



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2009

Recent Events

The Last Two EDAS Lectures

At our December meeting we had an interesting presentation from **English Heritage on their archaeological survey and geophysics on the Dorset Ridgeway**. Andy Payne, from Fort Cumberland and Hazel Riley from Exeter gave us their perspectives on recent work involving the Neolithic monuments within the Dorset AONB, focussing particularly on the long barrows and bank barrows that are characteristic of the area. Drawing on their results and examples from other sites they highlighted the benefits and drawbacks of this scientific approach to the curation of monuments.

Andy also mentioned that following an upgrade of their equipment, English Heritage have several older magnetometers that are now redundant and are available for loan to amateur societies. Any budding geophysicists out there take note! (Dave Stewart)

Our next lecture, which took place on 14th January, was "**The Prehistory of Hengistbury Head**" with Peter Hawes. Initially a teacher, Peter went along to a dig at Hengistbury Head, and this led to a life-long interest in archaeology, and also to him becoming a Field Study Officer on the site. Over time, a team of very well known archaeologists was put together to investigate the site, and to foster an interest in archaeology in a much wider audience. There is now a Visitor's Centre at Hengistbury, and an educational video is being made that features (amongst others) Professors Cunliffe and Barton, and Julian Richards and Phil Harding.

Peter started his talk by reviewing the geological history of the site, which has visible evidence from various periods over 60 million years. The coastal geomorphology of the site is also very important, as erosion is unfortunately destroying some of the archaeological evidence.

The archaeological record on the site covers the period from the Late Upper Paleolithic to the Roman Period. As well the defensive bank which controlled access to the 'mainland', the evidence shows extensive occupation on the site, including unusual features such as 'shovel marks' on some of the buried land surfaces. In a successful piece of experimental archaeology Jake Keen and his team have used iron ore from Hengistbury to produce good quality pig iron.

We had a very full audience at our 'emergency' venue of Allendale House. The lecture had to finish very quickly, and there was little time to sum up or thank Peter properly for his talk. We thank him very much for telling us about archaeological and educational potential of this very important local site.

Hengistbury Head Video

Peter Hawes has sent through to Steve Smith two copies of the Geology animation that he included in his recent talk. The animation is on a DVD which Steve could play okay on his PC but his DVD player couldn't recognise. Steve will bring them along to the next meeting and members can borrow a copy if they wish.

Forthcoming Events

EDAS FIELD TRIP 2009

Please see the separate sheet in with this Newsletter.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO TAKE PART IN FIELDWORK AT TARRANT MONKTON

Many people will remember EDAS member Jim (Jeremy) Webster and his field studies for his MA. Members helped him with geophysics, and excavation of a Late Neolithic henge at Tarrant Monkton in 2005.

Jim has decided to continue with a PhD, focused on the same sites as for his MA. He started his fieldwork studies of Tarrant Monkton towards the end of 2007 and a number of people helped him with geophysics and field walking at that time. After a break in 2008, Jim is returning to Tarrant Monkton to do more field walking and other studies, starting on Monday 9th February.

The availability of the site depends on agricultural priorities. The first field to be studied (Football Field) has recently been ploughed. In March, it will be drilled with spring barley and undersown with grass. Consequently, it would not be available for field walking for about three years. Hence, all work needs to be done by early March. The work consists of setting up grids, field walking and a small amount of excavation.

Jim is now living in Weymouth, to continue his studies. He does not have a land line. Members wishing to help Jim at Worth Matravers should contact him on his mobile: 07791 311323. (Phil Roberts)

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.

2009

- Wed 11 Feb EDAS Lecture: An update on the Knowlton Project with John Gale of Bournemouth University.
- Wed 11 Mar EDAS lecture: The Black Death in Dorset with Dr Mark Forrest of the Dorset Local History Centre.
- Wed 25 Mar EDAS AGM followed by a talk by an EDAS member. More details to follow.
- Wed 8 Apr EDAS lecture: The Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre with Luke Winter. Note: **Venue to be confirmed.**