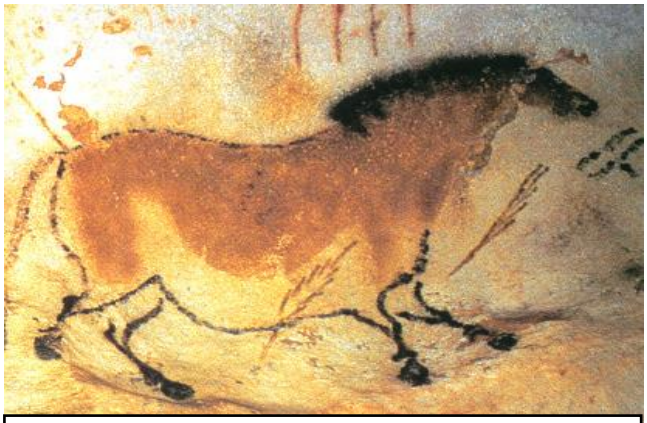
Our ancestors would no doubt have shared their mental images with each other, and with other groups in their intermittent gatherings around the camp fire, by talking. But perhaps they were also keen to share these images with unseen forces or their perception of spirits. Life for these people was dominated by the unknown and the unknowable; everything may have been deemed to have had some form of spirit life. Why did trees grow, why did the wind blow, why did it snow far too much sometimes? Too many unanswerable questions. Was it the spirits, and if so how did the spirits manifest themselves?



Chauvet cave (Ardèche, France) c. 30,000 BC.
Are these just horses or are they something more?

Although most of the images in the caves are of animals, it is unlikely that they were created simply as pictures of animals, more likely they represent some form of the animal's spirit. Our ancestors would have gained a familiarity, and possible an affinity, with animals through the hunt, and most of these images were clearly connected to the hunt. But, in the main, these images do not show the actual kill nor glorify in it. It has been suggested that they express some form of connection, perhaps even kinship, with the animals, to encourage the spirit of the animals to support the hunt, and thereby maintain the human population. If the hunt meant killing an animal then perhaps thanks should be offered to whatever spirit may have been guiding that animal or that animal's herd. Our ancestors would no doubt have acknowledged that the animal was killed so that they could live.

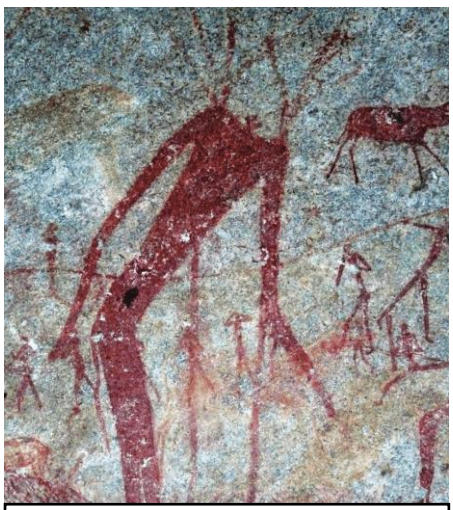
Although certain of these cave images appear to show lines that, on first glance, could be construed as spears piercing the animal, on closer examination these 'spears' might well represent lines emanating from the animal, i.e. representing some form of animal spirit or soul reaching out. I much prefer this latter explanation, as it would illustrate that at this early stage there was an acknowledgment of a spirit, and that the animal being hunted was as much a part of creation as the hunter, so should be honoured as such.



A horse from the "Panel of the Chinese Horses" at Lascaux, France. DNA studies show that the 'leopard' spotting existed in pre-domestic horses, showing that the artists were reflecting their natural environment.

Our modern Western conception of religion revolves around God, the soul and the redemption of the soul. Upper Palaeolithic beliefs, such as they may have been, might have revolved around this acknowledgement that animals had as much right as the hunter to exist. Thought processes may have gone along these lines: if I acknowledge that, perhaps, there is some form of spirit guiding our people, then possibly there is some form of spirit guiding the animals. It is therefore incumbent upon me to honour the spirit of the animal that I kill for the family's sustenance, in the same way that I honour my own family's spirits. It is unlikely at this stage that there would have been anything resembling all-encompassing gods nor any notion of redemption, but possibly there was an acknowledgement of 'other', the first vestiges of religion.

But, as I mentioned above, these artistic images were often in the darkest, most inaccessible, parts of caves and clearly not for public consumption. So, possibly, we have here the first stirrings of a form of shamanism and an acknowledgment of some form of magico-religious belief. Shamanism, which was originally a Siberian practice, is basically a belief that the practitioner is able to reach altered states of consciousness in order to communicate with the spirit world. For our Upper Palaeolithic ancestors this spirit world could well have been represented by animals. To reach it the shaman had to communicate with the animal spirits and would disappear into the furthest reaches of the cave to do so, somewhere where his brethren could not or would not dare not go. No doubt he would come out of the cave once he had completed his journeying and convey the messages he had received to his waiting brethren.



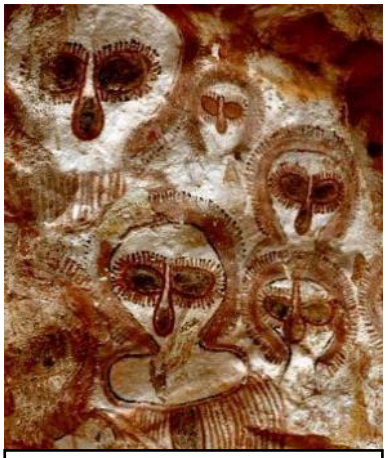
A cave painting from Zimbabwe, dated 10-5,000 years ago, showing a shaman with an enormous body and tiny head, towering over other people and animals.

In the present day, shamanic culture is very secretive; although a shaman will pass on messages he may have received and even share his visions, he will not share his knowledge of how, or indeed why, he has messages and visions. It would seem that shamanic culture is surprisingly widespread, even today, and not only in isolated tribal societies. In many situations it has become corrupted and even (I hate to see it) tinged with an element of commercialism. The genuine shaman has to suffer first (often by undergoing dreadful initiation ceremonies) before he can embark upon his healing or divinational practices. It is possible that a similar situation may have developed in Upper Palaeolithic times. Our Upper Palaeolithic shaman in the dark recesses of these caves may have been the first to create a form of religious or supernatural mysticism!

So does belief in a supernatural help make sense of a mystifying and volatile existence? There is no clear adaptive Darwinian advantage to religion; the Darwinian view is that religion is solely a product of human cultural evolution.

But wait, is that in fact the case? Biological evolution may well have developed some form of defence or other mechanism in the early human, or even hominid, mind to help deal with the inexplicable, and to our Upper Palaeolithic ancestors much must have been inexplicable. If, when and how this mechanism may have developed remains anyone's guess. But is it not conceivable that a propensity to such a belief system may have become hardwired into the human mind, so that by the time of the Autobiographical transition the human mind became sufficiently mature to allow magico-religious sentiments to arise?

Dreams would no doubt have had a significant role to play here. We do know that most mammals dream, though their cause and purpose is as yet unknown, but, as with most things, there are plenty of theories. If mammals dream then clearly our hominid ancestors had dreams, but possibly prior to the advent of Autobiographical Memory they were unable to interpret their dreams. Dreams probably had a significant role to play in shaping religion. This is borne out by the study of so called 'tribal societies' today. In modern studies of traditional cultures, dreams and dreaming are prominent in terms of forecasting the future, visiting deceased relatives, or the land of the dead, or indeed other worlds! The general view is that they show a, sometimes phantasmagorical, world, but one which is considered quite real albeit in a parallel existence. These clearly human experiences must have been equally familiar to our ancestors, and may well have given our ancestor shamans much ammunition!



Wandjina petroglyphs, *c*.3000 BC, Kimberly, Australia: the spirits that created the world in one version of Aboriginal Dreamtime beliefs that continue today.

Let's assume, just for the sake of argument, that around 40,000 years ago our ancestors were developing an acknowledgment of a spirit world, which they considered had some form of control over all the aspects of nature which could not be understood. Our ancestors may have come to the view that an individual had a form of conscious spirit and, because they were aware of their mortality, they became aware that possibly the spirit, such as it may have been, might survive the death of an individual and join the other spirits, both of the animals and their own ancestors. If the clan leader, who was considered a great man and a man who would look after the clan, died, perhaps his spirit would survive in some form somewhere in the spirit world and continue to watch over the clan and perhaps be watched over by animal spirits. Is this how an acknowledgment and reverence of the ancestors developed and is this why reverence for the ancestors gradually became more relevant than, although not replacing, reverence for the animal and other spirits? Perhaps these were the thoughts behind the enigmatic cave painting shown here; does it represent an animal sprit with human characteristics or perhaps the transition from an animal spirit into a human spirit?

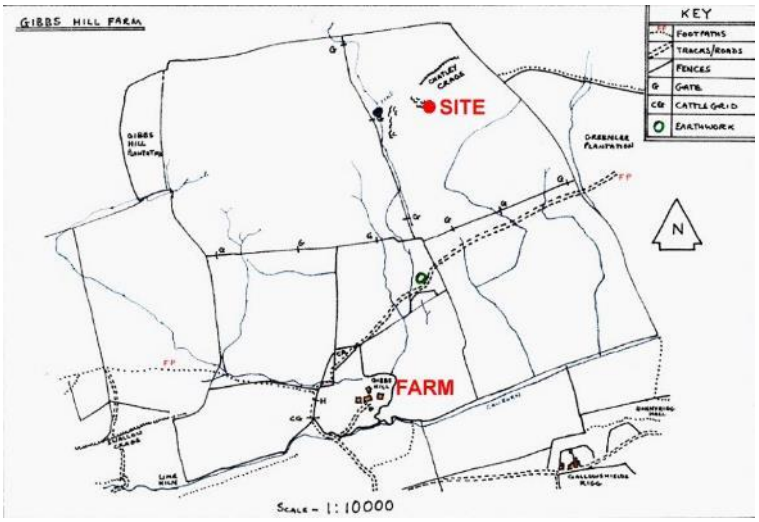
A modern interpretation of "The Sorcerer" from the cave of the Trois-Frères in south-western France, c.15,000 years old. Combining elements of many animals, though the horns are doubtful, it was thought to represent a shaman in animal guise but this is increasingly being challenged.

By the time we come to the end of the Ice Age, around 12,000 years ago, it would appear that ancestor veneration, or perhaps even worship, was an important part of society. In all probability was beginning to supplant the veneration of the animal and natural world. In my next article I will look at this development as illustrated by the construction of the world's first massive stone structure in south-east Turkey, Gobekli Tepe. With other sites, this marks the end of the Palaeolithic period and the beginnings of a whole new chapter in the human story with the advent of the Neolithic Period.

Neil Meldrum

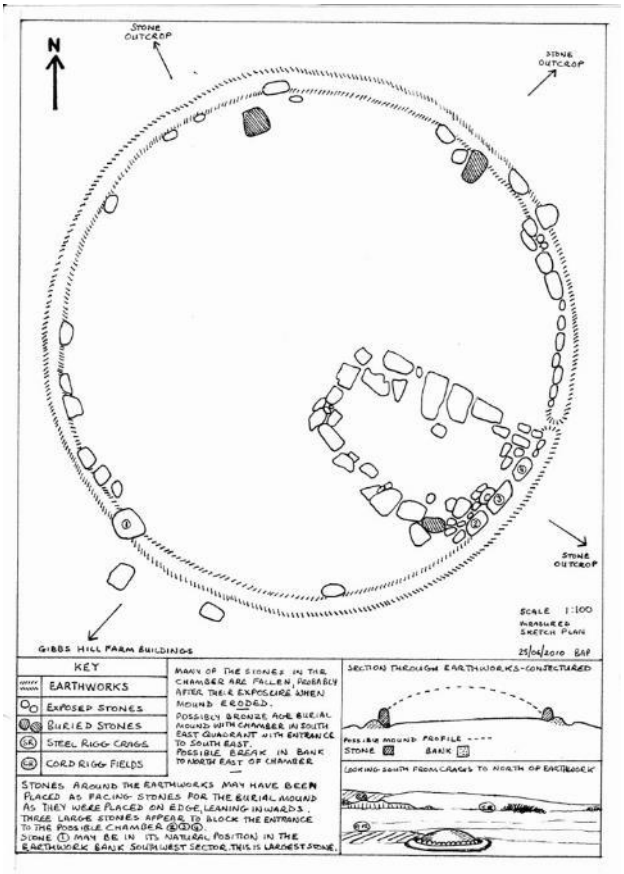
Hadrian's Wall Country: a feature to the north of the Wall, on Gibbs Hill Farm

In June of 2010, whilst excavating at Vindolanda Roman Fort, the owner of Gibbs Hill Farm where I was staying in Northumberland, near Hadrian's Wall, wanted some help. She told me about a possible site on the farm, which hadn't been recorded as far as she knew. She asked if I would take a look and told me where to find it, giving me a map of the farm to help.



So we went to have a look:

If not completely obvious from the photos, its position in the landscape would have been quite prominent. I drew a plan of what I found, without the aid of a tape measure, and speculated that it was perhaps the remains of a Bronze Age Barrow. The owner was, in any case, very pleased with the results.



I believe the site has been officially looked at since then but haven't yet been able to see the report. I hope to let you know once I find out!

Bryan Popple

Web Link Highlight October 2020

Until the last week of the month, the links were a bit thin in October, but a late burst of items made the list a bit closer to normal. I was, however, surprised to see the piece in the Bournemouth Echo (print version) about the prehistoric footprints in New Mexico. I cannot recall seeing anything else in this august local journal on similar topics, despite the sometimes high profile efforts of Bournemouth University.

Even more of a surprise was to see another article about a week later on an 160 million year old dinosaur that could not fly, with no local scientific or academic involvement. Is this a new direction for the local paper, I wondered? Over the following days I tried searching the Echo website to find and include a link to the non-flying dinosaur story, but strangely it would appear that it did not merit being given space on the Echo internet pages. I therefore Googled it and found a link from another local paper (the Shropshire Star) that felt it worthy of webspace, so that link is in the list.

Alan Dedden

October Weblinks

Anglo-Saxon Burial Found Near Marlow
https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/oct/05/archaeologists-unearth-remains-believed-anglo-saxon-warrior

59 Mummies Found At Saqqara - With More To Come
https://www.livescience.com/59-mummies-saqqara-egypt.html

New Species Of Dinosaur Found In Gobi Desert
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/dinosaur-new-species-fossils-parrot-mongolia-oksoko-avarsan-b836020.html

1200 Year Old Pagan Temple Found In Norway
https://www.livescience.com/ancient-viking-temple-to-thor-odin-unearthed.html

12 Year Old Boy Discovers Rare Dinosaur Skeleton
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2020-54547987

Bournemouth University Part Of Team Interpreting Ancient New Mexico Footprints
https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/18802812.academics-uncover-human-story-prehistoric-footprints/

Huge Cat Found At Nazca Lines Site In Peru
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/18/huge-cat-found-etched-desert-nazca-lines-peru

Detectorist Finds Rare 900 Year Old Penny
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8862793/900-year-old-silver-penny-unearthed-amateur-detectorist-Yorkshire-set-fetch-15-000.html

Are These Nails From The (or a) Crucifixion?
https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/jerusalem-nails-jesus-christ-crucifixion-romans-caiaphas-tomb-1.9209068

Witch Repellent Graffiti Found On Ruins Of Medieval Stoke Mandeville Church
https://www.livescience.com/witch-marks-medieval-church.html

Remains Of Sacrificed Llamas Found At Inca Site In Peru
https://www.livescience.com/inca-llama-sacrifices-naturally-mummified.html

160m Year Old Dinosaur Struggled To Fly Despite Wings
https://www.expressandstar.com/news/science-and-technology/2020/10/22/160m-year-old-dinosaurs-struggled-to-fly-despite-bat-like-wings-study-finds/

Teenage Metal Detectorists Find Coins Sold At Auction For £7,000
https://www.greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk/news/teen-metal-detectorist-norfolk-1066-coin-auction-1-6902305

Fanged Marine Reptile Roamed The Oceans 240 Million Years Ago
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8889733/Fanged-marine-reptile-short-flat-tail-acted-underwater-float.html

We'd really like you to send your weblinks to Alan at alan.dedden@gmail.com

Egypt 1: Cairo & Alexandria

The Arab Spring uprising of 2011 resulted in the collapse of the Egyptian tourist industry – one of the mainstays of their economy. The Egyptian Pound also collapsed, causing further economic hardship. As part of the planned recovery the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza began construction in 2012, after ten years of planning, with the aim of providing a world-class building to house many thousands of priceless exhibits never shown before in the correct conditions. In March 2018 there were news items implying that the Grand Museum was open, so we booked an 11 day excursion to Egypt. Three days would be spent in Cairo and include the new museum, with the remainder on a cruise down the Nile visiting many famous locations.

Whether the news about the new museum being open was a ruse to encourage more tourists we have never found out but, as it became too late to cancel our plans it was obvious that it was not open (originally planned for 2015, the new museum is said to be opening this year). So, in February 2019, we flew out to Cairo and began the adventure.

The first excursion was to the existing Egyptian Museum opposite Tahrir Square. The journey through the chaos of Cairo was fascinating. Once at the museum we found that it was also a holiday week, so much busier than usual. We only had the morning there with our excellent guide for the week. To see even wooden artefacts in wonderful condition despite being over 4,000 years old was amazing. Naturally, the highlight was the Tutankhamen exhibits; the gold covered wooden shrines are very large and ornate. Like all the wooden artefacts, such as Tutankhamen's war chest shown here, they're amazing survivors due to the dry climate. The unique thrones were truly astounding and the famous gold mask is, of course, fabulous, but the ornate second sarcophagus is constructed from a mind boggling 240 lbs of gold.

The tour aimed to pack in a lot, so lunch was at a restaurant in Giza overlooking the pyramid site, then it was back on the coach to go and visit the 3 great pyramids. The whole site was very busy because of the holiday, so we just chose to walk around the outside of the pyramids and take in their immense size, not enter the long and cramped burial chamber tunnel like many others. The second part of this visit took us to a more distant, less frantic, coach park where the views were more like those of a typical postcard.

Once the utter chaos that is Cairo was left, the sights from the coach on the way to Alexandria were very interesting, being across the 'green' delta part of this mainly agricultural country. Apart from extensive crops and waterways, there were many small farms with their distinctive pigeon houses. Away from the sea front any parts of Alexandria are pretty shambolic but we soon reached our first stop, the 4th century Roman amphitheatre and building complex. The complex included baths and other high status buildings, and we were free to wander around the extensive remains for an hour or so.

Following this it was off to a restaurant overlooking the blue Mediterranean before setting off again for the 15th century fortress of the Citadel of Qaitbay at its prominent coastal location. The final location to be visited in Alexandria was the 150 acre tropical gardens of Montaza Park, which are dominated by the huge and ornate Montaza Palace from 1892.

After that we returned to Cairo to prepare for the early morning flight south to Luxor and our Nile cruise, to places which will be covered in future EDAS newsletters.

Jo & Sue Crane

REMEMBERING THE ROMANS VIII

I've suggested that the varying proportion of epitaphs by age relates to the 'social worth' or 'social value' of the individuals commemorated, i.e. that there's a greater wish to remember those at the most important stages of life. As I said in article III, there's a very high proportion of epitaphs, vs. the number expected on a plausible Roman mortality table, for those in their later teens and up to about 25, falling off after that.

This is a period of many key milestones in life, of course, particularly marked for Roman men. Having left childhood behind, boys became 'young men' around age 17, when they could act as citizens in the forum or on the battlefield, then fully adult at 25 when they could hold public office. The only milestone that seems to have been marked for girls was the 'maturity' that came with marriage, when the unmarried girl with her head uncovered (as shown) demonstrated that she was a married woman by covering her hair.

As we have seen, women could marry at what we would consider a very young age, though these were mostly 'political' marriages of the élite (and we should not assume they were consummated, or that the couple necessarily lived together, until she was older, though I have seen one epitaph of a young wife dying at 27 having lived with her husband for 15 years). Perhaps 60% of Roman women were married by age 20, generally to men who were 5 or more years older. In fact, one study showed that few men in Northern Italy were married by 25 and almost all by 30. Children were seen as a major reason for marriage and usually followed fairly quickly after.

The large number of epitaphs for the later teens and 20s can be seen, in general terms, to be mourning unfulfilled promise. Female proportions peak for ages 15-19, though remain relatively high for 20-24, presumably reflecting marriage or the anticipation of it. The male proportion is quite high for 15-19, though with a clear peak for ages 20-24, and then falls off quite rapidly after that. This seems to be more concerned with the male milestones described above than with marriage, as for Speculus in the last article, who apparently died on his 18th birthday.

CHARITINI CONIVGI
QVAE·VIXIT·ANN·P·M·XXII
ANTIOCHVS COIVX·POSVIT
B · M

A marriage cut short at the relatively young age of about 22 (P.M. is *plus minus* or "roughly"). *Coniugi* is feminine, showing the death of Charitina (?), the wife of Antiochus, who set up (*posuit*) the epitaph. COIVX is presumably a mason's error for *coniunx* ("spouse"), whilst B.M is *bene merenti* or "well deserving". CIL 5.2215 X

D.M. TI. CL. FELICI
VIX. ANN.XVII M.VIII D.XXI
MIL. ANNO M.VIII D.XXI

Tiberius Claudius Felicius' family would have hoped for a longer military career than 1 year, 8 months and 21 days. If the numbers are to be believed, he joined up at the age of 16, below the usual minimum of 17 (though I have seen one case of apparent recruitment at age 10). CIL 6.03582 Rome

I have been somewhat scathing of the apparent accuracy shown where age is given down to days (and even hours). However, that sort of accuracy is much more likely for the period served in the military, as good records were kept of length of service. This was an important piece of information as, with some variations over time, 25 years of service would earn a gratuity and Roman citizenship, a valuable reward for non-citizens. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean that the age is any more accurate since, in many cases as above, it is just shown as the years of service plus a number, often 20 – which other sources put as the peak age of recruitment.

The next article will start to look at epitaphs for older people and the issue of exaggerating age.

Geoff Taylor

View from Above No 31:
Wor Barrow

Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane

When I started to research this site I mistakenly looked for Worbarrow which, of course, is a bay along the coast west of Tyneham! Wor Barrow is near the crest of Oakley Down, perhaps even on Handley Down (sources differ), a little way to the north of the A354 and about 2km east of Sixpenny Handley. This is a sort of follow-on from looking at Woodcuts settlement in the April 2020 newsletter, in that Wor Barrow was also on Pitt Rivers' land and excavated by him in 1893-4 (photographs below), with publication of the results in 1898[1].

The excavation has been suggested as the 'first scientifically excavated long barrow'. It was certainly systematic and meticulous records were kept; the archive is now held by Salisbury Museum and includes the original field notes. But the excavation is also the reason that the site looks as it does, since the barrow wasn't restored and the spoil, instead, banked up outside the excavated ditch with the intention of providing an amphitheatre where Pitt Rivers' estate workers could enjoy entertainments. The central flat area approximately matches the original ground level. While this is certainly not our approach today, Pitt Rivers' photographs give a good idea of the original mound, whilst the retained records and finds have allowed later review and re-interpretation.

All the same, there was then clearly much still to learn about the best approach to excavation, with a hard lesson learnt that excavating at a vertical face is much less useful than digging down layer by layer. On a more positive note, Pitt Rivers' early experimental archaeology in taking detailed measurements of the subsequent silting of the excavated ditch, over several years, led to the view that the extent of silting was not an accurate means of dating.

The original publication shows that the barrow was oval, 45x23m at its widest and aligned NW-SE; before excavation the mound was almost 4m high. At least 6 male skeletons were unearthed, originally buried in a wooden box within a mortuary chamber at the south-eastern end, which was then covered with turves.

Research on long barrows, especially across Cranborne Chase, often uses Pitt Rivers' work alongside more recent surveys and excavation. The standard view is that long barrows originate in the early Neolithic, around 3,700-3,500 BC, and were usually only used for primary burials over a fairly short period, perhaps a century or so. However, unusually shaped long barrows, like Wor Barrow, were thought to be later. The most extensive review of the archive for Wor Barrow was undertaken by English Heritage, as it then was, and published in 2016[2] (it's available online). Including analysis of the skeletons and a carbon dating programme, it was able to provide a detailed interpretation of the phasing of construction and burials.

Different interpretations of the dating evidence are possible, especially as some items from the excavation archive were discarded after Pitt Rivers' death. A reasonable view is that the earliest construction was the wooden mortuary chamber facing southeast, probably a little before 3,650 BC, and used for 6 burials over about 85 years, all adult males up to about 45 years old. The turves were then added and the surrounding ditch begun, building up a low mound. A little later the ditch and mound were enlarged further, then a young man and a child were buried in the ditch at the south-eastern end, the man found with a flint arrowhead under his lower ribs, perhaps the cause of death. The ditch and mound were then completed, likely to have been no later than 3,500 BC. Isotope analysis shows that all these people, none taller than 172cm (5' 8"), were local and had a characteristic Neolithic diet, high in animal protein.

Clearly, though, Wor Barrow does fit into the 'standard' timeframe, the exact form of such monuments presumably being down to local preferences. The story didn't end with the Neolithic though: Pitt Rivers' excavation uncovered pottery up to, and through, the Roman period. There were also 17 secondary burials in the ditch, of which Pastscape says "… a Romano-British date had been suggested [but] this cemetery has many characteristics of a late Saxon execution cemetery …".

1. Pitt Rivers, A.L.F. 1898. *Excavations in Cranborne Chase, near Rushmore on the borders of Dorset and Wilts, 1893–1896*, Vol IV. Privately printed.
2. Allen, M.J., Smith, M., *et al.* 2016*. Wor Barrow, Cranborne Chase, Dorset: Chronological Modelling*. Historic England (Research Report Series 9-2016).

Jo Crane/Geoff Taylor

Do you have information about EDAS's history which can help us fill the gaps?

With the help of several people, most recently John Day's son, Alwyn, we have managed to put together a fairly comprehensive summary of EDAS's activities, but we're missing a lot from the 'middle years'. I'd particularly like to see the following:

- EDAS Newsletters for 1991-2000
- EDAS Programmes for 1991-1996

Whatever you have will be most welcome, so please let me know and we can try to arrange for me to see it – geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk

FREE BOOKS

From different sources I have a few spare books available, free to first replies. If you'd like any let me know (geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk) and I'll make arrangements to get them to you:

- Dorset Monograph 6 on R-B Industries in Purbeck, 1987
- Dorset Monograph 7 on Poundbury Excavations Vol 1- Settlements, 1987
- Wessex Archaeology Report 4 on Excavations at County Hall in 1988, 1993
- CBA Research Report 7 on Rural Settlement in Roman Britain, 1966

We're working on consolidating our various holdings of the Dorset Proceedings, and some of them will become available over the winter.

Meanwhile, we lent Volume 137 of the Proceedings to someone and it's never come back. If you have it please let me know (library fines will be waived).

EDAS 2020-2021 PROGRAMME

Subject to coronavirus restrictions, 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

2020			
Wed 11th November	Zoom Lecture	**Wayne Bartlett**	AD871 - The Year of Nine Battles
Wed 9th December	Zoom Lecture	**Mark Corney**	Villas, Churches and Baptisteries
2021			
Wed 13th January	Zoom Lecture	**Sophy Charlton**	Finding Mesolithic Britain: Biomolecular Approaches to Hunter-Gatherer Archaeology
Wed 10th February	Zoom Lecture	**Paul Cheetham**	300 Miles in the Footsteps of Vespasian – Lake Farm Roman legionary fortress
Wed 10th March	Zoom Meeting	**AGM and members' talk**	Keeper's Lodge – Andrew Morgan and Lilian Ladle
Wed 14th April	Zoom Lecture	**Mike Allen**	The Prehistoric Chalkland Landscape of Stonehenge, Avebury and Dorchester - tearing up the textbooks and starting again
Wed 12th May	Zoom Lecture	**Julian Richards**	Shaftesbury - Alfred's Town, Alfred's Abbey
EVENTS TO BE RESCHEDULED			
tbd	Tour	**Devizes Museum**	Led by museum director David Dawson
tbd	Walk	**Cranborne Chase**	9 mile walk from Martin Green's farm looking at the history of the Chase, led by Alan Dedden
tbd	Day trip	**London - Sir John Soane's Museum and the Museum of London (tbc)**	Coach trip to visit two of London's Museums

DISTRICT DIARY

Your information is very welcome, especially now when this section is looking very sparse – do let me know of any events.

ALL EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS THEN IN FORCE
(Local societies may have events, but they're not generally advertised beyond members)

Sat 14th Nov	The Anglo-Saxon Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk	**SHARP**	One day online conference, **free but you need to register** – see p.12 September newsletter