



Established 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – Mid-Summer 2013

Mick Aston



It is with great sadness that we say farewell to Mick Aston, who died on 24th June 2013. Mick was one of the great promoters of community archaeology and recently we had the pleasure of Mick attending our 30th Anniversary Garden Party, when he enjoyed speaking to several old friends. Mick and his partner Teresa have been involved with a number of EDAS archaeology projects over the years. He will be missed by everyone who cares about our heritage.

EDAS Lecture: The strange case of Dewlish Roman Villa, with Iain Hewitt

At our last meeting on 8th May we enjoyed an interesting lecture by Iain Hewitt from Bournemouth University about the Roman Villa at Dewlish. The villa was excavated between 1969 and 1979 under the direction of Bill Puttnam – and we were delighted to welcome his wife Maureen in the audience. Iain has the challenge of finally publishing the site by pulling together all the material from the original excavation. He quickly explained that he is not an archaeologist but rather an expert on buildings. This talk was quite expedient because EDAS are currently undertaking an exploratory excavation on another Roman Villa at Druce Farm, a mere 2 miles away.

Iain started by giving some background about the main characters involved, first the tenant John Boyden, who he described as a farmer and old-fashioned, self-taught polymath, who apparently got Barry Cunliffe involved in archaeology. John also undertook excavations and was involved in aerial photography at Swindon. Bill was a Romanist and working at Weymouth College where he cleverly established an archaeology section within the History Department.

Dewlish Manor Estate sits in a favourable location on chalk downland. The villa must be seen in context with a Late Iron Age settlement to the north joined by a trackway. The villa has been known for many years, in the early 18th Century the Dorset historian Rev'd John Hutchins mentioned a Roman Mosaic made of white and black tesserae, of which there is no sign. He also mentioned that the house contained part of a Roman mosaic pavement set on wall, and today there are parts of two mosaics there. There was another reference dated 1790 to red tesserae being found.

In the first year of his excavation, undertaken as a trial, an exploratory trench was dug, the location being based on the evidence found from field walking. This uncovered some mosaic and exposed part of a building proving the villa remains were in good state of preservation. In 1970 the team returned. This was well before geophysics technology, so they carefully sited a number of test pits (using Greek letter notation) to

locate the extent of the building. They found walls 55 cm thick, comprising large nodules of flint with brick pieces, and the foundation of the yard. In 1971 the full excavation was started, using a methodology derived from that used by Mortimer Wheeler. They adopted a site grid of 5x5 metre squares, each separated by a baulk of 0.5m.

Iain went on to say that the villa was constructed in several phases, and was regularly amended, describing it as a long lasting building site. Some walls were made with nodules of flint with nice templar stone corners; others incorporated fragments of clay tiles with the flint, but no stone corners. He explained that the earlier structures had roofs built of ceramic tiles, but later they converted to limestone tiles. The weakest wall of a Roman Villa structure is the gable wall, and they used methods to reinforce its construction.

The villa comprises several buildings, the first building was constructed in two phases plus an appendage comprising an aisle with four pier foundations, their pads set on an earlier demolished wall. Another was a winter triclinium, a dining room facing west, to take best advantage from the setting winter sun. The rooms had apse windows, always very small because the opening weakens the structure. Most of the glass recovered from Dewlish is from window panes. There was a bath house seemingly squeezed into a small space, but nevertheless comprising three areas: the caldarium (a very hot and steamy room heated by a hypocaust), the frigidarium (cold plunge pool) and finally the apodyterium (changing room), added in the 4th century. They found a number of a number of strange long shaped rooms, eventually these were realised to be a sections of rooms converted to act as passageways to extensions built behind.

Iain has concluded that the villa was developed through five phases: Phase-1: a row villa with painted plaster; Phase-2: some small rooms were added; Phase-3: a hypocaust was built and covered in a mosaic, with channels round the existing buildings; Phase-4: aggrandisement when the extensions were built and passage ways created to provide access; Phase-5: decline and squalor with squatters. The mosaics show signs of being punctured by post holes inserted to shore up the roof, and thereafter the site was subject to stone robbing.

Artefacts include coins of Theodosius were found dating to 4th century and piecrust SE Dorset orange wipeware pottery 4th century, very late Roman that continued in use until c. 420AD. Other finds include plaster painted in cinnabar, and eight infant burials. Geophysics shows that there are many more features that have yet to be explored.

After the talk the team working out at Druce Farm descended on Iain, there seem to be many parallels with what is being found on this new site. Many thanks Iain and we look forward to your visit and advice at Druce and we look forward to your publication.

Andrew Morgan

National Trust - Brownsea Island: CBA Festival of Archaeology - events 27th & 28th July.

There is an opportunity for EDAS members to get involved with this event and the activities planned over the weekend 27th/28th July, and it is hoped EDAS will be represented and assist with some of the activities as well as promoting our Society.

If you would like more details see below or seek Alan or Gill out at our next meetings or contact directly:

Alan Hawkins: tel - 01202 668178, email - alhawk@ntlworld.com

Gill Broadbent: tel - 01202 841547, email - agbroadbent@btinternet.com

Alan Hawkins

EDAS 30th Anniversary Garden Party – 23rd May

The society was founded in 1983 and as part of its 30th anniversary celebrations we held a Garden Party in the perfect setting of the Priest House Museum, Wimborne Minster.

Nearly 80 members and guests attended the event and they enjoyed the opportunity to reminisce with old friends in the lovely gardens. The highlight of the evening was a presentation made by the society to Honorary President, John Day who has recently stepped down as chairman, a role he has held from the very beginning of the society. Brian Maynard made a very humorous and heartfelt speech and presented John with a replica Bronze Age Beaker pot, crafted by Dorset potter Bill Crumbleholme.



Brian presents John Day with a replica Beaker pot



Mick Aston and Martin Green share some memories

Members enjoyed a new display in the museum that celebrates 30 years of EDAS activities, including involvement in nearly 30 archaeology excavations undertaken by EDAS members in the local community and 24 annual Field Trips taken throughout the length of England and Wales. The display was designed by Gill Broadbent, member and Honorary Keeper of Archaeology, and includes artefacts from the Roman Villa excavation at Myncen Farm, that featured on a Time Team programme, plus items from our excavation at Worth Matravers on the Isle of Purbeck, that uncovered features from the Neolithic through to post-Roman times.

There was also a slide show of over two hundred photographic images showing EDAS members in action throughout the 30 years. This seemed to capture the commitment and motivation of the society, full of energy and good humour...and of course the sun was always shining!

Andrew Morgan thanked everyone who had helped organise the event, especially Emma Ayling, curator of the Priest House Museum, for making the facilities available. He congratulated the founder members, including Tim Schadla-Hall and David Johnson, for creating such a vibrant and successful society and John and Della in particular, for imbuing the society with its special spirit. He concluded that he wants EDAS to remember its origins and to continue undertaking practical archaeology in the community for another 30 years.



EDAS members enjoying the evening

Mike Carter Chairman of the board of Trustees, for the Priest House Museum, congratulated EDAS on its success and looked forward to more shared activities in the future.

Andrew Morgan

EDAS Archaeology

Visiting Fellow with the School of Applied Sciences



I am delighted to announce that Bournemouth University, School Academic Board have offered EDAS committee member Lilian Ladle MBE., an appointment as a **Visiting Fellow, with the School of Applied Sciences**, in recognition of her “considerable standing in her professional/academic area”(their words). This is a very prestigious award and on behalf of the society I offer Lilian our warmest congratulations.

The desire to undertake practical archaeology was the reason why our society was created thirty years ago and to some extent this award reflects the strength of this activity within the society.

Archaeology Report -Druce Farm Project

An ‘Open Day’ was held on Sunday June 30th at Druce Farm Roman Villa when nearly 300 visitors, viewed the work in progress on one of the hottest days of the year. A total of 30 volunteers have been working since the beginning of April and have uncovered what is going to be one of Dorset’s most important Roman buildings. Many of the excavators were out on Open Day to explain the archaeology.

Our guests were guided around three ranges of buildings, firstly looking at the high-class, domestic suite where walls delineating rooms and a complete mosaic have been uncovered. Although Roman villas are quite common, to find a complete pavement these days is rare, particularly when fields are deep ploughed. The second range of buildings where the bases of their walls survive are likely to be industrial or agricultural in function. The third range consists of an aisled barn where one of the walls had fallen onto the ground. Visitors marvelled at a huge stone plinth which had supported a massive roof timber. Again, this building is very important because intact fallen masonry is exceedingly rare. Finds were on display and finds washing took place all day.

The mile walk up to the site did not deter anyone, and babes were pushed up in buggies and elderly folk came armed with walking sticks. There were several groups from amateur archaeology societies from Dorset and beyond, and a number of professional archaeologists who are very impressed with the site. We had wonderful comments about the site from all our visitors and the donation box was full to overflowing!!

This event could not have happened without the support and hard work of the following EDAS members: Janet Bartlet, Sue Cullinane, Vanessa George, Mike Ladle, Barbara Milburn, Andrew Morgan, Len and Pam Norris, Bryan Popple and Geoff Taylor.

A report on the villa excavation will be included in a future newsletter.

Lilian Ladle

EDAS Field Trip 2013 – Penwith, Cornwall

In June members of EDAS (and Barney the dog) spent an enjoyable week visiting some of the (mostly) prehistoric sites on the Penwith Peninsula, not far from Land's End.

The trip was organized by Graham and Susan Adams who treated us to a fantastic selection of stone circles, quoits and standing stones.

Sunday started in great style with a stimulating walk along from Penzance to Marazion and the atmospheric St Michael's Mount. We all walked across the water (well, via the causeway) and spent a couple of hours exploring the sub-tropical gardens which perch precariously on the cliffs and the main building complex which is both private home and monastic complex. The weather was kind and even the sun put in an appearance!



Unfortunately the next day wasn't quite so kind weather wise but we were all suitably dressed as we set off from St Just. The first stop was at a rather enigmatic feature which is described as a mediaeval amphitheatre (or plain-an-gwarry). It is of similar size to a Roman amphitheatre (as at Dorchester) but its real use is unknown. It may have been a sports arena or market place but various other uses were suggested by our group! We continued our walk on out towards Cape Cornwall (one of only two 'capes' in the



country) passing signs of Cornwall's industrial and prehistoric past on the way. At the cape we stopped at a convenient tea van (in the NT car park) while looking out at General Dr Gaul in the bath (an island otherwise known as The Brisons). We then moved on to the tiny early Christian chapel of "St Helen's Oratory" which retains a Cornish cross, although this is probably not the original one which is thought to have been 'lost' down the well at the St Just vicarage! We returned to St Just via Kenidjack Castle before moving on to the wonderfully named

Woon Gumpus Common!

From here we walked up to Chun Quoit burial chamber. These Bronze Age structures are primarily found along the Atlantic façade in Cornwall, Wales and Brittany and consist of three or four vertical stones with a massive capstone. Many have been "restored" in recent history and are impressive structures.



Monday evening saw our group meeting at the National Trust "Count House" near Bottalack for an overview of the archaeology of the Penwith peninsula by Jim Parry, the NT archaeologist for Cornwall and Devon.



The next day was again a "damp air" day which we started by visiting the impressive Iron Age village of Chysauster. This is a fantastic site with a number of interlinked stone houses (to my mind reminiscent of Scara Brae). Each house consists of a central courtyard with a number of small side rooms. It is unclear if the courtyard was roofed but it appears to be the main living area and some have a central depression which could be to support a roof post. The site was originally investigated by the antiquarian William

Copeland Borlase, a name we would come to know well over the week!

After lunch the weather had improved and we went in search of another quoit. Despite our efforts we failed to find the quoit (Brian later revisited and showed us where we had gone wrong!) but we did find an amazing settlement site with fantastic views.



Wednesday is traditionally a "free day" on field trips where members go off to pursue their own interests; in my case a visit to St Ives to the Tate Modern museum and to the wonderfully eclectic collection in the St Ives museum.

Thursday was probably the best day weather wise being lovely and sunny, if a little breezy. In the morning we started by visiting the enigmatic "Men An Tol" consisting of a circular holed stone standing on edge (through which Barney the dog delighted in jumping!) with two uprights one on each side. We also saw the inscribed stone of Men Scryfa (originally Bronze age but a debased Latin inscription added during 5thC to 7thC) and visited Lanyon Quoit. This Quoit (chambered tomb) collapsed in 1815 and was re-erected in 1824, after public subscription, with the capstone supported by three uprights.

After lunch we visited the spectacular Carn Euny Iron age village consisting of 10 or more houses and a unique Fogou with a circular chamber. The Fogue (a late Cornish word meaning cave) was discovered in the early 19C and excavated by Borlase and Blight between 1862 and 1867. In addition to the corbelled chamber there is a long curved passage with a side passage or 'creep'.



We finally visited the prominent hill of Carn Brea with various prehistoric and more recent features. From the top of the hill we were treated to a magnificent panoramic view looking out across the Penwith peninsular in all directions.

Friday morning saw our group visiting the Church at St Buryan (with an interesting impromptu guide by the church warden). The church was originally endowed by King

Athelstan where he stopped to pray (for a successful campaign) at the chapel of Saint Buriana c 930AD. Because of the royal connection the parish fell under control of the King (a "Royal Peculiar") and not the Church. One of 12 Cornish crosses in the parish is found in the churchyard.



We next visited the stone circle of Boscawen-Un which is particularly well preserved and has a large central Menhir leaning at quite an angle. This site was one of the three main Druidic sites during the medieval period and, judging by the "deposits" around the circle, is still in use today! We then moved on to the larger Merry Maidens circle and the two large menhirs (the tallest still standing in Cornwall) known as the Pipers. These are reputedly the two pipers who lured the merry maidens to dance on a Sunday and, as a consequence, were all turned to stone!

Friday afternoon was an "optional" visit, some of us visiting the Telegraph museum at Porthcurno. Porthcurno was originally founded in the 1870s as a safe location to bring ashore the new undersea telegraph cables which were beginning to stretch out around the world. It became a major communications centre and only ceased operation in 1970 as the technology of communications changed.

To round off the week we all met for the traditional “last supper” at the oldest pub in Penzance, the Turks Head.

Many thanks to Graham and Susan for organising a very enjoyable week, and we look forward to the 2014 EDAS Field Trip, rumoured to be to Lincolnshire.

Steve Smith

EDAS Walk - Cranborne 22/6/2013

It was disappointing that more members did not risk the weather and participate in the guided walk around Cranborne, led by Luke Winter of the Ancient Technology Centre.

The intrepid few were rewarded with an entertaining and informative tour; starting along the River Crane which gives Cranborne its name and in Saxon times was a major waterway that powered four mills.

The Cranborne estate once belonged to the Saxon thane Brihtric. He made a fatal mistake in spurning the advances of a Norman lady, Mathilda, who subsequently married Duke William and, following the Norman invasion, Brithtric’s lands were all given to Mathilda while he died a pauper’s death in prison. Something about a woman scorned, I think.

The manor house is the oldest residential building in Britain, the main hall dating from 1208. Built as a hunting lodge by King John, the manor was the courthouse where justice was handed out for Cranborne Chase; though perhaps justice is the wrong word for laws where anyone taking a deer could have his eyes put out!

Passing back by the church we were lucky to catch Trevor Steptoe, broom in hand, who gave us the history of the church and the Benedictine Abbey founded in AD 980 by the then thane Aylward Sneuw. Tewkesbury Abbey was subsidiary to Cranborne and the size of the church reflects Cranborne’s important status. Trevor pointed out the 600 year old carved pulpit and the fascinating medieval wall paintings in all their lurid detail.

The walk ended on horseback, on two racehorses to be precise. Those were buried atop the motte of the Norman castle by Tregonwell in the nineteenth century. Clearance of the woodland allowed us to see the extent of the inner bailey and ponder the purpose of such a fortification in subjugating the local populace.

Then it was back to the Ancient Technology Centre for a wander around the various structures. A big thank you to Luke and Trevor for a very enjoyable morning and a note to those who stayed away; it didn’t rain on us for the entire trip.

Dave Stewart

EDAS 30th Anniversary Essays

This month we have essays written by two stalwarts of the society, Phil Roberts and Brian Maynard. Phil describes unexpected pleasures whilst offering hospitality to esteemed archaeologists who spoke to the society, whilst Brian waxes lyrical about his relationship with EDAS and how he has enjoyed his passion for stumbling over the moors, exploring bumps in the ground.

COINCIDENCES by Phil Roberts

Many years ago, when I became EDAS programme secretary, I was keen to book some specific speakers. Some of these would probably need to stay overnight after their lectures. It struck my wife, Marion, and me that it might be fun to accommodate them at our house. It was fun and very interesting. Also, of course, it saved EDAS some expenses. What became apparent, from our very first guest onwards, was that almost invariably there was some connection or coincidence, however tenuous, between our guests and ourselves.

The first speaker to stay with us was Mark Roberts, of Boxgrove fame. He is memorable, of course, for his outstanding contribution to field paleoarchaeology. He also sported a, now, fashionable shaven head. Combined with his formidable reputation as a site director, his appearance led to his nickname of 'Rottweiler'. Mark bears the same name as our elder son. He stayed with us twice, during which I discovered another coincidence, very important to both Mark and me, which is a passion for real ale. No opportunity was lost to exercise this commonality.

Bob Bewley stayed with us three times. The first time, he was in charge of aerial photography at the RCHM(E) and had become the leading expert in his day, in archaeology from the air. Like myself, he had developed a passion for flying aeroplanes in his University Air Squadron. His best friend at university, later to be his Best Man, was also in the University Air Squadron. After graduation, Bob made a difficult choice in between the RAF and archaeology. His best friend joined the RAF and subsequently became our elder son's boss in a Tornado squadron at RAF Lossiemouth, whilst Bob continued his archaeology studies, with a PhD at Cambridge. Bob later became Regional Director for the South West Region of English Heritage and is now Director of Operations for the Heritage Lottery Fund.

John Bingeman spoke to EDAS about Historic Wrecks in the Solent. He and his wife, Jane, stayed with us after the lecture. John dives on the wrecks, whose marine archaeology he studies. He was acting as a consultant to Wessex Archaeology. He is a retired Royal Navy deck officer and had sailed aboard HMS Fearless, a LPD (Landing Platform Dock) Class warship. Our younger son, who is a naval architect, was responsible for the structural safety of HMS Fearless, until she was decommissioned. John and our son are both Chartered Marine Engineers. Jane was the goddaughter of the elderly lady who sold us our house. It was due to Jane's intervention that we had avoided losing the house, when she persuaded her godmother that it was unreasonable of her to change her mind to sell on the eve of exchange of contract!

Dr J D Hill was another visitor. Like John Bingeman, he is a diver. However, 'JD' tends to dive to get away from archaeology, although he lectures on Southampton University's MA course on Maritime Archaeology. When he spoke to EDAS, he was Curator of the Iron Age in Europe, at the British Museum. Unsurprisingly, his speciality was the Iron Age, and he identified a couple of ceramic sherds found in our garden as being IA. 'JD' is now Director of Research at the British Museum.

Another interesting guest was Grahame Soffe. He was a founder member of the Association for Roman Archaeology and was, and still is, its Chairman. As you might expect, Grahame is a passionate Romanist and is a fountain of knowledge regarding every aspect of Roman archaeology.

He lectures widely and at all levels, on the subject. He stayed with us at a time when EDAS was looking for funding of specialist reports on the Myncen Farm excavations. Whilst we were discussing these excavations after his lecture, Grahame said that he would support any application from EDAS for such funding by ARA. In due course, ARA paid for the report by Dr Denise Allen on Roman glass found at Myncen Farm,.

On a lighter note, one of our guests, who must remain anonymous, was propositioned by an unknown, gay, bleached-blond window cleaner – in our drive at home!

We also had other archaeologists to stay. Every one of our guests was gracious, entertaining and, of course passionate, about archaeology. All believed in voluntary contributions to archaeology. We enjoyed every minute.

Phil Roberts

EDAS – a personal recollection, by Brian Maynard

In 1983 I was required to work for a short time in the microbiology laboratory at the old Boscombe Hospital under the supervision of a certain Mary Tiller. Myself, along with the current Mrs Maynard, had moved to Dorset from the barren, archaeologically speaking, wastes of the Fylde coast in Lancashire just over a year before. I had soon started to indulge my passion for wandering aimlessly over the countryside with one of the other loves of my life, the Ordnance Survey map! In contrast to the Blackpool area the local map was studded with sites in gothic script which I took great delight in finding whilst never knowing what they were. When this came up in conversation with Mary she told me about this relatively new organisation and its formidable leader, John Day, who could advise me how to join. It just so happened that John was delivering a lecture that very week at a public meeting in Blandford so I determined to attend. To this day I have no recollection of the subject but I was enthralled by incomprehensible talk of barrows, mesolithic, hillforts and henges. After the meeting I fought my way through the mass of excited groupies gathered around the great man and managed to find out about EDAS.

The first meeting I attended was in the old teachers centre in Wimborne at which maybe a score of people were present including luminaries like John, Della and a pretend farmer called Martin. The speaker was a certain Chris Sparey-Green describing excavations at Poundbury Roman cemetery which he was due to write up. (did that ever happen?).

Within a week or so I went on my first EDAS walk. Led by John, we walked for miles around Cranborne Chase, pausing to avidly look at various exciting grassy mounds, hedgerows and clumps of trees. My fellow walkers talked animatedly and incomprehensibly about the late Neolithic and post medieval. My head was spinning trying to make sense of words and phrases like hengiforms, banjos, scrapers and DMVs mentioned casually to the appreciative nods and murmurs of the company.

Undeterred by my lack of comprehension I persisted to attend meetings and walks and gradually started to understand what these strange people were actually talking about. Eventually I learned that one could, whilst out with friends, point to a vague mound and state things like “that’s the remnants of a long barrow” with such confidence and conviction that people actually believe you. This is something that many archaeologists have built a career on.

Now that my interest was well and truly sparked I decided to go on my first field trip. This was to Dartmoor where I, and my young son Chris, stayed in a tiny tent and had the most amazing week stumbling over the moors. That was it, I was hooked!

In all the subsequent years I have thoroughly enjoyed everything that EDAS has thrown at me. The meetings have ranged from the (mainly) enthralling to the (rarely) deeply tedious. The walks were

always great although now few and far between but hopefully due for a comeback. The field trips have, without exception, been one of the highlights of most years.

I have a lot to thank Mary Tiller for. Not only did she introduce me to the joys of EDAS membership, but she had the eminently good sense to get pregnant and leave work thus creating a vacancy for a laboratory manager which I deservedly filled.

Brian Maynard

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2013
27th-28th July 2013	National Trust - Brownsea Island: CBA Festival of Archaeology - Weekend events Contact: Alan Hawkins - 01202 668178, email - alhawk@ntlworld.com or Gill Broadbent - 01202 841547, email - agbroadbent@btinternet.com
4th August 2013	Guided tour with Martin Green around Down Farm and a visit to his museum. Meet at 2:00pm at Down Farm (OS GR: ST999 148). A great opportunity to examine some of the sites Martin has excavated over the years. It will take two hours or so, returning to the farm for a look around the very special museum. Contact Steve Smith: 01202 886897 or Andrew Morgan: 07748961941 Directions: Turn off the A354 signposted Wimborne St Giles. Continue a short distance along this road. Take the tarmac lane on the right (signposted "Down Farm"). The farm is past the cottages on the right hand side.
1st September 2013	EDAS Walk: A mostly flat walk of about 5 miles to pass and in some cases visit Winterborne Came House and church, Whitcombe church and West Stafford church. Meet at 10.30 parking near Max Gate off A352 SY704899 Explorer Map OL15. Any queries to Peter Walker on 01425 471326.
11th September 2013	EDAS Lecture - Bouldner Cliff Project, with Lauren Tidbury of the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Marine Archaeology,
9th October 2013	EDAS Lecture –What’s so fascinating about watermills? with Peter Lightfoot
13th November 2013	EDAS Lecture – Stonehenge, New Discoveries, with Professor Mike Parker Pearson, UCL Institute of Archaeology. NB: this event will take place at the East Dorset Council Chambers, Furzehill
11th December 2013	EDAS Lecture – Isaac Gulliver Dorset Smuggler, with Malcolm Angel