



# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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**NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2008**

## **Recent Events**

### **Visit to the Knowlton Dig**

Bournemouth University has been digging recently at Knowlton. On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June a substantial number of EDAS members turned up for a tour of the Highlea Farm site given by Dr. John Gale. The site is part of a long barrow 'chain', and has a very interesting and complicated history. It probably started as a henge monument, and then was added to with rows of small posts or stones, and circles of small pits that could indicate the position of hut circles. Two human burials, separated by many years, had been discovered in separate pits, and were probably prestigious individuals of their time. At a later date the site was made into a very grand monument by being converted into a large round barrow. The painstaking re-excavation by Bournemouth University showed the impressive construction of the boundary ditch, which had perfectly flat sides and floor. (We apologise to EDAS members who could not be informed of this event which was announced at the last-minute).

### **EDAS Summer Barbecue**

The EDAS July BBQ was faced with undesirable, inclement weather but never-the-less Henry Cole put on a successful occasion. Protection from the elements was taken in one of Martin's outhouses; surrounded by archaeological artefacts we were faced with a table heavily laden with mouth watering food and were entertained by an excellent musical duo. They were uncertain what they should call themselves, currently known as the Badgers, and members suggested a number of other names. Henry, with two assistants, acted as chef, despite the rain, and we were all mightily pleased with his expertise at the BBQ. It was gone twelve before the last revellers left the remains of the party with music ringing joyfully in our ears.

Thanks a lot to Henry, his helpers, the musicians and Martin for once again letting us use his buildings and viewing his museum. Roll on next year.

### **Sunday 29 June - Walk around Wimborne with Bob Hill**

29 members accompanied by 9 guests joined Bob Hill to discover more about the architecture of Wimborne. We met in the Minster churchyard, and from there Bob pointed out various architectural features to enable us to be able to date some of the buildings. From the churchyard we moved to the High Street, The Square and the Cornmarket to examine further buildings. Before we knew it 2 hours had passed and our guided tour had come to an end.

Whilst Bob had not studied the buildings beforehand, he was nevertheless able to suggest the likely date of each building. He taught us to look up above eye level and we ended the afternoon with a crick in our neck! We thank Bob for a most enlightening walk. Thanks also to our member Phil Colwill who told us some of the history of the buildings we saw.

### **Sun 31 Aug - Guided Walk around Sherborne and Castleton Waterwheel Museum**

19 members and 3 guests met Rob Curtis outside Sherborne Abbey. Rob told us that King Ine had a cathedral built at Sherborne as the existing diocese was too large, and Aldhelm (later St Aldhelm) was appointed as the first bishop. However, when the Normans arrived they decided to move the see to Sarum and Sherborne reverted to a Benedictine monastery which had been built on the site of the earlier cathedral. We also learnt that because of disputes between the townspeople and the monks, the former built a parish church, All Hallows, alongside the Abbey church. In a further dispute, the Sherborne Riot, part of the abbey church was set on fire and to this day you can see that some of the ham stone in the abbey had turned red as the minerals in the stone oxidised.

We then moved to the nearby St John's Almshouses which were refounded in 1437 to accommodate 12 men and 5 women who were old, feeble and impotent. The almshouses own a medieval triptych that was found under the floorboards in the 19th century. Rob then took us to Sherborne School and pointed out those buildings that had been part of the monastery before the Dissolution. Walking through the town Rob pointed out various houses and other buildings and explained their history.

In the afternoon we visited the waterwheel museum where 3 of the volunteers explained the various buildings and machinery. The Museum is run by a local group of volunteers who over the past 25 years have rescued the waterwheel and its house from serious neglect. The wheel, 26 feet in diameter having steel rims, 72 steel buckets, and a cast iron rim-gear, is unique in having three leats providing water in high breast shot array. The wheel was so seriously corroded that it is has had to be rebuilt at a cost of £60,000 and is now restored to full working order. The pumping station, which houses the waterwheel, once formed an important part of Sherborne's water supply system. Using water from the nearby Osborne stream and from Sherborne Castle lake, the waterwheel drove a set of pumps, which in turn pumped pure water from a borehole adjacent to the pump house to a reservoir on the northern edge of town. We thank Steve Smith for organising the day's events.

Peter Walker

### **EDAS Reports in this year's Proceedings**

Members are reminded we get the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, held by Alan Hawkins in our library. This years edition contains articles by two of our members.

*The Decline of Holt Forest, Chase and Park, Wimborne Minster, in the 17th. century, by David Reeve.* This is a well researched and fascinating piece of local history.

David Stewart's contribution, *Hod Hill: "Too much wasted for cultivation for definite survey"* reports on his extensive geophysical investigations of Hod Hill, demonstrating the effects of agriculture culture. Again, something well worth reading and useful to members not acquainted with geophysical illustrations. We congratulate both Davids for their valuable contributions to local archaeology.

### **Forthcoming Events**

**Wed 10 Sep** Our first EDAS Lecture of the season. See 'Diary Dates'.

#### **Review – "Where was the inn?"**

A fascinating paper forming part of an investigation into the archaeology and history of the Allen Valley by EDAS, is one entitled "The Cap: A Lost Inn of Horton", by John Day. In this he attempts to establish the location of a public house named initially The Cap of Maintainance and subsequently just The Cap. Although it is a pity that the author is unsuccessful in finding the site, or sites, the saying "the chase is often more important than the kill" could aptly be applied here. This is because in the course of his research John has produced a veritable cornucopia of intriguing historical facts and information

Starting with an early eighteenth century inquisition report by a coroner and jury concerning a suicide in a church bell-tower, a study is made of related post mortems, some important families from the area, Hearth Tax Registers, Churchwardens' Accounts, a Protestation Roll and many other documents. A description and purpose of a cap of maintainance is given, some significant properties in Horton are discussed and many direct quotations are reproduced.

Although the subject matter is rightly treated more seriously than an historical whodunnit, the reasoning methods, deductive logic and elucidative commentary are similar. It is possible that in the future some other investigator may find more clues that will enable the position of this lost inn to be pinpointed, but that would not detract from the importance and usefulness of this paper.

Barry Perratt 18.8.08.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

The dates for EDAS events are underlined. The monthly evening lectures start at 7.30pm. Walks and field visits usually meet at 10.30 am at the published Grid Reference. Ring the leader if the weather is doubtful or if more details are required.

### **2008**

Wed 10 Sep EDAS Lecture: **The Results from a large scale excavation at Staple Gardens, Winchester** with Ben Ford, Oxford Archaeological Unit.

Wed 8 Oct EDAS Lecture: **Life in a Medieval town** with Nick Griffiths.

Wed 12 Nov EDAS Lecture: **Forensic Archaeology** with Paul Cheetham of Bournemouth University.

Wed 10 Dec EDAS Lecture: **The South Dorset Ridgeway** with Andy Payne of English Heritage.