East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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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 – May 2021

Editor's Notes

I'm writing this on the Bank Holiday and, of course, the weather isn't great. I'm sure it will get better as we head into summer and into the EDAS summer break. The last lecture of the current season will be the one below and this will be the last newsletter for now. I'm intending to issue a midsummer edition in July and then we'll start again for the 2021-22 season in September.

Our Zoom meeting this month is by Mike Allen on the 'Prehistoric chalkland landscape of Stonehenge, Avebury and Dorchester'. He'll be talking about how new research is allowing us re-evaluate, and perhaps re-interpret, what seems a familiar landscape. That's on Wednesday 12th May at 7:30 with, of course, joining invitations sent out a few days before.

Whilst we're coming to the end of this season, I'm sure you'll all be interested to know what's happening next season and, of course, over the summer. We're not resting on our laurels as the **Letter from Andrew** makes very clear.

There's a notice about the re-opening of the Museum of East Dorset in Wimborne and, further down, Vanessa tells us about some of discoveries made in the museum building during the Revival Project's major restoration and conservation work: **Historic house reveals its secrets**.

Thank you to Matthew Tagney for his summary of Julian Richard's talk on the 'SAVED' project in April, which came close to our limit of 100 Zoom connections: **Shaftesbury: Alfred's Town, Alfred's Abbey**.

There are links to several online lectures and news items as well as another edition of Alan's long-running series of **Weblinks** and **Highlights**. The other continuing series are here too: **Remembering the Romans XII** and **View from Above 37**. The article on Egyptian travels last month looked at Western Thebes – the Theban necropolis across the Nile from Luxor. This month we'll go **Along the Nile to Aswan -** south along the Nile and stops to look at some of the temples, with thanks again to Jo & Sue Crane for their photographs and memories included here.

And the **EDAS Lecture Programme 2021/22** is on the last page - something to look forward to as the weather improves and restrictions are removed. Best wishes for a lovely summer.

Geoff Taylor

Reply to me, please (email above or just hit 'reply') – perhaps write something for the Midsummer Newsletter; I'd be very happy to receive any contributions.

Dear members and friends of EDAS,

I hope you and your families are keeping well and I thank you for your continued support of the Society through these difficult times. It has been heartening to receive so many kind messages.

During the winter we finalised the 2021-2022 lecture programme, shown at the end of the newsletter, and have been considering the meeting arrangements. Our priority is to return to St Catherine's Hall as soon as possible: the meetings are the focal point of the society and the social side has been missed by many people. Several speakers have also stated their preference for live talks and their dislike of speaking into a screen. However the situation with the pandemic remains uncertain and we will remain flexible.

As you know the Zoom programme has been very successful, opening up a wider audience and the opportunity to obtain speakers from further afield. Ideally we'd like to offer both options - to meet at St. Catherine's as well as showing the lectures on Zoom. However, there are some technical challenges to be resolved, not least the provision of internet connectivity and an upgrade of some our equipment. A good deal of preliminary research has been done but can't be completed until we have full access to the hall. Even then, the technological challenges may well limit what can be achieved.

I am delighted that we have been able to plan a number of day events for the summer, such as field walks and site visits, and we will keep you informed once the arrangements have been finalised.

I am sure most of us will adapt quickly to the post pandemic situation, even if that means fewer hugs and handshakes, but I look forward to the future and an even stronger Society. Meanwhile I hope to see you via Zoom at the Mike Allen talk on 12th May.

Best wishes,

Andrew Morgan

Museum Re-opening

The Museum of East Dorset plans to open its doors on 17 May, in accordance with current government guidelines. Admission tickets are now allocated for a specific entry time and must be pre-booked on the website, although tickets may be available in person on the day (subject to availability).

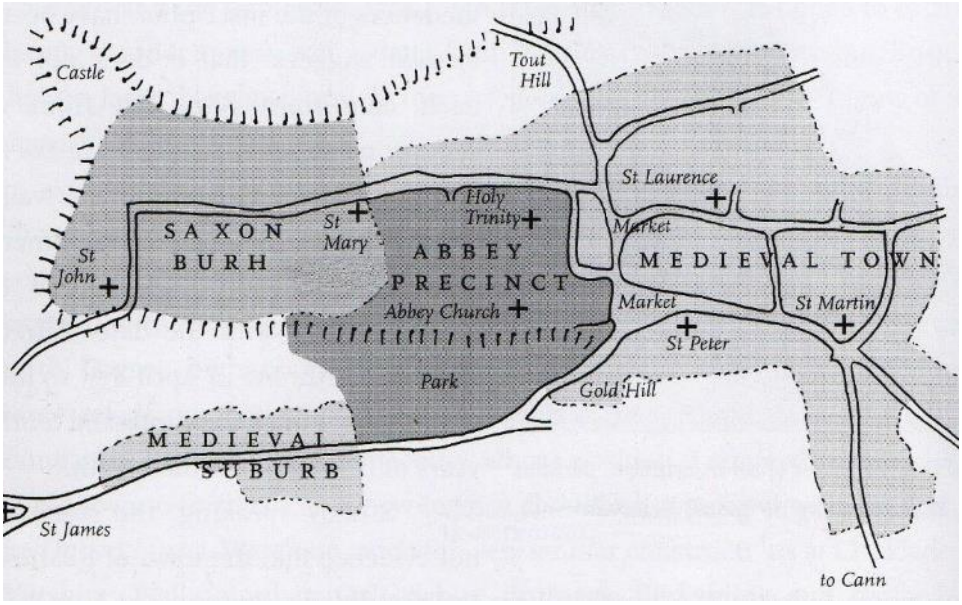
However, the Information centre, shop and Tea Room (garden service only) are already open.

It is possible to book events, including virtual events, via the web site : www.museumofeastdorset.co.uk

Shaftesbury: Alfred's Town, Alfred's Abbey
Zoom lecture by Dr Julian Richards FSA

In the year AD 2021 (or year 2 LD - Locked Down), EDAS measures attendance at lectures not by "b*ms on seats", but "devices on Zoom". We had a near record number of those for April's talk by Julian, who updated us on the 'SAVED' project – Shaftesbury Abbey Voyage of Exploration & Discovery. We were lucky to catch him as he is (now and then) distracted by not only preparing a Stonehenge exhibition for a German museum and a new ceramics gallery for Salisbury, but also by a Mesolithic project.

A sign on the road into Shaftesbury proclaims it as a "Saxon hilltop town". On a narrow sandstone spur with steep drops on three sides, it is an ideal defensive position for one of Dorset's four Alfredian burhs, defences against marauding Vikings. Gold Hill is, of course, famous and famously steep, but Tout Hill to the north mirrors that, demonstrating the excellent siting of the burh.



Was any settlement here before Alfred? A very early Saxon pottery kiln was found during construction of the local Tesco. On the Green north-west of the Abbey site, a new GPR survey by Vienna's Ludwig Boltzmann institute has revealed intriguing building-shapes – see below. Excavation there, if Historic England permits, might be for a new generation of keen trowel-wielders – perhaps including some of the volunteers SAVED trained in theory and practice, whose ages ranged from 8 to 80, from eleven local schools and the local adult community.

What did SAVED discover? Digging took place both in back-gardens along Bimport, the spine-road of the original town, and in the Abbey ruins. The Bimport test-pits showed an unusual depth of garden soil, which yielded finds ranging from Mesolithic worked flints to a surprising number of medieval silver coins, and a few precious sherds of Saxon pottery. There was also a lone fragment of Roman box-flue tile: when Julian mentioned this, we all heard Lilian exclaim "Ooh!"

Test pitting in well-tended lawns and local allotments – in sun or snow!

The test pit in the allotment, shown below, yielded a cut medieval 'long-cross' penny. Of course, the cross facilitated the cutting of silver pennies into halves and quarters, as also shown (not the actual penny from the allotment).

In the Abbey, one unexpected treasure was a black “Our Father” rosary-bead made of jet, whilst the GPR survey located still-hidden stone sarcophagi beneath the nave. However, some previous theories were overturned. No evidence of foundations could be found for the claimed south-west cloister, despite burials being found there. And the supposed “buttresses”, marked above ground by stone piles against the south wall, seem to have been 20th century inventions. However, the foundations of the south wall were found, and those of a “bench” along the south aisle on which the nave pillars stood. In-situ tiles were discovered, worn by pilgrims’ feet, giving strong clues as to the original floor-level.

The stone pile marking the south-west crossing pillar was also real, covering massive medieval concrete foundations. This spot gave us the star find of the dig – a 14th century crowned head, beautifully carved in stone, and probably undisturbed since the Dissolution around 1539. It would have formed part of a crossing-screen of royal or saintly figures to inspire the faithful. The project’s architectural historian, Dr Jonathan Foyle, thinks it is probably female and royal, given the Abbey’s status as a royal foundation for women.

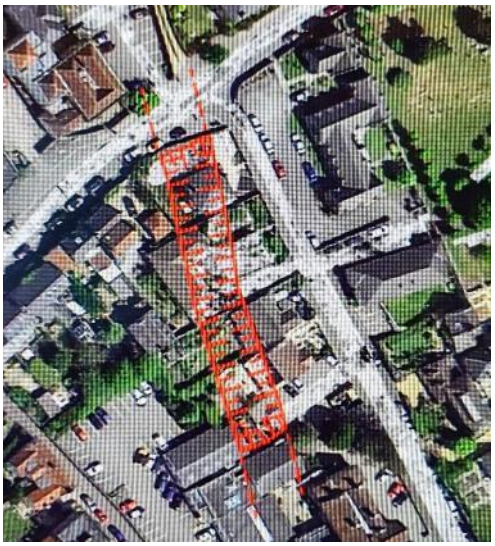
The head in in situ and EDAS member Alan Dedden, who uncovered it, with Julian moments after it was lifted in August 2019.

Lockdown disrupted this project as it did so many aspects of life, but the time was well spent in the Abbey’s museum, extensively revising their displays. Large parts of a reredos-base were rescued from the stores and placed together along the foot of one wall, whilst stonework from Saxon fragments onwards was arranged by period to tell the Abbey’s seven century story more clearly.

A post-script to the main dig came when the crypt, or charnel-house, north of the chancel suffered a wall collapse in Autumn 2020 (Julian swears he has alibis for all of that week). Since the turn of the year, with Historic England supervising, tumbled stonework has been cleared, allowing a new assessment of how far what we see now reflects medieval work (for example, the core of yellow mortar seems to be original), and how far it is 20th century re-build after previous collapses. Meanwhile post-excavation analysis continues so far as lockdown allows, recording and cataloguing the 2019 finds.

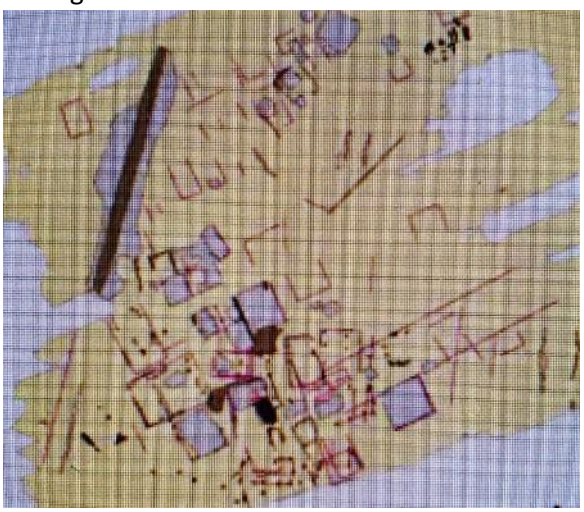
SAVED has already deepened and broadened our understanding of the Abbey and its place in the town

but, as ever, there remain plenty more questions. For example, the location of the Abbey vs. the burh is uncertain, though we know from Alfred's contemporary biographer that the King built his abbey "by the east gate" of the burh.



At one point the eastern edge of the burh may have lain on the north-south line of Abbey Walk, as there are intriguing traces of a wide, deep ditch, with the profile shown. It is mostly now under hospital buildings at the south where it diverges from the line of Abbey Walk, as marked on the aerial photograph. That would certainly fit the burh-boundary measurements deduced from the Saxon *Burghal Hidage* text. This lies west of the Abbey, implying that the Abbey was outside the burh, a potentially unsafe position in those troubled times. Perhaps, then, the burh's eastern boundary was moved east beyond the Abbey, to the line between Gold Hill's massive medieval wall and its northern twin on Tout Hill?

The interpretation diagram of the geophysics results on Castle Green, within the burh area, clearly shows traces of many structures as mentioned earlier. Dating them would need excavation and Julian is certainly leaving quite a To-Do List for any successors to tackle, but he hopes that Alfred, not only a warrior and diplomat but also a great believer in education, might look approvingly on our latest efforts.



More research is clearly needed – do we have any volunteers (with deep pockets)?

Footnote: Julian also gave a brief plug for his new collage of Verwood pottery fragments, which can now be seen for free in the garden of Wimborne's Museum of East Dorset - MED, formerly known as The Priest's House Museum.
And my apologies for the quality of some of the photographs – I blame the vagaries of *Zoom*.

Matthew Tagney

Flag Fen Archaeology Lecture Series

Because of support from the government's *Culture Recovery Fund*, this year's lectures in the series will be hosted virtually and completely **free** of charge.

Summary details of the May lectures are given below. They are all at 7pm, free of charge, available on Microsoft *Teams* and bookable through Eventbrite. Find out more and book your place at **this link**.

I (Geoff) have no experience of *Teams*, but believe those who have used *Zoom* won't find it very different. For more information see **here**; but you don't have to have a *Teams* account to join a meeting as it says **here.**

- **Thursday 6th May**: Ritual Offerings in Prehistory? Understanding Bronze Age bronze and gold hoards in Britain and beyond…and why Flag Fen remains special, by Dr Ben Roberts of the University of Durham: what these hoards can tell us of the lives of prehistoric communities.

- **Thursday 20th May**: Secret Britain: Unearthing our Mysterious Past, by television presenter and author Mary-Ann Ochota: the lives of our ancestors revealed by famous finds from across Britain, and from ones known only to experts.
- **Thursday 27th May**: Respect your Elders: Old Swords in Early Medieval England, by Dr Sue Brunning of the British Museum: Why older might have been better for your sword in Anglo-Saxon times.

CBA Wessex – May 2021 Newsletter

The newsletter can be found here. It contains details of a Zoom lecture later this month (free but booking needed) and links to earlier lectures available on YouTube for a little while. There are also links to several archaeological news items (with a few that Alan has already publicised) and to an article on Mary Anning.

Web Link Highlights April 2021

A shorter list this month, but none the less interesting.

With the recent consultation for the next Dorset planning policy, it is depressing to read the story of the destruction of the Son Oms prehistoric site to make way for the expansion of Palma airport in the late 1960s. Objections were raised at the time, but were overruled by the local and national authorities who had "a total lack of interest" according to historian Hernández Jiménez. Equally depressing were the reports of the damage caused to the native American petroglyphs in northern Georgia, and the break-in at the Scarborough Roman villa site. I wish I could say I am surprised in any of the above cases. Sad? Yes. Outraged? Yes. Surprised? No.

On a more positive note, many of us will at some stage have handled pottery with clear marks made by the potter as they formed the item and decorated the rim or base with finger or thumb indents, so the discovery of the potter's fingerprints on a Neolithic pottery sherd from the Ness of Brodgar is an even more direct link to the person who made that pot 5,000 years ago.

Alan Dedden

March Weblinks

- **Vandals Destroy 1000 Year Old Rock Art** here
- **Bronze Age Stone Slab Identified As Oldest Map In Europe** here
- **Prehistoric Human Bones Found By Walker On Guernsey Coast** here
- **Human Remains In Bulgarian & Czech Caves Reveal More About First Homo Sapiens In Europe** here
- **The Destruction Of An Ancient Ceremonial Site To Allow Palma Airport Expansion** here
- **3,000-Year-Old Lost City Discovered In Egypt** here
- **First 'Homo' Species Left Africa With Ape Like Brains** here
- **Church Of England To Return Benin Bronzes** here
- **New Research Sheds Fresh Light On Aztec Renaissance** here
- **First Of Its Kind Roman Site Uncovered In Scarborough** here
- **And Then It Is Raided** here
- **Neanderthal DNA From Spanish Cave Soil Tells Story Of Different Populations** here
- **Tyrannosaurs May Have Hunted In Packs Like Wolves** here
- **British Museum Exhibition Sheds New Light On Nero** here
- **Fingerprint Found On Pottery Sherd Found At Ness Of Brodgar** here
- **Roman Settlement Found In Leicestershire** here
- **Oldest Evidence Of Human Activity Found In South African Cave** here

Historic house reveals its secrets

The story of the Grade II* listed building which houses the Museum of East Dorset is common to many historic buildings of its period: continuous change from the 1500s to the present day. What makes this house so different to many is that it is not hidden behind locked gates. As a museum, it is open to the public who can view and interpret the building and its architectural features for themselves.
The town house, which comprises Nos. 25 - 27 and No. 29 on Wimborne High Street, is set within a medieval burgage plot created by town planners in the 1200s. The house has a fine view of the Minster church. Its stone north wing makes it particularly significant, offering a distinctive feature in a streetscape where many earlier buildings have been re-fronted or rendered to present a "flattened" façade to the street.

Major restoration and conservation, 2019 - 2020
The museum's Revival Project, completed in Autumn 2020 and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has resulted in a completely refurbished building. A key objective of the project was to preserve and conserve the fabric of the historic town house whilst making the museum accessible to all. Conservation architect, Thread, was tasked with re-assessing the building and its potential. A key starting point was the 2007 Conservation Management Plan prepared by FORUM Heritage Services to help support future management and development of the site. This document discussed the building in detail and identified possible dates and construction phases of different rooms and annexes based on expert knowledge as well as photographic evidence of interventions from the 1990s.

Claire Fear of Thread worked with Dorset-based firm Greendale Construction on building works ranging from minor refurbishment in some areas to a full strip-out and redecoration in others. Unsympathetic modern building aspects were removed. As a result, a wealth of historic architectural features has been revealed, some of them completely unknown in modern times. These all help to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the building. They also show how different generations of occupants left their mark on the house over the centuries. Today, the historic house proudly shares the stage with the new exhibition galleries and artefacts from the East Dorset area.

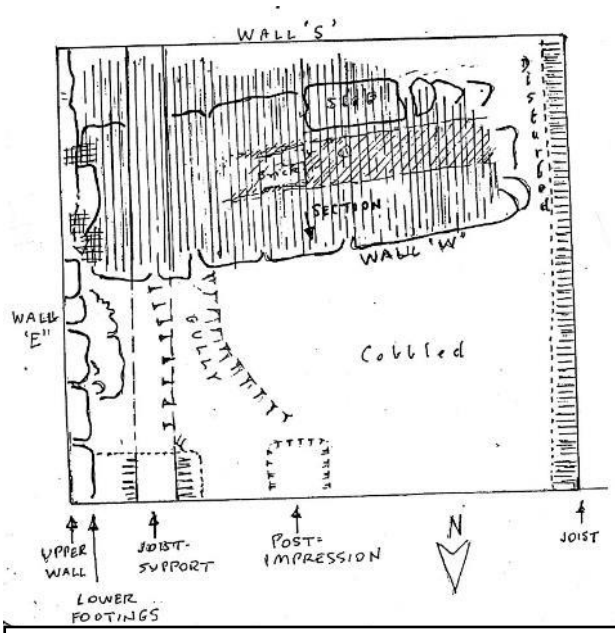
A chance to update the archaeological record
During 2019, there was an opportunity for archaeological investigation and recording in areas which we knew would be affected by the work. Local archaeologist Keith Childs conducted an excavation in what used to be the open courtyard between the two wings of the building (now the Entrance Gallery). He revisited an earlier archaeological investigation by Norman Fields which Hilda Coles commissioned in 1983 when the floors and joists in that area required renewal.


Courtyard in early 2020 before the builders laid the new floor.

The 1983 archaeological report described traces of various walls in the courtyard which indicate different phases in the building's development. The most significant was the remains of a Purbeck limestone wall lying at 87° to the original external wall of the town house before the courtyard was enclosed. Although neither wall has any foundations, this wall lay either contemporary with, or immediately posterior to, a rough cobbled floor (possibly 1300s to 1400s).

During the 2019 excavation, Keith investigated the wall further with the intention of revealing it for the public. He discovered that it has a cornerstone aligned with that of the north wing. The wall dates to the

late Elizabethan period and is part of an earlier south wing which faced the street in the late 1500s. The wing was demolished during the mid-1600s prior to the Georgian two-storey alteration of the building.



Part of the sketch from the 1983 report showing the stone foundation wall. Notice the gully, leading into Wall W, which deepened into a little soakaway fashioned under a bridge of stones between Wall W and Wall E. On a rainy day, the view through the vision panel is partially obscured as moisture builds up under the glass.

When the weather is 'clement', visitors can see the remains of this significant stone foundation wall through the glass vision panel in the courtyard. This photograph was taken before the glass was installed. It was also a dry day.

Further unknown building features uncovered after 500 years

We believe the Purbeck limestone wall in the courtyard is associated with a previously unknown projecting roofline which is visible at first floor level in what is now the Working Life gallery (though now partly obscured by display cases). It is possible that the wall supported a roofed extension, perhaps a portico or roof extending to the front of the building.

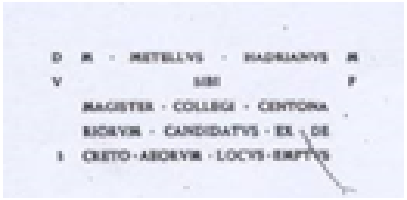
In this same corner you can see the results of successive adaptation and alteration to the building. The feature in the photograph was probably an external window in the original stone house which overlooked the street. When the courtyard was enclosed in the 1700s, the opening was adapted to form a door. It was then changed to form a cupboard in the 1850s. In 2019, it was the storage cupboard in the Director's office. The Conservation Officer deemed this corner so significant that the planned doorway from this gallery was re-routed through a timber-framed partition wall dating from the 1600s.

Stories revealed for future generations
The Revival Project has given the Museum of East Dorset an opportunity to discover even more about the place where it is housed. The building has shown itself to be alive with history, which is now revealed and preserved for future generations. The significant findings help us to understand how the building has been altered and adapted over time to meet the needs of its successive occupants.

Thanks go to Dave Keig who has kept a photographic record throughout the refurbishment project. This means that the museum has a complete photographic record from June 2019 to October 2020, including images of several areas which have, once more, been hidden.

Vanessa Joseph

REMEMBERING THE ROMANS XII



A few points about using the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and reading epitaphs on microfiche: the inscription from CIL here is a direct copy of the microfiche, i.e. the blurring is original. I've not always been able to reproduce the layout of the original inscriptions within these articles since, even if we recorded the line breaks, we wouldn't have recorded spacing like this one. This looks to have been done for a visually pleasing effect, but others have things like line breaks in the middle of words, letters added between lines or smaller to fit onto the end of a line, and so on.

The neat lettering of CIL does not reveal that the original text may have been close to illegible and, of course, all the entries are transcriptions which were heavily reliant upon the original reader. Mistakes in the epitaphs aren't uncommon, often attempts to spell words as they sounded, and sometimes hinder translation. Also, the abbreviations on almost every inscription include some that are uncertain even to experts.

Except for a few transcription errors, ages are, at least, easy to record. As we have seen, though, they're unlikely to be accurate in the majority of cases. Even at quite young ages there's evidence that parents weren't sure of the exact age of their children, often choosing something that was visually striking or even, occasionally, admitting their uncertainty. Devices like emphasising a birthday not quite reached add to the impression that commemorators were keen to make the epitaphs stand out for passers-by to see, e.g. on the tombstones lining roads outside towns and cities. Ages also tended to be rounded up as people grew older, leading to increasing exaggeration.

It has been suggested that detailed age statements (i.e. to months, days and even hours) were related to astrology, but their inaccuracy surely makes them useless for that purpose. That inaccuracy was demonstrated by the single, detailed, epitaph in the previous article. What we see recorded is "a pattern of epigraphic commemoration" rather than "an actual pattern of longevity", in the words of two distinguished writers on the subject. Another writer put it as "No one knew exactly how old the deceased was, though it was somehow important to say how old.".

The massive bias towards recording the lives of young people in their late teens and early twenties seems to show a particular need to memorialise major stages in Roman life, whether achieved or not quite reached – marriage for women and becoming an adult or entering public life for men. The preponderance of male epitaphs over female ones serves to emphasise how epitaphs reflected the perceived 'social value' to the Romans of those commemorated.

I promised a shorter article after the length of the previous one, so will finish this one here. The next few articles will just be about some epitaphs that I thought might be of interest more generally.

Geoff Taylor

View from Above No 37:
Cropmarks of a possible long barrow and Romano- British enclosures

Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane

The aerial photograph shows the cropmarks of a possible long barrow and adjoining enclosures near East Martin on Cranborne Chase, taken from the north. Most of the information here comes from a paper written by Michael Gill of the Avon Valley Archaeological Society ("AVAS") about a geophysical survey undertaken by the society in 2017.

In recent years aerial photos available in Google Earth have revealed many interesting features, albeit often faintly. Most recently, LiDAR scanning of parts of the country has taken place with the results made publicly available. With suitable filtering and processing, LiDAR data and imaging can reveal many features not previously recognised; in the New Forest this has resulted in teams investigating these features to see what is archaeological. Long lost ancient monuments can be found by diligent research, which is basically the story here.

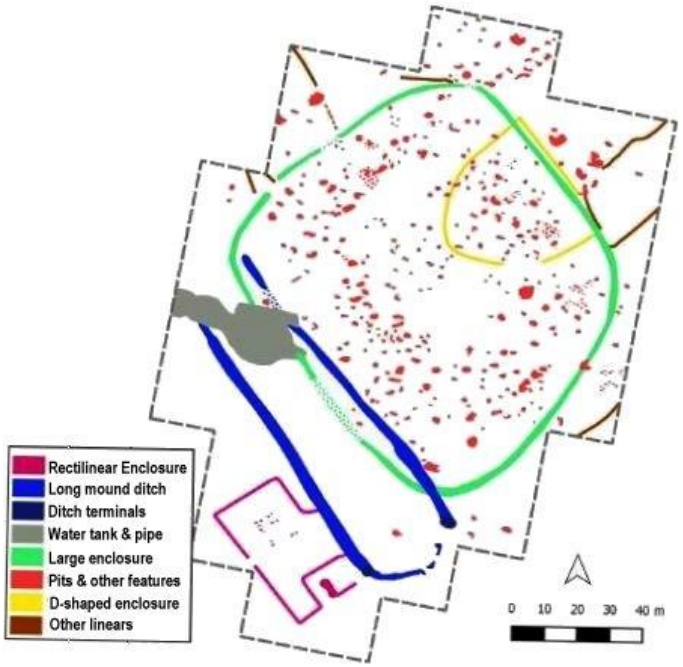
The 'long mound' remains visible in the landscape, whilst the large O-shaped enclosure next to it and several other features shown in the photograph have been known from cropmarks for many years. In the 1970s the RCHME clearly didn't think that the mound was a Neolithic long barrow, though accepted that it was of long barrow proportions at around 100m long. A more recent comprehensive volume[1] on the archaeology around Bokerley Dyke described it in similar terms to the RCHME as "of uncertain origins".

The large O-shaped enclosure was identified as the site of a Romano-British settlement based on surface finds including pottery and saddle quern fragments. Fragments of brick and tile were indicative of at least one building there. Its positioning next to the mound was thought to show that the two were related.

However, AVAS's studies of both Environmental Agency LiDAR data and aerial photographs showed that some of these conclusions might be flawed. The mound seemed very clearly to be tapering (i.e. trapezoidal) and to be flanked by parallel ditches, consistent with it being a long barrow. It also seemed that the ditches might continue around the south-eastern end of the mound, suggesting a long barrow of the 'Cranborne Chase type'. Further, it appeared that the enclosure ditch was both

slighter than the flanking ditch and didn't respect its presence, passing closer to the mound, i.e. that it was of later date.

The gradiometer survey undertaken in September 2019 basically confirmed these points and showed some very clear features, as seen on the interpretation plot. A modern water tank and pipe obscured any other results from one area, and there are no discernible features on the mound. However, the two long ditches beside the mound are very clear, with that to the south west better defined and around 3.5m wide. At the south eastern ends of the two ditches are strong anomalies around 3.5m diameter, possibly pits, beyond which a slighter intermittent ditch curves around the end of the mound. This does fit well with a 'Cranborne Chase type' of Neolithic long barrow.



The large enclosure contains many pit-like anomalies that seem not to be randomly distributed. For example, there are few near the ditch, which might suggest there was a bank, with other empty areas that were probably for specific uses. Its shape is consistent with the Iron Age or Romano-British periods, and the ditch following the edge of the mound on the south west implies it is rather later than the side ditch it crosses. The D-shaped enclosure is probably later than the large one as, otherwise, it would presumably have shared that ditch (though the fact that it is parallel may well imply that the earlier ditch was still visible).

There are other linear features on the plot, and a further complex of enclosures on aerial photographs, though a wider survey area would be needed to understand these better. Perhaps the most interesting is the rectilinear enclosure with its rectangular pattern of anomalies suggesting a building.

Randomly collected surface finds include 28 struck flints, which could suggest a Neolithic date but are not conclusive. The 176 pottery sherds, including 4 samian and several from the New Forest industry, suggest occupation from the late Iron Age through much of the Roman period. In addition there were fragments of a Romano-British quernstone and Purbeck limestone roof tile.

New Forest beaker with red slip; later 3rd or 4th century.

Whilst there is a need for caution until further work can be done, it does look as if AVAS have, yet again, added to the corpus of long barrows and enhanced our understanding of the monuments on Cranborne Chase. Of course, confirmation of their findings will require a proper field walking survey and some targeted small-scale excavations.

1. Bowen, H.C. 1990. *The Archaeology of Bokerley Dyke*. London: HMSO.

Michael Gill/Jo Crane/Geoff Taylor

Egypt 4: Along the Nile to Aswan

The Nile cruises from Luxor up the river towards Aswan and back tend to stop in much the same places, though not always in the same order. Here I've simply chosen to work southwards, with no stops on the return journey.

The cruise ships dock alongside each other, up to 5 or 6 abreast, so it can be interesting to have a quick look at other ships as you pass through them. It's much more fascinating, though, to watch life on the Nile and its banks, which often looks like something from centuries or millennia past. Jo said that he & Sue don't remember seeing one tractor in the fields, just donkeys and the occasional horse. Life must be quite hard for many, though I remember many smiles from the people we encountered, even when they weren't trying to sell something.

Travelling south, the ship has to pass through the lock at Esna's dam after about 50km. Few tourists visit Esna's temple because, despite being amongst the latest to be built in Egypt, it is poorly preserved. Continuous habitation of the town, including a garrison stationed there from the time of Diocletian in the late 3rd century AD, means that the temple remains are now 9 metres below street level. As well as being a fairly late Ptolemaic construction, although on a much earlier site, it had significant building or decoration work under almost every emperor from Claudius to Antoninus Pius, with more limited and poorer quality work under almost all subsequent emperors up to Decius around AD 250. Other than a possible cartouche of Maximinus Daia (305-313) at the obscure and little known site of Tahta, this is the latest recorded Roman building work on any Egyptian temple.

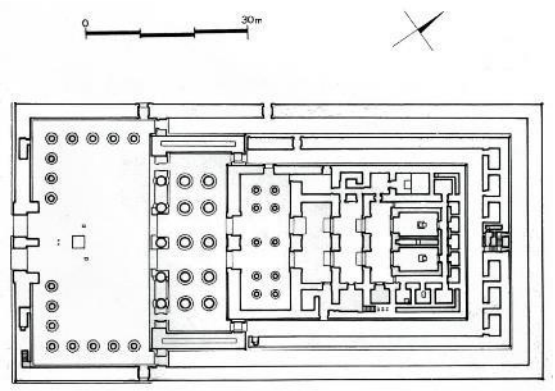
Every cruise ship does stop at Edfu after another 40 km to visit the temple, as it is the best preserved of the major temples and classic in its design. Edfu is relatively unusual in being of sandstone, so didn't suffer from robbing for lime. However, most of the original mudbrick enclosure wall has been lost or

badly ruined (below left) and the modern town covers part of the enclosure and comes very close to the east side of the temple. This was probably due to encroachment after the cult was abandoned later in the 3rd century, when there seems to have been a major economic downturn in the area. It may be related to the rebellion against Diocletian as, like Kom Ombo, the town was garrisoned then with a detachment of 560 soldiers, a presence that seems to have lasted for 300 years.

Built in the Ptolemaic period, again on an earlier site, inscriptions record the temple's completion as late as 57 BC after 180 years of construction and decoration (cartouches of Tiberius are recorded, but it seems likely that this only relates to a little decoration work). It was dedicated to Horus of Edfu, in the guise of a falcon, whose statues stand in the intact inner sanctuary and by the pylon gate. The carved decoration is very well preserved, except where less tolerant later religions, particularly Christians, have defaced it. Much has been learnt of ancient Egyptian life and customs from the inscriptions on these walls, even of their perfumes from the many recipes in the 'Perfume Room'.

The next stop is Kom Ombo, about 40 km from Aswan. The temple here is very close to the Nile and quite ruined as a result, as much has been lost to the river over the centuries. Oddly, the stone was also attacked by insects that bred in the sands near the Nile, until this was cleared about 30 years ago. The ancient town of *Nubt* was renowned for its association with crocodiles, with mummified specimens displayed in a small museum near the water's edge. Little is, though, known of the Roman period town, despite this being another place that was garrisoned under Diocletian.

Kom Ombo temple was, not surprisingly, built under the Ptolemies on an earlier site, with a good deal of Roman period work under 14 Roman emperors from Augustus through to the short reigns of Macrinus and Diadumenianus (217-218). It had a double dedication, to the crocodile god Sobek of fertility and creation,



and to the falcon-headed god Horus, with a unique design of two parallel processional ways not far apart, from the outer pylon gates to the gods' inner sanctums. Originally, the temple was about 100m long, but very little survives in front of the rear 50-60m, and much of that is partially ruined and roofless. There are, though, many reliefs of quite sophisticated surgical instruments still visible, so it clearly had an association with medicine.

Aswan is the final stop for cruise ships before they return downriver. Upstream was always impassable to larger vessels because of the First Cataract (of 6) – a stretch of narrow channels between islands and rocks, with some rapids. The Low Dam, the first on the Nile, was constructed there by 1902, completely restricting passage. It seems that the Aswan souk is a 'must visit' as we all went there and I (Geoff) was cheated by a clever sleight of hand to get a very poorly made T-shirt that wasn't the one I'd tried! We all seem to have tried a 'hubble bubble' pipe in Aswan too (not illegal substances of course).

The First Cataract divided Egypt from Nubia, part of which was under Egypt's control for much of the Old Kingdom (i.e. up to about 2000 BC), but had maintained its own cultures and often small independent kingdoms. During the Middle Kingdom that part of Nubia to the Second Cataract, about 340 km south west of Aswan, was annexed and, by the start of the New Kingdom around 1570 BC, there was little to distinguish Lower Nubia from Egypt. Conquests then expanded the Egyptian Empire much further south, although most of Nubia was lost later, and the Romans had to settle for a southern boundary at Maharraqa (ancient *HIERA SYKAMINOS*) about 120km south of Aswan.

The settlement on Elephantine Island was the original 'border town' and grew to cover the island, although over a third was given over to temples and their dependencies. At least one was built there by the Romans, with two others having Roman work. Little remains of any of them, and Elephantine now seems to be best known for the tropical gardens that Jo and Sue visited.

Aswan, ancient *SYENE*, grew up from the 4th century BC, becoming the centre for commerce and administration. Two small Egyptian temples are known with Roman work, one completely Roman and the other started under the Ptolemies. Again, little remains of either. Aswan was also known for its granite quarries, particularly used for obelisks. Sue & Geoff visited the quarry with the 'Unfinished Obelisk', the largest ever attempted at 42m (137 feet) in length and about 1200 tons, but which cracked before it could be removed.

The next and final article in this series will take us to the temples of Philae and Abu Simbel, both moved away from the lakes created by damming the Nile.

Geoff Taylor/Jo & Sue Crane

EDAS Lecture Programme 2021/22

2021

8th September **Dr Lucy Shipley** ***The Etruscans*** *Zoom lecture*

Based on Lucy's well-received book, the talk looks at this relatively unknown group of Iron Age communities in central Italy, and unravels some of the nonsense written elsewhere about how 'mysterious' they were.

13th October **Prof Dave Parham** ***Bronze Age Shipwrecks***

Dave is the Professor of Maritime Archaeology at Bournemouth University. His talk covers the small number of Bronze Age shipwrecks found in UK waters and looks at the international context to help understand them.

10th November **Francis Taylor** ***The Khmer Empire***

At its height the Khmer Empire covered modern Cambodia and large parts of Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. Francis tells the story of the series of Khmer-speaking kingdoms that flourished in the region between the 4th and 17th centuries, and of the fascinating architecture that they inspired.

8th December **Dr Leonard Baker** ***The Most Riotous Unprincipled Men***

Protest, crime and communal identity in Sixpenny Handley, c. 1800-1850. This period saw great changes to the traditional ways of life for the ordinary peoples of Cranborne Chase, and it was also a time of economic depression and poor harvests. Sixpenny Handley was, and is, the largest settlement on the Chase and resistance to the changes centred there.

2022

12th January **Rob Curtis** ***It's A Grave Business***

Burials and cremations from past to present, together with Church memorials and graveyard headstones. This really is Dead Interesting Dorset!

9th February **Prof Tim Darvill** ***Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones***

Tim will explore the connections between the first monuments along the north-west Atlantic coastlands.

9th March **AGM, followed by** ***Wimborne All Hallows Church and Graveyard***

The church at Wimborne All Hallows was demolished in the 1730s, but the graveyard continued in regular use until 1900. It then became overgrown and the location of the church was lost. This project surveyed the remaining memorials, investigated the historic record and excavated to find the church.

6th April **Dr Denise Allen** ***Roman Glass In Britain***

The Romans introduced glass to Britain following the invasion in AD43. Denise discusses the manufacturing techniques and locations, the resulting trade and evidence for local manufacture.

11th May **Dr Jim Leary** ***The Vale of Pewsey Project - Marden Henge and Cat's Brain Long Barrow*** *Zoom lecture(tbc)*

Jim will give an overview of the Vale of Pewsey project, including the latest account of the investigations at Marden Henge and the exciting excavation of Cat's Brain long barrow.