East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

Founded 1983

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk
mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk
https://www.facebook.com/dorset.archaeology

Edited by Geoff Taylor, email: geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk, Tel: 01202 840166
224 Leigh Road, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2BZ

NEWSLETTER – March 2021

Editor's Notes

Our 6th Zoom lecture, by Paul Cheetham, had the highest number 'tuning in' so far, hitting the stops at 99 – obviously well over the century in terms of the number of people participating in this fascinating presentation. As always, it's summarised below: **300 Miles in the Footsteps of Vespasian**.

This month's Zoom meeting is, of course, the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 10th March at 7:30. It will be followed by a talk on the Keeper's Lodge project undertaken in 2019. As always, the Zoom link will be sent out a few days prior, obviously just to members this month.

View from Above has its 35th outing, with the second article on the Dorset Cursus following on from the one last month. However, there's no 'Remembering the Romans' again this month, as I wanted to include a few things that have been waiting to go in for a while. For the same reason, although Neil Meldrum has provided a further article in his spiritual evolution series you won't be able to read that until next time either.

Alan has provided an item about a recent BBC2 programme on Stonehenge, demonstrating that the ideas in the programme aren't as new as you may have thought: **Stonehenge: whose idea?** He has also given us an even longer list than usual of **Weblinks** (and **Highlights)** to follow up stories of interest in the news. A bit further down there's another short piece from Alan on rural poverty in 19th century Dorset: **Dorset Wages: 6/- a week**.

The second of Phil D'Eath's articles, following on from the first part in the February Bulletin, covers the remaining 7 of his views on the **Greatest British Archaeological discoveries ever made.** It would be interesting to have some of your views on Phil's choices. Time also, for the next in the series on travel and temples in Egypt, last seen in January: **Egypt 3: Across the Nile from Luxor – Western Thebes**, with thanks to Jo & Sue Crane for their photographs and descriptions included here.

Contributions and feedback to me, please – you can just 'REPLY' to the email

Geoff Taylor

A reminder that our speakers for April and May have swapped places, so it's now Julian Richards in April and Mike Allen in May.

Also a reminder and last chance to get any of our spare copies of the Proceedings volumes 79-127 before, sadly, they'll be binned.

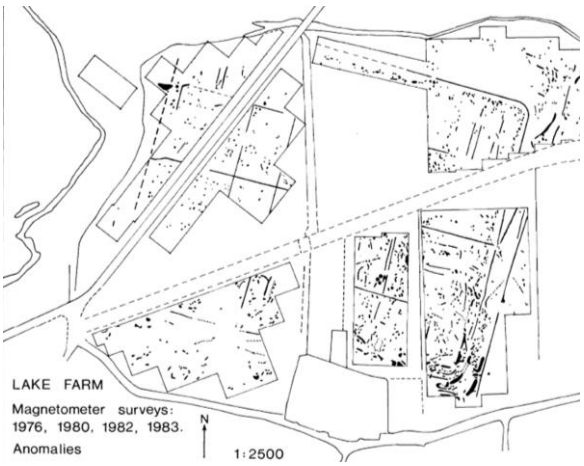
The CBA Wessex announcement of their Spring Lecture Series is here but mostly superseded by their March Newsletter HERE with lots of links to talks and other interesting items.

300 Miles in the Footsteps of Vespasian (or the reinterpretation of Lake Farm 'vexillation fortress')**: Zoom lecture by Paul Cheetham**

The Lake Farm Roman fortress, close to Wimborne, has been a somewhat under-appreciated monument in Dorset. However, thanks to recent work we now know it was a legionary fortress and actually of international importance. Discoveries like this are a team effort and Paul started by crediting his co-conspirators: Harry Manley (geoinformatics), Miles Russell (Roman archaeologist), David John (3D model) and 'Duracell' Dave Stewart, who did the vast majority of the practical geophysics, i.e. walked a lot (the 300 miles in the title). The formal publication of this work can be found in two journals referenced at the end.

In general, a Roman legion was 5,280 legionaries – professional soldiers originally drawn from the Roman citizenry and, with some changes, serving for 25 years. The *Classis Britannica* was effectively the navy, providing supplies and support; they would certainly have been involved here. Auxiliaries were specialist fighting units drawn from natives across the Empire, but not locally. A legion-sized auxiliary force was often attached to the legion when on campaign, and they might be left behind to police an area once conquered. No auxiliary forts are known in Dorset, suggesting they weren't needed.

Vespasian was the legate (commander) of the 2nd Legion (*Legio* II *Augusta*), and it's perhaps because he became emperor later that we know anything of his time in Britain. Historical sources say he was in Dorset, fought many battles and subdued the locals, but there is actually little evidence of fighting here, especially as the hillforts were probably abandoned before AD 43. The legion presumably headed west into Dorset, were then probably in Exeter by the mid-50s, before moving to Caerleon. Its time in Dorset would have been short.



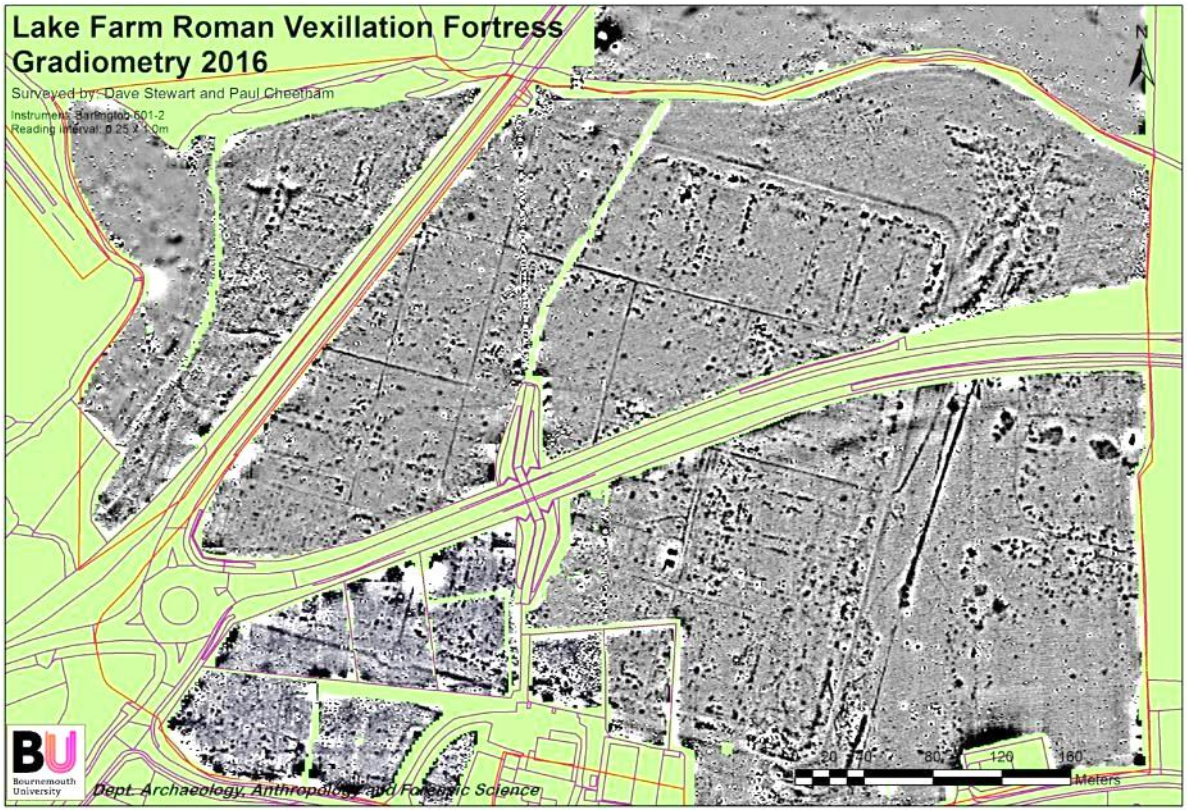
The existence of the Roman military base near Wimborne was first seriously proposed in the early 1960s, and enough information had accumulated to schedule the site by 1968, though only the very recent work has shown its exact extent. Local archaeologist Norman Field was heavily involved in both its discovery and work there for over 20 years, with subsequent excavations under the auspices of Poole Museum in preparation for the bypass. However, none of this work was ever properly published, so that accurate phasing/dating of the site hasn't been possible, hampering research into the immediate post-invasion period in the south of England.

The Ancient Monuments Laboratory conducted geophysical surveys from 1976 to 1983, initially using resistivity but with poor results, as the fort had been wooden. The then fairly new, and relatively crude, magnetometry produced better results. In fact, despite the difficult method of producing results (sticking strips of printout together and hand drawing the

interpretation), the results of this pioneering work were much better than might have been expected.

They were interpreted as showing an earlier phase or phases of encampment, of about the size for a legion (*c.*20ha), then the final smaller fort of about 12ha (30 acres). This was taken as the base of a vexillation, or detachment, of the legion with half of it stationed elsewhere, probably in Dorchester. It is now believed that the earlier phase, seen particularly in the line slightly to the east outside the fortress, was the legion's marching camp. The idea of a fort or fortress at Dorchester still persists, although years of excavation have found no evidence for one.

Despite the building of the bypass, on the line of an earlier railway, the Bournemouth University gradiometry survey of 2016 shows that a considerable amount survives. There are substantial remains, buried and protected and, unlike other early fortresses, Lake Farm hasn't been built upon to any large extent. For example, Exeter's legionary fortress is actually only known in a limited number of places with the rest inferred, and we don't even know for sure where the invasion sites are.



There is , though, nothing to see on the ground – the Roman army destroyed or took away anything that could potentially be used against them (e.g. when Inchtuthil fortress in Scotland was abandoned, 10 tons of manufactured iron objects were deeply buried). The beams in building foundation trenches here didn't rot but were removed, and the main grid lines on the survey are drains along the internal roads.

The survey does show that the fortress was of the standard plan, with a possible *vicus* to the east, shown in this reconstructed aerial view from the north. The 'main' road is now felt to be that from the east; its path leaving the fort is clear on the survey, and it has now been seen as a cropmark a little to the east by Merley Hall Farm. Norman Field thought supplies came from the port at Hamworthy, but the Hamworthy road aims for the road to Badbury Rings, rather than the fortress, with construction that suggests a later commercial use. Supplies may well have come from Hengistbury, most likely along the Stour.

It is clear that the barracks buildings are smaller than normal, but built to hold the usual number of soldiers, i.e. there is sufficient accommodation here for a full legion, so that there is no need to postulate a fort in Dorchester. Squeezing the soldiers into smaller buildings does suggest that they believed they wouldn't be here for very long. In fact, the best guess at present is that the fortress was built in the mid-40s and in use for no more than 10 years (more exact dating awaits John Milward at the University's full examination of the records and finds from the earlier excavations – an extensive task). Put together with the earlier points, this does suggest that resistance in Dorset was much less than the old narrative.

It is frustrating that the commandant's quarters and HQ are pretty much under the bridge over the bypass. There are, though, features to be seen, such as workshops probably to the right of that bridge, with two large anomalies that could be buried metal. Poole Museum's excavations found complete vessels and a valuable lead tank, so what else may have been buried? Subsequent magnetometry to the north, east and south-west up to 2018 (not shown) suggests further workshops outside the fortress, probably necessary given its small size. Perhaps the anomalies on the east relate to workshops rather than a *vicus*; there may instead have been one where Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures are apparent to the south/south-west.

A bathhouse was important for soldiers' morale, with evidence suggesting they could even be built before the commandant's house. One here would probably be the earliest in Britain, but what was thought a possibility proved not to be on a small excavation to the south, outside the scheduled area. Further work is needed, but is difficult as there is a good deal of soil over the site; helpful in keeping it safe but less so for surveys. This does seem to be hill-wash rather than flood deposits, and it appears that the Stour has not changed course very much in 2,000 years.

The road to the east points at the southern edge of Merley Ways, but then where? Paul's suggestion is that it headed for the ford where Canford Bridge now is, perhaps the highest point for river traffic. There are many other possibilities, presumably linking up to the short scheduled stretch north of the Stour about a mile east, recently confirmed as a Roman road. It is thought that it links to the Roman road from Winchester, traced westwards to Stoney Cross in the New Forest.

Finding the Roman names for places has been based on several historical sources, particularly Ptolemy's *Geography* from the 2nd century AD and the *Antonine Itinerary* from the 3rd century. Before the fortress at Lake Gates was known, confusion of places in this region was to be expected, but Norman Field gave good reasons why the fortress should be identified as *ISCA* in 1968. He also said that the distances in the sources would fit Hengistbury being *DUNIUM*. Despite this, Rivet & Smith's influential *Place Names of Roman Britain* (1979), placed *Isca* at Exeter, which the itinerary identifies as *Isca Dumnoniorum*. This gave problems with identifying *Dunium* (or *Dunum* as they preferred it), because of the distances to other places, and they suggested Hod Hill rather than the traditional view of Maiden Castle. The article in the Proceedings gives good reasons to believe that Norman Field was correct. In fact, it seems that *Isca* may relate to supply by river, and that the name 'followed' the legion to Caerleon.

This was a fascinating talk, giving us lots of new information about a very important site on our doorstep. There is, of course, much more in the references below, but I'm sure we'll all look forward to further news, especially once Bournemouth University can complete the work of examining, analysing, and publishing all that was done before.

Stewart, D., Cheetham, P., & Russell, M. 2020. A Magnetometry Survey of the Second Augustan Legionary Fortress at Lake Farm, Dorset. *Britannia* 51: 307-317. doi:10.1017/S0068113X20000082

Russell, M., Cheetham, P., Stewart, D., & John, D. 2020. In the Footsteps of Vespasian: rethinking the Roman legionary fortress at Lake Farm, Wimborne Minster. *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society* 141:

Geoff Taylor

View from Above No 35: *Photos by Sue Newman and Jo Crane*
Dorset Cursus 2

The previous View from Above gave an overview of the Cursus, with an aerial view of the south-western terminus. This one concentrates more on the north-eastern terminus, shown in the two aerial photographs.

The excavations on the cursus suggest that it may have been allowed to silt up quite rapidly, so that it could have fallen out of use quite soon after being built. It was clearly not forgotten, in that Bronze Age sites like the barrow cemeteries on Oakley and Wyke Downs appear to have respected its presence. This obviously contrasts with the Roman engineers who built Ackling Dyke across it and, indeed, across barrows in the Oakley Down cemetery.

There are several ancient monuments at or close to the north-eastern terminus on Bokerley Down, best seen on the larger of the two photographs above. The green mound 'below' the end of the cursus (i.e. south of it) actually consists of three monuments – a long barrow nearest to the cursus, lengthened by the addition of an 80m bank barrow, in turn attached to a Bronze Age round barrow. A ditch of unknown age crosses the cursus almost at right angles, whilst the long straight line just beyond the end of the cursus reveals the path of Grim's Ditch, thought to be Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. Beyond that is the very clear bank and ditch of Bokerley Dyke, thought to have originated in the Late Bronze Age, but

remodelled several times, particularly as a defensive feature in the later Roman and early post-Roman periods. It forms a boundary between quite different forms of land use and, of course, continues today as the boundary between Dorset and Hampshire.

The apparently circular feature north of the end of the cursus is actually a fairly short long barrow within what may have been a stone circle. The line of the triple monuments 'points' southward to a Neolithic mortuary enclosure just beyond the hedge, with a further long barrow at its western end (i.e. left), neither visible here.

The smaller aerial photograph here does, to some extent, show how the alignment of the cursus curves to come close to the long barrow near the terminus.

A good deal of the information in this article and the previous one comes from Martin Green's book *A Landscape Revealed – 10,000 Years on a Chalkland Farm*. Although now 20 years old, it remains both interesting and useful. Copies are still available, both new and used, from sellers such as World of Books and Amazon.

Jo Crane/Geoff Taylor

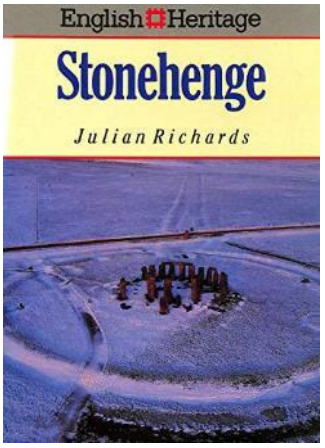
One of **Bryan Popple**'s sketches showing, as it says, a long barrow on Martin Down. Martin Down is just across Bokerley Dyke from Bokerley Down, so this must be quite close to the end of the Cursus.

Stonehenge: whose idea?

Many of you will have seen the inevitable media frenzy around the BBC2 programme *Stonehenge: the Lost Circle Revealed*, revealing the supposed 'new' discoveries about the bluestones. If taken at face value, the revelations that the bluestones weren't taken directly from a quarry (or quarries), but from an existing stone circle, and the claim to have found the actual quarries, were all new and from the recent work of Mike Parker Pearson. However, a little metaphorical digging shows these are not new ideas.

Following the original naming of Preseli as the source for the bluestones by geologist H H Thomas in 1923, several attempts were made to find the quarries and a number of possibilities were investigated. Parker Pearson's work was built on work by a team led by Dr Rob Ixer, Dr Robert Bevins and Prof Nick Pearce, which identified Carn Goedog and Craig Rhos-y-felin as the source quarries for the bluestones in

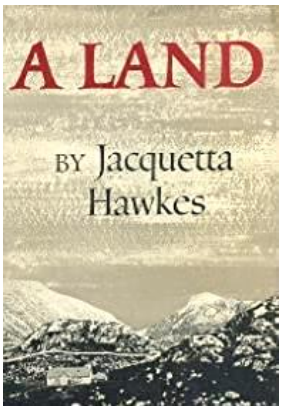
2011 (or at least the dolerites and rhyolites – there are a few other bluestone types not mentioned in the programme). Work under Parker Pearson built on this, providing compelling dating evidence that was published in 2015.



The dismantled monument theory was supported at least as far back as 1991 in the English Heritage handbook *Stonehenge* (see pages 55 - 57), written by Julian Richards. Those of you who came on the EDAS walks around the Stonehenge landscape with Julian in 2017 and 2018 will remember, while we were amongst the stones, Julian explaining that the shaping of some bluestones suggested they had been in place as elements of bluestone trilithons, not at Stonehenge but close to their source in the Preseli Hills.

Stones 36 (left below) and 150 have mortice holes, and several other bluestones have the remains of tenons, presumably removed at Stonehenge as they were by then redundant. Stone 68 (right) shows a different shaping in the form of a long groove along one edge. There is also a buried stump with a tongue along its edge. It is not known if these match, but it raises the possibility of yet another previous construction from which these stones have been removed.

The germ of the idea that the bluestones came from a megalith (or megaliths) in Wales goes back even further, and was postulated in her book *A Land* by archaeologist Jacquetta Hawkes published in 1951. Granted, Mike Parker Pearson has now added to this theory by finding a likely site for an original stone circle, but it is a glaring omission to not have credited Julian or Jaquetta with the ideas. Julian could also have been interviewed for the programme. Perhaps the demands for dramatic TV overrode the need for academic rigour.



As with almost all studies of ancient monuments or events, each new piece of research adds another element to the overall picture. In this case, Parker Pearson has been working at these 'new' findings for 10 years and has certainly found new evidence. However, this will not be the end of the story.

I am not the only one to pick up on this as Charlotte Higgins covers most of the same ground, but in far more erudite language, in her Guardian piece **here**. The New Scientist article in this month's weblinks is more focussed on the site of the previous circle.

If you're interested, used copies of both of the books can still be bought online, though *A Land* is quite expensive. You might also like Charlotte Higgins' *Under Another Sky*, about her journeys around historic, especially Roman, Britain.

Alan Dedden

Web Link Highlights February 2021

This month may be the most weblinks I have compiled [it is – *ed*.] and there are several to comment on. First, the Scythian shoe: why was this item published now as the shoe was discovered in 1948 and there does not appear to be any new analysis? It appears to be result of a social media item about the shoe, possibly released to attract visitors to St Petersburg.

We could all do with a steady supply of humour in these lockdown times, but the addition of a mask to the Long Man of Wilmington apparently caused damage. The similar addition to the Cerne Giant used a sheet to create his mask, but the Long Man was altered using paint. The Long Man seems particularly prone to unauthorised amendments as previous 'attacks' have given him a 'Cerne appendage', a feminist transformation and anti-fracking signage.

Some of you may have seen the Daily Express item about the 'Murder House' just outside one of the Roman forts on Hadrian's Wall. Interesting, except that nowhere in the whole item, including a short video, did they give name of the fort! Housesteads, in case you are wondering. I did not include it as it did not relate to any new discovery or analysis, instead it seemed in part a report on a 'History Hits' programme (interesting idea, but yet another subscription), and in part Daily Express sensationalism.

The item about the Isles of Scilly museum caught my eye, and at first I thought they were taking the museum to the 'off islands' to beat Covid restrictions - because the headline says that. Then 10 paragraphs in I learnt that the current museum building is condemned! How can that be anything to do with Covid? I am not sure if this is a misunderstanding, or simply poor journalism. Either way, the item would appear to never have had the benefit of proof-reading.

Having been to the Outer Hebrides during my working life, the discovery of an Iron Age settlement on St Kilda was of more than passing interest but, reading the item, the find of a possible early Bronze Age pottery sherd was even more intriguing. The headline calls it a 'A Remote Scottish Island' – at about 63km off the west coast of the Outer Hebrides, they do not come much more remote than St Kilda! And those seas are not known for their placid nature. Which raises several obvious questions (not addressed in any of the write-ups I saw):

- Did they know St Kilda was there before they set off? It may be visible from the higher parts of the Outer Hebrides, but not at sea level.
- How good were the boats in the early Bronze Age?
- How good was their navigation?
- Why did they go there?

As usual, more questions than answers.

Alan Dedden

February Weblinks

- **635 Million Year Old Fossil Is Oldest Known Land Fungus here**
- **Analysis of Teeth Found 1910-11 Show Strongest Evidence Of Neanderthal-Homo Sapiens Interbreeding here**
- **Part Of Henry VIII's Crown Found By Detectorist here**
- **Mummy With Gold Tongue Found In Egypt here**
- **Well Preserved 2300 Year Old Scythian Shoe Found In Altai Mountains here**
- **Ruins Of Ancient Church And Temple Found In Aswan here**
- **CT Scan Of Ancient Platypus Fish Gives New Insight Into Evolution here**
- **Study Debunks Remains Held As Relics Of St James here**
- **Sheep-Sized Dinosaur Attracted Partners With Neck Frill here**
- **Shipwreck With 'Several Treasure Chests' Found Off Kent Coast here**

- **Two Mystery Shipwrecks Off Kent Coast Given Protected Status here**
- **'Mud Mummy' From Egypt Sold In C19th In Wrong Coffin here**
- **Long Man Of Wilmington Given A Face Mask here**
- **Mosque Built Just Decades After Death Of Muhammad Found Near Sea Of Galilee here**
- **Royal Mint To Auction Rare Tudor Coin here**
- **Isles Of Scilly Museum Goes On The Move here**
- **'Mammoth' Fossil Found On Isle Of Wight Beach here**
- **Controversy Over Carved Stone here**
- **Bronze Age Burials And More Found At Stonehenge Tunnel Site here**
- **Evidence Of Iron Age Settlement On Remote Scottish Island here**
- **HMS Victory Figurehead Cut Up By Mistake here**
- **Hoard Of 600+ Roman Coins Found In Turkey here**
- **Earliest Manmade Wind Instrument Found In French Museum here**
- **2,000 Year Old Terracotta Figurines Found At Myra In Turkey here**
- **Were The Stonehenge Bluestones Originally At Waun Mawm? here**
- **World's Oldest Known Brewery Found In Egypt here**
- **Dig In Oxfordshire Reveals Domestic Life In The Iron Age here**
- **Supposed Utah Iron Age Horse Not That Old here**
- **Study Finds Pharaoh Killed In 'Execution Ceremony' here**
- **DNA Recovered From Million Year Old Mammoth Remains here**
- **Viking Jewellery Found On Isle Of Man here**
- **Study Links End Of Neanderthals And Flip Of Earth's Magnetic Field here**
- **Carved Roman Phallus Found During A14 Work here**
- **Figurine Suggests Ancient Britons Favoured Mullets here**
- **Heart Of Belgium Mayor Found In Fountain here**
- **More (Circumstantial) Evidence That Richard III Had The Princes Murdered In The Tower here**
- **Giant Coelacanth Ancestor Identified From Fossilised Lung here**
- **Pagan Roman Sarcophagi Found In Israeli Zoo here**
- **Australia' Oldest Rock Art Is Anatomically Accurate Kangaroo here**
- **Dark Age Britain Was A Land Of Saints here**
- **Drake's Lost Fleet To Be Excavated here**
- **Origins Of Domestic Dogs here**
- **Likely Route Of First Domestic Dogs In Americas here**
- **12th Century Bathhouse Uncovered In Seville Bar here**
- **Elaborate Depiction In Egyptian Tomb Is Extinct Goose here**
- **20m Year Old Petrified Tree Found Intact On Lesbos here**
- **Mary Anning Celebrated On 50p Coin here**
- **Former Bar In Spain Could Be 14th Century Synagogue here**
- **New Technique Reveals Hidden Details In Ancient Etruscan Paintings here**
- **Ceremonial Carriage Found Near Pompeii here**

Greatest British Archaeological discoveries ever made - part 2

In part 1 I revealed 5 of my top 12 British archaeological discoveries, taking us up to 1939: Vindolanda, the Stonehenge landscape, Lullingstone Roman villa, the Orkney Neolithic settlements and the Sutton Hoo ship burial. The final 7 are described below, starting with my only choice that could be described as 'treasure, though included because of what it said of life in later Roman Britain.

Mildenhall Roman Treasure, West Row, Suffolk
"When is a hoard not a hoard? When it's a tableware set."
In 1942, a ploughman called Norman Butcher spotted some silver objects in the soil whilst tilling a field, and uncovered a related assemblage of 34 pieces of very finely decorated Roman silver tableware dating from the 4th century. His employer, Sydney Ford, took possession of the items, secreting them at his home and attempting repairs on some pieces. A visitor, becoming suspicious at seeing the items under repair, reported the matter to the police and arrests followed. The find was declared 'Treasure Trove' and the British Museum acquired the items. Butcher and Ford were only latterly deemed to be the finders and received compensatory reward payments for their troubles far below the value of the silverware they had found.

The 'Treasure' has been described as being 'by far the most valuable Roman objects artistically and by weight of bullion in Britain' and are on display at the British Museum. Replicas are housed in the local museum at Mildenhall.

Starr Carr Mesolithic Site, Vale of Pickering, Scarborough, North Yorkshire
A Mesolithic landscape preserved in peat covering a former lake. Use of the site is thought to have commenced 9335-9275 BC and lasted for about 800 years. Discovered in 1947 by amateur archaeologist John Moore, who noticed artefacts in the soil, excavation was undertaken later by Cambridge University. Finds have included post holes evidencing the oldest structure ever found in Britain (likely to have been a 3.5 metre wide wooden platform), 21 red deer skull caps or 'frontlets', more than 200 projectile or harpoon points made from antler, and previously worked stone including amber, haematite and iron pyrites, plus a large quantity of flint. A shale pendant with evidence of Mesolithic art was found in 2015 (shown).

The site has been rapidly drying out with further evidence of human activity in danger of being lost. Some of the finds are housed in York Museum.

Mary Rose Tudor Warship, Solent estuary, Portsmouth
The heavily loaded warship of Henry VIII sank in sight of the king and his retinue into the Solent mud on 19th July 1545 after a manoeuvre led to its capsizing. Of the 400 strong crew over 350 died. Unsuccessful attempts were made to salvage it at the time. In1838 a fishing vessel caught its nets on the wreck and some objects were recovered, but it wasn't until 1971 that it was formally identified as the wreck of the Mary Rose. Underwater excavation was led by Margaret Rule and it was finally raised in 1982.

Great efforts were taken to ensure the survival of the artefacts and the surviving shell of the ship once out of anaerobic conditions. The truly impressive results of this process, and of painstaking research into the layout of the vessel and the roles of its crew members, can be seen at the Mary Rose Museum at the Historic Dockyards in Portsmouth.

Boxgrove Palaeolithic site, Eatham Pit, West Sussex
The discovery of the largest area of undisturbed Palaeolithic land surface in Britain came to light in the early 1980s when owners of a quarry called in archaeologists due to the number of flint tool artefacts

they were discovering. Excavations at the site, led by Mark Roberts of University College, London, revealed that finds from the site dated to the Lower Palaeolithic period. Numerous Acheulean flint and a few antler tools and remains of animals (some butchered) were found. However, the significance of these artefacts was dwarfed by comparison to the discovery of a hominid tibia bone found in 1994, belonging to the species *Homo Heidelbergensis* and more than 500,000 years old. This is the only post cranial humanoid bone ever found in Northern Europe.

Finds are in the care of the British and Natural History Museums in London and the quarry site was purchased by Historic England.

Within this context mention needs to be made of the **Happisburgh Footprints** in Norfolk, which almost made it onto this list. In May 2013, coastal erosion leading to removal of layers of sand from a beach exposed a number of footprints, relating to more than one individual, which had been baked into sediment during the Pleistocene period more than 800,000 years ago. They are the oldest hominid footprints ever found outside Africa.

Must Farm Bronze Age settlement, Whittlesey, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
In 2011 during a landscape scale archaeological investigation of Fenland and its deep buried deposits, Cambridge University uncovered a series of extraordinary finds. Further investigation led to a full scale excavation in 2015 of a late Bronze Age (*c.*1000-800 BC) settlement built on a raised platform, which had been destroyed by fire causing it to collapse into a river channel. The result of this event was that a time capsule of artefacts belonging to the family living in the fire damaged building was preserved in anaerobic conditions. These included metalwork, textiles, complete pots, wooden artefacts and more.

Decisions have yet to be made about where the finds will be housed and displayed.

Just 2km to the north of Must Farm, and deserving mention, is **Flag Fen** – the location of another impressive Bronze Age site preserved in a waterlogged peat basin. Discovered by an archaeological team led by Francis Pryor during survey work in 1982, a 1km long raised wooden causeway leading to a large platform emerged during excavation. An array of apparently ritually deposited prestigious items, including swords, spearheads, earrings and brooches were found in the surrounding watery area. Alongside them were hundreds of small polished white beach pebbles, animal bones, potsherds and the oldest surviving wooden wheel found in England. There is a visitor centre on site which includes display of a log boat found at Must Farm

The grave of King Richard III, Grey Friars, Leicester
The precise burial place of Richard III had remained a mystery until 2012 when Leicester University researchers and archaeologists, in conjunction with the Richard III Society, successfully pinpointed his last place of rest under a council car park built over the ruins of the medieval Grey Friars friary in the city. DNA, historical and literary records relating to the King, and the physical deformity of his spine, provided the evidence that it was indeed his body.

The remains were exhumed and reburied with due ceremony at Leicester cathedral in 2015. A centre has been opened in his name above the site of his grave in the car park and is open to the public.

Pocklington Iron Age Burial Ground, East Riding of Yorkshire
The burial ground has several dozen square barrows which were discovered during construction of a new housing development in 2014. Over 160 burials have been found, with a range of grave goods including weapons, brooches, pots and amber and glass beads. What

makes the site particularly important was the discovery of a 'chariot burial' in 2017. It is believed to have been used by a 'warrior' whose prized possessions, including a well preserved bronze shield and highly decorated brooch, were found along with the skeleton, which was lying in a crouched position in the cart of the chariot. The upright remains of two ponies had also been interred, the first within a chariot burial in Britain.

Persimmon Homes have stated that they will be donating what has been found to a museum.

My choice of the 12 in descending order of preference are: 12. Richard III; 11. Mildenhall treasure; 10. Lullingstone Villa; 9. Pocklington burial ground; 8. Boxgrove; 7. Star Carr; 6. Mary Rose; 5. Sutton Hoo; 4. Orkney settlements; 3. Stonehenge Landscape; 2. Must Farm; 1. Vindolanda.

So, what would be your choice for the top 12 – what would you remove and add? I'd really like to hear.

Phil D'Eath

Dorset Wages: 6/- a week

In the 5th episode of 'Full Steam Ahead', repeated on BBC4 on 20th February, Alex Langlands illustrated a point by saying that the Dorset agricultural labourer's wage in 1850 was 6/- a week (about £40 now). Some viewers may have wondered why Alex chose Dorset as the county to highlight in this regard.

By chance I had recently been looking at a series of articles and letters in The Times, and other newspapers, about the poverty in rural Dorset in the early to mid-1840s, particularly amongst the agricultural labourers. In these articles and letters, Dorset is quoted as the poorest county in England, and is compared in this respect with Ireland; that's why it was quoted by Alex. The wage given in most of these accounts is 7/- a week, but this is not the only issue highlighted. Housing was badly built, not maintained, cramped, lacking amenities and often with the whole family (frequently 6 or more) sharing a single bedroom. Village conditions were little better and job security was at the whim of the farmer. The wage, however, was almost exclusively the only point of debate. Nobody was denying the sub-standard living conditions.

There is so much more in these letters and articles that deserve retelling. I hope to provide an insight to them in future newsletters.

Alan Dedden

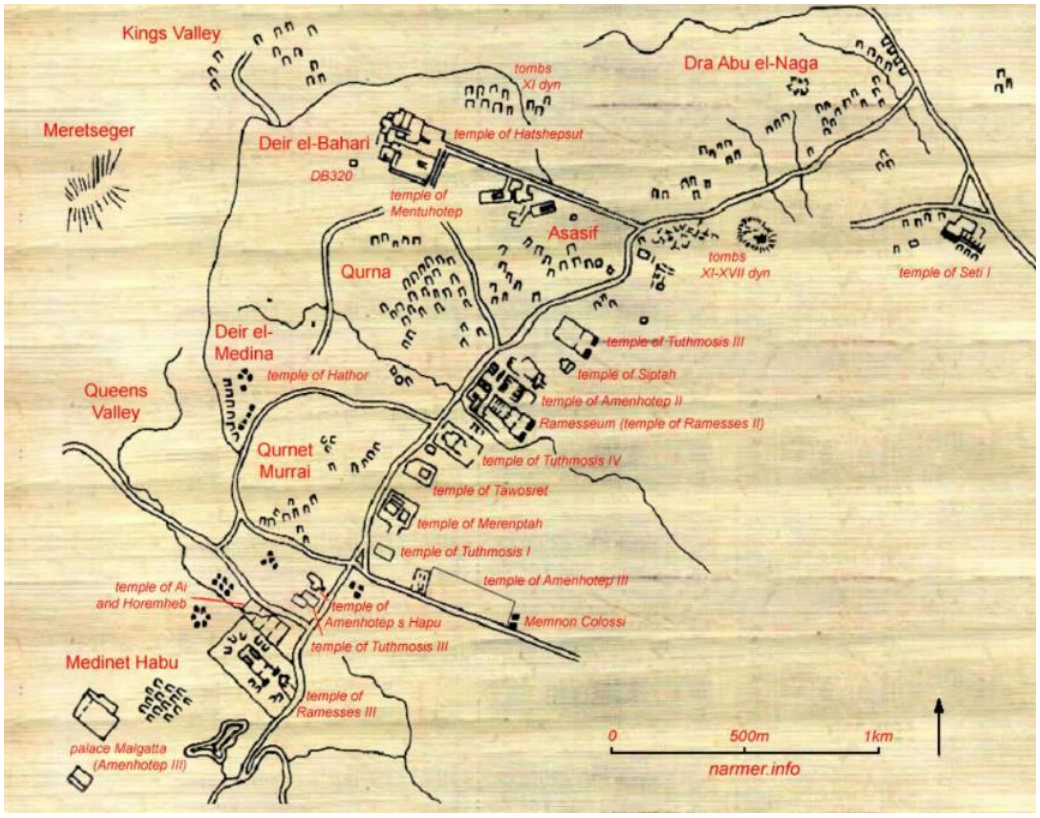
Puffing Devil

Did you know that Richard Trevithick produced a road-going steam engine in 1801, 3 years before his first steam engine on rails. It was tested with some of his friends on Christmas Eve and, apparently, worked quite well. However, it didn't work quite so well a few days later after its operators left it idling while they went in the pub, and it exploded (or burnt, sources vary).

Trevithick Day is celebrated in Cornwall in his home town of Camborne on the last Saturday in April. Amongst other steam-powered vehicles, a replica of Puffing Devil parades through the streets. See, for example, this link.

Egypt 3: Across the Nile from Luxor – Western Thebes

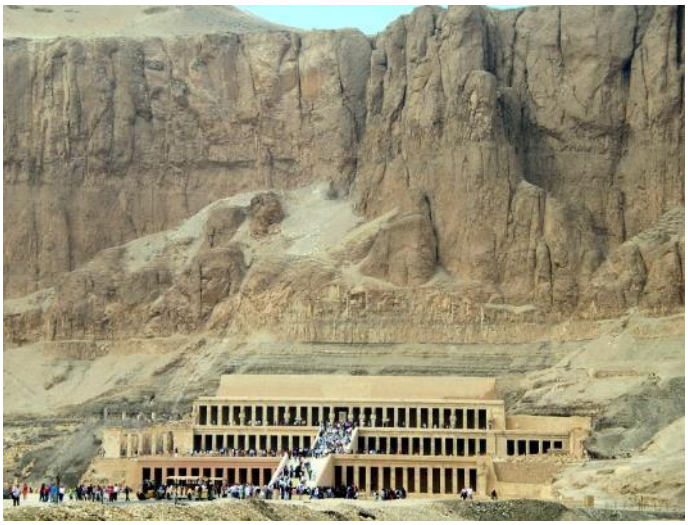
Jo & Sue Crane thought that their visit to the 'Theban necropolis' was, perhaps, the single best day of their whole trip, understandable given the variety of sights and, especially, the decoration in the Pharaonic tombs. Many people will know little of the west bank of the Nile opposite Luxor other than the Valley of the Kings, and perhaps the Valley of the Queens and Hatshepsut's mortuary temple. There are, though, many other ancient monuments, almost entirely built on the desert beyond the cultivated area irrigated by and from the Nile. In particular, there are over 600 known tombs, of which only a fraction were of royalty, with most being of the nobility but others of senior officials and even of the craftsmen who worked on the important tombs.



The Colossi of Memnon are two huge statues of Amenhotep III (died *c*.1350 BC), set up at the entrance to his mortuary temple, of which very little remains. In the Ptolemaic period the town here was called *MEMNONIA*, hence the name. This is the closest monument to the Nile and actually built within the cultivated area; early photographs and 19th century paintings show the Colossi surrounded by Nile floodwater. A devastating earthquake around 1200 BC caused most of the temple to collapse, after which later Pharaohs robbed the site for their own temples. The Colossi were badly damaged but remained, apparently emitting strange 'singing' sounds from time to time in the Roman period until they were repaired around AD 200.

Beyond the Colossi, along the edge of the desert, stretch about a dozen further mortuary temples, though most are badly ruined. Amongst the best preserved is the Ramesseum, the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses the Great. Beyond these, tombs, particularly of the nobility, were then dug into the sandstone in the rising ground and along the edges of the mountains, indicated by the Π symbols on the map. Some are under the local villages, often discovered when cellars were dug, and we (Geoff & Sue) were shown one by the owner of the house built above it in the village of Asasif (photograph below). Whilst originally highly decorated, many have suffered from years, or centuries, of being open and used for other purposes,

though new ones are still being discovered. Only a week or so after we returned from Egypt in 1997, Islamist terrorists killed 62 tourists at the Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut, just along the road. The brave villagers of Asasif heard the gunfire, stopped tourists going further and hid many in their houses or the nobles' tombs.

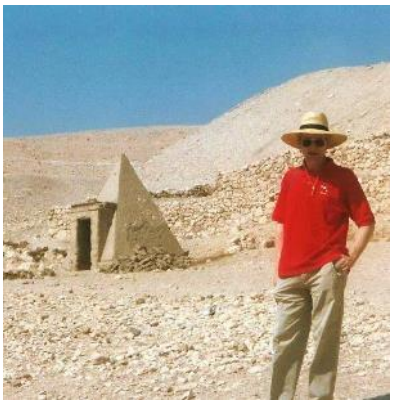


Hatshepsut's temple has a very modern look, despite being 3,500 years old, and is different from most of the other mortuary temples that have styles similar to the temples at Luxor and Karnak. The colonnaded entrances to each of the three levels have square columns, some fronted by the few remaining statues of the Pharaoh. Ramps link to the terraces at the higher levels, which were originally planted with exotic species. Excavation, restoration and reconstruction has been continuous for many decades and continues to bring new finds, e.g. the highest level was mostly destroyed by an earthquake in antiquity, but was found to have been used for royal tombs *c*.950-525 BC.

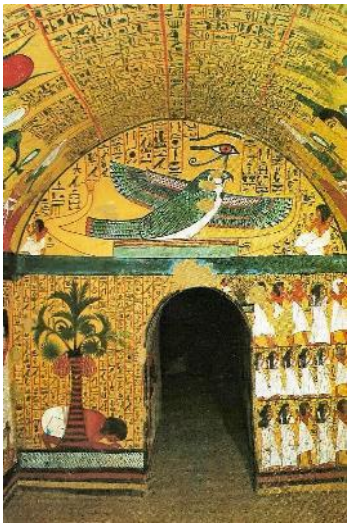
As Jo says of the Valley of the Kings "A standard ticket allows entrance to three tombs and others, like those of Tutankhamen, require extra fees, which we also purchased. After a thorough briefing by our guide we set off and explored our choice of three tombs. The insides of two of them were awe inspiring

in both their size and decorations. It was hard to believe how vivid the colours and images were after approaching 3,500 years underground. We certainly could have spent all day (and quite a sum!) if time had allowed. Our fourth tomb was that of Tutankhamen which had only been opened again two weeks before after undergoing restoration. The tomb is very small in comparison to others, but richly decorated and Tutankhamen's mummy is still in place." I just remember not being able to take photos, so having to buy the relatively poor postcards on sale that don't scan well; Sue & Jo obviously managed this one.

Between the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens lie the remains of Deir el-Medina, the village where workers on the ancient tombs lived. The walls of their houses still stand, some up to a metre high, but more remarkable are their tombs. They often had a small pyramid with the entrance door, then a descent to the underground chambers. Although relatively small, occasionally with 2 or 3 chambers, they're exquisitely decorated – hardly surprising as these were the people who decorated the Pharaoh's tombs.



They're also often considerably better preserved than the royal tombs, partly because many were discovered relatively recently and partly because of the low numbers of visitors (at least in 1997). The tomb shown is of Inherka, according to the postcard, but it's not! Searching for him reveals that he was 'Foreman of the Lord of the Two Lands in the Place of Truth' around 1200 BC, but the tomb isn't this one and I've not been able to find whose this is.



The large building at the far side of the workmen's village is the local temple, another monument originally dating from the 15th century BC, as with several of the monuments described previously. Perhaps this isn't surprising as the 'New Kingdom' began around 1570 BC, with several powerful rulers who fully united the country, created an empire and began 5 centuries of wealth and prosperity. Amun, god of sun and air, rose to prominence in this period, as we've seen with the temples dedicated to him at Karnak and Luxor, but this one was dedicated to Hathor, goddess of the sky, of women, and of fertility and love. Again, early archaeologists have done us no favours in removing much without record, though it is known that most of the remains are Ptolemaic, whilst a Roman period chapel to Isis was built at the rear, probably under Augustus. Despite the village being abandoned in the 11th century BC, the temple remained in use until the 8th century AD, latterly as both a monastery and Christian church.

Only a kilometre southwest lies Medinet Habu, the settlement associated with the mortuary complex of

Ramesses III (1186-1155 BC). An original small temple to Amun (closest to us in the aerial photograph), again from around 1500 BC, was incorporated into the mortuary complex, dominated by the huge temple seen in the picture. Unusually, the outer precinct walls were originally 60 feet high, with an outer crenelated wall 13 feet high. Perhaps this fortress-like design was deliberate, as it became a refuge from Libyan incursions in the 11th century BC, including for the people of Deir el-Medina.

As at Deir el-Medina, much of the remains of the small temple is Ptolemaic, but there was a considerable amount of building and reconstruction under Claudius, Domitian and as late as Antoninus Pius, well into the 2nd century AD. A prosperous Christian town grew up there and survived for a century under Arab rule but, like much of Western Thebes, was abandoned in the 8th century.

Two other small temples in this area have remains that appear to be almost entirely Roman, although their sites are rather older. Deir el-Shelwit, about 3km southwest of Medinet Habu, has a very small temple, yet it includes the cartouches of many of the emperors from Augustus to Antoninus Pius. The limited evidence after 19th and 20th century clearance of the settlement area suggests that many, or even most, of the houses date from the Roman period. At Deir er-Rumi, a kilometre west of Medinet Habu near the entrance to the Valley of the Queens, an unfinished rock-cut dynastic tomb was expanded and external rooms added. The only dating evidence found was a cartouche of Antoninus Pius, after it was mostly destroyed by rock falls from the mountain above, and there is no evidence of any settlement.

Leaving Western Thebes and crossing the Nile, our travels will take us onto the Nile cruise ships to start the journey south in the next article.

Geoff Taylor/Jo & Sue Crane

BEWARE FALSE NEWS (or abysmal journalism)

Alan sent me this link to an article from the Daily Express about Bronze Age burials in the New Forest – of some interest except that the howlers make you wonder what else is incorrect:

- Experts are able to identify these burial mounds due to a "ring ditch" which forms around earth when soil has been dug up.
- Several of the UK's most significant monuments were erected during the Bronze Age, including Stonehenge.
- It was followed by the Iron Age, which was largely introduced by the Romans.

"Oh, look at us with our cooked food! Don't you just hate culinary fads?"

EDAS 2021 PROGRAMME

Subject to coronavirus restrictions lectures will one day be from 7:30 – 9:30 pm at St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE. Meanwhile, at 7:30 on a device near you.

http://www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk/programme.html

Wed 10th March	Zoom Meeting	**AGM and members' talk**	Keeper's Lodge – Andrew Morgan and Lilian Ladle
Wed 14th April	Zoom Lecture	**Julian Richards**	Shaftesbury - Alfred's Town, Alfred's Abbey
Wed 12th May	Zoom Lecture	**Mike Allen**	The Prehistoric Chalkland Landscape of Stonehenge, Avebury and Dorchester - tearing up
EVENTS TO BE RESCHEDULED			
tbd	Tour	**Devizes Museum**	
tbd	Walk	**Cranborne Chase**	
tbd	Day trip	**London Museums trip**	

DISTRICT DIARY

Your information is very welcome, especially now when this section is completely empty – 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)