East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

Founded 1983

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NEWSLETTER – February 2022

Editor's Notes

I'm very pleased that we had a good turnout for January's talk by Rob Curtis, despite the lack of mince pies. The presentation is summarised a bit further down: **It's a Grave Business**, concentrating more on the history of burial than the Dorset epitaphs that Rob also showed us. It's just a coincidence that the very last of the Roman epitaph series, **Remembering the Romans XVII**, is in this edition, and it's about an epitaph from Dorset. I should say that the order of articles isn't necessarily that of these notes.

This month's talk is by Tim Darvill of Bournemouth University, entitled *Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones - the first monuments along the NW Atlantic coastlands* – looking at the connections between those early Neolithic monuments. That is, of course, at St Catherine's Hall, 7:30pm Wednesday 9th February.

Following on from Andrew's piece on the origins of the Society's name last month, it was lovely to receive the message below from Haydn Everall, one of our founder members from nearly 40 years ago. In respect of that upcoming 40th anniversary, Andrew has sent a message to everyone: **EDAS 40th Anniversary: 1983-2023**. Please do respond to that.

Andrew has also provided two more interesting 'Post-excavation Updates' on recent research results. Number 2, following Andrew's report on the Keeper's Lodge glass last month, is **Keeper's Lodge Excavation – Message in a bottle**, followed by an item on a particular bottle type, kindly provided by Mike Squires who has been assessing the assemblage: **Pontilled Hamilton Bottles**. The third update is **Wimborne All Hallows Excavation – Medieval floor tiles research at Shaftesbury Abbey Museum**.

Neil Meldrum's 13th article appears in this edition, having skipped last month, this time looking to the Far East in **Ancient China – The Prelude**, covering many things I, at least, didn't know about early Chinese civilisations. There will be a few more on ancient China when I can fit them in, before switching attention elsewhere. Many thanks to him for all his work on these articles.

The long-running series of **Weblinks** and **Highlights** from Alan Dedden is here, as well as a further article based on Sue Newman and Jo Crane's aerial photographs: **View from Above No. 42: Hod Hill**.

As ever, this edition finishes with our **2022 Programme**, then the **District Diary**, though with nothing new since last month I'm afraid.

Geoff Taylor

I read with interest Andrew's short note on the naming of EDAS: *What is an antiquary?*

As the founding member who suggested the name, I can confirm that it was accepted unanimously, by all six of us! It was our ambition in those early days to follow in the footsteps

of the great Antiquarians such as Stukeley, Aubrey, Pitt Rivers and the like, who undoubtedly had a similar passion to question, learn and discover.

We were greatly motivated by Tim Schadla-Hall, who made us acutely aware of the post-war destruction which was taking place on a massive scale by modern farming methods. Incidentally in Tim's 30yr EDAS anniversary lecture to us, he confided that when he heard the name East Dorset Antiquarian Society he gave us little hope. He did graciously apologise.

Although moving away from the area some years ago, I have been able to follow with great interest the "doings and diggings" of EDAS, and I feel that the gravitas implied by the name has certainly been lived up to and deserved over the four decades. Keep up the good work.

Haydn Everall

EDAS 40th Anniversary: 1983 - 2023

As you may have noticed, next year we will be celebrating our 40th year. To mark this impressive landmark we intend to put on a few activities.

Many will remember 10 years ago when we celebrated our 30th anniversary – we held a rather pleasant Garden Party at the Priest's House Museum. Although the rain kept us indoors, we enjoyed a great turn out and old friends of the society, Mick Aston and Teresa Hall, were surprise visitors. We also invited members to write articles for the newsletter recalling their fondest memories of the society. We enjoyed a number of charming stories about the origins of the society, their antics on various archaeological excavations, and their adventures on field trips when people used tents and caravans as they travelled across the country using maps and compass rather than satnavs and mobile phones. We also created a photo diary of the first 30 years and asked members to submit suitable photographic images. We thanked Steve for digitising a number of slides and old photos, especially from John's collection.

With this latest anniversary we have thought of three celebratory events so far:

1. **Summer Garden Party**: to be held at the renamed Museum of East Dorset
2. **Day Conference**: to celebrate the archaeology of Dorset. We will invite a selection of learned friends of the society to give a series of talks.
3. **Define Dorset in 40 archaeological items**: we will ask members and friends to submit their selection of 10 favourite items from Dorset, whether an archaeological monument or a single artefact. These will be compiled, the top 40 listed and potentially described in the newsletter in instalments over the year.

Please, if you have any other ideas or want to get involved contact me or another committee member.

Thank you,
Andrew

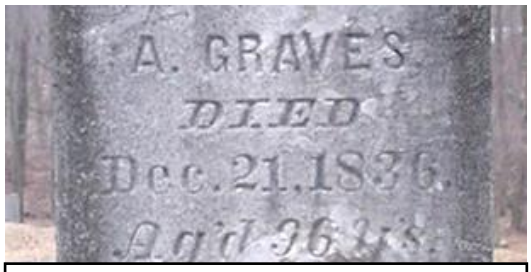
It's a Grave Business – Lecture by Rob Curtis

The first part of Rob's talk took us through a history of human interment and if, when and how people were commemorated over the millennia (I should say that I've added information to make a more continuous story). The second part was a look at specific epitaphs from across Dorset, covered fairly briefly here.

Rob told us that the earliest known evidence of deliberate burials 'respecting the dead' were those found in the Qafzeh cave, near Nazareth in Israel, from over 100,000 years ago. In fact, this is a controversial area in terms of dating, which early modern human species the remains belonged to and, of course, exactly how the people were buried. Some animal bones were found there, and at the similarly dated Es-Skhul cave on Mount Carmel, that might have been deliberately placed grave goods.

One of the Qafzeh skulls (replica)

Clear evidence for respecting the dead and for forms of funeral ritual comes rather later, and we'll jump forward in time. One theme is the burial of items with the person that related to their life or for use in an afterlife, though clearly not practised in all cultures and all periods of time. The vast amount of goods buried with Egyptian Pharaohs is well known, notably from Tutankhamun's tomb. As Rob pointed out, Tutankhamun was a relatively minor, short-lived, ruler; how much would have been found in Ramesses the Great's tomb if the grave robbers hadn't been there first?



From Little Meadows, Pennsylvania, USA

Elaborate tombs and valuable grave goods were, of course, usually reserved for the wealthiest and most important people in society. In most places and times, at least until relatively recently, that was also true about the commemoration of individual people; beyond the better-off, few had individual burial places with lasting, named epitaphs. To a large extent that was true of the Romans, as we saw in the newsletter series on Roman epitaphs. Both burial (or 'inhumation') and cremation were practised in the earliest years of the Roman city state, but cremation became the dominant approach from around the 2nd century BC. For the less well-off, ashes might be placed in niches in huge structures called *columbaria* (literally 'dovecotes'), but even the cost of this would exceed the means of many, let alone the cost of an (optional) inscription. By the mid-2nd century AD inhumation had become the norm, only partly explained by the rise of Christianity.

The earliest formal burial known in Britain is the 'Red Lady of Paviland', found in a cave on the Gower peninsula in 1823; actually this Upper Palaeolithic man lived about 33,000 years ago. His partial skeleton was covered in red ochre and accompanied by shell beads and carved ivory. Formal burials from the Mesolithic in Britain are hardly known except, perhaps, for 'Cheddar Man' from Gough's Cave dating to c.10,000 years ago, and it's not certain he was deliberately buried. The Neolithic, from about 6,000 years ago, is mainly characterised by large collective monuments for the dead, such as the long barrows of Wessex, with 60 or so in Dorset.

As we move into the Bronze Age, around 2,500 BC, individual interments become the norm, both inhumations and cremations at different times, a picture repeated in the Iron Age and for much of the Saxon period. Despite elite and even 'kingly' burials, judging from the range and amount of wealth buried, we rarely have even a suggestion as to who was buried.

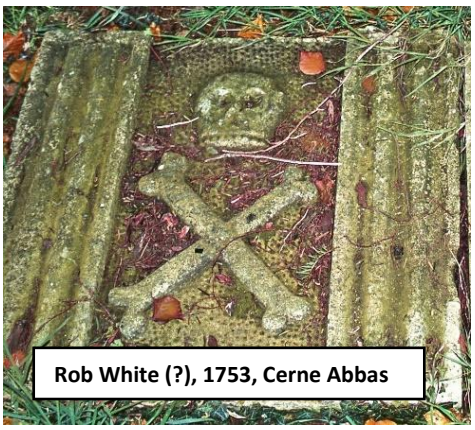
As above, the Roman period provides an exception, though named epitaphs in Britain are much less common than elsewhere. Here, too, there is the start of the Christian tradition of burial rather than cremation, ostensibly without

The late 6th century Prittlewell burial, thought to be Prince Sæxa, brother of King Sæberht of Essex.

grave goods. Even so, many east-west Roman-period burials at Poundbury, outside Dorchester, retained the provision of a coin for the ferryman. I imagine a similar lingering of pagan traditions happened as Christianity took hold in Saxon England. Even much later, a superstition remained in some areas that the Devil would claim the first burial in a new graveyard, with a dog buried as a precaution.

The churchyard provides a setting for the church itself, a spiritual centre and sacred space, and 'God's Acre' may well be considerably older than the church at its centre. It is thought, particularly in the rural South-West, that the northern part was often left unconsecrated for burials of suicides (not allowed to be buried in consecrated ground until an Act of 1823), excommunicates, etc., though evidence is limited. Some thought the space was left for the village youth to play games, and certainly secular uses of churchyards weren't uncommon, particularly fairs and markets which added to the priest's income (e.g. in Hogarth's painting of the 1832 Southwark Fair). In fact, as at Wimborne Minster here, secular uses of churchyards continue to this day.

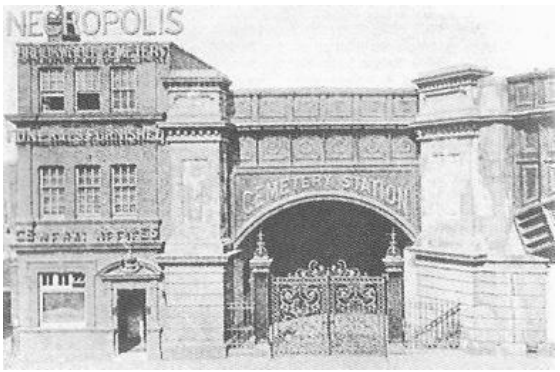
Apart from the rich, often with expensive tombs inside churches from the 12th century, the only memorial to those buried was usually a communal cross until the mid-17th century; the few headstones dated before that are mainly thought to have been set up retrospectively. There is, though, some evidence that individual wooden markers were sometimes used before that but, of course, they don't survive. Each church or diocese made its own rules about permitted material but some, like wrought iron, also haven't survived well. Lasting memorials were still the prerogative of the better off; even the guinea charged for up to 36 characters on a shared stone was beyond the majority of people.



Rob White (?), 1753, Cerne Abbas

Like most things, fashion affected headstones, such as the pre-occupation with mortality in the 17th century giving way to themes relating to resurrection in the 18th, when footstones with initials and date were also fairly common. Early in the 19th century crosses became more prevalent, as they were no longer seen as 'Popish', but mass production then brought in a vast range of 'standard' designs.

High mortality meant graveyards often became overcrowded but, for a long time, older remains were just cleared away or cut through. New burials would be placed on top of previous ones, and the ground rose leaving paths in holloways. In some places, old bones were removed to an ossuary, as at St Leonard's Church in Hythe. Privately owned cemeteries opened to meet the need in the first half of the 19th century, such as Highgate Cemetery in 1839, but it was the Burial Acts from 1852 that put a national system in place, with town councils enabled to establish municipal cemeteries and making it an offence to disturb a grave. In 1854 the London Necropolis railway station opened at Waterloo for transport to the new Brookwood Cemetery near Woking, moving to Westminster Bridge Road in 1902 but closing permanently after massive bomb damage in the Blitz.



But it was the introduction of cremation that reduced, though has never removed, the problem of space in graveyards and cemeteries. The Cremation Society was founded in 1874, mainly concerned with public health, but faced considerable public opposition. An acre adjoining Brookwood Cemetery was bought and a crematorium built by 1879, but the first cremations

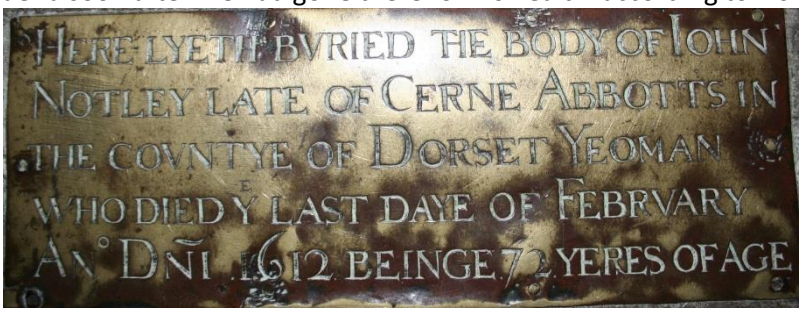
there weren't until 1885 because of the threat of legal or parliamentary action. Thomas Hanham of Manston House near Sturminster Newton, son of Sir James Hanham of Wimborne, built a crematorium in his grounds. His wife was cremated there in 1882 and his mother a year later. There was no prosecution and, actually, no law against cremation, even if many acted as if there was, but clear regulation had to wait until Acts of Parliament in 1900 and 1902. Attitudes changed a little after WWI, and public acceptance was boosted by Bishops and other important people being cremated, but more so just after WWII with two Archbishops adopting cremation. Despite the Pope not accepting cremation for Catholics until 1963, a fairly constant 70-75% now opt for it.

Dorset has its fair share of famous people buried in the county. Often, unlike Thomas Hardy at St Michael's, Stinsford (or rather just his heart; the rest is in Westminster Abbey), their fame is likely to be more fleeting, like Robin Day in Whitchurch Canonicorum.

The epitaphs of military people also abound, including the first Victoria Cross awarded in British home waters – Jack Mantle, buried in the Naval Cemetery at Portland in 1940 – and the holder of the first aviation VC. William Rhodes-Moorhouse VC was killed in 1915 when his son was just 4 months old; the son became a fighter ace, earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and was killed during the Battle of Britain. They are now together in the grounds of Parnham House, Beaminster in this fitting memorial. The memorial to Sir John Colquhoun Grant in St Mary's Church, Frampton records that he had 5 horses shot under him at Waterloo, though he lived 20 year after that. Serjeant William Lawrence's story is just as remarkable, having escaped death several times in the Peninsula War and at Waterloo by bullets hitting different bits of his equipment. He started what is now the Bankes Arms at Studland, and his 1869 memorial is in the churchyard of the Norman church there.

As well as the good, we obviously have the 'not so good', like the smugglers Isaac Gulliver at Wimborne Minster and Robert Trotman at Kinson. According to Robert's headstone, he was "barbarously murder'd on the shore near Poole" in 1765; in fact shot by customs men whilst trying to load smuggled tea. James Warden had apparently been a distinguished officer in the Royal Navy but, by all accounts, was a very difficult person, to say the least. His tabletop tomb in St Andrew churchyard, Charmouth, records that he was killed in a duel in 1792. His wife died 7 years later, apparently of 'pining sickness', though everything suggests that she welcomed the duel and it's outcome.

Benjamin Jesty, who died in Worth Matravers in 1816, has been sorely used by history, in that he invented and used vaccinations against smallpox before Edward Jenner. There is, at least, a blue plaque on his farm. John Menzies died in Madeira soon after 'he had gone there for his health' according to his memorial (sorry, not quick enough to record when and where!). And finally, the brass plate here, in Cerne Abbas church, isn't that unusual except that John's farm in America was compulsorily purchased by the government to build the Capitol in Washington DC.



For those wanting to know more about memorials, Rob recommended Hilary Lees' 2002 book *Exploring English Churchyard Memorials*, which is "an authoritative but eminently readable" survey of those listed as Grade I or II* across the country.

Geoff Taylor

REMEMBERING THE ROMANS XVII

A long time ago, in the first of this series of articles, I mentioned a tombstone recently found in Dorchester which had spurred me to start the series, and said that I'd write about it. The following is mostly based on an article in the newsletter of the Association for Roman Archaeology[1].

This funerary dedication was, as far as I know, first reported in the Roman Society's journal, *Britannia*[2], in 2018. It was apparently "found in East Street in 2016", in the garden of a house being renovated. The inscription is on a rectangular slab of Purbeck 'marble' 64cm wide, 11cm deep and 1.15m high, though it's broken at the bottom with perhaps 20cm or more lost.

Photo © ArtAncient

L.DIDIVS
L.F.FAB
HERACL.
BASSVS
VETERAN
EX.LEGII AVG
ANN LV
T.F.I

This commemorates Lucius Didius Bassus, son of Lucius (L.F.), of the Fabia voting tribe and originally from *Heraclea* in Macedonia. He was a veteran of the Second Augustan Legion who had apparently died at the age of 55. T.F.I stands for *testamento fieri iussit*, i.e. that the monument was set up by an heir in accordance with Lucius' will. The experts suggest that the top of the broken part shows the start of the letters CL, perhaps the beginning of the heir's name. I can't see it!

The *Britannia* article says that the slab was used as a step to the house, presumably prior to the renovation work. That seems rather odd as the front, though unpolished, is unworn and the back is reportedly rough. It may simply have been found in the garden, as in another report.

In the 1940s Dorchester was thought to have begun around AD 70, but subsequent research suggests rather earlier origins, perhaps even as early as the 50s. For example, several copies of coins of Claudius have been found, and these seem to have gone out of use very early in Nero's reign (i.e. after 54 AD). Despite many suggestions of Dorchester being founded from or on a military base, evidence of such a base remain elusive; since Lake Farm has been shown to be for a full legion (March 2021 newsletter), a large base wasn't really needed. *Legio II Augusta*, the Second Augustan Legion, under the command of future emperor Vespasian, was recorded as conquering this part of southern England. It was based for a time at the Lake Farm fortress, just outside Wimborne, and is known to have been in Exeter by AD 55, perhaps in Gloucester for a period, and then at Caerleon from 74 or 75. We saw a religious inscription on Purbeck marble from a Second Legion centurion in the Caerleon Museum on the 2018 field trip.

In fact, Purbeck marble was widely used from soon after the conquest, especially across the southern part of Roman Britain, apparently reserved for military or official use like the famous Cogidubnus (or Togidubnus) dedication in Chichester. We might guess that Lucius joined the military around age 20 and served 25 years, suggesting he lived about a decade after being discharged, probably from a legionary base or as part of the creation of a veteran colony.

The inscription is unlikely to be earlier than the later fifties AD, but it's impossible to determine an exact date. It doesn't seem likely that the tombstone came from far away, which might suggest that, at least, a vexillation from the Second Augustan could have been based in or near Dorchester. Of course, Lucius may have chosen to settle away from his last posting, perhaps somewhere he had served previously, though with less likelihood if the distance was large. More importantly, to my mind at least, the epitaph shows perhaps a decade of settlement and that Roman-style wills were used in the town (i.e. the Roman legal system was in operation), with clear implications for the establishment of Dorchester.

This is the last article in this series; I hope you've found some of them interesting.

1. Sparey-Green, C. 2019. The new inscription of the second Augustan legion from Dorchester, Dorset (*Durnovaria*). *ARA News* 41: 51-56.
2. Tomlin, R.S.O. 2018. III Inscriptions, A. Monumental 1. *Britannia* 49: 427-428.

Geoff Taylor

Weblink Highlights January 2022

Not as many weblinks as usual this month, which is a surprise as those countries using archaeology as tourist bait are normally very active in releasing 'exciting new information' about this time.

Living in Dorset, it is encouraging to see another area highlighting the importance of archaeology and historic remains. One can only hope that this enthusiasm is infectious, and that we see some tangible evidence of it here in Dorset from our elected representatives. The item about the teenager finding an Anglo-Saxon skull is, however, a lot more encouraging.

Alan Dedden

January Weblinks

Italy Returns Parthenon Fragment To Greece here

Horned 'Viking' Helmets Were From Another Culture here

Ichthyosaur Fossil Found At Rutland Water here

And How It Was Protected here

Teenager Finds Part Of Anglo-Saxon Skull In River Stour here

Badger Thought To Have Found Hoard Of Roman Coins here

Medieval Warhorses No Bigger Than Modern-Day Ponies According To Study here

Vast Romano-British Settlement Found On HS2 Route here

Rare Roman Wooden Sculpture Found In Buckinghamshire Ditch here

Stairway Sealed For 500 Years By Elizabeth I Discovered here

Poole Museum To Get £2.2M Lottery Grant Revamp here

Trail Of African Bling Reveals 50,000 Year Old Social Network here

Rare Henry III Gold Coin Found By Metal Detectorist In Devon Field here

Climate Change Threatening Archaeology here

The Museum At The End Of The World Reopens For Business here

Newcastle Seeks It's Place On Hadrian's Wall Trail here

The February newsletter from The Council for British Archaeology, Wessex can be found here.

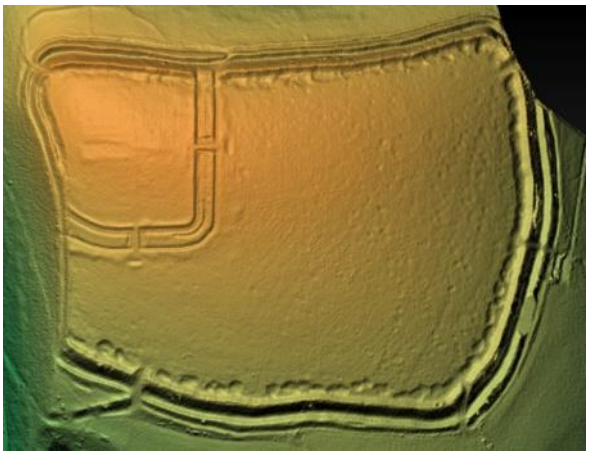
View from Above No. 42: Hod Hill

Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane
(view to east)

It seems unlikely that I can add anything about this site that many readers don't already know. Perhaps, then, some of the following will be useful reminders (particularly as some of this information comes from earlier newsletters – April 2014 on Dave Stewart's lecture and February 2018 reporting on Sue & Jo's talk, which included another of their photos of Hod Hill.

Close to Childe Okeford, at 144m Hod Hill is high above a meander on the River Stour with wide-ranging views over rural Dorset, and is home to wildflowers, including orchids, and butterflies. At 22ha (54 acres) it encloses the largest area of any of Dorset's Iron Age hillforts. Uniquely, there's a Roman fort of *c*. 4.5ha in the north-west corner.

The hillfort has huge double ramparts except on the west, where the much slighter defences are above a very steep slope. 'Steepleton Gate' at the north-east corner was one of two original entrances, with an in-turned opening and a huge horn-work channelling any approach. The other Iron Age entrance was 'West Gate' at the south-west, with an extra line of rampart and ditch. The line of quarry pits along the inside of the fort, except on the west, is visible on the photograph but clearer on the LIDAR image (north at top) below. Their spacing suggest that the ramparts and ditches were built by different work-gangs.

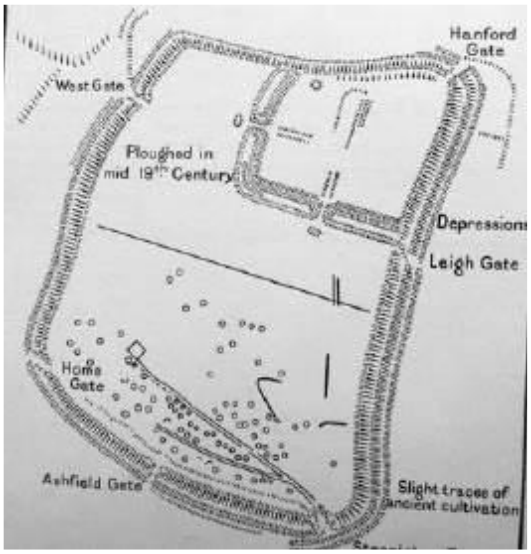


The Roman fort was built soon after the AD 43 invasion as Vespasian's forces moved through Dorset. It seems to have been the base for around 5-600 soldiers, perhaps a mix of regular legionaries and auxiliaries, and 250 cavalrymen. The Roman-period entrances are 'Hanford Gate' in the north-west corner, into the Roman fort, and 'Ashfield Gate' in the middle of the east side (the remaining entrance, 'Home Gate' in the south-east corner, is thought to be medieval or later). Traditionally, this was one of the hillforts conquered by Vespasian's army as described by Suetonius, but it seems more likely that Hod Hill had been abandoned for a century or so before the Roman invasion. The Roman military stayed for under a decade before the legions moved westwards and into Wales; often suggested as occupation ceasing in AD 51.

The top of the hill remained under pasture until 1857, when high prices for grain resulted in the western half being ploughed, including within the Roman fort. After that ploughing continued until just after WWII, leaving only the south-east corner untouched. Excavations took place in the 19th century, but seem to have revealed little of significance. From the 1830s, local grocer Henry Durden collected items found at Hod Hill and may well have encouraged farmworkers to dig for them. Some were sold in his

shop, but he amassed a nationally significant collection by his death in 1892, subsequently bought by the British Museum. In the early-20th century Heywood Sumner echoed the antiquarian Charles Warne's 1865 lament about the destruction of the remains on Hod Hill. He did, though, produce a good survey map in 1911, and noted the continued presence of numerous pits, mounds and hollows relating to Iron Age roundhouses.

OGS Crawford's pioneering work with aerial photography in the 1920s included photographs of Hod Hill and the map shown here, giving the location of many roundhouses. The first properly conducted excavations were probably those under Sir Ian Richmond in the 1950s.



However, he seized on the finding of *ballista* bolts across the site, and particularly those concentrated in one area, as being evidence of a Roman attack including a surgical strike on the chieftain's hut. This sort of bias to a battle scenario was common then (*cf*. Mortimer Wheeler), especially as many archaeologists were ex-soldiers. It is more likely that the bolts were evidence of target practice by the Roman garrison.

However, Richmond did excavate some of the hut circles, with finds including Iron Age pottery, hoards of slingstones, horse trappings, iron sickles, currency bars and many Durotrigian coins..

Starting in 2005, Dave Stewart surveyed the whole area with a variety of geophysical equipment suited to finding different features. This was clearly a considerable task, covering 750 grids of 20m x 20m after climbing the hill with his equipment. It did, though produce spectacular results, showing that features can be discerned right across the fort despite the plough damage. A dendritic system of trackways runs across the hillfort from Steepleton Gate, the main path running towards the corner of the Roman fort. Huts by the track have no ring ditches and many have more than one hearth; they're suggested as cooking huts. Several of the huts were within enclosures, which may mean they belonged to the leaders of local tribes or clans. An anomaly on the northern edge appears to result from the waste from a smithy (Richmond had found slag), whilst some alignments of posts suggest commercial buildings (rather than storage or living accommodation).

Iron spikes around the edge of the Roman fort suggest towers and other defensive structures. Geophysical evidence suggests that at least one barrack block may have burnt down (other information on the site says that the Roman fort was burnt down before the military left, though I've not seen the evidence for this). There would seem to have been a round house within the Roman fort, a feature previously thought to be a barrow, but confirmation and dating would require excavation. I know Dave was interested in that, but it seem the National Trust remain against it.

Geoff Taylor/Jo Crane

Post-excavation Update 2: Keeper's Lodge Excavation – Message in a bottle

When working on archaeological excavations it is often said that the time spent on post-excavation tasks is roughly 4 times that spent on your knees digging. Post-excavation research is very time consuming, but it is usually also very interesting and rewarding. Often we bring in experts to help us complete the work.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we retrieved a good assemblage of bottle fragments during the work at the Keeper's Lodge during the summers of 2019 & 2021. We were extremely grateful to Charlie Hathaway for introducing us to Mike Squires, a highly respected bottle collector from the area. Mike came and examined our assemblage and picked out one specimen for particular attention.

We had recorded it as a fragment of a green glass bottle of a typical Hamilton shape, with a flat bottom. We knew it had been used for mineral water, made in the 19th century and was bottled in Dorchester. However Mike generously provided us with the following background story about mineral water production and this particular bottle type.

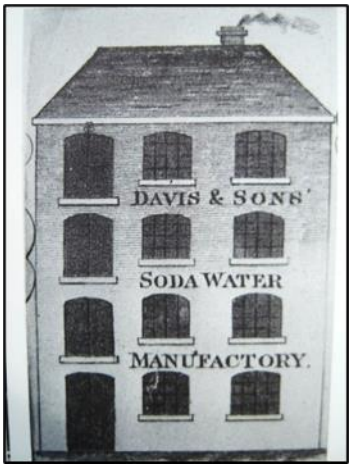
Mike showing our modest fragment to David Smith

Andrew Morgan

Pontilled Hamilton Bottles – used by Davis & Sons Dorchester

A rare example of a complete bottle, NOT from Keeper's Lodge. Photographs courtesy Andy Lane.

These bottles are particularly interesting in the history of soda water production in Dorset; they are the earliest known bottles from the first Dorset soda water manufacturer, established in 1826. The bottle was moulded and then the base attached to a pontil rod to enable the lip of the neck to be carefully finished. This resulted in a rough area on the base of the bottle known as a pontil mark, as shown. This technique was discontinued around 1830-1835 for this type of bottle, so it is quite likely that such bottles date *c*. 1826-1830. As far as I know, only two whole Davis Hamilton bottles of this age exist.



It is believed that the person who first used this type of bottle was Nicholas Paul a former business partner of Jacob Schweppe. Jacob Schweppe & Co, based in Geneva, was the first company to produce artificially carbonated soda water. The business started around 1780, and in 1792 Schweppe opened a factory in London. Soda water was marketed and sold as being beneficial to health, and was made by some chemists on a small scale. By the early 19th century other soda water manufacturers were starting up in competition to Schweppes.

Davis & Sons, chemists of Dorchester, were known to have supplied Schweppes Soda Water in the 1820s. They started their own production lines in 1826, probably in Trinity Street, Dorchester. In 1835 they extended their premises and introduced the first steam engine to Dorchester. It provided 8 horsepower, and the new factory was mentioned with great pride in the Dorset County Chronicle "… *they have just put up a steam engine of considerable power …. [the factory is] amongst the most complete works of the kind in the kingdom*"

Despite being in business for 40 years, only three whole Davis bottles have survived, including the two mentioned above. This is not unusual; there are many 19th century soda water producers for whom no bottles have survived. Contrast this to late 19th /early 20th century bottles, such as those used by The South Western Mineral Water Company (Est. Wimborne 1887), where thousands of whole bottles of various types have been dug up.

Mike Squires

Post-excavation Update 3: Wimborne All Hallows Excavation – Medieval floor tiles research at Shaftesbury Abbey Museum

Some of the most interesting small finds recovered from our excavations at Wimborne All Hallows are fragments of medieval floor tiles. In total we have 58 fragments, 32 containing part of an inlaid design. No complete tiles were recovered as this is material that had been discarded during the demolition of the church; any complete examples would have been removed.

Two old friends of EDAS, Diana Hall and John Winterbottom, have agreed to prepare a report on the tiles. They once lived nearby in Wimborne St Giles and were very interested in the graveyard; John was involved in clearing the site over several years. Diana is a highly regarded specialist in medieval tiles and has made copies for use in a number of churches, including Winchester Cathedral. They use traditional methods to make replica tiles: the clay is carefully prepared with inclusions removed, then pressed into a tile shape. For inlaid tiles the design is impressed into the clay using a wooden mould, with the design standing proud that John has carefully crafted out of beech wood. A clay slip is used to cover the tile and, when dried, the slip is carefully scraped off the surface to reveal the pattern. A lead glaze is then applied to the tile, which is then fired in a kiln. I was delighted when they agreed to look at our tile assemblage.

Before handing over the material a preliminary assessment was made for our Open Day, to identify the more obvious design types using the A.M. Emden's catalogue in his book *Medieval Decorated Tiles in Dorset*. Most were quite straight-forward, but several will require the expertise of Diana to confirm. Here are a few examples:

Diana and John will consider the fabric of the clay to assess where the tiles were made, potentially identifying the origin of the design and the period when they were made and installed.

In January we were invited by Claire Ryley for a private visit to Shaftesbury Abbey Museum, to investigate the impressive medieval tile assemblage now held in their archive. We thank Matthew Tagney for helping with the arrangements.

Claire showing Diana and John the Abbey catalogue.

Looking for similar examples

The visit didn't resolve all the outstanding questions, but we found several examples featuring the same designs and made of similar clay to those found at Wimborne All Hallows. I can thoroughly recommend a visit to the Shaftesbury Abbey Museum and grounds when it re-opens; our next stop is Gillingham Museum.

Andrew Morgan

Ancient China – The Prelude

The Chinese are a pragmatic people and, unlike most ancient cultures, they did not attribute the creation of the world to some supernatural event or god of creation; the universe just 'happened' and had existed for ever as 'chaos'. From this chaos a giant egg emerged together with a primordial being, Pan Gu (the myths are silent on where or how this egg and Pan Gu were created!). Pan Gu somehow caused the egg to split: the clear white became the Heavens, representing light, order and male, a manifestation of the ancient Chinese conception of Yang, and the murky turbid yolk solidified to become the Earth, representing darkness and disorder, a manifestation of the ancient Chinese conception of Yin. Chinese philosophy required Yang and Yin to remain in harmony, but this was not always the case as we shall see in later articles.

Legend has it that after 18,000 years or so Pan Gu suddenly expired, and the fragmented remains of his giant body became the physical features of the Earth. Evidently this was followed by the reigns of the Emperors of Heaven, of Earth and of Humankind, lasting in all some 75,000 years! An alternate legendary source names the 'Three Emperors' Fuxi, Nuwa and Shennong as reigning for a rather more believable 150 years in total. A further five semi-mythical emperors then came along, each reigning for some 100 years. Many of the arts of civilisation have been attributed to the first, Huangdi (the Yellow Emperor), who supposedly reigned from 2697-2597 BCE. There may be some element of truth in the legend that he was the first to forge some form of unified state along the Yellow River. The last of these five emperors was Shun, who considered his son unworthy of the throne and, instead, appointed his chief adviser, Yu, as his successor. Yu is the fabled instigator of the first Chinese Dynasty, the Xia Dynasty.

Chinese history is defined by reference to its Dynasties, the earliest being the so-called Three Dynasties – the Xia, the Shang and the Zhou. The problem with interpreting ancient Chinese history is separating legend from fact. Although this is the case with all ancient cultures, this problem is exacerbated in China because of the longevity and continuity of its culture. However, a considerable degree of archaeological research has recently been, and is presently being, carried out throughout China, resulting in a general reappraisal of Chinese history and legend.

Chinese civilisation initially developed along the banks of the Yellow River, a rather less hospitable river than the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates or the Indus, the homes of the other three

The Huang He, or Yellow River, has often been called the 'Sorrow of China' because of its frequent but erratic flooding and the sometimes huge changes in its course.

ancient riverine civilisations. It floods frequently and violently, and is apt to change course on occasion over hundreds of miles. The Yellow River valley has a colder climate and a harsher environment than the other centres of early civilisation. But, in spite (or quite possibly because) of these challenging conditions these ancient Chinese cultures developed the ability to survive and thrive, ultimately giving rise to the unique Chinese civilisation.

Archaeology is now shining a light on the early cultures in the Chinese heartland during what has become known as the Jade Age, roughly between 3500-2000 BCE. Unsurprisingly, it was called that because of the number of beautifully worked and exceptionally finely crafted jade artefacts and religious symbols produced in this period. Two major Jade Age centres were Hongshan and Liangzhu. The slightly earlier Hongshan is centred on the northern lower reaches of the Yellow River, in the area of Tianjin on the map above. Its main ceremonial centre, Niuheliang, is a huge site featuring elaborate stone-lined elite graves. It appears that this site collapsed around 2000 BCE because of major climatic changes to colder, drier conditions. Liangzhu was an impressive site further south, just off the map south of Nanjing, perhaps with a population of up to 30,000. It seems to have been a more sophisticated culture than Hongshan, again distinguished by wonderful ritual jade objects. Archaeology shows there were very marked social distinctions.

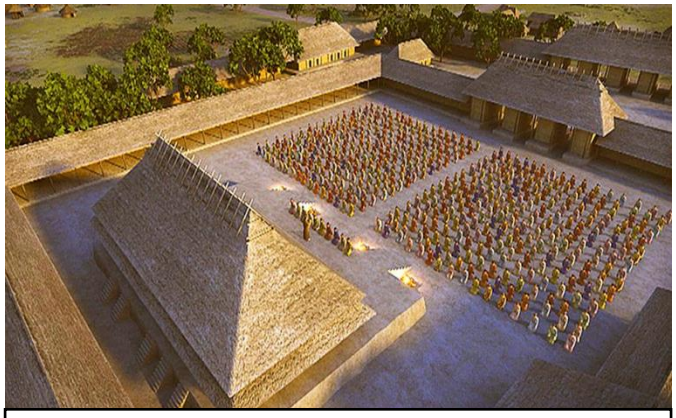
Hongshan jade 'pig dragon' pendant; height *c*.5cm. National Museum of China

Liangzhu black jade *cong* (function uncertain); height 20.5cm. British Museum

The Jade Age culminated with the site of Longshan, which absorbed and eventually replaced both Hongshan and Liangzhu, and grew to dominate most of the middle Yellow River valley. It is clear that warfare was a dominant feature of this society and that Longshan's growth was militarily inspired, absorbing many indigenous cultures and inaugurating the advance of the Han people. The Longshan culture brought the Chinese heartland well into the Bronze Age. Towns morphed into cities and population grew exponentially. Large city walls were constructed, divination and ancestor worship, so important in Chinese history, were evident, as was human sacrifice. Was Longshan the centre of the legendary 'Five Emperors'? Quite possibly, but in all probability they will always just remain the stuff of folk tales.

Because all the ancient civilisations were riverine they all had flood myths, as illustrated in the Bible, and China was no exception. Although he remains a semi mythical figure, Shun's successor, the legendary Yu, achieved fame by taming the devastating floods of the Yellow River. The story is that he worked non-stop continuously for 13 years organising a complex system of dykes, levees and irrigation canals; only then, when he was satisfied that they had all made the right impact, did he take up his role as the first emperor of the Xia Dynasty *c*. 2070 BCE (perhaps a bit later).

The existence of the Xia Dynasty (2070-1600 BCE) is now widely accepted as an historic fact. However, there are no contemporary written records and the archaeological evidence remains vague at best. There was certainly a sophisticated culture around the site of Erlitou, upstream of Longshan (roughly where "River" is on the map) and slightly later. It may well have been the early Xia capital. Most scholars of early Chinese history (both Chinese and Western) would now accept that the Erlitou culture is synonymous with the Xia Dynasty. However, the Xia remain an enigma; they were not chronicled until



A possible reconstruction of a palace in Erlitou.

civilisation and political sophistication had clearly arisen, there was nothing yet to compare with the political centralisation, geographical expansion and sophisticated culture of the later Han, Tang, Sung, Ming and Manchu dynasties, which were initially inaugurated by Qin Shi Huangdi in 221 BCE, the real First Emperor. These earlier dynasties only covered tiny areas of modern day China and would have had a far more federal organisation. Quite diverse populations were still being assimilated into the homogeneous Han.

Recent excavations in Erlitou. Finds are analysed and housed in the 'Erlitou Relics Museum', opened in 2019 at a cost of £65m.

the 4th century BCE, over a thousand years after their supposed demise, nor has any reference to the Xia yet been discovered in the copious oracle bones of the Shang (a subject for my next article).

But this presumed Xia Dynasty, centred around Erlitou, did become the heart of some excellent bronze working, replacing the jade working of the earlier cultures. Bronze casting went on to became a hallmark of the subsequent Shang Dynasty, and could easily compete with any contemporary cultures in the Middle East. But, although a degree of

Xia period bronze jug from Erlitou.

In addition to bronze working, the Xia's spiritual life was heavily connected to ancestor veneration, which has remained a fundamental of Chinese culture throughout its long history. There was clearly a very sharp divide between the nobility and the common people, sharper perhaps than in other contemporary societies, and the king reigned supreme. The upper echelons of Xia society may even have already considered themselves as inhabiting the 'cosmic centre' occupying 'All Under Heaven', a major characteristic of later Chinese dynasties.

There were up to sixteen kings throughout the period of the Xia Dynasty, but again little is known about them (in these articles on early China, I refer to the rulers as kings, not emperors; the general view is that neither the geographical extent of the state, nor the complexity of their organisation, were yet such as to warrant the terms empire or emperor). The last king, Jie, apparently started off as a successful ruler, but the story is that he became involved with a concubine named Moxi, after which he completely neglected his duties and devoted himself to a profligate life of unbridled luxury. His corruption resulted in his regime, after a long war, being overthrown by Cheng Tang (Tang the Accomplished) of Shang, thus establishing the Shang Dynasty, *c*. 1600-1046 BCE. The Shang were a neighbouring tribe of the Xia, who had no doubt acquired many of the arts of civilisation from them and, as so often happened throughout Chinese history, went on to overthrow their mentors.

Although little may be known of the history of the Xia, the archaeological record is beginning to show a well-established urban civilisation in the Yellow River valley, reliant upon irrigated wheat cultivation and

trade within an increasingly cultured neighbourhood. It was clearly a militarily inclined state, and probably had inclinations towards empire, which would have led to clashes with the emerging Shang state. It was the Shang who went on to create a political state with a complex government, a strict hierarchy and a burgeoning economy. Later Shang cities were as large as, and perhaps larger than, anything in the contemporary west. Agriculture, especially the cultivation of wheat, which gradually supplanted millet in the Yellow River valley, became widespread, with an extensive and sophisticated irrigation system. Populations grew exponentially. But the clear hallmarks of Shang civilisation were spectacular bronze casting, perhaps seldom surpassed anywhere in the world at any time, and their reliance on divination from the famous 'oracle bones'.

In my next article we will look in a little more detail at Shang society and beliefs, and their eventual overthrow at the hands of the Zhou.

Neil Meldrum

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 9th February	Lecture	**Prof Tim Darvill**	Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones
Wed 9th March	AGM & talk	**Andrew Morgan, Alan Dedden, Ian Drummond and Vanessa Joseph**	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 this month, for which we've issued their kind invitations) and the Wareham Society.

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

Thur 17th February	Schooners: design and people in the 18th 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 at Furzebrook Village Hall, normally 7:30pm 3rd Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.