East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – March 2022

Editor's Notes

I was sad to have to miss the February lecture by Tim Darvill, but I'm pleased to have Andrew's excellent summary, which has given me a good overview of what I missed: **Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones.**

This month we have the *Annual General Meeting* on the 9th, which we would obviously encourage you to attend, if only for the series of talks to tell you all about the *Wimborne All Hallows* excavations and the research that has been done about the site.

You will already know something of the post-excavation work for both All Hallows and the Keeper's Lodge excavations from articles in the last two newsletters. There's more on that here in articles from Vanessa and Andrew: **Update 4: Wimborne All Hallows – Architectural Stone** and **Update 5: Wimborne All Hallows – Window Glass**. Post-excavation study and research is, of course, when all that's been found from digging starts to be fully identified and come together to tell the story of the site. The updates can only tell part of that story, so there will be much more at the meeting.

I'll be away at the end of March, so I'm afraid the April newsletter will be late, and may not appear before the April lecture on the 6th – early in the month because of other events in the hall on our usual night. That will be by *Denise Allen*, a renowned expert, about *Roman Glass* – a somewhat mysterious substance, even though it's made from cheap materials, which was fully exploited by the Romans.

Antiquaries and antiquarians continues the correspondence which Andrew's item on our society's name engendered. I'd be pleased if anyone would like to add to this.

Robert Heaton and Vanessa Joseph made mosaics at a Museum of East Dorset workshop, revealed by Vanessa in **Mosaic art**.

And Alan Dedden has provided the first follow-up to Leonard Baker's talk about Cranborne Chase: **'The Most Riotous, Unprincipled Men' - The Early Years of Cranborne Chase**. He has also, yet again, provided us with the month's **Weblinks** and **Highlights**. Continuing with the series, we have **View from Above No. 43 Gussage Down**, but a short one this time as little is known about the site shown in Jo & Sue's aerial photographs.

Then there's a possible new series, **Did You Know?** Only "possible" because serialising it will rely on you providing short items – to the email address above please. And an actual new series of fairly short articles from early Dorset Proceedings, **From the Archives**, before the usual EDAS **Programme** and **District Diary**.

Geoff Taylor

Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones: exploring the connections between the early Neolithic monuments along the NW Atlantic coastlands – Lecture by Tim Darvill

It was a great pleasure to welcome Tim Darvill back to EDAS to deliver a talk on prehistory. He drew a great audience, several of whom had not attended for ages. Tim did not disappoint and gave a stimulating and wide-ranging talk, explaining how cutting-edge technology is helping better understand our past. It is overturning old certainties and, of course, raising many more questions. I have focused on a few of the themes he covered.

There are numerous national and international programmes using data from ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis. On the grand scale, a succession of large scale migrations have been identified and their significant impact on indigenous populations is being better understood. But the technology can also be used to give an insight into smaller groups, helping us better understand how families were organised and their relationship with other communities. Improvements in radiocarbon dating, using innovative statistical analysis tools and improved calibration of dates, have brought added precision to dating evidence.

Following the end of the Last Ice Age, Britain was re-colonised by hunter-gatherer groups in a period we refer to as the Mesolithic. With rising sea levels, Britain was eventually cut off from the continent by about 6000BC. Meanwhile, in the Middle East, the Neolithic revolution had started, resulting in domesticated animals, cultivated crops and pottery. It gradually spread through mainland Europe, reaching NW France by about 5000BC. For unknown reasons there was a delay of about 1000 years before the migration continued into Britain and Ireland. The study of aDNA has showed that the earliest Neolithic farmers who settled in Britain derived about 80% of their ancestry from early European farmers (EEF), originating from Anatolia, and around 20% of their ancestry from Mesolithic hunter-gatherers from Western Europe (WHG). This suggests limited interbreeding and a rapid replacement of the indigenous people. The EEF genetic component is very similar to contemporary populations from the Western Iberian peninsula, suggesting a major migration route along the Atlantic Seaboard. Tim pointed out that this is an example of when the genetic evidence supports the archaeological evidence, as reflected in the spread of different monument types along the Atlantic coast.

Another large scale migration came to light with aDNA analysis of human remains from 136 sites across Britain and continental Europe. The Bell Beaker culture came to Britain *c*. 2450BC, and it is now realised that it was also accompanied by a large-scale migration of people via central Europe, resulting in another wholesale replacement, this time of the indigenous Neolithic population. Tim explained that, recently, there is growing evidence of yet another, hitherto unknown, Bronze Age migration into Britain *c*.1000BC, during the middle to late Bronze Age.

Hazelton Long Barrow
(Image Historic England)

These techniques can also be applied on a local scale, and Tim referred to work on the Neolithic long barrow at Hazleton North, in Gloucestershire, dated *c*. 3700BC. This is a Cotswold- Severn style of long barrow, of a type also found in southern Brittany. Analysis of 74 human remains samples has provided genome-wide data for 35 people. This revealed that 27 were related, representing five generations of a single extended family, descended from a founding male who had children with four women. This demonstrates a possible polygamous arrangement, and the absence of adult daughters could be explained by an exogamous marriage exchange, when daughters are put into arranged marriages and they leave to live with the families of their partner – a common means of building family networks. Three of the women had also had children with two different men. The tomb is quite complex, with multiple chambers; it seems that the right to use the tomb was based on the male relationship but which chamber was assigned seems to be related to the female relationship. There is much more to be revealed.

Another convention that is now being reconsidered regards monuments. These have long been associated with the appearance of farming communities, people who had to be organised and live a settled lifestyle; such structures seemed beyond the capabilities of simple hunter gatherers. It is now realised that the exquisite megalithic temple complex at Göbekli Tepe in Turkey (shown), was built some 11,000 to 12,000 years ago — hundreds of years before any evidence of farming or animal domestication emerged. In Britain we have numerous modest, yet very enigmatic, examples. We are familiar with the three large pits located in the old car park metres away from Stonehenge, which was built millennia later. These are conical in profile, with a flat base, between 1.5-2.0m wide, *c.*1.3m deep and aligned east to west. They are dated 8820-6590 cal BC. It is believed that they held tree trunks 3m high, and Tim wondered whether these were ancient totem pole-like structures. A more complex example of a pit alignment has been excavated at Warren Field, Crathes, near Aberdeen. This represents the most systematically investigated Mesolithic pit group in Britain, with radiocarbon dates within a range from 8210 to 6690 cal BC. The pits are aligned in a slightly irregular line along the top of a low ridge. Twelve pits were excavated and found to be circular or oval, 1.0 to 2.6m in diameter and 0.55 to 1.3m deep. The alignment ties into the skyline defined by the hilltops behind, and correlates with phases of the Moon. Some suggest it is the oldest lunar calendar yet found. Distinct examples of copper, lead and silver in crushed rock were found in some of the fills, brought from over 40kms away. Whatever their purpose these pits are a significant statement in the landscape.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of location, with evidence of repeated use over many years. The Bryn Celli Ddu, Anglesey, comprises an early Neolithic henge, enclosing a circle of stones, to be replaced later by a chambered tomb beneath a mound. In fact, this is all predated by two post holes positioned near the entrance, and the burial of an aurochs which is dated to 5990-5730BC. Locally Hambledon Hill is readily recognised by the impressive multivallate Iron Age hillfort, but it has two early Neolithic causewayed enclosures on the top of the hill plus two long barrows. To that can now be added two post holes that have been dated to 8-7000 years BC. It is another example of a site that had been used repeatedly over millennia.

Hambledon Hillfort with causewayed enclosures

There are many examples of megalithic monument types that are found in Brittany and also in the west of Britain; clear evidence of movement along the Atlantic Seaboard. Brittany has a huge collection of standing stones, most being early monuments. At Locmariaquer, not far from Carnac, is a complex of three stunning monuments. The earliest is a huge standing stone that is called the Grand Menhir of Brise (right), a startling 20m in length and weighing 350 tons, lying broken in four pieces. It once stood as the last in a line of 19 menhirs, now only represented by 19 socket holes, that stood for one or two centuries before they were toppled. Tim raised the question “was this an early example of iconoclasm?” Nearby is the Table des Marchands, a passage grave with two decorated slabs that are very similar to those found in the burial chambers at Bryn Celli Ddu and Barcloid y Gawres in Anglesey, and and Newgrange in the Boyne Valley, Ireland. The third monument is the Er-Grah long

Barcloid Y Gawres decorative stone

barrow; it measures 140 metres in length with a trapezoid shape. The structure evolved over time, starting out in *c*. 4,500 BC as a group of small burial mounds, later a rectangular cairn was constructed, and *c*. 4,000 BC the cairn was extended. This type of multi-phase development appears similar to the development of the Notgrove long barrow in Gloucestershire, another Cotswold-Seven type, which started with the erection of a standing stone, replaced by a rotunda grave (chambered round cairn), followed by the long barrow.

In Britain there are perhaps 40 examples of really big standing stones. The Pipers at St Buryan, Cornwall are two standing stones set 90m apart, the taller measuring 4.7m in height, but there is no dating evidence as yet. The Calanais Standing Stones (below) form an extraordinary cross-shaped setting on the Isle of Lewis. The tallest stone is centrally positioned and is 4.8m high. A later chambered tomb has been constructed within the circle. In Britain, Tim explained that portal dolmens were an indigenous style of burial chamber that preceded long barrows. At Pentre Ifans, Pembrokeshire, is another example whereby a standing stone was knocked down prior to the burial structure being built.

The Avebury complex of henges and standing stones was constructed over millennia. It has been much changed and suffered abuse in more recent centuries. Stukeley described a fallen stone in the centre of the southern circle "*The central obelisk of this temple is of circular form at base, of a vast bulk, 21feet long and 8 feet 9 inches in diameter; when standing, higher than the rest*". This was named the Obelisk and perhaps it was the original standing stone.

The dating of megalithic monuments relies on the presence of secure dating evidence. Many early features have been incorrectly dated based only on type. One intriguing example is the Cut Hill Stone row on Dartmoor, which has traditionally been described as a feature of the Bronze Age. However some of the stones had collapsed in antiquity and been covered by peat. The peat has been sampled and is dated to 3700-3540 BC. That mean that the stones had collapsed during the early Neolithic, but when were they erected? There are many so called Bronze Age stone rows in the west of Britain that may have suffered from incorrect dating.

With the improvements in carbon dating and statistical analysis tools, dating is becoming more precise and easier to achieve. This is making us rethink the capabilities of the hunter-gatherers. Tim also mentioned that there is now evidence that hunter gather groups had been quarrying at Carn Menyn, in the Preseli Hills in Pembrokeshire, at one of the sites where the mythical Blue Stones, later used in Stonehenge, were extracted.

Tim is excited about the impact of these technologies that are changing the archaeological world as we knew it, providing evidence that challenges our traditional understanding of monuments and the people who inhabited our land. He concludes that the old classification method of Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age provides an unhelpful structure in the way we see the past.

It is a time for new questions and new possibilities.

Andrew Morgan

Post-excavation Update 4: Wimborne All Hallows – Architectural Stone

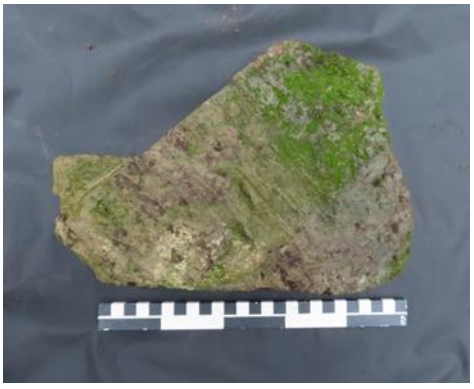
During the excavation we found a small amount of architectural stone, most of this valuable material having been removed during demolition. However, on three corners of the nave we had foundation remains in situ: on the SW and SE corners quoins were exposed formed of two greensand ashlar blocks the lower one with chamfered edges; the NW corner had been disturbed, with only the upper block remaining. A more substantial arrangement of greensand ashlar blocks was exposed forming the foundations of the NE and NW corners of the tower structure. A small number of discarded ashlar blocks were also recovered slightly away from the building. To protect the material and make it readily available for assessment, the stones have been collected by Robert and kept on a trailer.

We were delighted when Trev Haysom, a Purbeck quarryman and stone expert, was willing to look at our material. We wanted to confirm the geology and also consider the purpose of some of the more intriguing stones. Trev confirmed that most of the examples were greensand ashlar blocks from the Upper Greensand formations exploited between Shaftesbury and Okeford Fitzpaine. There were a few examples of Purbeck stone, in particular, a broken paving slab of fine-grained limestone that he thought came from the Downsvein bed and was likely post-medieval. We also have several examples of Purbeck limestone roofing tiles.

Trev explains the preparation of paving slabs.

There was much debate about two carved pieces of a fine-grained creamy-white limestone, one of which is pictured left. I thought it was possibly oolitic, and Trev suggested that it may well be from the Portland Wardour Upper Building Stone, known locally as Chilmark Stone. This is a highly prized stone, typically used for the dressings of windows and arches, and can be found in Wimborne St Giles church. The examples we found may be associated with a window, but there is no recess to take a window frame.

Two well carved large stones, tapering to the top and which were moulded to form a lip and a drip channel along the bottom edges, had been re-purposed post demolition. Trev agreed with our assessment that they are likely coping stones from the top of the tower. There are some pieces with an unfamiliar shape whose purpose has not yet been confirmed. One such example of ashlar greensand (shown right), has two faces set at a 135° angle. Trev suggested that this represents part of what he referred to as a clasping buttress, which typically supported the corners of a tower. Two other pieces also have drip channels, and are extremely weathered and with an L-shaped return. Trev agreed that these appeared to be coping stones, but their use is not certain.



We also looked at two fragments of moulded Purbeck marble. The first was clearly a corner of a coffin lid, very similar to the complete example found by Vanessa. It had the characteristic double hollow chamfer moulding around the edge, typical of the Purbeck style. The second example was very weathered; it had potentially been re-used as an informal headstone and partially buried. There was evidence of moulding at an angle and a slight taper, strongly suggesting that it, too, had once been used as a coffin lid. That

makes four Purbeck marble coffins found at the site, each of which was very expensive.

In due course these stones will be offered back to Wimborne St Giles and possibly reinterred at the graveyard.

Andrew Morgan

Post-excavation Update 5: Wimborne All Hallows – Window Glass

During the excavation we started to find small pieces of glass. They were flat and thin, usually coloured, and many had an iridescent finish. They were soon being found in all the main trenches. The obvious conclusion was that they were window glass, but they seemed to be very thin for medieval glass. We sent photos to Denise Allen, the Roman glass expert and friend of the society; she was not able to confirm identification but kindly sent them to Rachel Tyson, a medieval glass expert. She explained that it was 'forest glass', which is made using potash as a flux (rather than soda) and results in the particular type of corrosion that gives the iridescent finish. Relying only on the photographic evidence, they were only prepared to say that it was potentially window glass.

By the end of the excavation, 119 pieces of probable window glass had been recovered. This glass is very unstable and difficult to conserve.

We were delighted when Cecily Cropper, a freelance forensic archaeologist and glass specialist, offered to look at the fragments with us. Cecily had prepared the glass report following the community dig in the garden of the Priest's House in 2011.

Cecily with Ian and Vanessa

Cecily confirmed that the material we had collected was window glass. One fragment, dating from the 12th or 13th century, showed signs of weathering typical of potash-based glass produced in forest glass houses. Some early fragments may have been painted. Although we are awaiting further analysis, a preliminary assessment of the assemblage is that most of it appears to be post-medieval from 1500s onwards, a time when plain glazing became more popular than stained glass.

We thank the Museum of East Dorset for allowing us to use their facilities.

***Forest glass** (**Waldglas** in German) was produced in north-western and central Europe from approximately 1000–1700 AD. Whereas the Romans used soda to lower the temperature at which the silica melts, Northern Europe developed a method using ash from wood to provide potash as flux. It is likely that the Huguenots, who were master glass makers, brought these techniques to England when they fled religious persecution. The forest glassmakers found it difficult to achieve the high standards of clarity and colour of the Roman methods, due mainly to the great variability of colour-controlling elements in the raw materials. Thus, a variety of colours occurred as glassmakers progressed from the early muddy green-yellow-brown colours toward clear-coloured and colourless glass. In 16th century England, an embargo was placed on the use of wood for fuel for glassmaking. Glasshouses often were located in forests owned by the church and one of the main uses of forest glass was for ecclesiastical stained glass windows.*

Vanessa Joseph

Antiquaries and antiquarians

Andrew's information about our name and the Society of Antiquaries' definition of an antiquary (January newsletter) has gained a life of its own. Following founder member Haydn Everall's letter last month, I've had a response from another long-standing (now Honorary) member – Tim Schadla-Hall.

Tim very kindly says that our longevity is "a tribute to successive generations who have developed the original idea". In 1983 he thought the Society sounded "rather stuffy … [but] how wrong I was! Now as you approach your 40th it is worth reflecting, in a changed world, that the original 6 all attended lectures in Wimborne, funded by the University Extramural department in Southampton and also the WEA. Since then the whole area of supporting adult education has almost completely disappeared. At the same time – and EDAS represents this so well – the growth of local community-based archaeological societies has proceeded apace!"

He also said "I cannot resist adding that there is a difference between antiquary and antiquarian."

Haydn's letter also drew a response from Jim Stacey, telling me that Rosemary Hill published an appreciative and well-reviewed book on 18th century antiquarians last year: *Relics, Ruins & Worm-eaten Things. Time's Witness: History in the Age of Romanticism*. There is a good summary and appreciation of the book in the Literary Review here, and Jim chose a short section to effectively summarise that:

> We still tend to dismiss the antiquary as the kind of uninspired collector of information embodied by George Eliot's ossified Casaubon. To the gentlemen historians of the Enlightenment, they were tasteless provincial nobodies (in other words, they lacked the means for a grand tour), whose interest in the material remains of the past ranged from the dull to the downright insanitary. To the 19th-century professionals who succeeded them, they were an amateurish embarrassment, whose contributions to knowledge were rarely acknowledged, even (or especially) when they provided the basis for later work. In Time's Witness, a history of history in the Romantic age, Hill launches a rehabilitation.

Mosaic art

Two very different mosaics were created by EDAS members Rob Heaton and Vanessa Joseph during the recent mosaic workshop at the Museum of East Dorset. Rob used matt porcelain tiles. His mosaic reminds us that EDAS will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2023. Vanessa used pieces of vitreous glass mosaic tile. Her artwork was inspired by a Dutch artist, Toon Tieland, known for his naive expressionist painting, often of monochrome colour fields bounded by solid black contours.

Vanessa Joseph

[Rob said that he won't give up the day job, but I (Geoff) think they're both pretty good]

'The Most Riotous, Unprincipled Men' - The Early Years of Cranborne Chase

Leonard Baker's talk in December highlighted the special nature of Cranborne Chase and those that lived there, but how did this 'community apart' develop? First, let's take a look at Cranborne Chase - what were its origins and how did it evolve over the centuries?

The history of Cranborne Chase is long, complicated and, in many respects, shrouded in mystery. A word of caution though – sources do vary on some of the detail, but this doesn't alter the overall picture.

The earliest known 'holder' of land which became Cranborne Chase was Brictric, or Brihtric, a powerful Anglo-Saxon lord and son of Algar, Earl of Devon. Brictric's grandfather (Algar's father) was Æthelward Mæw, known as Haylward Sneaw (the fair). He founded the Benedictine Cranborne Abbey around 980, and was buried there. Although the Abbey was reduced to the status of a priory in 1102, Brictric enhanced it in accordance with the wishes of his parents, so he had more connection with the area than simply holding rights to an area of land. The priory church remains as Cranborne's parish church of St Mary and St Bartholomew, though little is left from the 12th century beyond this Purbeck marble font.

In his youth Brictric had spurned the romantic advances of Matilda of Flanders whilst on embassy to her father, Baldwin V, Count of Flanders. Matilda, whose grandfather was king of France, and whose 5x great-grandfather was Alfred the Great, became besotted with Brictric and was very upset when he turned down her proposal of marriage. However, she went on to marry a rather larger catch in William of Normandy; following his conquest of England, he seized Cranborne Chase and gave it to Matilda. Brictric was captured, imprisoned at Winchester, starved to death and buried there. Indeed, some sources say Matilda ordered his detention whilst she was Regent during William's absence in Normandy. Hell hath no fury, perhaps.

At this time, Cranborne Chase was quite a sizeable piece of land, said to cover about 800,000 acres across Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. This seems unlikely as that is 1250 square miles; a more realistic, but still very large, measure is probably around 250,000 acres. Hunting on Cranborne Chase was confined to the 'Inner Bounds', which were surrounded by the 'Outer Bounds' that provided a protected environment for the deer. These 'Bounds' were subdivided into 'Walks'. Because it was not held by the monarch, this wasn't a 'Royal Forest' like the New Forest and the Forest of Dean were. Indeed, a medieval forest was not a forest as we know it, but an area of land of varying landscape types (which need not include trees) where the right to hunt was exclusive to a named person. That right could be franchised, so that the person may not have owned the land. The early medieval meaning of forest was the land beyond the enclosed or cultivated areas that was 'managed' – a relatively limited area as the population at the time was only around 1.25 million (about the size of Birmingham today).

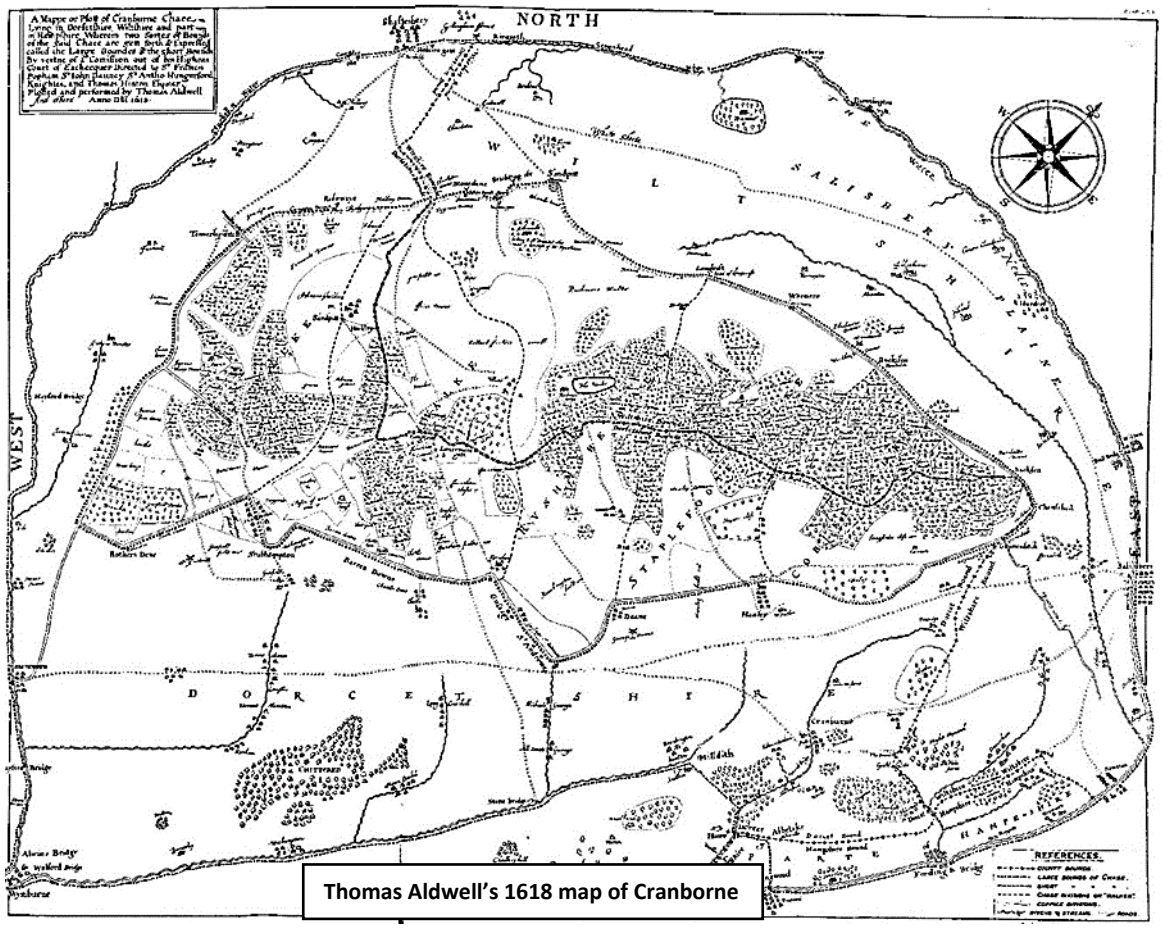
Following the Conquest, simplistically, the right to hunt in a Royal Forest was reserved to the monarch, but non-royals could hold the franchise to hunt in a chase. However, this clear distinction had very grey edges, not least on Cranborne Chase, in part because it was held at various times by the monarch. The main animal hunted was deer, but wild boar, hare and other animals (collectively termed 'venison') might also be hunted. On Cranborne Chase roe deer were most common, but it was fallow deer (as shown) which was the prized kill, "held by competent judges in the highest estimation, for its unrivalled flavor [sic] and fine condition". Cranborne Chase is, and was, the wrong habitat for red deer and they were never established there. Over the years, though, the importance of hunting waned and timber became the more valuable asset, because of the growing needs of the navy

for ever more and larger ships to first establish, and then defend, the growing overseas territories.

The rights of those living within the bounds of the Royal Forests were minimal under William the Conqueror and his immediate successors. William is reputed to have cleared out 36 parishes when he created the New Forest, although with limited evidence, but this gives a clue to the authority he wielded in his forests. The rights of those living within a chase, enforced by the 'Lord of the Chase', were also limited, though not as restrictive nor as harshly punished. It was not until the Forest Charter of 1217 (alongside the second writing of Magna Carta) that the rights of the ordinary people within the bounds of the forests were formalised, and new rights gained. However, these rights were never applicable to any of the chases, such as Enfield and Cannock. On Cranborne Chase, rights, or liberties, were established over the centuries as a means of maintaining a measure of legitimacy for the owner of the hunting rights to maintain the chase for hunting. Various constraints were placed on landowners and others living on the Chase, such as not enclosing fields, cutting wood or killing deer. These liberties included taking a specified number of deer on special occasions, pasturing cattle and sheep on certain pieces of woodland in specific months, gathering fallen wood or taking down trees deemed to be 'storm-damaged'. There were a host of other customary rights, often nebulous, which were said to have existed 'before official recollection' (understood to be 1215 - the year of Magna Carta).

The Lordship of the Chase after Matilda followed a tortuous path, only summarised here. From Matilda, it passed to her son William II, who gifted it to Robert Fitzhayman and then to his daughter Mabel. In 1119 Mabel married Robert, one of the illegitimate sons of Henry I; he was made the 1st Earl of Gloucester, starting a long association of Cranborne Chase with the Honour of Gloucester. Henry II held the lordship 1183-1189 and John from *c*. 1199-1214, but otherwise the lordship was held by the Earls of Gloucester or close relatives up to the time of Edward IV in the 15th century, and remained with the monarchy to James IV early in the 17th century.

The boundaries of the Chase were frequently disputed. In the absence of maps, the boundaries of all hunting forests and chases were defined by a 'perambulation' which proceeded along established landscape features. The disputes weren't limited to the detail of the outer boundaries but, on occasion,



Thomas Aldwell's 1618 map of Cranborne

included the entirety of the outer bounds or all of the Chase in Wiltshire. These disputes were eventually settled around 1280 with a successful application to have the boundaries set out in a Quo Warranto, or writ, under Edward I, that was 'exemplified in Chancery', in other words that it was to be held as a permanent record.

Perhaps the most interesting holder of the title was Elizabeth de Clare, sister of the 8th Earl of Gloucester, who inherited the Lordship of the Chase after the Earl was killed at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and died without issue (it's mostly irrelevant here, but it's worth looking up the details of her life and its many rapid changes of fortune). In 1322 she was forced to exchange her properties for less valuable ones when taken prisoner during an episode of conflict in the Welsh Marches. Then she regained them in 1326 following the execution of her adversary, her brother-in-law Hugh le Despenser, Lord of Glamorgan. When Elizabeth died, in 1360, the lordship passed to her great granddaughter, Philippa and then directly down four generations.

During the whole of this period there is little evidence that any of the Lords of the Chase ever visited it or hunted there, with the exception of King John. This could just be a lack of surviving evidence, but the value of the Lordship in these years mainly arose from the value of the venison it produced, and this was managed by appointed Rangers on the relevant 'Walks'. This would change, along with other factors, leading up to the events described by Leonard Baker.

To be continued.

Alan Dedden

Weblink Highlights February 2022

The item on the Etruscan lovers makes an interesting postscript to the talk last September by Lucy Shipley on the Etruscans.

I have to say that I was surprised at the idea that Neanderthals were wiped out by modern humans. To achieve this would have required a concerted effort – and probably need to have been pre-conceived - over very large areas, bigger wider than modern Europe. This never seemed feasible to me, but if you only have very few pieces of evidence on which to base wide-ranging theories, errors are highly likely.

The news of a police investigation following illegal metal detecting activity at the scheduled Roman fort of Bar Hill on the Antonine Wall is encouraging, and we can only hope that the investigation results in prosecutions. One can only wonder why similar damaging activities at Lake Farm – circus 'pegs' of 1m driven into the fortress area – have not been taken as seriously. [I have written to the relevant person at Historic England twice without a clear answer (ed.)]

Alan Dedden

February Weblinks

Ancient Helmets Found During Dig At Temple Ruins In Southern Italy here

Native Peruvians Re-assembled Corpses Following C16th European Looting here

40 Beheaded Skeletons Found In Roman Cemetery In Buckinghamshire here

Dinosaur Prints Damaged By Construction Vehicle here

Neanderthal Extinction Not Caused By Brutal Wipe Out here

Chalk Drum Is 'Most Important Prehistoric Art Find In UK For A Century' here

20 Terracotta Warriors Discovered In Pit Around Secret Tomb Of China's First Emperor here

1.5 Million-Year-Old Fossil Rewrites Single 'Out-Of-Africa' Theory here

Roman Fort Damaged By Suspected Illegal Metal Detecting here

Etruscan Terracotta Lovers Still In Tender Embrace After 2,500 Years here

Orkney And The British Museum Stonehenge Exhibition - Reflections From Charlotte Higgins here

Scientists Solve 5,000 Year Old Cold Case here

5,000 Year Old Leg Bone Found In The Thames here

Modern Star Maps Hint At Wreck Location Of Shackleton's Endurance here

Teacher Finds Mistakes In The Bayeux Tapestry While Making Replica here

Metal Detectorist Finds Medieval Gold Brooch With Religious Inscriptions In Wiltshire here

Largest Mosaics Found In Years Uncovered Near The Shard here

Fossil Of Largest Jurassic Pterosaur Found On Skye here

Well Preserved 9,000 Year Old Shrine Found In Jordan here

Dozens Of Human Sacrifices Found In Death Pit here

View from Above No. 43: Gussage Down

Photos by Sue Newman and Jo Crane

Two views of enclosures on Gussage Down from slightly different angles, showing how what can be revealed changes at different times – the first during crop growth and the second with the mature crop, where growth height differences can be seen.

Gussage Down featured in View from Above 33, though of a different area which was part of a scheduled monument with a good deal of information. These enclosures aren't scheduled or mentioned anywhere that I could find, so I don't know what they are – an excuse for a much shorter piece than usual.

Geoff Taylor

Did You Know?

This serves as an introduction to a possible new series of short items about the history and archaeology of Dorset, or perhaps of Wessex more widely. For example:

- Did you know that Princess Margaret gave a speech outside the late-18th century Town Hall at Bridport nearly 70 years ago, to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the town receiving its Royal Charter?
- Or that the Victoria Community Hospital in Wimborne (pictured) was founded 135 years ago in recognition of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee? It really was a 'cottage hospital', for the poor, with room for just 9 patients and the operating theatre doubling as a bathroom. From the original matron and servant, it now has around 150 employees.
- Or even that Bournemouth has some of the oldest beach huts in the UK, starting from 1909? The oldest, no. 2359, apparently has its own blue plaque.

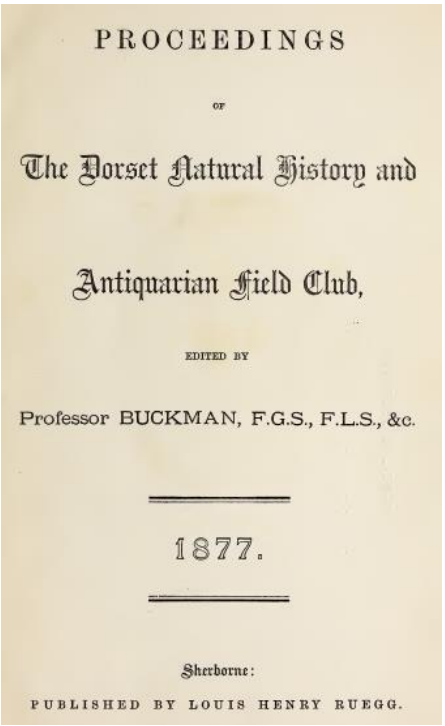
I 'stole' these from another publication and they are, probably, neither the most interesting facts nor really of great antiquarian interest. And that's where you come in – this "possible series" won't continue unless you can let me have more interesting or unusual information.

So, please take the time to send me short items, or links to them, that you think others would be interested or surprised to know – a few sentences would be good, a paragraph even better. Thank you.

Geoff Taylor

From the Archives 1

This is the first of a new series of occasional short articles looking back over the early Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society. I'll simply be looking for items that appear interesting, or even unusual, so some volumes will merit more than one article, others less or none.


PROCEEDINGS

OF

The Dorset Natural History and

Antiquarian Field Club,

EDITED BY

Professor BUCKMAN, F.G.S., F.L.S., &c.

1877.

Sherborne:

PUBLISHED BY LOUIS HENRY RUEGG.

Volume I was dated 1877 and they were the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club* up to volume 49, a club formed 15th March 1875. According to research in 1949, the 1877 edition was published that year, but the date on the cover and/or frontispiece was often the year before publication, deliberately so for volumes 50-127, after which the more usual convention of year of publication was adopted. I'll usually just call them the "Proceedings" and give the accepted year of publication from the research (though I'm fairly certain some of that is wrong).

I will, of course, concentrate on 'antiquarian' items, and try hard not to be upset by the information lost by what we would consider a very poor approach to digging up antiquities. There was, at least, an effort to record what was done, where, and what was found. In some cases, these will be the only records of sites and finds.

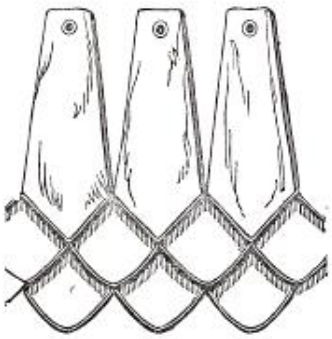
For many years, presumably until it became too long, the Proceedings included a list of members. This first volume shows they already had over 100 members, as

well as 10 honorary members, with a smattering of titles and military men and a high proportion of churchmen – presumably a certain class or type of Victorian gentlemen, though there are a few women too.

The major part of the Field Club's activities were Field Meetings, which continued for many years – visits to sites of interest across the county, generally followed by dinner and a paper being read. In 1877 visits included Eggardon Hill Hillfort, Maiden Castle, Corfe Castle, Dorchester Amphitheatre and Poundbury (described as "a Danish earthwork"). The Club was initially more concerned with natural history than archaeology, even visits to ancient sites being accompanied by examination of the flora and sometimes fossil hunting.

The longest archaeological article is about the "opening of the [Roman] villa at Thornford", said to be a "second-class dwelling" because only 4 of the 6 rooms were found then, in which the floors were very simple mosaics of large tesserae. The villa is set just south of the River Yeo, not far from Somerset and about 5km south-west of Sherborne (ST 595 136) and is better known now, with several later articles in the Proceedings.

Finds included amphorae, mortaria, decorated samian sherds and different iron items, particularly the nails from roof tiles. The roof tiles, like many of those at Druce, were of the local stone – lias limestone – but cut differently as shown, both decorative and reducing the weight on the roof beams. Painted plaster was found in abundance, in some cases still adhering to the remains of walls. This seems to have mostly been in bands or stripes, in a variety of colours, though there are no illustrations. Only two coins were found, both illegible "third brass", a description then used for smaller Roman copper alloy coins of diameter 17-21mm ("brass" didn't imply the coin was of that alloy, but came from medieval usage for any copper-based coin, or perhaps simply the later colloquial term for money). Without dates for the coins, and presumably with insufficient knowledge then to date items like the decorated samian, there was no attempt to date the villa.



A short item looks at the antiquities of Abbotsbury, mentioning a barrow dug fairly recently which contained mainly cist burials but also some cremations in "rude urns". The area of the 1044 Benedictine Monastery had also been excavated in recent years, showing the size of the Abbey Church, whilst a new burial ground proved to more ancient when many skeletons were found. Some were thought to be of soldiers killed in the 1644 siege of Abbey House. Whilst not described here, I found that a large parliamentary force under Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper came from Dorchester to rid the village of its Royalist garrison under Colonel James Strangways. Having eventually taken the house, which was by then aflame, the parliamentarians began to ransack it and were caught in the explosion of several barrels of powder. The house was destroyed and at least 60 parliamentary soldiers were killed.

Geoff Taylor

The CBA Wessex March 2022 Newsletter is here, with the usual mix of items on events, talks and archaeological information.

One item says " Archaeologists may have missed a big clue over the age of the Cerne Abbas Giant, as reported nationally and featured in *Digging for Britain*". This is simply not true – the Benedictine Abbey in Cerne Abbas was considered as part of possible dating evidence, even in my summary of the results of the investigations (Midsummer 2021 newsletter). Another attempt to say 'we were first'!

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 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

Lots of new lectures from the Wareham Society, and I believe 'in person' lectures are in planning for AVAS (*Zoom* until this month, at least, for which we've issued their kind invitations).

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

Wed 16th March	We are the Time Travellers: treasures from the Dorset earth	**Wareham Society**	Karen Brown
Thur 17th March	The Roman town house: Dorchester's hidden gem	**Blandford Group**	Steve Wallis
Wed 20th April	Villains, Victims and Tragedies at Dorchester gaol	**Wareham Society**	Brian Bates
Thur 21st April	Iron Age Excavation at Blandford	**Blandford Group**	Dan Carter/Peter Cox, AC Archaeology
Wed 18th May	The Battle of Britain over Dorset	**Wareham Society**	John Smith
Thurs 19th May	Underfloor excavations at Avebury Manor	**Blandford Group**	Briony Clifton, Avebury National Trust
Wed 15th June	Dorset Shipwrecks and Maritime Archaeology	**Wareham Society**	Gordon Le Pard
Wed 16th Sept	Finding Nero (and other Roman Emperors), after AGM	**Wareham Society**	Miles Russell

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, BH20 5AR, normally 7:30pm 3rd Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.