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# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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## NEWSLETTER – September 2022

### Editor's Notes

The start of a new 'season' of EDAS lectures after our summer break seems to me to have come round rather quickly. We have, as always, arranged a varied set of speakers – listed in the **EDAS Programme** near the end of this newsletter – covering topics that we trust will provide something for everyone.

Our first meeting, on the 14<sup>th</sup>, features Lilian Ladle talking about Druce Farm Roman villa. You'll know from past experience that Lilian is an entertaining speaker, and obviously has unrivalled knowledge of the villa after directing the excavations and years of gathering the expert reports and writing the monograph that, as reported in the last newsletter, received unprecedented positive comments from the 3 peer reviewers (we're expecting what we hope will be the final monograph proof in the next few days).

You'll know that we suspended the lecture meeting breaks and refreshments, because of Covid and the hall's restrictions. Staffing can be an issue, especially as those in the kitchen usually miss much of the lecture, and many members have said that it also breaks up the talk. We've therefore decided that we'll continue without a break for now and go straight through the lecture and questions at the end. There is, of course, no problem with people then staying for a while to chat. If you have any comments on this, please do let me know.

### 2023 Field Trip

Many people have said that they've missed our annual field trips, postponed because of Covid issues and then the personal circumstances of potential organisers. Phil D'Eath and I have, though, now done initial research for a week-long field trip to Kent in mid-June next year. Many aspects have to be firmed up before we can make a formal announcement, but it is looking hopeful.

We are, of course, very aware of the current financial climate and are prioritising free sites or ones run by English Heritage (where non-members could save a lot by joining – Phil has thoughts on how to get a discount). Our aim is to visit a range of places from prehistoric through medieval and up to WWII, so we're looking at sites in both west and east Kent. A centrally placed base, like around Canterbury (a relatively expensive area), would still involve some long journeys, neither environmentally friendly nor kind on budgets. So we feel that a two-centre trip, probably based in Sandwich and then Maidstone, would be the best solution.

Watch this space for further information; meanwhile your comments and suggestions would be very welcome.

The Dorset Natural History and Archaeology have, at last, caught up with our membership, so we now have two membership cards allowing free entry to the County Museum in Dorchester. If you want to borrow them, please let me know.

EDAS ran a very popular event at the end of July, reported here as **Archaeology for young people at the Ancient Technology Centre (ATC)**. We may well do this again, so will be looking for volunteers!

Thanks to Robert and Vanessa for information on some English shipwrecks being given protection and the relationship of one to the medieval cross slab Vanessa found at our Wimborne All Hallows excavation, summarised here as **'Oldest' English shipwreck carried cross slabs**. Thanks also to Peter Lamb at Poole Maritime Trust for permission to reproduce (further down) a short article from the Trust's July 2022 newsletter: **A cannon ball discovered at Lulworth Cove**.

A simple 'thank you' seems insufficient for all of Alan's contributions to the newsletter, here yet another edition of his **Weblinks** and the **Weblink Highlights**, as well as the fifth follow-up to Leonard Baker's lecture on Cranborne Chase: **'The Most Riotous, Unprincipled Men' – The Main Characters, Part 3**.

There's also number 46 in the **View from Above** series and the third of the **From the Archives** series. I promised a follow-up on the replica Viking longship, which is also here: **Experimental Archaeology - the voyages of Sea Stallion**.

Finally, it's good to see that the **District Diary** is starting to fill with talks you may well want to attend.

**Geoff Taylor**

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## Archaeology for young people at the Ancient Technology Centre (ATC)

With the support and encouragement of staff and volunteers at Cranborne ATC, EDAS organised a free event for young people at ATC's Dark Ages weekend, 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> July. We set up a covered area (far right on Robert Heaton's drone photograph) with small rectangles for the children to dig, gave them the basic digging equipment and about half an hour to see what they could find. After that they could wash their finds, which proved very popular, then take away whatever they wanted (unless it was archaeologically significant). For those more interested, and other visitors who came by, there was an area with a wide selection of earlier finds that people could handle and displays about EDAS excavations.



The event proved very popular, with 99 young people ranging from under 2 years old to mid-late teens, along with many of their parents, having a go at excavating. This young lady, not quite 2 years old, wasn't even the youngest digger. We got many positive comments after the weekend and even on social media, so it's likely that we'll do this again at some time.

Most of the finds related to the site's distant past (one fossil, a variety of flints and rounded pebbles, pieces of marcasite mineral), a few from the area's agricultural past (oyster shells, a



clay pipe stem and a sherd of Verwood pottery), and more modern items like small sherds of glazed pottery. More intriguing was the large amount of charcoal and burnt flints, up to crinkled and crazed flints like that shown above that have been subject to very high temperatures. But then we found that the excavation site had been used by a group conducting metallurgy experiments. The children were, of course, happy to take home interestingly shaped and coloured stones (I can't speak for their parents).



Thanks are due to ATC staff and volunteers, and to the group of Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award candidates who did much of the setting up, but especially to the volunteers who instructed, supervised, encouraged and explained: 'from' ATC: Kathy Garland, Bridget Chase and Sue Martin; 'from' EDAS: Alan Dedden, Vanessa Joseph, Lilian Ladle, Robert Heaton, Simon Dunk and David Smith of Keeper's Lodge. It was a very enjoyable, if somewhat tiring, weekend.

**Geoff Taylor**

## 'Oldest' English shipwreck carried cross slabs

Online articles on both the Guardian and BBC websites (see Alan's weblinks) provided information on three English shipwrecks added to the previous 51 that have been given Protected Wreck status. Divers will need a licence even just to inspect them, and any artefacts found are protected. This short piece concentrates on the oldest of these wrecks, and particularly on its cargo.

The 'Mortar Wreck' was discovered by diver Trevor Small in Poole Bay in 2020 and reported to Bournemouth University. Dendrochronology shows that its Irish oak timbers were felled between 1242 and 1265, during the reign of Henry III. Although older wrecks dating back to the Bronze Age are known in English waters, none have the remains of the hull structure. For EDAS, a particular interest is that the ship was carrying two Purbeck marble cross slab gravestones, one of which is pictured here.



Of course, Vanessa discovered a cross slab during our excavations at Wimborne All Hallows (see April newsletter). That one, also of Purbeck marble and also dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, had a different head type and a double hollow chamfer. It is clear that such slabs, indicating high status burials, were prized beyond the Dorset area. As Hefin Meara, a maritime archaeologist with Historic England, said "It shows that these are really desirable products ... exported far and wide ... an indication that it's not just the stone itself that was desirable [but] the skills of local craftspeople."

Vanessa contacted Brian and Moira Gittos, who have done comprehensive surveys of Purbeck Marble coffin-shaped slabs, and have prepared a report on the Wimborne All Hallows slab. It seems they have had a lot of involvement with the Mortar Wreck, giving advice to the excavators about the stones they are finding. As they said: "We are expecting that there is more useful information still to come. It is a very exciting discovery".

## Vanessa Joseph/ Robert Heaton/ Geoff Taylor



This is a "contemporary art installation" for the National Trust at Housesteads Fort on Hadrian's Wall (thanks to Peter Walker for the link: [here](#)). It was "created by renowned artist, Morag Myerscough and the local community, ... is called 'The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is' [and] stands in the exact spot that the north gatehouse at Housesteads once stood". You will have your own views, but comments I've seen include "good

grief", "incandescent" and "The trouble with these artistic installations is it's all about the ego of the artist hidden behind 'community'. Perhaps it was another example of HLF desperately keen to throw its funds away and able to tick its meaningless boxes". Or maybe it was an NT or English Heritage box-ticking exercise (the site is scheduled and under the 'protection' of EH).

One small mercy is that it's temporary and will be removed at the end of October.

## Events & activities

The CBA Wessex September Newsletter is at [this link](#). It includes information on the Red House Museum in Christchurch and a very reasonably priced course at Springhead, near Fontwell Magna.

Details of the Cranborne Chase AONB Walking Festival are at [this link](#).

Jan Walker kindly sent me details of Oxford University's ongoing education courses, and particularly the Mick Aston 2022 Lecture on *New Research on Neolithic Orkney* – details [HERE](#) (you do need to book and it's £12 for online attendance). That page has a link to the various courses OU offer, some of which look really interesting, though they're not particularly cheap

### Sixth Annual Pitt Rivers Lecture

## Christopher Evans

### *Excavation as Experiment: Prehistoric communities and monuments on the Fenland Ouse*



**Tuesday 25 October 2022**  
7:00pm  
Live in the Fusion Building, Talbot Campus, BH12 5BB, and on-line via Zoom  
For further information, registration, and the latest updates please visit:  
<https://sixthpitriverslecture.eventbrite.co.uk>

Arguing that archaeological fieldwork needs a greater experimental ethos, this talk will draw on the results and implications of over 40 years of excavation at sites along the Great Ouse around its junction with the Fens. The results from these extensive, mainly develop-funded investigations not only provide unique insights into the lives of prehistoric communities, but also raise questions about the way we interpret and understand individual sites in their landscape context.



Christopher Evans, former Director of the Cambridge University Archaeology Unit, has directed numerous excavations in eastern England and published widely on landscape archaeology.

Presented by the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology in association with the Prehistoric Society



## Weblink Highlights July & August 2022

As the Poole Bay shipwreck is partly covered elsewhere in this newsletter I will pass over it for this edition of Highlights.

The recovered relic item is one that stands out for its demonstration, yet again, that beliefs can be very difficult to dislodge. Leaving aside the remote possibility that the beautiful casket shown here actually contains the blood of Christ, the fact that people still believe such (alleged) items carry a curse is, to me at least, astonishing. There is a strong connection with belief in conspiracy theories – a total lack of objective evidence and formulated to support a particular view of the world. A very good read on this subject is David Aaronovitch's *Voodoo Histories* (Kennedy assassination, moon landings and others looked at in depth). However, what cannot be avoided, and both links to the next Highlight and ensures such ideas will continue, is the enduring appeal they have to either lazy or reader-hungry journalism.

Which brings me to the item on parasites and medieval friars. The revelation that such closed communities as monasteries, and their gardening practices, were ideal for spreading roundworms is an interesting result from sound research. But did the Indy100 website really have to give this story the headline “Robin Hood was filled with parasitic worms given to him by Friar Tuck”? Quite apart from the totally unnecessarily lengthy headline, and the mind-numbing inanity of it,



from my memories of the Robin Hood stories, Friar Tuck did not do much gardening. I have used a different source for this item as it's probably a more serious treatment, but if you want to see the Indy100 headline in all its glory go to [this link](#)

You can make your own mind up on the item on non-binary skeletons.

***Alan Dedden***

## **July and August Weblinks**

**Cavers Find Pristine Mineshaft Frozen In Time For 200 Years [here](#)**

**Dutch Art Detective Recovers 2000-Year-Old Relic [here](#)**

**Poole Bay Medieval Shipwreck Given Government Protection [here](#) and [here](#)**

**Rare Dig At Arthur's Stone Writes New Story Of Neolithic Site [here](#)**

**Fossil Of 'First Predator' Named After Sir David Attenborough [here](#)**

**Eye-popping Fossil Fish Found In Gloucestershire Cattle Field [here](#)**

**New Pompeii Finds Shed Light On Middle Class Life [here](#)**

**Horniman Museum To Return Benin Bronzes [here](#)**

**Hunter-Gatherer Footprints Uncovered In Utah Desert [here](#)**

**US Returns Dozens Of Looted Antiquities To Cambodia [here](#)**

**There Is No Such Thing As A Nonbinary Skeleton [here](#)**

**New Evidence Suggests Carter Stole Artefacts From Tutankhamun's Tomb [here](#)**

**Expert Makes Rare Find On Sheffield Museum Opening Day [here](#)**

**'Magical' Rock Crystals Found At Neolithic Ceremonial Site In West Of England [here](#)**

**100 Million-Year-Old Dinosaur Footprint Found At Restaurant In China [here](#)**

**Parasitic Worm Infections Of Medieval Friars [here](#)**

**Huge Megalithic Stone Complex Discovered In Spain [here](#)**

**The Gough Map May Show Evidence Of Wales' Atlantis Off Ceredigion [here](#)**

**Remains Of Older Fortress Found Under 'Mega-Monument' Burial Mound In Cyprus [here](#)**

**82ft Dinosaur Found In Portuguese Garden [here](#)**

**Dinosaur Tracks From 113m Years Ago Exposed By Drought [here](#)**

**Ancient Glass Vessels Restored After Beirut Blast Breakages On Display At British Museum [here](#)**

**Stone Circle And 11th Century Church Uncovered As Spanish Reservoir Shrinks [here](#)**

**Arrowhead From The Viking Age Uncovered By Melting Ice [here](#)**

**Woman On Beach Finds Fossil Likely Older Than Dinosaurs [here](#)**

**Remains Of 17 People From A Medieval Well Were Victims Of An Antisemitic Massacre [here](#)**

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## **'The Most Riotous, Unprincipled Men' – The Main Characters, Part 3**

The Milford-on-Sea Occasional Magazine I mentioned last month arrived a few days after the closing date for the last newsletter; perhaps fortunate as newsletter space can be at a premium for Geoff. I'm extremely grateful to Barry Jolly, who wrote the article on Captain Peyton, for his time and help in following up on this leading member of the Handley Torches.

John Strutt Peyton was born in 1786 to William and Phillis in Kentish Town. William served in the Navy

Office at Somerset House for many years, but the family naval tradition went much deeper, including an uncle who captained a ship at the Battle of the Nile with Nelson. More details of John, and his family's naval connections, are at [this link](#), including the loss of his right arm after an encounter in 1807 and promotion to captain later that year. An 1828 book of naval biographies by John Marshall included an expansive account of an action by Peyton in 1812 to take three privateers. Somewhat belatedly, it raised him to what then amounted to celebrity status: in 1830 he attended a levée, or formal reception, with William IV to whom he was introduced by Viscount Melville, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Despite this later fame, and like Harry Dibben in the previous newsletter, I've not been able to find a portrait.

Captain Peyton left active service in 1814 and, in October, married Frances Boyfield Woodyear, the daughter of another naval officer, at Boldre near Lymington. Their first child was baptised at Lymington on 8th December 1815, but they soon moved to a house known as 'Buona Vista' on the outskirts of Milford, and their other 4 children were baptised there, up to 1821. By 1823 the Peytons had moved to Dorset, and the jury lists for 1825-1834 show them living at Sixpenny Handley.

John was evidently a man of some means, assessed for land tax at 6 shillings and also owning a freehold house at 109 Cheapside in the City of London, where he appears on the electoral register, which gives his place of abode 1832-1833 as Handley House as shown (date uncertain). This was demolished in the 1960s, but stood facing Back Lane at what is now St Mary's Court at the top of the High Street. The house was fortunate not to be destroyed in the Sixpenny Handley fire of 1892 as the start of the fire was in the wheelwrights workshop just around the corner, or the 3 other fires at Sixpenny Handley in the previous 35 years.



It was during his time at Handley House that Peyton was a leading member of the Handley Torches, when they began their campaign of vandalism in support of Harry Dibben's legal challenge to enclosure. The challenge succeeded in 1834, not long before the Peytons moved to Farnham Cottage, Tollard Farnham, according to the electoral register.

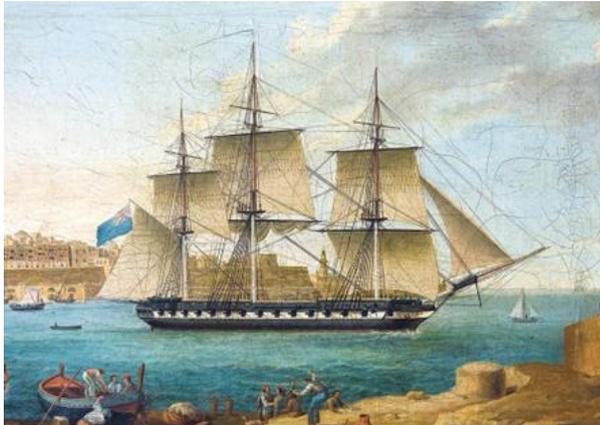
This is slightly confusing as, on a modern map, Tollard Farnham is just a hamlet of a farm and a scatter of cottages distinct from Farnham. However, the 1835 tythe map shows that the whole of the area encompassing Farnham, New Town, Hookwood and Tollard Farnham was within Tollard Farnham parish, to which the electoral registers presumably referred. Indeed, the name suggests that Farnham Cottage was in the village of Farnham. A chance conversation in August with another EDAS member, and



volunteer digger at Julian Richard's Springhead excavation (the subject of next January's EDAS talk), who lives in Farnham revealed the discovery of a naval officer's button in his garden. The style identifies it as a commissioned officer's button of 1795-1812. The cottage where it was found dates to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century; could it have been Farnham Cottage?

In 1835 John Strutt Peyton qualified as a juror as the leaseholder of Farnham Cottage. Moving from the significant Handley House, which he owned, to the presumably somewhat less significant Farnham Cottage seems to indicate a change of circumstances. This may be linked to the purchase of a share in King's College, London at the cost of £100 (about £12,000 today) which qualified him as a 'Proprietor', allowing him to nominate 2 pupils to the school, or one each to the school and college – presumably for his two sons. There is, perhaps, some irony in his becoming a 'proprietor' when he was instrumental in fighting the wishes of the Cranborne Chase proprietors as part of the Handley Torches.

Another factor in the move may have been the change in the course of his life which seems to have resulted from his celebrity following publication of Marshall's book. In January 1836 he was nominated a Knight Commander of the Royal Guelphic Order (KCH), and in June appointed to the 46 gun HMS Madagascar (same class as the frigate pictured), and sailed for the Caribbean to combat the ongoing



slave trade. He was knighted in 1837 (KCH was a foreign order, so a holder wasn't a 'Sir'), but fell ill early in 1838 and HMS Madagascar returned to Portsmouth. He died in London on 20th May.

Coincidentally, Sir Charles Paget (son of Lord Anglesey, the 'Lord of the Chase') was also appointed KCH, and Sir John's time in the Caribbean overlapped with Sir Charles being

Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy North America and West Indies Station.

In doing research like this, coincidences suggest questions that often can't be resolved, such as whether the two met. But there are also gaps and anomalies that intrigue, even if they aren't directly relevant. Here, for example, there is a gap in the listed commanders of HMS Madagascar from 1834 to 1838. One source records the knighting of Sir John "of Yealmpton in Co. Devon", but the only connection seems to be that his widow was living there when her mother died in 1839. Yealmpton isn't far from the naval base at Plymouth, but HMS Madagascar sailed from and back to Portsmouth during John Peyton's appointment. Frances Peyton lived until 1849 and left a 6 page will which may shed further light, but the writing is mostly unreadable, for me at least. If anyone would like to have a go, and help satisfy my curiosity, please let me know.



**Badge of the Knight Commander of the Hanoverian (or Royal Guelphic) Order, Military Division, awarded to Britons from 1815 until 1837, when the union with Hanover ceased.**

**Alan Dedden**

## A cannon ball discovered at Lulworth Cove

Poole Maritime Trust have been donated this cannon ball, a valuable and interesting addition to their collection of local history. The donor, sharp-eyed Lisa Kyprianou, was visiting Lulworth Cove and, whilst paddling, spotted it washed up on the beach.

Robert Heaton said that this was "A great little find just rolling around the seabed. Quite how its density stopped it from dropping through the stones we will never know. Perhaps it was embedded in a cliff and was then eroded out. When these dry out they can fall to pieces, but this seems to have survived."

Natalie Georgina has provided the following that may provide a clue to its history : "It's the summer of 1643 and, in the fields beyond Lulworth Castle, a small group of women and children are enjoying the afternoon sunshine. Though you would never know it from the idyllic scene, the county is rife with tension as the violent clashes of the English Civil War begin to wreak havoc. Suddenly, a single musket shot rings out



and a child falls, mortally wounded. As his mother wails in anguish, word is passed to Sir Humphrey Weld, owner of the castle.

Within minutes this former Sheriff and Lord Mayor of London, devoted Royalist and defender of the Crown, is mustering the waiting troops of his friend, Sir Thomas Tyldesley. Meanwhile, Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentary forces are gathering in an attempt to take Lulworth. Within the hour a bloody battle is raging as the Royalists push forward, determined to repel the advances of the Roundheads. In a blaze of musket and cannon fire the two sides become locked in brutal hand-to-hand combat. They drive hard into each other, a forest of pikestaffs clashing, their muskets – useless at such close range – gripped by the barrel and used to club the enemy to the ground". It's a quote from *Living History at Lulworth Cove* at [this website](#).

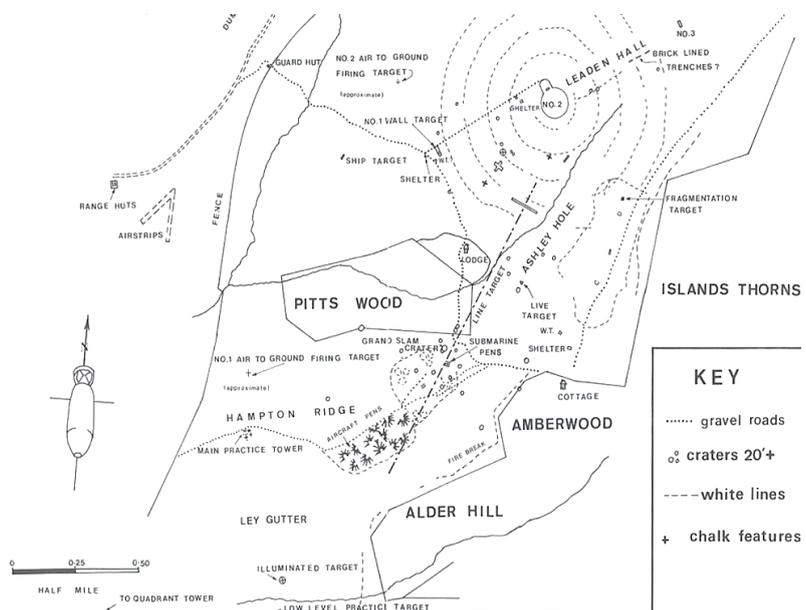
**View from Above No. 46:  
Ashley Walk, New Forest**

**Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane**



This is a photograph of part of the Ashley WWII bombing range near Godshill, east of Fordingbridge, in the New Forest. It is one of several that were set up in Wessex (a smaller version of this picture was in the February 2018 newsletter, part of the summary of Jo and Sue's talk the previous month).

Although many of the bomb craters have been filled in, it is obvious from the photograph that some are still visible, as well other features such as sighting lines and targets. The yellow circle is the 200m diameter concrete 'Wall Target'; comparison with the map will allow you to identify several other features. You can search for these features on the ground by parking at the Ashley Walk car park and then walking.



The lease of this 5,000 acre site was agreed with the Verderers in February 1940, and it was ready for use 6 months later, though German reconnaissance photos from 1941 show that many of the more specialised targets had still to be added.

Aircraft flew here from RAF Boscombe Down on aircrew training flights, but mainly to test munitions. In fact, every sort of munition fired or dropped from British planes was tested here, except for live incendiaries. That included versions of the 'Bouncing Bomb' designed by Sir Barnes Wallis. Night runs were also made, with an illumination target specially for the purpose. There is just one known site of an aircraft crash, a Lancaster of 617 Squadron (the 'Dambusters'); luckily, all of the crew survived.

Shown on the map, and this photograph, is the crater from a 'Grand Slam' bomb, successfully tested here on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1945, leaving a crater 9m deep and 38m in diameter (though it missed the intended target at the top of the photo). The following day, one was used in a raid that put the important Bielefeld railway viaduct out of use after 54 earlier raids had failed. The Grand Slam was a 22,000lb (or 10 tonne) bomb, 8m long, designed to cause an 'earthquake' effect. It was so heavy that Avro Lancasters had to be modified to carry one, and suddenly rose 100m or more on releasing it.



The range continued in use until 1946, but clearance wasn't complete until 2 years later. Many of the targets were removed, as well as the domestic facilities for crew, observation shelters and towers. The Ministry of Home Security target, at the top of the crater photo above and circled

below, now looks like a huge round barrow, as it was buried when demolition attempts failed. This 33x37m reinforced concrete structure was known locally as the Submarine Pens, which it slightly resembled, but had actually been built to test different types of concrete construction.

The Grand Slam crater was amongst the many (as can be seen) that were filled in after the war, though one close by from a 12,000lb 'Tallboy' bomb was left and is now a pond. The Ministry of Defence did confirm that the area was cleared of ordinance, and I've not found any reports suggesting that the area remains potentially dangerous to visit!

If you'd like to find out more about the range [this site](#) has a good deal of information, as well as [this one](#).

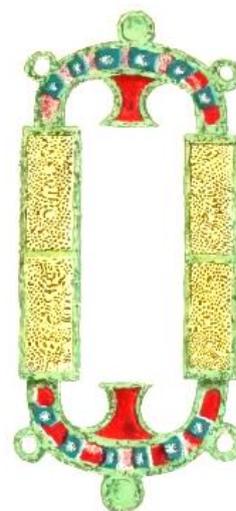


*Jo Crane/Geoff Taylor*

### From the Archives 3

A further description in volume II of the Proceedings seemed likely to be of interest:

This pendant or brooch was found in Dorchester alongside decorated samian sherds and other Roman items over what appeared to be a Roman floor (suggested as a villa). This was in digging foundations for a wall in the north-east corner of the “new fairground”, which seems to be the site now used for Wednesday and Sunday markets, outside the Roman walls at about SY 691 902. The dimensions aren’t given but, assuming it has been reproduced full size, it’s about 10cm long. The green is patinated copper (Prof. Buckman is quite clear that it isn’t bronze), whilst the coloured areas are enamels, with the yellow “dotted all over into a ... pattern by metallic(?) points”. From the fixings on the rear it was interpreted as a “pendant meant to be fastened by buttons and sewing” and felt more likely to be Anglo-Saxon rather than Roman, despite the findspot and associated objects. Today Google and the Portable Antiquities Scheme allow for a serious search, though I couldn’t find anything like it after half an hour or so. If anyone knows more I’d be pleased to hear.



Turning to Volume III (1879), I see that Dorset in Saxon charters was *Durnsaet* or *Dornsaet*. A long, and somewhat confusing, article claims that there were ‘islands’ of Celts (or “Welsh”) in early Saxon Dorset, assimilated over a long period rather than conquered. Although clearly possible, both evidence and argument suffer from too many leaps of faith (pun not intended, but much is based on church dedications).



An hour glass and stand attached to the pulpit at St Andrew’s Church, Bloxworth is discussed in some detail. After the Reformation preaching was obligatory and the hour glass was, from different sources, either to ensure the sermon was long enough or ensure it wasn’t too long. It seems, though, that many vicars would turn the glass, condemning parishioners to another hour (or more), perhaps why these are now very rarely found in their original position, or at all. Sadly, the Bloxworth original, perhaps dating to 1683 and about 25cm tall, was stolen in 2003, though now replaced by a replica. The photograph is of the original.

The Proceedings missed a year, but volume IV (1881) has rather more items of potential interest than volume III. There are two papers on the Antonine Itinerary, a register of places along the Roman roads and the distances between them. Its origins are still debated, and it could well be a collection of information written over 2 centuries (though many sources say it is from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and others the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century). Despite the copying involved to leave us with several primary manuscripts today, with the obvious possibility of errors, the Itinerary has been helpful in giving us the Roman names of many settlements. In some cases the distances listed have played a part in the discovery of settlements, in others routes, settlement locations and place names continue to be disputed.

Both articles look at *Iter XV* from *Calleva Atrebatum* (Silchester) to *Isca Dumnoniorum* (Exeter), an *Iter* with known errors. The first article, and by far the most fanciful in its derivations in my view (though not necessarily always wrong), actually calls it *Iter XVI* which doesn’t exist. I found the second article more interesting for its proposal that *Vindocladia* (or *Vindogladia*) was Badbury Rings, and I wonder if this was the first time this was seriously suggested. Prior to that various locations were suggested including Wimborne Minster, despite the mileage being wrong and it being some distance from Ackling Dyke. We now generally think Vindocladia was the settlement near Shapwick, unknown in 1880 and clearly quite close to Badbury. I was also intrigued by the author calling the modern town Winborne Minster, quite deliberately. As far as I can tell, the current spelling was in common use long before 1880 and, though there were clearly variations over the centuries, few started with “Win”.

**Geoff Taylor**

## Experimental Archaeology - the voyages of *Sea Stallion*

The previous article on the replica Viking longship, *Sea Stallion*, covered the ship's design and construction. This one looks at how the experimental work continued with sea trials of the longship and, especially, voyages from Roskilde, Denmark, to Dublin in 2007 and then back in 2008. It is mostly based on information from the book mentioned previously and from the website of the Viking Ship Museum (<https://www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk/en/>). Photographs are, again, mostly © Copyright of the Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde.

*Sea Stallion* was completed in 2004 as a 'replica' of *Skuldelev 2*, a Viking longship built in or near Dublin around AD 1042. As far as possible its design and construction followed that of *Skuldelev 2*, or of other Viking ships from that period where *Skuldelev 2*'s remains proved insufficient. However, one thing the Vikings clearly didn't have was electronics, and *Sea Stallion* has a tangle of cables providing radar, navigation functions and satellite communication. Whilst this may seem to be 'cheating', crew safety is



obviously vital, especially on an open ship, and *Sea Stallion* always has a support ship on longer voyages. There's also a nurse onboard, inflatable life-rafts and each member of the crew has access to a survival suit if the worst happens. The electronics do provide a vast amount of data about the ship's movements, so as to be able to analyse how well it actually sails in practice. Several logbooks and diaries are also meticulously kept to fully understand *Sea Stallion*'s performance and crew experiences.



There are many questions to be answered about the ships in considering how the Scandinavians during the Viking Age came to be so important as warriors, but also as merchants and colonisers. For example, how swift and seaworthy were the different sorts of ships, could they sail in all weathers and what could they do faced with a rocky shore, an onshore wind and a storm? Also, how many crew were actually needed, and how many people and how much cargo could be carried? Sea trials can look at the technical qualities of the ships, but only longer experimental voyages can bring us closer to understanding how quickly and how far the Vikings could travel in practice.

A summary of the results might be that *Sea Stallion* performs very well but modern people less so. Various different results are quoted in different circumstances, but it seems that the ship's long



waterline and narrow cross section means it can accelerate quickly and, under sail, average around 7 knots, reaching 11 or 12 knots in favourable conditions (1 knot=1.85kph=1.15mph). A maximum of 17 knots has been achieved in stronger winds, probably at a time when the crew would have preferred not to be sailing. Under oars, mainly used for manoeuvring, around 5 knots can be achieved, though not against the wind or in large waves, and not for long periods; half this speed would be sustainable for rather longer though I can't find details. Perhaps surprisingly, *Sea Stallion* performs better with every other oar manned – speed only falls slightly as there is more room, whilst taking turns to row means it can be done for longer.

With a hardy crew and favourable winds, the North Sea could be crossed in 3 days. However, experience has shown that a modern crew is worn out quite quickly because of the cramped conditions and, in particular, their inability to get enough sleep. Even the more hardy Viking warriors would have needed breaks to rest. All the same, in 2006 *Sea Stallion* was sailed from Roskilde to Oslo (over 500km/300 miles) without going ashore, even though it met the largest waves experienced up till then.



For the longer voyages, *Sea Stallion* has a crew of 60-65, with at least 10 or 12 more thought to have crewed *Skuldelev 2*. I imagine that might be to provide a bit more room for people and/or because of the weight of the modern equipment on board. There is, in fact, a weighing day for all the crew and their luggage (max. 80 litres per person) before setting sail, partly to ensure that the ship is trimmed correctly, but also to check crew weight losses (or gains?) during the trip. Food is actually very varied, with a hot meal every day and, despite seasickness and difficulties in producing food in bad weather, people eat more on board than on land. Of course, supplies can now be obtained easily at the fairly frequent rest stops, or even from the support ship. Things were obviously not so easy for the Vikings, whose usual meal was a buttery porridge, heated over a small fire and bulked out with preserved fish or meat and dried root vegetables; any fresh fish they caught would be very welcome. On the other hand, in Norwegian law at least, Viking warriors coming ashore could practice *strandhogg* or beach butchery, as long as they left enough behind for the owner to prove the loss and claim compensation from the king.

The shifts, or watches, on *Sea Stallion* are of 4 hours, partly as there is only space for half the crew to



sleep or rest at a time. Some were able to stretch out along oars in the narrow 'rooms' between frames, others slept on the floor at bow or stern. Neither would have been particularly comfortable, especially with the complete lack of shelter and the possible need for those on watch to move among them. One article I found said that "the crew experienced the hardships the Vikings would have encountered" but, although they did only have a woollen blanket for covering, modern clothing is likely to be much better than the woollen cloaks which

were the Vikings' outer garments. Some may have had sleeping bags made of skins.

The voyage of *Sea Stallion* to Dublin and back was epic for those taking part, but probably relatively common 1,000 or so years ago given the importance of Irish settlement for the Vikings. The modern crew was 65 people at any one time, volunteers from 10 different countries. In total they sailed 4,600km (2,870 miles), outwards from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2007 and returning from 29<sup>th</sup> June to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2008. It seems that both routes were used by the Vikings, i.e. the northern outward journey via the Orkneys and the southern return along the English Channel, with little difference in distance. The choice may well have depended on the likely winds, easterly now being more common in spring and south-westerly in autumn, though the northern route seems to have been preferred for ships sailing to Scandinavia.



Rest stops were common in both directions, such as at Kirkwall and the Isle of Man on the outward voyage, Torquay, Margate and Den Helder in the Netherlands on the way back. Crew changes were also quite frequent, partly to provide fresher people but more often because the person had run out of time to be off work. It seems that *Sea Stallion* proved itself well, though the weather was vicious at times and the expected small repairs were constantly needed. A tow was used for part of the route to Kirkwall when the wind direction changed unexpectedly and was forecast to remain westerly for some time. For the Vikings that would have meant returning to Denmark or even the loss of the ship and its crew. On the return, *Sea Stallion* was becalmed in Lowestoft for 11 days, although the sunny weather meant everything and everyone could dry out.

The following snippets summarised from diaries and blogs give an idea of the impact on the people:

- I didn't sleep so well one night as I was soaked by a wave that washed over me as soon as I put my head down and went right inside my clothes. It takes forever to dry out.
- Some people swear by 'hi-tech' synthetic clothing, which is light and takes up little room, others by wool-based layers. The best is my choice of wool inner and synthetic outer, but still I can't stop my teeth chattering.
- On our free time we creep under woollen blankets and huddle for warmth; impressive snoring is the price for keeping warm.
- Log entry Tues. July 3 2007, 1:45 am – 2 more crew members evacuated, one with seasickness and the other hypothermia (they set off on July 1<sup>st</sup>).
- I have never been so bruised as when I arrived exhausted home to Dublin, hands weathered and nails engrained with black tar from the ropes. But I had rowing muscles, a glow in my cheeks and had just completed the most amazing adventure.



After many more trips and years, *Sea Stallion* had to return to harbour on its first voyage in 2019 after springing a leak below the waterline. Some of the strakes, i.e. planking, had cracked near the mast. There were still problems after the repair, and they found some of the nails and spikes near the mast were loose. Time was beginning to take its toll after 15 years of sailing, and the ship couldn't tolerate the same stresses as when it was new. It was decided to reduce the mast and sail by 1.5m, allowing ballast to be reduced by 1.5 tonnes, as well as making several

lesser repairs and changes in the mast area. Of course, Viking period mast heights are unknown archaeologically, and the changes will allow exploration of the effects of this change in design.

In fact, there are signs of major repairs on most of the known Viking ships, and tree ring dating of old and new parts suggests that many were done after about 15 years. *Skuldelev 2* was scuttled in the region of 30 years after it was first built, and a lifespan of 20-40 years was thought to be reasonable for most Viking ships. On the other hand, the Oseberg burial ship now in the Oslo Viking Ship Museum (p.8 November 2019 newsletter), was only in use for 14 years, so the lifespan of a Viking ship might be relatively short. We'll have to wait to find out how *Sea Stallion* fares in future.

Oh, and I did discover that reconstruction of *Roskilde 6*, found in the harbour in 1997 and the longest Viking ship known at 36m, was set to begin in 2020, but no doubt interrupted by the pandemic.

**Geoff Taylor**

## EDAS 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.

2022			
<b>Wed 14<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Lecture	<b>Lilian Ladle</b>	The Romans at Druce Farm Villa: Mosaics, middens and military?
<b>Wed 12<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Lecture	<b>Helen Farr</b>	Marine Archaeology in the Black Sea
<b>Wed 9<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Lecture	<b>Richard Hobbs</b>	Hinton St Mary Mosaic: Fieldwork & excavations
<b>Wed 14<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Lecture	<b>Mike Gill</b>	Redefining the Neolithic Map: Recent work on Cranborne Chase and Avon Valley long barrows
2023			
<b>Wed 11<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Lecture	<b>Julian Richards</b>	The last wild Britain: the Mesolithic people at Springhead
<b>Wed 8<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Lecture	<b>Neil Meldrum</b>	Ancient China
<b>Wed 8<sup>th</sup> March</b>	AGM & lecture	<b>To be announced</b>	Subject tbd – recent EDAS work
<b>Wed 12<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Lecture	<b>Peter Cox</b>	40 years of archaeology in Dorset
<b>Wed 10<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Lecture	<b>Clare Randall</b>	The manor of Putton and the potential of medieval archaeology in Dorset

## DISTRICT DIARY

**AVAS has had to change their meeting venue and that meant changing the day they meet; the new details are below. Their new hall is only 5 minutes from Ringwood and has good parking and other facilities, with the first meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Speaker information will follow once available.**

2022			
<b>Thur 15<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Finding Mesolithic people under the Solent	<b>Blandford Group</b>	Rebecca Ferreira
<b>Wed 21<sup>st</sup> September</b>	Finding Nero (and other Roman Emperors), after brief AGM	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Miles Russell
<b>Wed 19<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Mapping time in the Purbecks – 11 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Mary Sparks
<b>Wed 16<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Dorset folklore and traditional tales from the oral tradition	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Tim Laycock
<b>Wed 7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	The last wild Britain: Mesolithic people at Springhead	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Julian Richards
2023			
<b>Wed 18<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Meyer: a rebel with a cause	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Graham Knott
<b>Wed 15<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Rockbourne Roman Villa	<b>Wareham Society</b>	John Smith
<b>Wed 15<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Update on Hadrian’s Wall	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Mark Corney

<b>Wed 19<sup>th</sup> April</b>	What's in a name? A history of Wareham through street names	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lilian Ladle
<b>Wed 17<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Dorset Churches	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Gordon Le Pard

### Archaeology Societies

- **Avon Valley Archaeological Society:** <http://www.avas.org.uk/>  
Meetings at Ibsley Village Hall, BH24 3NL (<https://ibsleyhall.co.uk/>), 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month September to May at Blandford Parish Centre, The Tabernacle, DT11 7DW. 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:** Their website isn't updated but they are on the Wareham Chimes site [here](#), or contact Karen Brown at [karen.brown68@btinternet.com](mailto:karen.brown68@btinternet.com). Meetings at Furzebrook Village Hall, BH20 5AR, normally 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.