



Established 1983

## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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### NEWSLETTER – January 2015

#### EDAS COMMITTEE VACANCIES

This year, two stalwarts of our committee, Brian Maynard and Steve Smith, have decided to stand down and will not stand for re-election. We offer our warmest thanks for everything they have done supporting EDAS over many years.

Please consider joining the committee, no special skills are needed, just enthusiasm and a willingness to participate and get involved.

The committee usually meets once a quarter at the Priest House Museum, Wimborne and the meeting normally takes about two hours. There is an application form attached to the newsletter.

#### EDAS Lecture: 'Wimborne in Saxon times' by Janet K L Seal

Please note, this comprehensive resume of the talk was kindly provided by Janet.

"Cerdic or possibly a Welshman, Caradoc, led the Saxons in 495AD. He established the boundaries of Wessex and fought the Britons at Mount Badon which may be Badbury Rings.

He was followed by pagan and Christian Kings until the Britons had been totally subdued and King Ina was crowned. A scholar and a general, he gave land to his sister Cuthberga to set up a joint nunnery/monastery in Wimborne. It took 20 years to build and had 'high and stout walls'. This led to the town providing many of the lay services, all the while protected by the king's palace up at Pamphill.

Although the inner compound was relatively small there would have been a garrison and facilities for the royal retinue to put up tents, secure their horses and hunt in the nearby Wimburneholt forest. The local farms provided food and fodder for all the king's animals as part of their land leases. The nearby wood The Hangings may have been the place where all local death sentences were carried out.

Cuthberga died in 718AD and was buried in St Mary's, the nunnery church. Many years later a missionary group left Wimborne including Brother John a travelling preacher. His daughter, disguised as a boy in order to be educated, rose in the church hierarchy and became pope. She was only discovered when she gave birth in the streets of Rome, one of which is still called Vicus Papisa!

King Aethelwulf raised the Dorset fyrd, or army, to fight the Danes. Their families protected by the other members of their frankpledge, 240 men from Dorset would have gone to fight, their main weapon a seax or bent-bladed sword or bows. The frankpledge is a system of ensuring the good behaviour of each member. Boys joined at the age of 12 when they were eligible to fight, to practice at Hillbutts, or to get married.

King Alfred did not linger in Wimborne after burying his elder brother, Ethelred, but rushed off to take possession of the treasury. He formulated many laws, divided the shires into Hundreds and created a recognisable justice system.

In Saxon times there were 37 Saint's Days plus Sundays so plenty of time to weave on the upright looms, the length of the warp threads weighted by stones with holes, governing the extent of the fabric. These stones were passed from mother to daughter as heirlooms.

Surplus animals had to be slaughtered each autumn and the flesh salted, dried or smoked as most agricultural land, lying between areas of common or heathland, was devoted to growing barley. This grain formed the basis of pottage, the food of the ordinary people, flavoured or supplemented with a little meat, sheeps' milk cheese or the wild fruits.

When King Alfred died, his son was elected King, not the late King's brother, Prince Aethelwold. The latter was so annoyed that he left the capital, Winchester and rode to Wimborne where he declared that he would live or die here. Breaking into the nunnery, he kidnapped a nun and took her to the king's palace. An alert sentry saw the new King's army camped on the slopes of Badbury and alerted the prince to the danger. He fled, joined the Danes in Mercia and was later killed in battle.

In turn the King's eldest son came to the throne, initially sharing the land with a younger brother. He was killed for his treachery and a half brother also met an equally abrupt end when swearing an oath in front of the Pope.

Aethelstan died in his mid forties, possibly of an inherited disease – Crohne's, which if left untreated is extremely unpleasant. His heirs continued the Cerdician line of rulers.

In 962AD King Edgar brought Sigferth, a Danish hostage, to Wimborne. After the feast Sigferth committed suicide but this fact may have been distorted in order for his body to be buried in St Mary's.

A new King was elected in 975AD – choice of Edward, mature but the mother was not actually married to the King or young Ethelred, son of Lady Elgiva. Edward was murdered at Corfe and Ethelred became King, his honour already stained.

Shortly after, a raid by the Danes sailing up the Stour damaged Wimborne, the palace and possibly the nunnery. Ethelred retaliated in 1002AD by killing every Dane in the land. 16yrs later the Danes destroyed the nunnery, the church, and the town. Many were taken as slaves, stock stolen or killed and all the town riches looted.

Cnut eventually got the throne by right of conquest and restored the church. The town grew slowly but never to its former importance. It was not until 1043AD that Edward ordered the founding of a college of canons under Dean Hugh D'Orivalle, and the old church was rededicated to St Cuthberga. A small chapel under the control of the abbey at Horton was called St Mary's, situated, according to Dr David Reeve in the proximity of Dryden's shop.

The Sheriff was based at Wareham. He held inquests into suspicious deaths, took the oaths of the 12yr old boys and administered justice from which he gained a small proportion.

Earl Godwin of Wessex was an important noble. His daughter married King Edward, his sons were in high positions. He may have been involved in the death of the king's younger brother and on his return to favour took an oath at the feast, choked and died. His son Harold took over his earldom and took the crown on Edward's death even though he had apparently sworn to accept Duke William of Normandy as his liege lord.

He died in the battle of Senlac Ridge, later called The Battle of Hastings, the victorious Normans abruptly ending the Saxon rule in Wessex."

**Janet Seal**

### **In Memory of Paul Miller Headmaster of St Andrew's School, Yetminster**

Some of you will remember Paul; he accompanied the wonderful children from his primary school on their visit to our Druce Farm excavation, as part of our school programme last year. He enjoyed the experience so much he returned on the Open Day with his wife, children and his in laws. They were all very enthusiastic and thanked EDAS for the opportunity.

Paul, a keen cyclist, was killed whilst riding to Dorchester on 8<sup>th</sup> January. We offer our condolences to his family and the pupils and staff of his school.

#### ***DORSET PLANNING and HERITAGE ADVISORY GROUP- Pilot Scheme***

Over the last few months Lilian Ladle and Andrew Morgan, representing EDAS, have been part of general discussions regarding the implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework and how it affects the archaeology of Dorset. Participants included representatives from: academia, amateur societies, local planning authorities, local museums and some professional archaeologists. The talks have been informal, and have included preliminary discussions with Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist with Dorset County Council.

The assumption is that members of an archaeological society have local knowledge which can be used in the identification of any archaeology that should be considered when assessing a planning application.

It has been agreed that EDAS will participate in a pilot scheme to assess whether an amateur society can provide a useful role in this process.

The intention is to ensure the archaeology is best served. This is NOT an exercise to discourage development. It is meant to complement the role of the Dorset County Council archaeological services.

These are early days, but we intend to develop procedures by the end of March and to commence by April 2015.

We are looking for members who are interested in participating in this exercise. If you want further information please contact Andrew Morgan .

Email: [andrewmorgz@aol.com](mailto:andrewmorgz@aol.com)

Tel: 01202 731162

## Visit to Poole High School

Following their successful visit to Druce Roman Villa in June, Jill Kennedy of Poole High School invited us to give a talk about archaeology at the school. Anticipating a small group Bryan Popple and Andrew Morgan were surprised to be taken to the theatre and greeted by most of the sixth form, over 150 pupils.

We presented an introduction to archaeology, using examples of our work at Worth Matravers and Druce Farm. Many of the pupils who visited Druce in June were in the audience and were pleased to see themselves featured in the presentation. We also provided suggestions of local places they could visit.

They were very polite and clapped with enthusiasm. At the end many took advantage to check the display laid out by Bryan, containing a number of artefacts, mainly worked flint, from his private collection. Several asked interesting questions about local archaeology and many took away copies of the EDAS Programme. One spoke about walks on Cranborne Chase with his Dad and was delighted to learn about Bokerley Dyke and the Dorset Cursus.

The talk was part of an extra curriculum programme to expose the pupils to people and groups in the community who do interesting things; an opportunity to widen their horizons.

We congratulate Poole High School on this interesting initiative. And OK I have to admit that I was slightly disappointed when Jill explained that attendance was compulsory!

**Andrew Morgan**

## GREAT DORSET ARCHAEOLOGY & MYSTERIES QUIZ

EDAS and the Priest House Museum are jointly organising a fun quiz night, to be held on

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015 starting at 7.30pm at the Priest House Museum.**

Test your knowledge about Dorset, from the depths of prehistory to the modern era. Even if you can't answer some of the questions you will go away having learned some interesting facts!

There will be ten rounds of questions, with a break for light refreshments.

This is a team quiz with up to 6 people per team and the charge is £5 per person. Just let us know if you want to attend – we can help arrange you into teams if necessary. The price includes the refreshments.

Tickets will be on sale from the Wimborne Tourist Information Office, next to the Priest House Museum, or at the EDAS Meeting, please see Bryan Popple.

Please book as soon as possible to help us finalise the arrangements.

***Proceeds will be shared between the PHM and EDAS***

## COUNCIL for INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGY

### 2015 Conference

As many of you will know the Council for Independent Archaeology is dedicated to promoting the cause of archaeology and supporting the role of amateur archaeologists. A notable success being the clarification of the Valetta Convention which threatened amateur led activities.

EDAS is delighted to have been invited to host the 2015 conference and we will be finalising the arrangement over the next couple of months. It is a one day conference to be held on a Saturday next September/October.

The conference will be open to all interested archaeologists; you do not need to be a member of the CIA to attend.

Further details to follow.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2015
14 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	EDAS Lecture – Geomantics in Archaeology with Ben Urmston, Wessex Archaeology
11th February 2015	EDAS Lecture – The Protected Wrecks on the South Coast, with Mark Beattie-Edwards, Programme Director Nautical Archaeology Society
13th February 2015	Great Dorset Archaeology and Mystery Quiz – 7.30 pm Priest House Museum, Wimborne. Tickets £5, for more details ask Bryan Popple or Andrew Morgan
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	EDAS Lecture – Life & Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum, with Paul Roberts Curator British Museum. <b>To be held at the Marconi Lecture Theatre, Bournemouth University</b>
25th March 2015	EDAS AGM followed by members' evening
8th April 2015	EDAS Lecture – Catalhoyuk Neolithic Settlement, with Professor Peter Andrews, Curator of Blandford Museum
13th May 2015	EDAS Lecture – The Portable Antiquaries Scheme and the Treasure Act, with Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen, Dorset Finds Officer
13th to 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	EDAS Field Trip – Cambridgeshire area. Led by Keith and Denise Allsop. Details to follow.

**Note:** unless otherwise stated all lectures start at 7.30pm and are held at **St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.**



## East Dorset Antiquarian Society

### NOMINATION FORM

#### Nomination for a General Committee Member:

<b>Name of Nominee</b>		<b>Nominee's signature</b>	
<b>Name of Proposer</b>		<b>Proposer's signature</b>	
<b>Name of Secunder</b>		<b>Secunder's signature</b>	

Please return the completed form to Brian Maynard, 7 Verity Crescent, Canford Heath, and Poole, BH17 8TH or [brian.retired@ntlworld.com](mailto:brian.retired@ntlworld.com)

**Contact Telephone Number:**

**Date:**