



# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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**NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2009**

## **Recent Events**

### **EDAS Lecture**

Our last EDAS lecture was "**The Black Death in Dorset**" with Dr Mark Forrest of the Dorset Local History Centre.

Mediaeval life was very regulated, with Manor Courts being held at regular intervals throughout the year. These recorded such things as births, marriages, deaths, and changes in property and land ownership. Crime and punishment were also dealt with at the Court, and the details of any offences and punishments were also recorded. Manor Court Rolls were written in medieval Latin, and so the first task is to translate them, which is done at the History Centre. Mark showed us examples of some local Rolls, and also the very poor condition that they can be in after 500 years of storage.

The Manor Courts continued operating right through the Black Death, and seemingly unrelated recorded events can give us a very good idea of what was actually happening. For example, numerous brewers being prosecuted for producing low strength beer could show that there was a shortage of grain. This could be a direct result of local illness and death reducing the harvesting of the crops. The prosecution of villagers for producing beer without a licence (especially by women) could show a desperate attempt to get income for food. Another measure was the number of children inheriting property from the Mother in a family, showing that the Father was probably dead.

Mark described a number of such items that could give an indirect idea of what was happening in the community, and when used with statistical methods a good idea of the death rates over time could be calculated. Such analytical techniques can be used to get a completely independent and unbiased look into what actually happened in the past; I am sure that they will take their place along side other scientific methods such as radio-carbon dating. We thank Mark very much for a very thought provoking look into the future.

## **AGM**

Our AGM on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March was conducted very swiftly as usual. Our long standing Secretary, Gill Broadbent, has left the committee owing to work commitments; we thank her for all her hard work over many years. We welcome our new Secretary Gillian Stolworthy on to the committee. (Please note, its not compulsory to be called Gill!) All previous ordinary members were re-elected, and so the 2009/10 committee is:

<b>Chairman:</b>	John Day	<b>Membership Secretary:</b>	Della Day
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Peter Walker	<b>Programme Secretary:</b>	Steve Smith
<b>Secretary:</b>	Gillian Stolworthy	<b>Special Advisor:</b>	Martin Green
<b>Ordinary Members:</b>	Graham Adams, Helen Brickell, Brian Maynard, Bryan Popple, Phil Roberts, and David Stewart		

The AGM was followed by a talk by Brian Maynard about the 2008 Dartmoor Field Trip. This was based in Moretonhamstead, and we had glorious weather for most of the trip. As befits a trip organised by Brian there was plenty of walking. The archaeology visited ranged from 'horizon to horizon' prehistoric landscapes (e.g. the monuments at Grimspound and

Merrivale) to the Powdermill's gunpowder factory and Dartmouth. The presentation reminded us of how very enjoyable this Field Trip was, and we thank Brian for organising and leading it. If you are interested in going on this year's Field Trip (details in previous Newsletters) then please contact Rob Fenwick.

### **Membership Renewals**

Please note that EDAS Membership renewal is now due. See the last Newsletter for details.

### **Forthcoming Events**

#### **Sunday 26 April Walk around Medieval Southampton**

Meet at 10:30 at the Bargate at the top of the High Street for a walk with Andy Russel of the Southampton Archaeology Unit. Members will recall that we did a similar walk last year. That was around the west side and this walk will mainly be around the east side. We will visit the North Walls, Polymond Tower, Medieval Friary remains and finish outside the God House Museum.

The walk will take 1.5 to 2 hours and the cost of £2 will be met out of funds for members. After the walk and lunch you could visit the Maritime and Archaeology Museums. For further information contact Peter Walker on 01425 471326 or email him at peter@peterwalker.info

#### **EDAS FIELD TRIP 2009**

Please see a previous Newsletter for more details and an application form.

## **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 8 Apr EDAS lecture at **The Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre** with Luke Winter. Please see the March Newsletter for more details
- Sun 26 Apr **Walk around Southampton** with Andy Russel. See earlier for more details
- Wed 13 May EDAS lecture: **They do things differently there! Archaeology around the world** with Tim Schadla-Hall of University College London.
- Sat 18 Jul **EDAS Summer Barbecue** at Down Farm. More details to follow.
- Sun 23 Aug **Walk around Christchurch Commons** with Mike Tizzard and Sue Newman
- Wed 8 Sep EDAS Lecture: **"Archaeology of the New Forest and its Coast"** with Frank Green, Archaeologist at the New Forest National Park Authority.
- Sun 20 Sep **Walk around Corfe Village and Castle** with Nancy Grace.
- Wed 14 Oct EDAS Lecture: **"Subject to be Confirmed"** with James Grasby