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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 – January 2022

Editor's Notes

Welcome to another year, which I'm sure we all hope will work out rather better than 2021.

Did you know that 2022 is the centenary of the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb, the 200th anniversary of the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone and the full opening of the long-awaited and spectacular Grand Egyptian Museum at Giza, only 2km from the pyramids? Well, the opening is planned for November 2022, but it's been 'going to open' every year from 2018, though keen observers think they might actually achieve this date. It will be the biggest archaeological museum in the world with more than 100,000 artefacts, including all of Tutankhamen's treasures. It was originally estimated to cost \$500m but is likely to have cost twice that when completed.

I am very pleased to report that Lilian has been given another very well-deserved honour, covered in Andrew's piece: **Congratulations to Lilian Ladle, MBE, FSA.**

The well-attended December talk by Leonard Baker looked at the disturbances around Sixpenny Handley in the early 19th century, and at events, both local and national, leading up to them. In order to give the central theme the attention it deserves, Alan's summary of **'The Most Riotous, Unprincipled Men'** doesn't go into depth on the main characters and surrounding events. They are, of course, mentioned where appropriate, but will be covered separately in more detail in future newsletters.

The January lecture is by Rob Curtis, entitled *It's A Grave Business*, which might be sub-titled 'Dead Interesting Dorset' and may well be relevant to our excavations in All Hallows Churchyard. We will be back in St Catherine's Church Hall but, of course, the rules have changed a little. I'm afraid that there will, therefore, be no refreshments and masks should now be worn (unless exempt). We'll obviously make sure the heating is on and that some windows are open to provide ventilation.

Andrew has providing an update on our other recent excavation: **Keepers Lodge – Assessing the glass assemblage**, whilst Vanessa tells of another archaeology-related workshop at the Museum of East Dorset: **Mosaic workshop at the museum.**

Alan has sent another long list of **Weblinks**, including some that I've found particularly interesting, and his usual **Weblink Highlights**. To say "usual" suggests that this just happens but, of course, it doesn't without a good deal of effort from Alan, who has been supplying us with links to information that most of us will have missed for over 5 years now. Sue Newman and Jo Crane's aerial photographs, and the information that goes with them, have also been entertaining us for over 5 years; this time it's **View from Above No. 41: Priddy Circles, Somerset.**

I've skipped the 13th article in Neil Meldrum's series for this month, not from superstition but because I wanted to include something else. When I wrote about visiting the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo (November 2019 newsletter) I said that we'd recently been to the Danish 'version', and would write

about that. Well, I did, but it's taken some time before I could find space to include it here: **The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark**. I haven't updated it, so a few bits might be slightly out of date. Before the usual listing of the **EDAS Programme** and **District Diary** at the end, there's another in the series on Roman epitaphs: **Remembering the Romans XVI**; just one more to go.

Geoff Taylor

Congratulations to Lilian Ladle, MBE, FSA

We offer our warmest congratulations to Lilian Ladle, who has been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. This is a very exclusive membership and a clear demonstration of how highly Lilian is regarded for her significant achievements in the fields of archaeology, antiquities, history and heritage.

Lilian working on the Druce Roman Villa Monograph, 23rd December 2021.



The Requirements for election of Fellows are quite specific, and in accordance with a Royal Charter of 1751. Each candidate must be nominated by an existing Fellow of the Society and supported by at least 5 (and up to 12) other Fellows certifying that, from their personal knowledge, the candidate would make a worthy Fellow and demonstrates that he or she is "excelling in the knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other nations". Elections are by secret ballot and entirely in the hands of the Fellows. The number of Fellows is limited by statute and currently is around 3,300.

The Society for Antiquaries is a prestigious and important organisation for archaeology and heritage in the UK, with an international reputation. It was founded in 1707, and is based at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. It organises a wide range of activities: a programme of public, educational and academic events, lectures and exhibitions; gives grants for research and conservation; publishes books and journals on heritage topics; and contributes to the formulation of public policy on the care of our historic environment and cultural property.

It has the most important library for archaeological research in the UK, and holds more than 130,000 books, including rare drawings and manuscripts. Its collections include over 40,000 objects, paintings, prints and drawings, and spans millennia of human history, from Neolithic stone tools to Tudor Royal portraits, as well as illuminated manuscripts saved from the dissolution of the monasteries.

This honour is greatly deserved; Lilian's energy and commitment to archaeological research is quite exceptional. We are very fortunate to have worked closely with Lilian, and to have benefitted from her enthusiasm and wealth of knowledge; we should be very grateful that our paths have crossed. For information, she is the third Honorary Member of EDAS to be elected a Fellow.

Andrew Morgan

What is an antiquary?

Over the years many people have asked about the name of our society. For information, it was chosen by the original members, nearly forty years ago, and I suspect they were influenced by the Society of Antiquaries which provided the following, rather satisfactory, explanation:

The term 'antiquary' first appeared in England in the sixteenth century, and referred to anyone who studied or collected the textual or material remains of the past. By the time of the Society's foundation in 1707 this definition still held, and the Society's membership encompassed remarkably diverse interests.

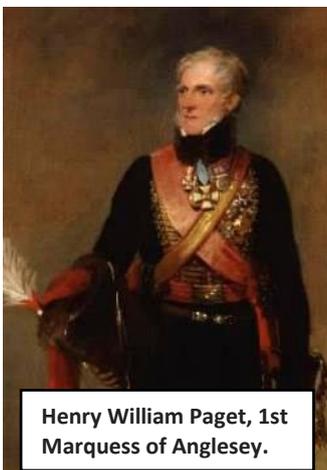
Today, archaeologists, historians, anthropologists and art historians all fall within the sphere of the antiquarian project, unified by their curiosity in the human journey through time. The ambition to preserve and record the past that prompted the Society's first founders has grown to sustain our modern heritage sector, and so our membership includes archivists, curators, conservators and other heritage professionals.

Andrew

'The Most Riotous, Unprincipled Men': Lecture by Dr Leonard Baker

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, changes to agriculture practices, including the introduction of machinery made possible by the Industrial Revolution, coincided with an economic downturn after the Napoleonic wars and successive attempts to disenfranchise Cranborne Chase. These factors were felt particularly by the agricultural labourers of Sixpenny Handley (then known simply as Handley) which was, and is, the largest settlement on Cranborne Chase.

Dorset was regarded as the poorest county in England and farming on the Chase was even harder. This was reflected in the condition of the labourers' employment and housing, and they relied on the traditions of the Chase to improve their lot. Other villagers regarded the removal of ancient customs and privileges as an attack on a distinct local identity, so the changes were seen in a negative light across the non-elite classes. In addition, the location of Sixpenny Handley, remote from any law enforcement, fostered a culture of local independence. This



Henry William Paget, 1st Marquess of Anglesey.

sometimes emanated from the history of Cranborne Chase as a royal hunting ground, but was also sometimes violent. There were cases of theft, assault and murder, as well as the poaching and smuggling activities for which the area was well known.

William Castleman was appointed Steward of Lord Anglesey's estates on the Chase around 1814, and visited Handley soon after. There he found the farms to be in very poor condition, and the village severely impoverished and populated by 'lawless fellows'. Castleman embarked on a series of actions intended to improve the state of Lord Anglesey's farms and reduce the opportunities for lawlessness. This set up a three-cornered structure with the 'Lord of the Chase', Pitt Rivers, and the villagers against change (for different reasons), but Lord Anglesey and other large land owners calling for changes.

It was commonly believed in Handley that their status as a 'Liberty' of the Chase exempted them from the legal restrictions placed upon hunting and wood gathering. Conflict in Handley began with the Court Day Riots of 1818 and 1819. These protests, over the right to hunt deer during the Manor Court, were an expression of Handley's communal identity and the centrality of custom to social relationships. In Handley, it was customary to hold a 'general hunt on the day on which the court is opened'. This had supposedly 'been practiced and deemed a right in the memory of persons near a hundred years of age'. A legal investigation in 1818 discovered that the 'Handley Hunt' had taken place since 'before official recollection' (thought to be 1215), not just by the labourers but by most of the local population. Eventually, judges at the Dorset Assize redefined this custom as criminal, which was seen by the locals as breaking the social contract which allowed Lord Anglesey his position so long as he acted fairly. An anonymous letter sent to Lord Anglesey asserted:

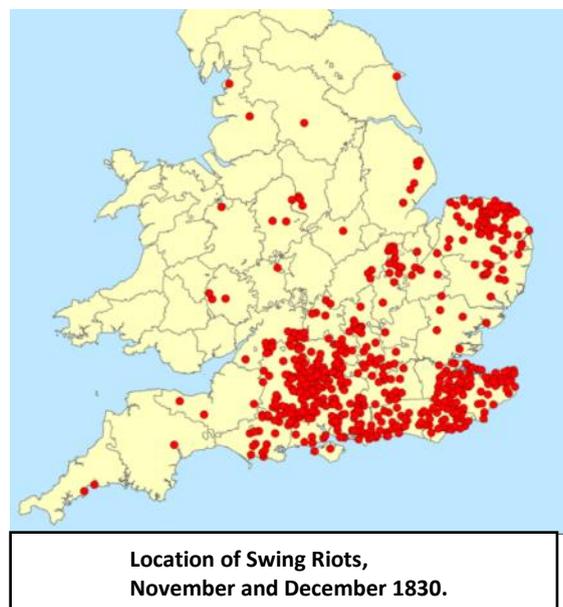
"If your Lordship has authorised these proceedings, you have given up the most valuable rights of your Estate, your court will become not legal, but if it be the work of your Steward... [then] the punishment of being discharged from your service is very inadequate to his status."

In 1818 Castleman attempted to open the court and tried to stop the hunt, where he was '*insulted in the grossest manner by a mob of 4 or 500 [and] in defiance of my remonstrances, the jury, as soon as they were sworn, left the court, with the rest of the mob, to pursue their diversion of deer hunting.*' The jury were mostly propertied men, demonstrating that this was a matter of fairness and local identity rather than rich vs. poor. The following year, the opening of the Manorial Court was the scene of another riot as Castleman and his agents tried once more to stop the hunt. After this Castleman never again opened the Manorial Court and, hence, in the eyes of the locals, removed a cornerstone of manorial life and local identity.

The importance of the social contract was asserted by the villagers again in the events of 1827-29. Castleman sold a significant number of trees on the 'waste of Handley'. This caused an outcry and '*the whole of this riotous place announced that it was theirs*' and that '*the Marquis and Mr Castleman had taken away their hunt and now they wanted to take away the rest of their rights*'. When Castleman's woodcutters arrived in February 1827 they were met by all the male villagers, including several significant local farmers, Captain Peyton (a retired naval officer) and the Reverend Streatfield. They referred back to the events surrounding the Court days of 1818-19, and claimed that Anglesey was not their Lord and had no more rights than they so that he should not cut or carry away any timber.

Following this turning back of the woodcutters, the protesters carried out some minor, but symbolic, acts, such as cutting down two trees to demonstrate their rights. They then occupied the threatened woodlands, and were brought food and drink by the village children; when the woodcutters returned they were pelted with stones and insults. Despite these protests, by March 1827 half the trees had been removed. However, minor acts of resistance continued and, in March 1829, a local paper reported that a number of trees were damaged, barley was stolen, and both were burnt in large bonfires in the coppices. These actions were another demonstration that their object was not to acquire the wood and barley, but to demonstrate their right to do so.

The 'Handley Torches' were first identified in November 1830 as part of the Swing Riots that were sweeping across southern England at the time. Nationally, the Swing Riots were a response to plummeting wages and the introduction of threshing machines, but in Handley this took on a slightly different form as a continuation of the resistance to Castleman's changes. A statute passed in 1828 allowed enclosure of lands on Handley



Common from 1830, which began in September and October that year. During the few months the Swing riots raged, the Handley Torches destroyed all the fencing around the common and the rest of the parish, smashed about 15 threshing machines, as well as chaff cutting and other machines, and sent threatening letters to Castleman. One from November 1830 said:

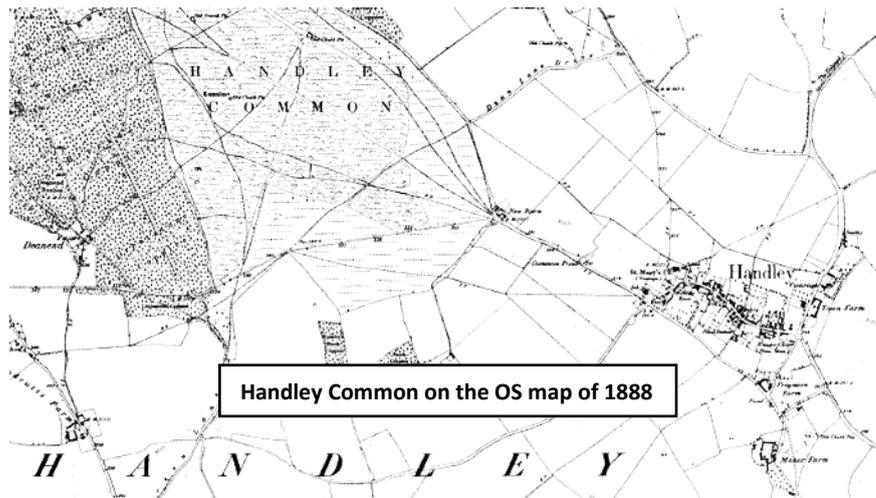
"Mr Castleman. Sir - Sunday night your House shall come down to the Ground for you are an inhuman monster and we will dash out your brains ... your sett ought to be sent to Hell. The Handley Torches have not forgot."

Whilst Swing was suppressed by January 1831 in most parts of the country, in Handley the Torches continued to be active, especially after Castleman refused to help the poor by granting them allotments to grow some crops. During this period the 'Handley Torches' had formalised themselves into something resembling an organisation, potentially even a union (pre-dating the Tolpuddle Martyrs by 3 years!). They were committed to stopping the enclosure by any means necessary, and at this point we have two named leaders emerging: Harry Dibben, a small farmer who lived on the edge of the common, and Captain Peyton, a retired and reportedly eccentric naval officer. They were also supposed to have been supported by the new local curate, Reverend Mason, although little evidence exists for that – most probably he was keeping quiet to save his job.

In 1832 the Handley Torches began a campaign of vandalism and destruction to support a legal challenge to enclosure by Harry Dibben. They smashed fences, let loose cattle into the coppices and assaulted the agents of the Steward. This campaign was, however, conducted in a manner which again reflected the desire to resist the changes to local custom and practice. Eventually, in 1834, Dibben won his case at the Court of the Exchequer and the common was saved, which makes Handley one of very few communities able to prevent enclosure – at least for around 10 or 20 years until Handley Common was finally enclosed. Following their court victory, Dibben and Peyton convened the 'Torches' and hosted a 'variety of rural diversions' on the common 'in celebration'.



The enclosures generated another source of discord, as using the paths and trackways across the unfenced lands had been seen by the villagers as a right, but increasingly seen by the landowners as a trespass and enabler of lawless activities. In 1815 the Stopping Up of Unnecessary Roads Act was passed, followed by the Malicious Trespass Act in 1820 which, by 1853, was responsible for 16% of all summary imprisonments. The Court Day Riots and these other measures seem



to have generated on-going criminal acts, and Handley became known as 'a rendezvous of the depredators' who 'infested the neighbourhood'. In 1829 the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* reported:

In the parish of Sixpenny Handley, Dorset, which in truth might be stated to abound more with the contagion of crime than any other place in the county, a considerable sensation has lately been excited by the discovery of a numerous gang of sheep stealers: the countless depredations

of other descriptions on the property of the residents almost exceed belief, and require a steady and persevering mind to bear up against them. Entering of barns, the breaking and stealing of fences, fowls, vegetables &c. are amongst the hourly thefts committed on the farmers.

Whilst these actions could be dismissed as criminal, and many clearly were, there is a fine line between criminality and protest and many historic events have straddled this boundary. The stealing of fences, for example, could well fall into the category of protest, so are these the actions of the forerunners of the Torches?

The last reference to the Handley Torches was in September 1837 when two bailiffs attempted to remove an outhouse from the commons under the orders of Steward Castleman. When they arrived the villager labourers chased them off but the bailiffs, frightened for their lives, hid inside the outhouse. Whilst the bailiffs hid, the crowd *'fired seven shots into that place by which they were compelled to quit possession through a small window, at great risk of their lives'*. The outhouse was not what we now know as an outhouse (or privy) – it was more likely to be a house outside the village boundary, possibly an ale house.

Prior to the incident above, in August 1837 Castleman had written to Lord Anglesey in exasperation stating that:

"I can assure that nothing but a strict sense of my duty would have induced me to bring this subject under Lord Anglesey's and your consideration and that it will be with extreme reluctance as far as my own private feelings extend that I ever embark in any matter that can bring me into contact with a set of the most riotous unprincipled men I have ever met with."

The continual thread running through most of the events described was not for gain or simple vandalism, but rather to demonstrate that these actions were based in custom and tradition garnered over centuries from the unique situation of Handley and its common on Cranborne Chase, and the strong feeling that if the elite were to hold their privileged position, they had to act fairly when dealing with the local population. Leonard Baker's conclusion from this is that the people of Handley were certainly riotous, but to claim they were 'unprincipled' would be a gross misrepresentation and do them a grave injustice.

Alan Dedden

Keepers Lodge – Assessing the glass assemblage

We were delighted when EDAS member Charlie Hathaway offered to help us assess the glass assemblage we had collected during the excavation we undertook at Keepers Lodge last summer. Charlie, as many of you will know, has spent many years researching and collecting glass from the Wimborne area and other Dorset sites. He often refers to the work he did at Dean's Court and Poundbury, and proudly showed photographs of him working in a midden with Nancy Grace, the National Trust archaeologist.



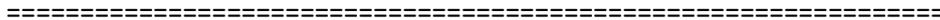
The Keepers Lodge collection totals 1,272 fragments weighing 14,752g. There were no complete bottles, and Charlie explained that the custom was to break bottles after use. The vast majority derived from bottles for wine, beer and mineral water. The latter includes examples of Hamilton bottles, identified by

a torpedo shape and mostly having a pointed bottom. though some have a flat bottom design as shown right. There were several examples of bottles that were sealed with a glass marble, like that below, named Codd-neck bottles. As expected, the majority of the bottles came from local breweries, though there were quite a few 18th and 19th century wine bottle fragments like those to the right below. We concluded that most were associated with the time when the house was a base for shooting parties.



We thank Charlie for his helpful contribution. He has put us in contact with Mike Squires, the leading glass man in the area, who will also have a look at the collection when he can.

Andrew Morgan



Mosaic workshop at the museum

Mosaic is the art of creating images with an assemblage of small pieces of coloured glass, stone, or other materials. The earliest known examples of mosaics were found at a temple building in Ubaid, Mesopotamia (now Iraq), and are dated to 2500 BC. They consist of pieces of coloured stones, shells and ivory.

Mosaic art continued to flourish in Roman times in both private and public buildings across the Roman Empire. With the rise of Christianity there was an explosion in mosaic art when the wall and ceiling mosaic forms were adapted for use in churches.

Today, mosaics are still a popular art form. Artisans and crafters work with stone, ceramics, shells, art glass, mirror, beads, and even odd items like doll parts, pearls, or photographs. Mosaics can be found in kitchen glass tile mosaic backsplashes, craft projects, garden art, as fine art, sculpture, park benches and also in public art.

The Museum of East Dorset is hosting an all-day workshop on Saturday 29th January where participants have an opportunity to learn the ancient craft of mosaic and make a beautiful and unique piece of artwork.

For more information on the workshop go to: <https://museumofeastdorset.co.uk/events/>

Vanessa Joseph



Mosaic Column from Ninhorsag, Tell al-Ubaid, now at the British Museum. Height 59cm.



I (Geoff) couldn't resist including a photograph of what may be amongst the highest expressions of the mosaic-maker's art – Roman wall 'picture mosaics'.

This one of a cat catching a partridge, with ducks, etc., below, now hangs on a wall in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples and came from the House of the Faun in Pompeii. I can't find out its size, but memory suggests no more than 40cm square. There are about 130 of the larger border *tesserae* across the mosaic, so the smaller central pieces must be about 0.2cm across. At this scale it's not surprising that they are difficult to see.

A similar design on a floor mosaic is in the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme in Rome, with another in the Vatican Museum. These seem to have come from

villas around Rome but, of course, have much larger *tesserae* and are quite poorly executed, even crude, in comparison. The information is unclear, but both seem to be early 1st century BC, whilst the wall mosaic is probably a century or more later.

Perhaps something for the participants in the museum's workshop to aim for?

The CBA Wessex January Newsletter can be found [here](#).
It has the usual mix of links to events in the region and to 'local' news, some of which is in Alan's Weblinks below; perhaps the best, and most local, is an item about 4 Dorset hillforts being removed from the 'at risk' register.
There's also a short list of new archaeological publications.

Weblink Highlights December 2021

There seems to be a theme of illegal activity in several of this month's weblinks, from illicitly sourced items being sold at auction to the find of a haul of counterfeit coins, but the item which caused me some head scratching was the Pharaoh's mummy. The mummy has been digitally imaged and revealed that he had been badly damaged by grave robbers but, 400 years after his death, the damage was carefully restored, including re-attaching his head and left arm. The robbers don't seem to have got away with much as he still had gold amulets and a 'unique' golden girdle. As with all archaeology, we only see a small fraction of the past, and that appears to be the case here!

It is almost a year since the last revelation confirming that Richard III was responsible for the murder of the princes in the tower, and now we learn that apparently that was not the case. However, I suspect there will be more on this – for instance, as Richard III only reigned for 3 years until he was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field, why then could not Edward 'come out of the closet'? Maybe it was thought best to continue to 'lie low', as the Tudors were adept at eliminating any and all pretenders to the throne. But then again, Edward's mother, Elizabeth Woodville, was still around and her daughter, also Elizabeth, was married to Henry VII, so how likely is it that Edward remained an unknown in Devon?

Alan Dedden

December Weblinks

Was The Collapse Of 'China's Venice Of The Stone Age' Caused By Climate Change? [here](#)

New Dinosaur Found In Chile With Weaponised Tail [here](#)

Fossil Footprints In Tanzania Hint At Mystery Hominin [here](#)

Fossils Of 11 Dinosaurs Found In Italy [here](#)

Antiquities For Auction Could Be Illicitly Sourced Claims Archaeologist [here](#)

1,000 Year Old Gold Earring Found In Jutland [here](#)

Physical Evidence Of Roman Crucifixion Found In Cambridgeshire [here](#)

Ammonites Were Jet Set Of The Mesozoic Era, Say Scientists [here](#)

Footprints Found In Spain Show Some Two Legged Dinosaurs Were Agile [here](#)

Rare Viking Sword Found On Orkney Has 'Many Stories To Tell' [here](#)

Medieval Pendant Is 1 Millionth Find Under The Portable Antiquities Scheme [here](#)

Farmer on Skye Fined £18,000 For Digging On Neolithic Site [here](#)

Gold Pendant Etched With Runes Causes Anglo-Saxon Mystery [here](#)

Scientists Discover 'Surprising' Cause Of Medieval Little Ice Age [here](#)

Israeli Police Recover Treasure Stolen 2,000 Years Ago [here](#)

Mystery Bishop's Name On Jar In Viking Hoard [here](#)

Brooches Found By Metal Detectorist Reveal Female Vikings Settled On The Isle Of Man [here](#)

Fossil Of Largest-Ever Millipede Found On Northumberland Beach [here](#)

Scientists Identify Perfectly Preserved Dinosaur Embryo About To Hatch [here](#)

Ancient DNA Study Reveals Large Scale Migration Into Bronze Age Britain [here](#)

Wreck Of Last US Slave Ship Found Mostly Intact On Alabama Coast [here](#)

Novice Metal Detectorist Finds Largest Haul Of Counterfeit Coins Buried 220 Years Ago [here](#)

World's Oldest Family Tree Revealed In DNA Study Of 5,700 Year-Old Cotswold Tomb [here](#)

'Rubbish Dump' Found In Ancient Egyptian Tomb Dedicated To Fertility Goddess [here](#)

Metal Detectorists Get Reward For 70,000 Celtic Coins Found In 2012 [here](#)

Rare 'Thunder Bird' Fossil Gives Clue To Demise Of Australian Megafauna [here](#)

Large Roman Fort Built By Caligula Discovered Near Amsterdam [here](#)

Iron Age Settlement Found During Roundabout Works [here](#)

Pharaoh's Mummified Body Digitally Unwrapped [here](#)

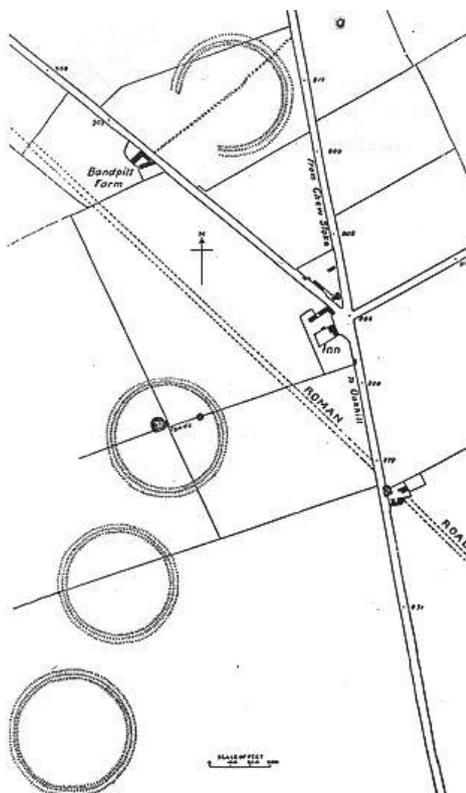
Did Richard III Have The Princes In The Tower Murdered? [here](#)

View from Above No. 41: Priddy Circles, Somerset

*Photo by Sue Newman
and Jo Crane*



Priddy Circles are about 4 miles north of Wells. The photograph was taken on quite a murky day and the enhancement to make the circles clearer has changed the colouration a little, but the almost straight alignment of these 3 circles is obvious.



Each is around 190m in diameter, and there is a 4th circle of similar size about 350m away to the north but slightly out of alignment. This one is incomplete and it seems likely that it was never finished. It is associated with probable Bronze Age barrows, one inside and up to 4 outside. The Roman road from Old Sarum also runs to the north, only just beyond the bottom of the photograph. Around 600m further south there are 2 Bronze Age round barrow cemeteries, Ashen Hill and Priddy Nine Barrows.

The circles are interpreted as Neolithic, as they are probably related to henges but with ditches outside the banks, an arrangement that is said to be unique in Britain. Also, in contrast to henges, which are often on low ground and associated with water courses, Priddy Circles are on uplands with no fresh water nearby. Excavations in the 1950s showed that the banks had stone cores, with post or stake holes on both sides. Further small excavations and geophysical surveys done more recently showed no evidence of further monuments in the gap of the 4th circle, nor any features within the circles that might help to understand their use.

The area is known for its sink holes or dolines, called “swallets” locally, with several incorporated within the monuments. These have caused subsidence in places, some of which is ancient and may have been the reason for abandoning construction of the 4th circle.

About a decade ago the landowner of the southern circle was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £38,000 for the damage his workers had done to the scheduled monument. It’s a pity that similar action wasn’t

taken by English Heritage/Historic England in respect of the damage to one of the Knowlton Circles a few years ago.

Jo Crane/ Geoff Taylor

The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark

The Viking Ship Museum (*Vikingskibsmuseet*) in Denmark is at Roskilde, under 20 miles to the west of Copenhagen and probably best visited by train, a journey of 20-25 minutes. It's a pleasant 25 minute walk from the station through the pedestrianised town centre, past the imposing 'Brick Gothic' Domkirke, started in the 12th century and where Danish royalty have been buried since the 15th century, then down to the museum on the seashore. There is also a bus between the station and the museum.



Museum entry varies in price by season, up to about £18 in summer (2019 price). That's about twice the price of the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo (November 2019 newsletter), but then this is a much bigger site



with rather more to see and do than in Oslo. The apparently excellent, but expensive, restaurant is complemented by a very good café, but there's also plenty of places for a picnic. They have a large shipyard where you can watch, and sometimes try, Viking and later shipbuilding techniques, with lots of hands-on experiences in the summer months. As you might imagine, they have built many accurate replica Viking ships there, looking at the differences between different Nordic approaches, as well as some ships from later periods – in total around 50 to date. Many are moored

in their harbour, some of which you can board. For an extra cost there are also boat trips in some of the Viking replicas, where you can be taught how to row and find out how Viking ships worked under sail.

The Viking ships themselves contrast with the ones in Oslo – 5 rather than 3, but much less well preserved as they were effectively wrecks, rather than burials. There are no artefacts on display as the ships had none when rescued from the sea. They're also younger than the AD 800-900 ships in Oslo, dating from the last few decades leading up to about 1050, but excavated and preserved with much better techniques in the 1960s. Most importantly, they represent a range of types, rather than just the warships seen in Norway, which has provided vital information on how the Vikings dealt with transporting goods and people other than warriors, hardly known before these remains were found.

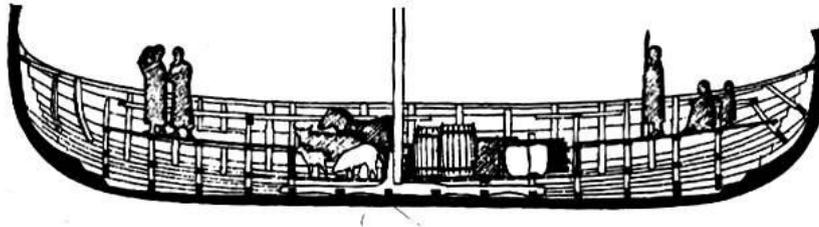


In the 11th century, Roskilde was an important city with a royal residence and bishopric, effectively the capital of Denmark. It was potentially vulnerable to attack from the sea along Roskilde Fjord to the north and, around 1070, ships were sunk in a barrier along the navigation channel to project Roskilde. In 1924, fishermen from the village of Skuldelev cut a new passage through the channel to allow for larger fishing boats and found the remains of these ancient vessels. They weren't excavated until 1962, when a large

coffer dam was built around the remains, allowing excavation after the seawater was pumped out. Although this was then very much like an excavation on land, sprinklers were needed to keep the wooden hulls wet. In the event, parts of 5 ship hulls were retrieved, which showed that the ships were old and much repaired when sunk. After preservation, the reconstructed 'Skuldelev ships' began to be displayed in the newly built museum from 1969.

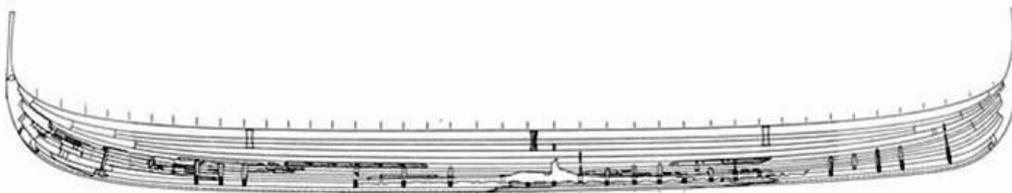


Skuldelev1 was an ocean-going cargo ship, called a **knarr** in Viking sagas, built of oak, pine and lime wood between AD 1030 & 1050, probably in Norway, and originally 16.5m long and 4.6m wide.



Compared with other Viking ships the sides are very high and the bow and stern very full and rounded, so that she had a large, floored, open cargo hold of 35 cubic meters. There were decks forward and aft, each with 4 oar ports for rowing when needed, and the ship has much thicker planking than most Viking ships. This type was used by Viking families moving to places like Ireland, Iceland, and even Greenland.

Although *Skuldelev 2* was very poorly preserved, having been at the top of the barrier, most of the important parts remained in good enough condition to provide a reasonable understanding of its construction. It was a large Viking **longship**, 29 to 31m long and about 5m wide (the longest Norwegian



ship in Oslo is 23m), with a light but sturdy construction based on the design of its frames and thinner planking than *Skuldelev 1*. The 36-38 'rooms' between frames were under 73cm apart, meaning that the 72-76 oarsmen had a relatively short stroke – sacrificing speed for numbers of warriors. Its fairly shallow draught, under a metre, meant that it could travel a long way up rivers and be brought right into, or perhaps even onto, the bank or shore to allow relatively rapid attacks and escapes if needed. Dendrochronology shows it was built near Dublin around AD 1042.

Skuldelev 3, the best preserved of the five (shown in the picture of the ship hall above), was built in Denmark of oak, though is as yet undated. It's a cargo ship a little smaller than *Skuldelev 1* but of a lighter construction, with no floor to the hold and lower sides. Its design meant that it wasn't suited to the open sea, though perfectly adequate for the Baltic and much of the sea around Denmark. This was the kind of ship used to penetrate the river systems of Eastern Europe, Russia and even trade as far as Constantinople.

Confusingly *Skuldelev 4* doesn't exist as the parts identified as a separate ship were eventually realised to be part of *Skuldelev 2*.

Skuldelev 5 was a warship, but only 18m long and under 3m wide. Its 'rooms' were well over a metre long, so that the 24 oarsmen could take much longer strokes than on *Skuldelev 2*. Given its narrow beam, this was potentially a much faster warship and, with a small draught, could navigate very shallow waters. It was clearly much less concerned with transporting large numbers of people and more with speed and access; a classic raider.



Skuldelev 6 is a small vessel, only 10m long and 2.5m wide, built of pine probably in



Norway. Although it had a mast, the remains suggest it was quite small, and insufficient remained to know whether it was rowed. It might have been a fishing vessel, or perhaps a passenger ferry for crossing over a narrow body of water.

Having such a range of ship types, with information from finds of Viking ships elsewhere, obviously gives a solid basis for building replicas, although there always remain questions about construction. For example, whilst the base of masts survive in some cases, full-size masts, sails and rigging generally don't. Roskilde's experimental archaeology in their shipyard is complemented by trial voyages in the reconstructed ships to understand, and perhaps improve, the ship's sailing characteristics. These are often undertaken by the "Guilds" – groups of volunteers who make up the crews. Four longer voyages were made in 2019, the longest from Høyanger in the Sognefjord north of Bergen, and along the Norwegian coast back to Roskilde. That voyage was done by *Sea Stallion (Havhingsten)*, the largest vessel that they have built so far at 29m long. This longship, of the same design as *Skuldelev 2* and with a crew of 60, became famous for its 2007 voyage to Dublin then back to Roskilde in 2008. More on that in a future newsletter.



But there are actually now considerably more ancient ships at Roskilde, as 9 were found during excavations for an extension to the shipyard and harbour in 1997. These date from the Viking age into the early medieval period, though there is little information on all but the one below. I think that excavation work has been completed and it seems that preservation, detailed recording and analysis are probably continuing for most of the finds.



Roskilde 6 was a warship, built some time after 1025, that had been dragged into the shallows of the Viking harbour and partly broken up. It's the longest Viking ship yet found at 36m, 4m longer than the *Mary Rose*. With 'rooms' 80cm long and 78 oarsmen, it was probably owned by a very important person, perhaps even royalty – it may well be a ship that's mentioned in literary sources. It is rather narrower than *Skuldelev 2* at under 4m, so with some similarities to *Skuldelev 5* but more of a ship like the former – for attacking with large numbers of fighters. Preservation has clearly been completed as this is a well-travelled ship, having been part of exhibitions in, at least, London, Berlin and Philadelphia over the last few years. Frustratingly I've not been able to find out where it currently rests; perhaps the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen.

The ships in the Roskilde Museum obviously have a lot less visual impact than those in Oslo, and there's nothing to see in the way of items from the ships. However, there is a lot more to see, learn and do relating to the wider range of Viking maritime transport and travel, including films in English about the discovery and excavation, as well as about the voyages of *Sea Stallion*, on which there will be more in a future newsletter.

Oh, and if you fancy a little light pillaging, you can buy your very own Viking longship.

Geoff Taylor

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Remembering the Romans XVI

A previous article showed one of the many known epitaphs of gladiators, though chariot racing was even more popular than gladiatorial combat as it took place over 50 times a year in Rome. It seems to have excited passions and violence similar to that amongst the most rabid South American football fans.

Hyla charioteer of the Blue team who lived 25 years. He won 7 two-horse chariot juvenile races and 21 four-horse chariot races, was withdrawn 3 times, came second 39 times and 3rd 41 times. CIL 6.37385 Rome

HYLA AGITATOR PANNI
VENETI VIX. ANN. XXV
BIGA PVERIL VIC. VII
QVADR XXI REVOCAT III
SECVNDAS XXXIX
TERTIAS XLI

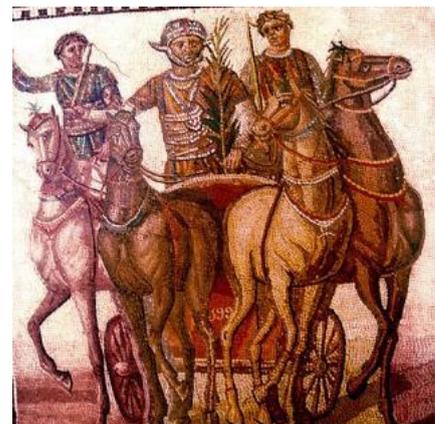
Biga is the two-horse chariot and Quadr(iga) the four-horse; the 4 bronze horses on St. Mark's Basilica terrace in Venice are survivals from an ancient sculpture of a quadriga (well, copies; the originals are now in a museum). The meaning of *panni* is uncertain.

Chariot racing was possibly even more dangerous than being a gladiator and it is entirely likely that Hyla died in a crash. The most popular seats in the circus where races took place were on the curved end where most crashes happened. There were few rules and almost any means of beating your opponents seems to have happened, such as whipping them or pulling them out of their chariots; there are even stories of attempts to poison charioteers or their horses.

The Circus Maximus in Rome was the biggest sporting arena ever built, holding around 200,000 people.



On race days it is said that the city emptied so much that soldiers had to be posted around the streets to deter thieves and looters. Betting on one of the 4 teams – Red, White, Blue and Green – was an important reason for attending the races, though the poet Ovid wrote a poem where the reason was to pick up young women by going to their 'rescue' among the jostling crowds. The pictures show mosaics of a member of the White team (left) and a



race winner from the Red team (right).

The most successful charioteer we know about was born c.AD 104 – Gaius Appuleius Diocles, a Spaniard by birth; the mosaic above right is thought to be him. A monument was set up by his fans in AD 146 which records, in too much detail to cover here, a career of 24 years till he retired aged 42 years, 7 months and 23 days with winnings of almost 36 million *sesterces*. As I mentioned in the February 2020 newsletter, earlier estimates of the current value ranged from \$100m to \$15 billion, in ever more breathless articles about him being the wealthiest sportsman ever. 36m *sesterces* is 360,000 *aurei* containing 2,600kg of gold, worth around £110m at the time of writing, though that isn't necessarily the purchasing power. I asked in the earlier item if anyone had a better idea of the modern equivalent, though no-one told me their view.

Gaius first joined the White team and then transferred to the Greens, thought to be the most popular. After a few years he moved to the Reds, perhaps where he could more easily become their best charioteer, and stayed with them. Amongst the many claims about his success, it seems that he raced almost 180 times each year throughout his career, winning over a third of his races and coming second just under a third of the time. Perhaps most impressive is simply that he survived and, reportedly, retired to a rural setting near Praeneste, now Palestrina, about 35km east of Rome. His death is said to have been recorded on an epitaph from his son and daughter.

I had recorded the age above as the age at death in my earlier research but, now that I've found online access to some of the corpus of inscriptions (<https://cil.bbaw.de/>), I realise it was when Gaius retired. I've not been able to find his epitaph to see how long he lived after retirement.

This is the penultimate article in this series - just one more, on the tombstone from Dorchester that made me think of writing this series in the first place.

Geoff Taylor

EDAS 2022 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.

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

Nothing seems to have changed here since last month, but I believe 'in person' lectures are in planning for AVAS (Zoom until February, for which we issue their kind invitations) and the Wareham Society.

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

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