



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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 – December 2021

Editor's Notes

For our November meeting, we were pleased to welcome Francis Taylor back; he previously stepped into the breach in September 2020 for our first *Zoom* lecture, on The Mayans. He was very pleased to be able to do a live talk this time. Francis has been involved in archaeology since 1965 and has, amongst other positions, been a Trustee of CBA Wessex since 1993. This time his talk was on **The Khmer Empire**, which covered much of South East Asia at its height in the 12th century, as summarised below.

Our 8th December Christmas lecture will be by Dr Leonard Baker, titled *The Most Riotous Unprincipled Men*. Unless you recognise the quotation, you won't know that this covers an important, but relatively unknown, piece of Dorset history. Successive attempts in the early 19th century to disenfranchise Cranborne Chase coincided with other local and national factors to ferment a period of serious social unrest on the Chase. This talk will focus on the events in Sixpenny Handley and the efforts of the Chase Steward, William Castleman, to counter them.

Because of the hall's rules, designed to keep you as safe as possible from Covid-19, I'm afraid there won't be the usual mince pies this year.

Neil Meldrum has provided another article in his series on the evolution of human spirituality and religious experiences. I am, as ever, grateful for articles to fill these pages that provide a different voice than my own and different subject matter. And if, occasionally, some elements are controversial or limited in their scope, perhaps it may spur someone to respond and add their own views or additional information. Here, then, is Neil's 12th item: **The Later Hebrew Experience**. Neil (and I) would be particularly interested to have comments or information from anyone who is familiar with early Judaism.

Other regular contributors include Vanessa Joseph, this time with two items, firstly: **Rare opportunity to view Victorian Christmas cards at museum**. Then, following on from Dave Parham's talk last month where he reviewed the work on HMS Invincible, Vanessa and Sara's article tells us more of their latest volunteer work on this project: **HMS Invincible 1744: the BIG move**.

Of course, there's also Alan Dedden's **Weblinks** and **Highlights**, now on the 43rd outing, and Jo and Sue's aerial photographs in **View from Above No. 40: Longford Castle, Wiltshire**. Finally, the newsletter includes the return of the Roman epitaph series with **Remembering the Romans XV**, and a short piece on **A few of Dorset's famous trees**.

With our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,
Geoff Taylor

The Khmer Empire – Lecture by Francis Taylor



At its height in the 13th century the Empire covered modern Cambodia, large parts of Thailand and Laos, and Vietnam except for the coastal regions. The Dai Viet lived in northern coastal Vietnam whilst the centre & south was inhabited by the Cham people, the Khmer's traditional enemy.

As you can see, Angkor Wat (1) is often very crowded, but photographs below will show you that some equally impressive temples are little visited. In fact, with care, it is even possible to visit Angkor Wat at a quiet time. Serious tourism to the temple probably started after the Paris Colonial Exposition in 1931, where a life-size replica had been created. The French had invaded Siam, as Thailand then was, and taken over Cambodia as a 'protectorate', in 1863 following Angkor Wat's rediscovery by French explorers from the 1850s, and especially Henri Mouhot in 1860. Before that there are reports from Portuguese visitors in 1585 and descriptions from Japanese Buddhist pilgrims in the 17th century; they left inscriptions and a map of the temple thought to have been drawn in 1630.



Numbers relate to sites in the text except close to Angkor Wat (1)



Of course, other temples were being discovered after Angkor Wat, and the earliest known photograph is that here of Bayon in Angkor Thom in 1909. Although that is only a little to the north of Angkor Wat, many were slowly being found in the wider region. This picture, like some below, shows that a key issue in discovering new sites is similar to Mayan ones – they have been covered and destroyed by the jungle. Angkor Wat was little affected by conflicts in the region, though many temples were badly damaged. However, looting has been a greater reason for losses, starting with the earlier explorers and continuing today, but particularly prevalent after the Khmer Rouge were removed from government in 1979 and then continued to wage a long guerrilla conflict for almost 2 decades.

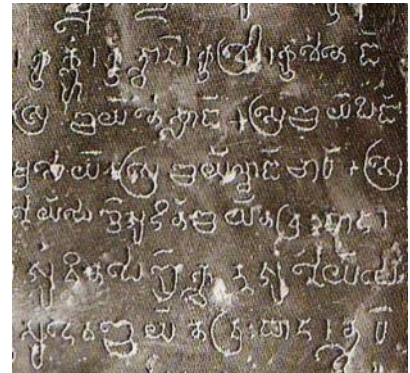
There has been very little archaeological research until relatively recently. As with most of the Victorian adventurers, many early explorers showed little interest beyond taking relics home. Some restoration started after 1900, although it was often poorly done. Subsequent conflicts militated against work as, indeed, did the difficulties of access through and in the jungles. Only the temples were built in stone, whilst palaces and other buildings were of wood and other perishable materials, so that finding and interpreting the latter required some sophistication in techniques. Whilst palaces are large and relatively easy to find, the same is clearly not true of smaller features. Only in the last decade or two, with LIDAR and proper excavations, are we starting to fully understand and date the huge extent of settlement and

development, such as planned urban centres, public waterworks, highways and bridges.

Useful written records are also fairly limited. It is known that manuscripts survived until at least the 17th century, but none are known to remain. Inscriptions, often on stone stelae, are known from the 6th



century in Sanskrit, with the earliest in Khmer dating to the early 7th century. Those in Sanskrit, like the 10th century one on the left, are mainly poems extolling the rulers' virtues in building temples. The Khmer inscriptions are generally inventories of temple offerings and possessions; the one on the right is dated to the 7th century.

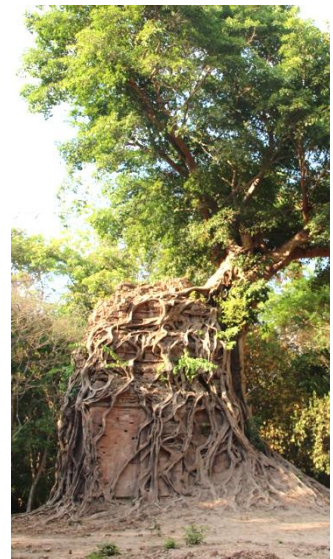


Sanskrit is the classical language of India, the sacred language of Hinduism and the language of classical Buddhist texts.

During the local Iron Age, c.500 BC-AD 500, the Khmer peoples were trading with the Indian subcontinent, and aspects of Indian civilisation were a strong and lasting influence from at least the 2nd century AD – especially in religion, writing, art and architecture. The early Khmer kingdoms were then starting to emerge, and can be probably be said to fully exist by the 4th century, though we don't know the names of all the kings (rather inaccurate records exist from Chinese traders, with one problem being the difficulty of translating Khmer names into Mandarin). Francis told us not to try to remember the kings' names, so there aren't too many here!



Among the early kingdoms Angkor Borei (2) from the 5th century is known for its wonderful statues. It is linked to the coast, and to the earlier site of Oc Eo (3) by canals over 100km long. Sambor Prei Kuk (4) from the 6th/7th century had 3 groups of temples, each within walls about 250m on each side, and shrines both within and outside the walls. Despite being badly damaged by American bombing, with craters still visible, and with some of the Khmer Rouge mines still not cleared (a huge and dangerous task), some of the shrines are still in use (true, also, in other temples). One of the shrines is a good example of how the jungle, here a fig tree, holds buildings together whilst destroying them.



Whilst there is no evidence of standing armies, the kingdoms did fight each other and eventually, in AD 802, Jayavarman II succeeded in uniting them all into the Khmer Empire. Although the capital moved several times, it was usually at or close to Angkor. The state religion was Hinduism for most of the Empire, and iconography was primarily Hindu, derived from their mythology such as the *Puranas* – Sanskrit verses telling of events in the lives of the gods and the never-ending struggle between them and the demons. The typically pyramidal shape of a temple was a representation of Mount Meru, home of the gods, and temples were covered in reliefs, mainly on religious themes. Some of the carvings at Angkor Wat are over 50m long, so that



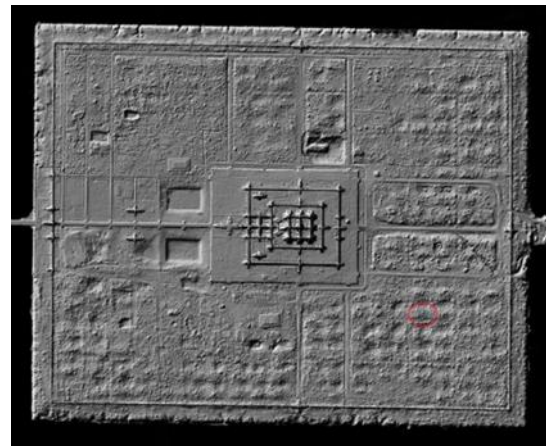
shown is just a small fraction of one, with demons pulling on Vasuki, the Great Snake, whilst the gods pull on the other end.

With the kings being polygamous, and succession not necessarily father to son, succession rivalries and even revolts were common; invasions weren't unknown, e.g. the Chams sacked Angkor in 1177. Each king wanted to build bigger and better – new temples, palaces and often a *baray*. These artificial lakes could be huge and far larger than needed for water supply, but their significance is unclear. Of course, stronger kings and those in more peaceful times could have much more of a lasting impact than others and conduct more extensive building programmes.

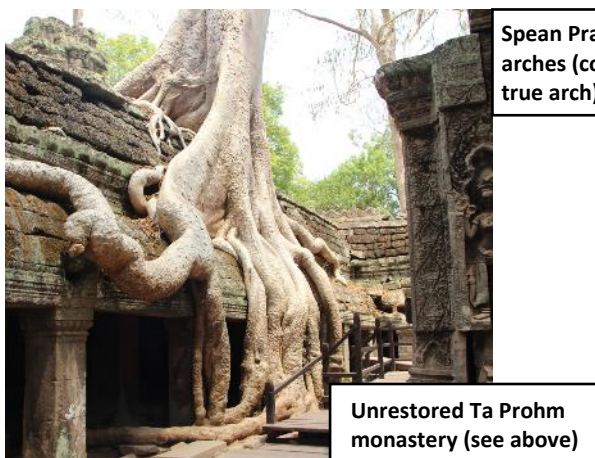
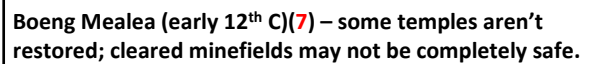
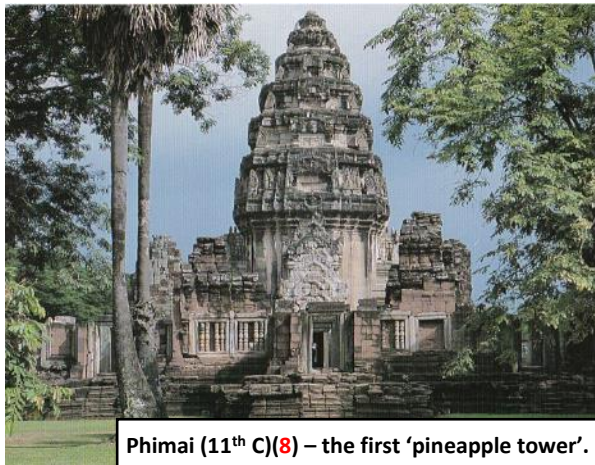
A key example is Jayavarman VII (ruled 1181-1218), who came to the throne in troubled times but had been a military leader as a prince. He restored Khmer power, punished the Cham and oversaw a massive building programme, which included public works such as hospitals and reservoirs. He built the huge Bayon temple and surrounded it with the city of Angkor Thom, adding Preah Khan and Ta Prohm (picture below) temples nearby. He was the first Buddhist ruler, but this was reversed by a later king and Buddhist images destroyed or adapted.



From the end of the 12th century the empire suffered successive invasions from Thailand and local uprisings of subject peoples. By 1327, when the last Sanskrit inscription is known, only a Cambodian kingdom remained. Although the extensive empire had clearly gone, some sources date the end of the empire to 1431 when Angkor was abandoned and the seat of power moved east to the Phnom Penh area. In any case, I'll finish with just a few of the wonderful images that Francis showed us.



Top left: Bakong (9th C) about 12km SE of Angkor Wat – the first sandstone 'temple mountain'.
Above: Lidar image of Angkor Wat within its moat, showing evidence of numerous wooden buildings.
Left: Banteay Srei ('Citadel of Women'; 10th C) (5) – considered the highest achievement of Khmer art and architecture, though commissioned by a Brahmin rather than a king.



Geoff Taylor

The Later Hebrew Experience

How close the kings were to the gods in the states of the early first millennium BCE Middle East remains a matter of contention. It is clear that in the Hebrew states of Judah and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Israel, there was a conscious move to secularise the king and separate him from Yahweh or any form of divinity, probably for the first time in history (at least in the history of the Middle East).

A 'Yahweh Alone' movement developed in some Hebrew circles, independently of anything happening elsewhere. That didn't necessarily mean the denial of other gods, only an obligation not to worship them. The worship of Yahweh eventually triumphed because of the Hebrew prophets who, unlike the many similar 'holy men' in other Middle Eastern cultures, were unwaveringly devoted to Yahweh and considered themselves the intermediaries between Yahweh and the people.

After the apparent excesses of king Solomon in the latter half of the 10th century BCE, the early Hebrew state of Israel split into Israel and Judea. El, his supposed son Baal, and El's wife (or possibly Baal's wife) Asherah, were the principal deities of this region – Ancient Canaan. They maintained a strong hold on the people, including the Hebrews, but were vehemently opposed by the early Hebrew prophets. There are no contemporary written accounts of these early prophets, only accounts from Deuteronomy much later, though these clearly illustrate the growing significance of the early prophets and the 'Yahweh Alone' movement. Elijah, in the 9th century BCE, was probably the first true Hebrew prophet; a revolutionary, like the subsequent prophets, in denouncing the long-held conservative polytheistic traditions.



Isaiah, in the 8th century BCE, attacked the polytheism of the Jerusalem Temple. It is clear that he looked upon Yahweh as a universal god – a god of all the peoples – although still not necessarily the only god! Isaiah was overwhelmed by his contact with the divine Yahweh, who he saw as an intimate god full of sorrow, not the triumphant god of Moses. The extremely difficult role he accepted was to move the people away from the old gods and the old ceremonies to a new conception. It seems that he perceived the overriding role of compassion, which would become one of the hallmarks of religious evolution during the Axial Age – the period from c. 800 -200 BCE when new religious systems developed across the civilised world.

This role was continued by the prophets Amos and Hosea, also in the 8th century BCE; they railed against the apparent growth in social injustice brought on by the new prosperity of the age. They were the first to emphasise the personal relationship between Yahweh and the 'Children of Israel'; neither kings nor



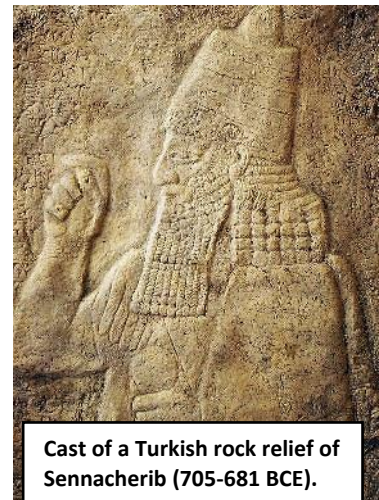
Assyrian cavalry relief (British Museum).

priests were needed to mediate. Israel is portrayed as the unfaithful wife of Yahweh, rejecting Yahweh's love by following false idols, though Yahweh remains willing to take her back. Amos castigated the people for neglecting Yahweh's laws and attacked their social wickedness. Hosea was more concerned with love, the love of a father for his child, and inward devotion to Yahweh. The sin that is now denounced is the oppression of the weak and the poor by the strong and the rich, and Yahweh takes absolute precedence over everything. Just before the Assyrian conquest of Northern Israel in 721 BCE, Hosea rejected kingship entirely. The ability of the prophets to challenge kings directly was clearly an indication of the weakness of the Hebrew monarchy, but it was also a demonstration of the level of passion felt by these prophets.

Assyria was intensely militaristic, but there was an equal intensity in their ideology. The predominance of Ashur, their principal god, was required to be recognised by all subject peoples, including the Hebrews. The evolution of Hebrew religion may be seen partly as a response to the Assyrian challenge, with Hebrew resistance taking the form of increasingly exclusive reliance on Yahweh, though the Assyrian model probably had a decisive influence on Hebrew thought. The 'Assyrian Covenant' was between ruler and subject: the people were required to follow the king's rules or suffer consequences from Ashur. A similar concept was adopted in Israel, but directly between Yahweh and the people. According to the prophet Isaiah, Yahweh's punishment to the people of Israel for neglecting him was Assyrian domination. Israel may have been subordinate to Assyria, but Yahweh was not subordinate to Ashur or any other deity.

In 701 BCE Judah was overrun by the Assyrian king Sennacherib. Where Moses's Yahweh would have cast Assyria in the role of the enemy, the emphasis had changed. The Assyrians were now instruments of Yahweh, doing his bidding by punishing the Hebrews for their 'idolatry', but Assyria would then come to grief when Yahweh ordained it.

The 'Deuteronomic Revolution' was probably orchestrated by the 'Yahweh Alone' movement during this Assyrian ascendancy, with Hebrew scribes working to counter the Assyrian ideological order whilst always fearful of their aggression. The Deuteronomists maintained that the Hebrews were a people apart and that Yahweh was the one and only god – a jealous god who would not countenance any rivals. The core message was absolute and complete monotheism – there is but one universal God, and you shall love Yahweh with all your heart and soul. The institutional achievement of Israel was to found a society not based on the rule of one man who claimed to unite heaven and earth, but on a Covenant between Yahweh and the People. The People should be answerable directly to God, not the king.



Cast of a Turkish rock relief of Sennacherib (705-681 BCE).

In Judah, the Assyrian ascendancy resulted in a temporary diminution of Yahweh's influence; the prophets were voices crying in the wilderness. However, Assyrian ascendancy ended c. 610 BCE when they were destroyed by the Babylonian king Nabopolassar and his Median allies. The temple in Jerusalem destroyed by the Assyrians was restored, all pagan images were dismantled and only sacrifice to Yahweh was permitted. Texts, which may have been the work of the Deuteronomic scribes above, were supposedly discovered in this rebuilding which have (again supposedly) formed the basis of the Biblical *Deuteronomy*, the very foundation of the Jewish faith.

In 587 BCE Nabopolassar's successor, Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and deported many Hebrews to Babylon and other colonies. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel insisted that Yahweh was using Babylon as his instrument to punish the Hebrews for not worshipping Yahweh alone, just as he had done with the Assyrians. Ezekiel again likened the Hebrews to an unfaithful woman, but this time one who was taken back by her husband on more than one occasion.



Reconstruction of Nebuchadnezzar's Ishtar Gate, Babylon (Pergamon Museum, Berlin).

At this moment of spiritual distress, when Israel had been laid to waste, the temple destroyed and the Hebrews exiled, a new Hebrew identity arose and a whole new way of thinking about the divine. The Babylonian Exile forced the Hebrews to re-examine (and possibly rewrite) their religious ideology – the monotheistic reformers, the Deuteronomists, finally established Yahweh as the universal God. They were not prepared to give up on their god and thus their very identity as a people (a determination which has maintained the Jewish peoples, and their

identity as one people, throughout history without necessarily a geographical base, possibly the only people to do so).

But the Babylonian Exile also exposed the Hebrews to Babylonian perceptions of the supernatural and, perhaps more significantly, to the possible influences of Zoroastrianism, then subsequently to Greek rationalism. It was during the Babylonian Exile that the Hebrews first considered that Yahweh created the world, probably because of contact with the cosmological myths of Babylon. The Hebrew afterlife, such as it was, had been a shadowy underworld called *Sheol* where Yahweh, and probably everything else, was forgotten. Quite possibly with Zoroastrian influence, a concept developed of encountering God at some stage after death when He re-enters the world. It can be said that the Jewish religion was born

during the Exile, and succeeded because it was effective in preventing despair and in inspiring hope in the Hebrew people.

Second Isaiah in the 6th century was the first prophet to declare that Yahweh was the one and only universal God, omnipotent and benevolent (taken here as a single prophet, though there are debates about the actual writer or writers). It was Yahweh not Ashur, Baal or any other god who had brought the whole world into being. Second Isaiah urged the Hebrews to look forward to a new show of divine strength. He foresaw the destruction of Babylon, which indeed happened at the hands of the Persians, and the gathering of the Hebrews into a great race who would convert the whole world to Yahweh.



Part of the Isaiah scroll, the oldest surviving manuscript of Isaiah, found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and dating from c. 150-100 BCE.

When the Persian king Cyrus conquered the Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE it seemed as though the prophets, and in particular second Isaiah, would be vindicated. Cyrus allowed the Hebrews to return home, but many elected to stay. Yahweh lost his anthropomorphic persona and took on a 'divine brilliance', becoming an amorphous divinity. During the two centuries of comparative peace under Persian rule, legalistic reforms of the Hebrews introduced the form of Judaism familiar to us today.

The Sabbath developed as a ritual to reflect Yahweh's day of rest after the Creation. The Ten Commandments were sanctified, together with another 600-plus commandments laid out in the



Torah scroll.

Pentateuch. Dietary laws were introduced as a sign of the Hebrews' special status and circumcision became obligatory as a symbol of being set apart; it was important to preserve the ethnicity and spirituality of the Jewish peoples. There was a move from personal inner conviction to the effective organisation of the community under the absolute authority of the law, 'the Torah', supervised by the priesthood. Inter-marriage was prohibited as it threatened the integrity of Yahwehism.

Ideas of the Messiah spread. He would be a king of Israel designated by Yahweh to reign with justice and dignity, but a mortal, descended from

the line of David. With strong Greek influence, after Alexander, there was a fair degree of syncretism between Greeks and Judaism – a melding of approaches – but tensions developed as the Jews denied the existence of any other gods, tensions that led increasingly to hostility.

A growing chasm was separating the world of the Jews from the Hellenistic world. The Jewish God made himself known by revelation, the Greek god, Aristotle's god, is distant and scarcely aware of the world that he has created. More of this and the dawn of Christianity in later articles. For the moment, for my next few articles, I want to cross the world and look at rather different forms of religious and cultural experiences in Ancient China and Ancient India.

Neil Meldrum

[This link](#) will take you to the newsletter of Cranborne Chase AoNB where you can find out more about their events and projects.

Rare opportunity to view Victorian Christmas cards at museum

During December, the Museum of East Dorset will display a selection of Christmas and New Year cards from the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. The cards date from around 1880 to 1914. They can be found in the Stationer's Shop, a room in the museum which was actually a stationer's and tobacconist's shop until 1872.

The first 'commercial' Christmas card was invented in 1843, when Sir Henry Cole had 1000 greetings cards printed for sale in London. When colour printing became cheaper, and postage rates were cut, everyone could afford to buy and send cards to family and friends over the festive season. The Christmas card brought the first high quality 'fine art' images into the homes of the ordinary people. By 1880, over 11 million cards were produced in Britain annually.

Chezzie Hollow, Director of the Museum of East Dorset, said:

"Some Victorian and Edwardian Christmas cards depicted 'traditional' winter or religious scenes, but other designs were based on flowers, birds and picturesque landscapes. This may be because they celebrated the anticipated return of spring. However, humorous and sentimental images of children and animals were also very popular.

"Many people collected and cherished the cards they received. Thanks to these collectors, we still have the cards today. Some of the Christmas motifs will be very familiar but you might be surprised by some of the 'novelty' cards."



From sentimental to humorous- I love the robins. These two and many others are now on display. Card images reproduced with the kind permission of the Museum of East Dorset.

Other festive activities at the museum include The Great Pudding Stir, which will take place in the Victorian kitchen on Saturday 11th December. This is included in the museum admission. For those interested in making their own willow decorations, there will be a craft workshop with festive refreshments on Thursday 9th December.

For further details on these events, please follow this link: <https://museumofeastdorset.co.uk/events/>

Vanessa Joseph

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HMS Invincible 1744: the BIG move

During November, Eileen Clegg, Community Archaeological Producer, The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN), asked for volunteers to help with the next phase of the HMS Invincible 1744 project: the BIG move.

HMS Invincible was the Royal Navy's very first 'Invincible'. She was built by the French in 1744, captured by the British in 1747, and became the blueprint for all Royal Navy 74 gun ships. She sank in 1758 after only 14 years of use. Invincible was a game-changer in the way ships were built and influenced the design of one of the world's most famous and enduring warships, HMS Victory.

HMS Invincible was made a Protected Wreck site in 1980. This meant that the Archaeologists from the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST) couldn't excavate her without ensuring that there was a home for the things that were raised from her as part of the excavation and archaeological research. The National Museum of the Royal Navy agreed to become that home.

Several EDAS members have already worked on the project at the MAST unit in Poole, where artefacts excavated directly from the seabed are recorded and conserved before being acquired by NMRN.

The *Diving Deep* exhibition has been at the museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard for a year. Soon everything will move to the Chatham Historic Dockyard, where a new exhibition starts in February 2022.



Looming large: this interpretation panel features EDAS committee member, Ian Drummond. All the *Diving Deep* panels will be recreated in the new exhibition space at Chatham.

For us, the BIG move involved decanting various exhibition cases. As well as paperwork (cross-checking labels vs. artefacts and ticking things off lists), we needed to wrap objects of all shapes and sizes very



carefully to ensure their safe transit to Chatham. During our two days in Portsmouth, we worked alongside museum curators and conservators. We packed items ranging from everyday objects, such as a wooden tankard, a square trencher and clay pipes to grenades and deadeyes. One of our most challenging objects was an extremely heavy but also very fragile sheave (pulley wheel) made of *lignum vitae*.

Alice Roberts-Pratt, Curator (Exhibitions) at The National Museum of the Royal Navy carefully protects the rigging on this model of HMS Invincible made from the 1744 ship's wood. A purpose-built packaging case is being used to transport the model to its new home.

***Diving Deep* volunteers (Vanessa and Sara)**

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REMEMBERING THE ROMANS XV

In the last article I showed two epitaphs that were mirror images of each other, one to the husband and his wife, the other to the wife and her husband, but with nothing to say who had them made or why. In all the almost 13,000 epitaphs with ages that we looked at, this was the only one like this that we spotted. There were, though, several with the same people repeated, but commemorated by different relatives or friends. In one case, the parents of a young married man commemorated him and his baby daughter and mentioned his wife then, as grandparents, set up a second epitaph for the baby alone. It seems possible that this was the result of an epidemic or the plague.

Military epitaphs tended to be fairly standard, with the soldier often commemorated by his heir, who was usually also a soldier or 'mess-mate' (*contubernium*). Roman soldiers, other than centurions, were

not allowed to marry until the reign of Septimius Severus around AD 200, though ‘common law’ marriages with local women seem to have been fairly common. As I mentioned in an earlier article, there were good records of length of service because of its importance in earning Roman citizenship and a gratuity; in the years of Rome’s expansion this was often a grant of land, usually taken from the conquered people. As here, age was often just taken as length of service plus a number of years, particularly 20.

To the shades of the departed Titus Flavius Euprepetus, a soldier who served 5 years from (around) age 20. Set up by his heir, Publius Cassius Lucanus. CIL 6.7653 Rome

D.M.
T.FLAVIO.EUPREPETI.
MIL.CLASS.PR.MISE.MEDICUS.
DUPLIC.VIX.ANN.XXV.MIL.AN.V.
P.CASSIUS.LUCANUS.HERES.
B.M.F.

Usually of more interest is the information given about the military unit or the soldier’s position within it. Titus was a member of the *Classis Praetoriae*, i.e. of the Praetorian Guard, shown here from the Arch of Claudius in Rome, based with the fleet. He was stationed at Misenum, the most important base for the Roman fleet during the Empire; it’s on the north side of the Bay of Naples, west of the city. He was actually a medic and received double pay (*duplic*).



Originally the bodyguard of the Emperor, the Praetorian Guard were, at different times, based in several places in Italy as ‘keepers of the peace’ and also served on the front line in conflicts. As an élite force they were paid more than an ordinary legionary soldier, ranging from 1.5 to 3 times as much over time. Even after just 5 years’ service, Titus could have left a considerable legacy if he had been sensible. It is, though, unclear why his epitaph was in Rome, 200km from Misenum, though there are several similar ones among the epitaphs in the capital.

Military recruitment was limited to Italy for several centuries during the Republic, but that became increasingly difficult and recruitment mostly switched to the provinces during the Empire. We found two Germans who were part of Nero’s guard, one stated to be Batavian, i.e. from the Rhine delta in the modern Netherlands, though unfortunately his name is missing from the tombstone. They were a warlike people and valued as soldiers, though revolted against Rome during the ‘Year of the Four Emperors’ in AD 68-69 following Nero’s death.

Marcus Vigellius was one of many members of the *vigiles* whose epitaphs we found, though sadly died at age 20 after only 6 months service. Readers of the Falco novels of Lindsey Davies will remember Falco’s best friend, Petronius, a chief of the Vigiles – a semi-military ‘night watch’ particularly concerned with preventing or stopping fires in the overcrowded streets of Rome and Ostia. Rome was very violent by our standards, with a high degree of criminal activity and little in the way of policing or possibility of redress. The Vigiles were the closest thing Rome had to a police force after Augustus added additional responsibilities. However, although charged with apprehending thieves and runaway slaves, Augustus’ main concern was to counter mob violence, and it seems likely that the Vigiles role as police was very limited in practice.



Remains of the Vigiles’ barracks in Ostia, where Petronius is based in the Falco novels.

The next, and almost the last, in this series of articles will look at the epitaphs of charioteers who raced in the Circus Maximus in Rome.

Geoff Taylor

Weblink Highlights November 2021

The logbooks linked to Shackleton and Scott are yet another discovery, not from the ground but from a storeroom. This time it is not a museum storeroom, but the New Zealand Meteorological Service. Discoveries like this make us grateful that whoever found them recognised them and brought them to light.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the item about the rare Iberian sword and other items offered for sale on the internet make us equally grateful that this was also recognised as an illegal sale.

For obscure reasons I Googled (other search engines are available) the woolly mammoth jewellery to find the source item, and was surprised (to put it mildly) to find many items of modern woolly mammoth jewellery available from many sources. I do, however, wonder how much of it is actually made from woolly mammoth tusks, and how much is made from a more easily obtainable alternative material.

Alan Dedden

November Weblinks

Largest Anglo-Saxon Gold Coin Hoard Found In Norfolk [here](#)

Metal Detectorist Finds Small Gold Bible Near York [here](#)

Pompeii Dig Gives Rare Insight Into Life Of Slaves [here](#)

Painting Of William Cecil Found Behind Walls Of Wetherspoons Pub [here](#)

Ancient Hangover Cure Found By Archaeologists [here](#)

Tannery Found Under Fountains Abbey [here](#)

Major Milestone Reached In Replica Sutton Hoo Ship Build [here](#)

Tirpitz Reconnaissance Spitfire Slowly Pieced Back Together [here](#)

New Dinosaur Species Identified From Bones Found On Isle Of Wight [here](#)

Why Did Early Homo Sapiens Migrations Into Europe Fail? [here](#)

Re-examination Of Supersaurus Bones Show It Might Have Been Longest Dinosaur [here](#)

Metal Detectorist Finds Roman Dagger At Site Of Battle With Rhaetians [here](#)

C15th Mass Grave Found At Chan Chan, Peru [here](#)

Huge Pits Circling Durrington Walls Are Man Made [here](#)

'Remarkable' Roman Mosaic Found In Rutland Farmers Field [here](#)

Logbooks Linked To Shackleton And Scott Found In Storeroom [here](#)

Spanish Police Recover Rare 2000 Year Old Iberian Sword Offered For Sale [here](#)

Neanderthal Fossil May Be Earliest Evidence Of Disease Jumping From Animals To Humans [here](#)

Woolly Mammoth Jewellery Is Earliest Example Of Humans Wearing Ornate Decorations [here](#)

Mummy At Least 800 Years Old Found In Peru [here](#) and a video [here](#), or a longer story and video [here](#)

Extinct Date Palms Grown From 2000 Year Old Seeds [here](#)

Pompeii Fresco Puzzle To Be Helped By Robots [here](#)

It would be really helpful if YOU could send Alan interesting weblinks that you spot. All you have to do is copy the URL, i.e. the website address, and paste it into an email to alan.dedden@gmail.com.

View from Above No. 40: Longford Castle, Wiltshire

*Photo by Sue Newman
and Jo Crane*



The castle is the seat of William Pleydell-Bouverie, the 9th Earl of Radnor, and set on the banks of the Avon at Bodenham, only about 4km SE of Salisbury. Despite it being so close to us, I didn't know that the castle existed until I saw Sue & Jo's photograph, and wonder how many of our readers knew. It contains an important collection of art, with links to the National Gallery, but can only be visited on 28 days in 'normal' years and only on pre-booked tours with limited numbers. They book up months in advance – see [here](#).

The manor on the site was damaged by fire in the mid-16th century, and was sold to a Thomas Gorges in 1537. About 3 years later he married one of Queen Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting. They re-built the property as a 'Swedish style' triangular castle, with round towers at the corners, much of which still remains. However, the work ran considerably over budget due to problems with the ground and Thomas persuaded his wife to ask the Queen to grant them an Armada shipwreck. The gold and silver from the wreck paid for completion of the castle by 1591.

The Royal family visited the castle in 1603, when it was described as "a faire new house of stone ... [and with] the fairest garden and green walks". Fresh water was pumped to the 3 floors and it had water closets operated by rainwater. In 1717 it was bought by the Bouverie family, and by 1773 the castle was surrounded by a formal park, laid out with avenues and rides.

However, the family then decided to extend the building into a hexagonal palace. One of the Elizabethan towers was demolished and replaced with a larger one, with new towers and linking wings built. As can be seen, though, the work was abandoned long before completion, with only one new side of the hexagon fully built.

The Longford Castle art collection, formed by successive generations of the family, is one of the finest in the UK. It includes paintings by van Dyck, Hals, Poussin and Holbein, together with British pictures by Reynolds and Gainsborough. There is also, amongst many other things, oriental porcelain, Brussels tapestries, and exceptional 18th century English and continental furniture.



Jo Crane/ Geoff Taylor

A few of Dorset's famous trees

We do seem to have quite a lot, and I'm sure many of you will know the story of some of them. The Damory Oak was covered in the February 2021 newsletter, but there's also:

- Tolpuddle Martyr's Tree, a large sycamore under which it is said that the 6 farm labourers formed a union in 1834. This is probably not the case, though the tree does seem to have been associated with their meetings.
- Judge Wyndham's Oak in Silton in Blackmore Vale, almost as far north as you can get in Dorset. The tree is up to 1,000 years old and named after Sir Hugh Wyndham (1602-1684), a Judge of the Common Pleas who used its shade to think about legal cases. It is said to have been used as a gallows for those convicted of participating in the Monmouth rebellion.
- The Monmouth Ash pub commemorates the ash tree under which the Duke of Monmouth was found hiding after fleeing from the Battle Of Sedgemoor in 1685. Having been discovered, he was beheaded on Tower Hill less than two weeks later. There is, apparently, still an ash tree there, near Horton, but it is unlikely to be the same one.
- Close by, near Woodlands, the Remedy Oak is reputed to be where locals came to see Edward VI, who had stopped to rest after being separated from a hunting party in 1581. They wanted him to touch them as this was believed to cure many illnesses, especially the 'King's Evil' or scrofula, a form of TB.



The oak has been in a poor state for many years and is held up by cables. Over the years it has been set alight, struck by lightning and hit by a lorry. This photograph from 2017 doesn't allow for the latest issue to befall the tree when a limb collapsed earlier this year. I don't know if the recommended extra bracing has been done yet.

- The Posy Tree was a sycamore planted at the summit of South Warren Hill, near Mapperton, to commemorate 80 local victims of the plague in 1582, and who were buried there. Unfortunately, the original tree became unsafe and was removed in 2011, though a replacement was planted in 2015.
- 'Billy Wilkins' is an oak tree in the privately owned Melbury Park, off the A37 Yeovil road about 20km from Dorchester. The origin of the name is uncertain, one story being that Billy was an estate bailiff who set off to warn his Royalist master of the approach of Parliamentary forces but was overtaken and killed. The tree is mentioned in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*, as "Great Willy".

EDAS PROGRAMME

Unless otherwise stated, and subject to coronavirus restrictions, lectures are from 7:30 – 9:30 pm at St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.

2021			
Wed 8th December	Lecture	Dr Leonard Baker	The Most Riotous Unprincipled Men

2022			
Wed 12th January	Lecture	Rob Curtis	It's A Grave Business
Wed 9th February	Lecture	Prof Tim Darvill	Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones
Wed 9th March	AGM & talk	Speaker(s) tbd	Wimborne All Hallows Church and Graveyard
Wed 6th April	Lecture	Dr Denise Allen	Roman Glass In Britain
Wed 11th May	Zoom Lecture	Dr Jim Leary	The Vale of Pewsey Project - Marden Henge and Cat's Brain Long Barrow

DISTRICT DIARY

Things have 'opened up' a little, with welcome lectures by the Blandford Museum Group. They're in planning for AVAS (Zoom until February, for which we issue their kind invitations) and the Wareham Society. There's nothing new since last month, but I imagine more might appear in the near future unless circumstances change.

Do let me know of anything you know or hear about.

2022			
Thur 20 th January	Mycenaen harbours	Blandford Group	Max Macdonald, Southampton University
Thur 17 th February	Schooners: design and people in the 18 th century	Blandford Group	Jack Pink, Southampton University
Thur 17 th March	The Roman town house: Dorchester's hidden gem	Blandford Group	Steve Wallis
Thur 21 st April	Iron Age Excavation at Blandford	Blandford Group	Dan Carter/Peter Cox, AC Archaeology
Thurs 19 th May	Underfloor excavations at Avebury Manor	Blandford Group	Briony Clifton, Avebury National Trust

Archaeology Societies

- **Avon Valley Archaeological Society:** <http://www.avas.org.uk/>
Meetings at Ann Rose Hall, Greyfriars Community Centre, Christchurch Road, Ringwood BH24 1DW, 7:30pm 1st Wednesday of month except June, July & August. Visitors £3.50; membership £10 pa.
- **Blandford Museum Archaeology Group:**
<https://blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk/groups/archaeology-group-revised/>
Meetings normally 7:30pm 3rd Thursday of each month September to May at the Tabernacle. Visitors £3; membership £10 pa.
- **Bournemouth Natural Sciences Society:** <http://bnss.org.uk>
Events at 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BN1 3NS; lectures Tuesday 7:30pm/Saturday 2:30pm.
- **The Christchurch Antiquarians:** <https://christchurchantiquarians.wordpress.com/>
No lecture programme but involved in practical archaeology projects. Membership £10 pa.
- **Dorset Natural History & Archaeology Society:** <http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/events>
Events at various locations in Dorchester, usually ticketed
- **Wareham and District Archaeology & Local History Society:** The website is no longer updated; for information contact Karen Brown at karen.brown68@btinternet.com
Meetings location to be decided, normally 7:30pm 3rd Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.