



THE CHRISTCHURCH ANTIQUARIANS

Newsletter, January 2012

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Roger Donne

Members in receipt of emails from our Chairman, Mike Tizzard, and the minutes of our committee meetings will be aware of our work at Millhams Meade in our search for the lost site of Christchurch's Port Mill. We believe that in 2011 we have made a significant discovery in the gardens of Millhams Meade which has been very encouraging for the members involved in the excavation and a vindication of Mike Tizzard's identification of the probable mill site. Thus, this newsletter is a special edition on the Mill Project with a report on the 2011 excavations and an article by David Eels on the early documentary references to Port Mill. We've also kept you updated on our other members' activities. Bryan Popple has contributed an article on his involvement with the hugely successful dig at Worth Matravers conducted by the East Dorset Archaeological Society (so that's where you were, Bryan!) and Stephanie

Liney tells us about her organisation of the St. Faith's Fair commemoration in October 2011.

I hope you find the contents interesting. If you are reading this and are not a member perhaps you would consider joining, to support our work? Contact details are at the end of the newsletter. We welcome and appreciate the support from our membership, both practically and financially. Our sole means of funding is via our membership subscriptions and the sale of our publications but outgoings can be expensive with, for example, the dating of a single sample of material by radio-carbon analysis costing us £250.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF PORT MILL

David Eels

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, exciting finds have been made during the last year by members of TCA carrying out excavations at Millhams. At long last it looks as though evidence has been found of the lost mill, so I thought that now is the appropriate time for an article on what I have found out about the mill while searching through medieval sources in the last thirty years.

Domesday Book (1086) tells us that Christchurch (written as Tuinham and Thuinham in that document) had two mills: the borough mill belonging to the king was worth five shillings while the canons' mill, probably on the site of the present Place Mill, was worth just thirty pence, exactly half the value of the borough mill. There were two other larger and more valuable mills in the locality: Holdenhurst Mill, owned by the king and later known as Throop Mill, which was worth fifteen shillings and the mill at Knapp which was worth twenty shillings. Hugh de Port had come to England in 1066 with William the Conqueror and soon became the largest land holder in Hampshire with his local holdings including Hurn, Knapp and Stanpit, but by 1086 he had leased Hurn and Knapp to another Hugh.

The Normans took over the very efficient Saxon administration system of shires sub-divided into hundreds and all four of these mills were in the same Hampshire hundred. The Saxons had named this hundred *Egheiete* which means *Edgagate*. Many of the hundreds were named after the location of the site for the monthly open-air meeting or moot so *Edgagate* could mean that the meeting place was near to the gate of the burh of Tuinham. If my suggestion for the origin of the name is correct, the moot would probably have been at one of the nearby Bronze Age round barrows.

Archaeology has shown that there were two of these almost opposite the burghal gate where the Waitrose store now stands.

In the second half of the 14th century a scribe at Christchurch Priory was given the task of copying out all the priory's documents to form the cartulary, and so that it could be seen at a glance what each document was about he added rubrics. The rubrics for the documents referring to the borough mill stated that it was Port Mill. The name Port goes back to Saxon times as Saxon market towns were known as ports and because Christchurch was one of these ports the name Port Mill meant the mill belonging to the market town. The local names Portfield and Portreeve's Mead have the same origin with the port reeve being the king's representative in the town.

Richard de Redvers, who was a minor baron in Normandy, had been a close friend and loyal supporter of the Conqueror's youngest son Henry and after Henry became king in 1100 he rewarded Richard with large estates in southern England including Christchurch and what is now Bournemouth. He and his descendants were to be lords of Christchurch until the death of Isabella de Fors (née de Redvers) in 1293 when the direct line of the family came to an end. For the period from the 1140s to the 1280s I have located at least fourteen documents that contain references to Port Mill. For some of these I have the full text and for others I have only a calendared version which is an abbreviated translation. In this article I will refer only to the most important facts from some of the documents. The full details will have to wait until we are ready to produce a book on the mill.

In the early 1130s the first Baldwin de Redvers, who was created 1st Earl of Devon in 1141 by Matilda when she was queen in all but name, had founded Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight which was so named because of its proximity to the stone quarry at Binstead. For various reasons Baldwin's foundation charter was not finalised and sealed until after he became Earl of Devon. In this charter he endowed the abbey with land and property including his mills at Christchurch and Holdenhurst. At a later date one of Baldwin's tenants named Sweyn gave to the abbey his house next to the mill at Christchurch and subsequently this gift was confirmed by Earl Baldwin in another charter.

In the 1190s Earl William de Redvers gave to the same abbey a new house next to the abbot's mill in Christchurch on what used to be a public street. Having passed this information on to my colleagues carrying out the

excavations, they have not found anything that could be interpreted as a road.

Circa 1260 Baldwin, the 7th and last Earl of Devon, granted to the Prior of Christchurch all of the water in the Mill Stream after it had left the Abbot of Quarr's mill and permitted him to dispose of it as he wished after it had entered the priory grounds, but he had to maintain access for the earl's boats through the middle sluice as far as the earl's cellars and the bridge. From this document it is obvious that Port Mill was on the Mill Stream north of the bridge and in order to obtain a rush of water past the waterwheel it would have to have been on the east side of the stream with the tail race flowing into the River Avon. It could not have been too far north of the bridge as a 15th century document in the borough archives (which Mike Tizzard mentioned in last year's newsletter) refers to a lane off Castle Street leading to Port Mill. Taken together, these documents seem to indicate that the mill was in the Millhams area. Incidentally, this circa 1260 charter seems to be the earliest document I have seen confirming the presence of a bridge over either the River Avon or the Mill Stream.

In the mid 1270s the death occurred of William Sweyn who was the tenant of Port Mill and it is possible that he was a descendant of the Sweyn who had granted his house to the abbey in the 1140s. Following his death, his widow and his two daughters, in three separate documents, each renounced their rights to the mill and its surrounding lands. As a result of this the Abbot of Quarr and the Prior of Christchurch began negotiations for the latter to lease Port Mill and its appurtenances in perpetuity for an annual rent of twelve marks. A final agreement was witnessed in March 1283 and in the following January this agreement received royal assent. The latter document refers to the leasing of two mills in Christchurch which probably meant that Port Mill had two sets of millstones at that time.

Christchurch Priory now held both of the Christchurch mills listed in Domesday Book and within forty years it would have in its possession all four of the local Domesday mills. In the 12th century Jordan Foliot had granted Knapp Mill to the priory and by the 1230s there were two mills at Knapp as indicated in a charter of the 6th Earl of Devon confirming the priory's ownership of mills on both banks of the River Avon at Knapp. The second mill at Knapp must have been Mead Mill (referred to by Mike Tizzard in last year's newsletter) as a document of circa 1285 indicates that Knapp Mill and Mead Mill were both on the River Avon and were in close proximity to each other. Finally in 1323 the Abbot of Quarr leased Throop Mill to the Prior of Christchurch in perpetuity for a fixed annual rent.

FINDING PORT MILL, A LOST MILL OF CHRISTCHURCH

Roger Donne & Mike Tizzard

In last year's newsletter, Mike Tizzard reported on our 2010 campaign to find evidence of Port Mill with a series of test pits in the gardens of Millhams Meade, between the River Avon and the Mill Stream. Various documentary sources, as well as features such as water channels, pointed to a mill in this area but the references in documents were imprecise as to its location.

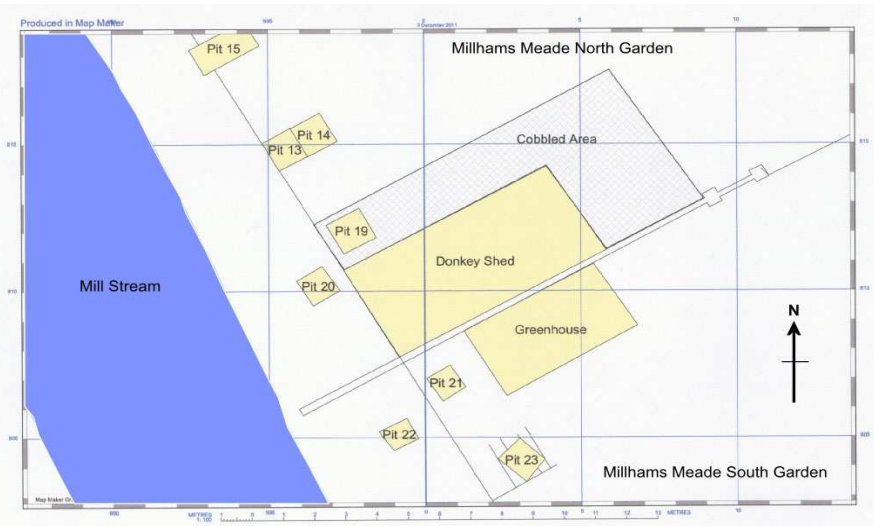
In another article in this newsletter, David Eels has surveyed the references to Port Mill in early documents dated prior to 1300. However, as Mike Tizzard wrote in his article in the 2010 newsletter, the most precise



Wooden posts and wattle revetting found in Pits 13/14, August to October 2010

evidence for the location of Port Mill is in the borough documents relating to the property that is now the Old George Inn, which the borough once owned. It states in a document dated to 1416 that the property was bounded on the east by a lane leading to 'Portmulle'. It is likely that the lane ran along the course of the alleyway that

today runs down the side of the George and perhaps continued down what today is Ducking Stool Lane and beyond to Millhams. Mike Tizzard always believed that this immediate area is the most likely place for the mill to have been sited and over the past five years TCA have tried to locate the site of Port Mill by trial and error excavation.



Plan of Millhams Test Pits, 2010 and 2011 Campaigns

In 2010, we found the first evidence of structures possibly relating to the water management associated with a mill in an area to the east of the Mill Stream and almost opposite the end of Ducking Stool Lane. These structures looked like the revetting associated with the bank of a watercourse and consisted of a wattle hurdle held in place by a horizontal beam and vertical posts, as shown in the photograph which was first published in last year's newsletter (see previous page). Similar wooden structures were found in Pit 15, 2m further north, which indicated a line of revetting at an approximate angle of 20 degrees to the present course of the Mill Stream in that area. TCA funded the radio-carbon analysis of a sample of one of the timber stakes from Pit 13/14 and this gave a date for the structure between AD1160 to 1290 (with 95% probability). Other pits excavated in 2010, Pits 16, 17 and 18, yielded some interesting medieval pottery finds and other features as reported in our November 2010 newsletter but did not provide any further convincing evidence for the mill.

In our 2011 campaign, we decided to follow back the indicated line of the revetting and try test pits as near as possible to the 'donkey shed', a modern brick structure, leaning against a brick wall separating two areas of the garden. Our first find of significance was in Pit 19, just 0.5m away from the north wall of the donkey shed: At a depth approaching 2m, we

found the end of a huge beam about 0.35m square and lying approximately at right angles to the line of revetting in Pits 13/14 and 15.

A second test pit, Pit 20, closer to the Mill Stream and 0.5m away from the western wall of the donkey shed, revealed the continuation of the beam with a raised section (centre of photograph below) and a mortise joint to the left (under the baulk), with its length clearly exceeding 3m, since we had not found its western end. The beam showed signs of large worked joints (at the end in Pit 19) and was set on top of piles, which were too deep for us to expose completely. The beam lay in conjunction with large water-worn stones or pebbles together with flatter stones which did not appear to have formed a floor but could have been laid to stabilize the beam. Around and over this was a thin layer of gravel out of which all the finds came. Above was at least a metre of river silts overlain with modern fill. In Pit 20, narrow planking butted against the beam on the southern edge.

No demolition debris was found and it seemed quite clear that the mill's superstructure above the base timbers had been removed and the area had lain underwater or been subject to flooding (hence the river silts).



*Large timber beam discovered in Pit 20
(red/white bands on scale are 100mm wide)*

We invited the Hampshire Mills Group to view our discoveries in Pits 19 and 20 and we were pleased to welcome Mick Edgeworth leading a party from the Mills Group to our excavation in July 2011. Their opinion was that the beam was most probably part of the 'hurst-frame' for a mill i.e. the structure carrying the working machinery of the mill, but confirmation of its precise function could not be made from the

evidence of this single beam.

It now began to look that the mill structure lay under the donkey shed and the adjacent wall, as we had feared. We therefore decided to attempt to define the southern end of the structure by excavating further test pits to the south of the wall, in an area obstructed by undergrowth and a greenhouse leaning on the southern side of the garden wall. We opened up Pits 21 and 22 in the space between the rear of the greenhouse and the Mill Stream. These revealed further timber structures at a depth equivalent to that of the discoveries to the north of the wall. However, this timber structure appeared to be wide planking and, with other supporting horizontal structures, more like the remains of a sluice or other water management system, rather than part of a hurst-frame, with the planking, we assume, forming a lining of the watercourse Pit 23, further to the south of Pits 21 and 22 was a further attempt to determine the extent of the mill structure. However, no more timber was discovered in Pit 23, although river gravels similar to those found in other pits were discovered at the same depth, yielding similar finds of medieval pottery and other items. Under the gravel, there was a layer of stones and boulders of varying sizes which could have been laid to stabilize the channel bed beyond the timber sluice.

All pits proved very difficult to work in, since they flooded at the working depth. Water trickled in and needed to be bailed out regularly during the daily work in the pits. On returning to the excavation after an absence of a week, all open pits were flooded to a depth of 1m or more. Thus the first chore of any working session was the bailing of the pits, usually by hand; the use of a pump and generator loaned by Peter Fenning was a great boon when available.



The 'Millhams' silver penny

A number of interesting finds were made within the pits. These finds originated mainly from the layer of river gravels at the same depth as the wooden structures described above. A great deal of medieval pottery shards were discovered, together with other domestic refuse such as animal bones and oyster shells. There were also lumps of red ochre which does not occur naturally on site and we have speculated that the mill could have been used in its processing. In addition, a small number of metal objects were discovered including two knife blades and a key. Smaller

metal items were recovered from the spoil heap by metal detecting thanks to the efforts of Perry Clayton. Metal detecting also revealed the most significant dateable metal object which at first appeared to be an Edward I silver penny, but later identified by Ciorstadh Hayward-Trevarthen of the Portable Antiquities Scheme as a continental copy which was issued by William of Namur between 1337 and 1391.

We remain, of course, very grateful to Mrs Diana Aldridge and her family for their interest in our work and for allowing us to excavate within the Millhams Meade gardens, as well as being very tolerant of our spoil heaps!

TCA ON ST CATHERINE'S HILL

Roger Donne

The 'Friends of St Catherine's Hill' (FOSCH) had organised an event on the Hill to celebrate the history and heritage of the site. TCA members Sue Newman and Mike Tizzard, who are very much involved in FOSCH, were leading organisers of the event in conjunction with the Christchurch Countryside Officer, Robin Harley. TCA was pleased to be invited to set up a stall on the Hill and be present at the event; the stall was attended by Adrian Tattersfield, Suzanne Popesco, Roger Donne, and by Mike Tizzard when he had a break from his guided walks around the Hill.

Not for the first time, the intrepid TCA team were saved from a soaking by the very welcome shelter of Adrian Tattersfield's gazebo! The morning



proved to be very wet and visitors were sparse for obvious reasons. However, with the heavy rain clearing away, the afternoon developed into a very pleasant day when it was a joy to be in such pleasant surroundings. The finer weather brought several visitors to our stall who expressed an interest in our activities and we hope that they will decide to join us.

TCA stall on St Catherine's Hill in the afternoon sun

ENGLISH HERITAGE AND THE CASTLE PROJECT

Roger Donne

We in TCA live in hopes that we may eventually be allowed to carry out more work on Christchurch Castle, hopefully by assisting with some form of limited excavation. We have been told by English Heritage that a precursor to such work would be the production of a conservation management plan. Thus we were very pleased to be told by Dr. Heather Sebire, a property curator with English Heritage, that she had been able to find a small amount of funding to commission a desk-based study of the Castle site from a professional archaeological organisation. The desk-based study would not be a full conservation management plan but we felt that this was an important step in the right direction. We were later informed by Hugh Beamish, Inspector of Ancient Monuments with English Heritage that he had placed the study with Oxford Archaeology and we were later contacted by Oxford Archaeology's Neil Adam.

A small TCA party met Neil in Christchurch on 3 October 2011, when we showed him around the Castle site and passed over copies of our reports and other information which we thought would be of assistance in preparing the desk-based study. At the end of December 2011, English Heritage sent us a copy of Oxford Archaeology study report and at the time of writing we are in the process of preparing comments on the report. Unfortunately we did not have an opportunity to comment on the draft which was disappointing in view of our initial assistance since we feel that our depth of knowledge would have been useful in the preparation of the final text.

In September 2010, David Eels wrote to English Heritage on behalf of TCA commenting on several inaccuracies and inconsistencies on the information boards around the Castle motte and Constable's House, as well as that fixed to the walls of the Keep. In February 2011, he responded to questions raised by English Heritage, supplying much more information about the Castle. As to be expected, David's carefully researched and detailed comments were well received by the senior historian responsible for the upkeep of these visitor facilities and later in the year, in October 2011, we were sent the proposed text of new information boards. The committee were very pleased to have the opportunity to comment and David wrote back to TCA with our views. We look forward to seeing the new boards which, we have been told, should be in place 'before the end of the financial year, so keep your eyes open in March or April 2012!

ST. FAITH'S MEDIEVAL FAIR COMMEMORATION

Stephanie Liney

This year I took over the running and organisation of the fair from Phil Tate and Kaz Hand. It was held in and around Place Mill on Christchurch Quay on 8 October 2011, where the tents, colourful banners, the costumed characters and the smell of cooked crepes tempted in the passers-by.

St. Faith's Fair dates from 1257 when Henry III granted Baldwin de Redvers a charter which allowed a three-day fair to be held in Christchurch around St Faith's Day, 6th October. The current event is a celebration of Christchurch's medieval history through the town's current inhabitants.

The Christchurch Antiquarians were represented by Mike Tizzard, Suzanne Popesco and Roger Donne who dressed up in thirteenth century costume to tend the TCA stall. The display of finds from the recent Millhams Meade archaeological dig allowed modern day visitors the



Busy stalls at the St Faith's Fair held at Place Mill on Christchurch Quay

chance to see and touch real artefacts from Christchurch's past.

This year, visitors to the fair could learn about warfare, sword fighting techniques and the longbow. There was also a display about how stained glass windows were painted and constructed in the great churches and cathedrals that sprung up across

England after the Norman Conquest. Many joined in with the period games and had a go at being a scribe whilst harp and recorder music from the thirteenth century floated around the fair. Those that were brave enough could ask for medical advice from the barber surgeon and his leeches. Phil Tate's information boards gave people the opportunity to learn about their local history.

The most popular event was the "rat hunt" for children. Led by "Geoffrey le Rat" (Geoff Bantock), we had 70 children take part. It was lovely to see a mixture of ages enjoying Christchurch's history and I hope

to expand on this for the 2012 event.

Many people have asked me just how authentic were the crepes? In medieval France crepes were given to the lord of the manor as a demonstration of their loyalty. Although for obvious health and safety reasons ours weren't cooked over an open flame, many of the fillings have not changed since the middle ages.

I'd like to thank everyone that took part this year and to the Christchurch Local History Society for paying for the insurance. If anyone would like to be involved with 2012 fair or if you know of anyone with a medieval skill who might like to join in, please contact me either directly or through the TCA contact address at the end of this newsletter.

PLAYING AWAY - EXCAVATIONS IN THE FOOTBALL FIELD AT WORTH MATRAVERS

Bryan Popple

In the early 1990s Southampton University had excavated Iron Age round houses and a Roman barn with grain drier in a field then part of Compact Farm at Worth Matravers. These excavations are reported on in the University of Southampton Department of Archaeology Monograph No. 4, Purbeck Papers.

In 2006 East Dorset Archaeological Society (EDAS), of which I am a member, was invited to do a field walk and survey to determine the extent of archaeology in the field. The landowner, Bob Kenyon, had set up the Worth Community Property Trust to build five houses for the local community and wanted to know where it would be least destructive to build.

Phil Roberts lead the team, firstly doing a geophysical survey and opening a number of test pits to investigate the survey's findings. Most of these had little archaeology but it was decided that further investigation should be done. In August 2007 Phil and the EDAS team which included myself returned to the field and opened up a number of trenches around the field. Some of the trenches produced very little archaeology but one trench shone brighter than the others. Trench 3 was close to old quarry workings and was not expected to have any archaeology in it, but within the trench we discovered a wonderful stone lined pit. This pit contained large amounts of pottery, animal bones etc. It was of Iron Age date and some of the pots were reconstructed. Close to it was the grave of a woman about 1.6 metres

tall, aged about 50. The grave had been badly damaged by the plough. She was also of Iron Age period.

In 2008 EDAS returned to the site and decided to investigate the relationship between trench 3 and the Southampton University excavations. The area was about 200 square metres and revealed a complex archaeology. A number of pits were excavated and these yielded a range of artefacts including worked flints, Iron Age and Romano-British pottery, worked shale and animal bones. One of the pits had a seat-like structure and became known as the 'jacuzzi pit'. Other features included a possible roundhouse, a shallow flue pointing towards the roundhouse and another burial of an Iron Age woman about 1.6 metres tall, aged between 35 and 40. Her head was lying on a limestone slab and she was lying on her left side in a flexed position. Finds included high status Romano-British artefacts such as tweezers, pins, brooches and Samian pottery. Iron Age pottery, slingshot, animal bones and shale objects were also found. It was decided not to continue excavations in 2009. However an EDAS colleague and I did a little work over the winter, investigating a small paved area in the south-west corner of the trench. This was close to the Southampton excavations and revealed a possible structure of Romano-British date, perhaps related to the barn. Another pair of tweezers was recovered from this area amongst other artefacts.

Phil relinquished the Directorship of the project and Lilian Ladle took over the reins to lead the post-excavation work. With the excavation 'complete' the building plans were drawn up and work on the construction was scheduled to begin in 2010. The first thing to be done was the construction of the service road for the builders to get on to the site. We were given two weeks to investigate the area just inside the gate where the road was to be laid.

A small team lead by Lilian went on to the site and as the top soil was taken off it was apparent that there was some archaeology in this area. Some stone structures were exposed and a padstone for a door post was disturbed. A section of a wall of a Romano-British building and possibly a section of an Iron Age house wall were revealed. Lathe cores of shale and fragments of shale bracelets began to appear as well as hand-worked shale. A number of infant burials from within the Romano-British building were discovered including one placed in a small stone box. These appear to have been beneath the floor. As we worked deeper, earlier features were uncovered including Iron Age pits, a possible Late Bronze Age house, a hearth and a Bronze Age midden.

News came that the building was going to be delayed and our time on site was indefinitely extended. Ken Wheatley, a well-known metal-detectorist, came on site to help and discovered a miniature bronze Breton axe just inside the doorway of the possible Bronze Age house. The axe has been dated to around 700BC and came from France. Near the hearth was a stone which when lifted was discovered to be a quern stone of Bronze Age date and this was sitting on a nest of stone. Within this a tiny piece of glass was found. It was found in a sealed Bronze Age context and is the earliest piece of glass yet identified in Dorset, possibly in the whole of Britain. It is being analysed and this has revealed that it was probably made in the Levant, modern day Lebanon, and have a date of around 700BC. Other finds from the Bronze Age contexts were pottery, bone and antler weaving combs, bone needles, worked shale and flint.

One of the most interesting features was a shallow stone lined Iron Age pit with a cow scapula at the bottom and beneath this was an earlier storage pit which had very good stratigraphy, with layers of burnt seeds and grain. This again was of Iron Age date and a small La Tène brooch was found within this pit. Another pit was crammed with pottery fragments.

Other finds included Roman coins, copper alloy bracelets, ceramic spindle whorls, shale beads and other shale items, pottery from all periods including some All Cannings Cross style of the late Bronze Age. Beneath the midden was a layer of cobbles which we realised was a laid surface of Bronze Age date and this had features on top of it and cut through. This was a hard standing covering the whole of the trench area. At the north-west corner of the site were two parallel lines of upright stones, two stones high and two stones side by side. This was cut into the cobbles and curved away into the north side of the trench. Within the fill between the stone rows some early Neolithic flints were found. The final feature discovered was a possible Neolithic ditch beneath the cobbles and the Roman and Iron Age buildings. Within this fill more Neolithic flint and a little Neolithic pottery.

EDAS were also advised that they would need to lift the first of the Iron Age burials because it was close to the proposed plot of the new houses. This was done at the end of the October and below the stone lined grave we discovered the cobbled surface again with associated Bronze Age pottery. The burial was about 15-20 metres away from our trench.

In February 2011 the EDAS team returned to the site, little knowing what lay in store, as the gateway needed to be widened and the field wall

had to be shortened. The bank below the wall and the hump between road and trench needed to be removed and also taking the opportunity to extend the trench to the north to investigate the stone rows which were heading into the baulk. Finds now started coming thick and fast including a section of bronze bracelet, Roman coins, a Durotrigian stater and Roman pottery. The first feature of the year was the doorway to a Romano-British building, workshop or barn, and was parallel to the section of wall found last year, it consisted of two large threshold stones, with slots and bolt holes for the locking mechanisms, an irregular padstone for one of doorposts and a huge slab outside the building. Beneath the doorway was a further infant burial. Near to the building were the remains of a smaller structure at right angles to it. After lifting the doorway stones, another infant burial was discovered beneath and, in a number of places, large deposits of limpet shells were found. Once again the cobbled surface was found in the gateway and together with a fire pit which may have been for pottery production in the Bronze Age.

Other features included a large pit of Bronze Age date which had been recut and was partially stone lined, the extension of the stone alignment and



The end of the line – one of the final discoveries at the Worth Matravers site

a series of postholes with pieces of limestone standing upright and Bronze Age pottery placed up against the stones. These post holes were arranged in a semi-circle demarcating a Bronze Age roundhouse with a possible doorway to

the south-east. These were sealed beneath the cobbles so were of an earlier period. After recording, this was removed and the search was on for the Neolithic ditch. Two long trenches were dug and in them the edges of the ditch were soon discovered; it was cut into the natural geology and had pottery and burnt organic material and a beautifully fashioned leaf arrowhead. At this point a halt was called to excavation and the team headed to the post-excavation work. The service road was laid and in July 2011 the developers had a turf cutting ceremony before commencing building.

Once again the EDAS team thought this was the end but Lilian got a call from Bob to say that he had been watching the top soil being taken off the house plots and had spotted something. He had grabbed his trowel and discovered the remains of a skull. The team laid down their pens and headed back on site to investigate and it soon became apparent that within the plot of one of the houses there were a number of burials orientated in an east-west direction. Some were in stone lined cists, some had only stones at head and feet and some were just earth cut. There were a couple of double graves and a triple. There was only one item of grave goods and this has been dated to 5th or 6th century AD.

Post-excavation work is carrying on and the buildings are going up. The people of Worth Matravers have been very supportive and the property trust, have helped all they can. Thanks should go to all involved over the years. For more information, look at the EDAS website www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk.

TCA CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like to know more about The Christchurch Antiquarians or about any of the articles in this newsletter, please contact either the Chairman or the Secretary, as below.

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