



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - MIDSUMMER 2009

RECENT EVENTS

Sunday 26 April – Guided Walk around Medieval Southampton

Please see the separate writeup enclosed with this Newsletter.

At our **last EDAS lecture** on 13th May Tim Schadla-Hall of University College London gave us a talk entitled: **They do things differently there! Archaeology around the world.** Tim's talk gave us a broad (and often very surprising) view of how archaeological matters are handled in other parts of the world. In many other countries only properly qualified professionals are allowed to have anything to do with archaeology, which obviously cuts out amateurs and children. In contrast, British archaeology has generally taken the opposite approach of getting children and amateurs actively involved, giving people an interest in their own past. This encourages a wider understanding that our archaeology is important, and it needs to be preserved and managed. As Tim pointed out, the past belongs to all of us!

Unfortunately, an 'extreme professional' approach was being taken in one (not to be named) eastern European country which was excavating a complete Roman Harbour. This still contained dozens of sunken, very well preserved, roman ships, together with their artefacts. Public visitors were not allowed on site, and even photographing from nearby was not permitted. Unbelievably, as each area had been fully excavated and recorded all the artefacts were put back into sacks and reburied in the ground!

The portable Antiquities Scheme was another matter which was dealt with differently abroad. Tim pointed out that in many countries the ownership of Metal Detectors is illegal, whilst at the same time their authorities turn a blind eye to the many thousands of artefacts that still go abroad each year to be sold on e-Bay.

While Britain has its monuments managed and preserved on a semi-commercial basis by organisations such as English Heritage and the National Trust, we do not have to deal directly with bureaucratic government: but, as Tim pointed out, those organisations themselves are not totally devoid of power struggles and politics. His overall message was that, although there is still much more that Britain can do to improve its archaeology, there are many aspects that we probably get right. Tim has had a very long working relationship with EDAS, and we thank him very much for a heartfelt, excellent, and thought provoking lecture.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sat 18 Jul EDAS Summer Barbecue

See the insert in this Newsletter for more information, and also an 'attendance' form to send off to Henry.

Sun 23 August – A walk around Christchurch Commons.

Our members Sue Newman and Mike Tizzard are leading this walk which starts at 10.30 at Grid Reference SZ 1458 9452 (Explorer OL22). This is Marsh Lane off Fairmile Road and there is a small car park there.

The walk will take about 2 hours and it is an uphill and downhill stroll on paths which can be narrow and full of tree roots, and occasionally off the path onto a heathery/furzy surface.

The walk covers a wide variety of points of interest and it should be noted that if we have time, and if the people attending wish it, we would like to extend the walk to look at the adjacent river meadow common, Coward's Marsh (which is flat but can be damp, as you would expect).

This variety includes barrows, other archaeological features of a somewhat elusive and ill-understood nature; also dramatic viewpoints; evidence of commoning practices such as sand-quarrying; other uses of the Hill including the reservoirs, military use and the town's former pest-house (still capable of being pressed into use for any hecklers!).

This is a fantastic opportunity to see and hear the joint authors of the book on Christchurch Commons; the opportunity to find out about the tangled, complex history of commoning at this and other sites; a very beautiful walk in a place long-threatened by disturbance in the form of a bypass for the town. Maybe members will spot one of the rare species which make the hill so special e.g. the Dartford warbler or the sand lizard.

Wimborne Square Archaeological Investigation, starting Sat September 19th.

Please see the application form enclosed with this Newsletter for more details.

EDAS Display at the Priest House Museum

This is just to remind members about the EDAS display featuring the excavations at Worth Matravers. Please drop in there for a look if you are in the area (e.g. visiting the Wimborne dig).

CHRISTCHURCH THROUGH TIME

Our member Sue Newman, who won a National Award for her book on Christchurch Workhouse, has written a history of Christchurch. Using revealing commentary and a series of clever juxtaposed photographs she traces the development of the streets and buildings of the town. Sue is well versed in the history of Christchurch and plays an active roll in preserving its old buildings and is a collector of documents and artefacts. "CHRISTCHURCH THROUGH TIME" is a paper back book. Printed by Amberley, and costing £12:99, it is a worthy read.

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

Sat 11th Jul The Dorset History Forum's workshop "Discovering Dorset's Past" at Dorset History Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester. For more details see their website: www.dorsethistoryforum.org.

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. See earlier for more details.

Wed 9 Sep EDAS Lecture: "**Archaeology of the New Forest and its Coast**" with Frank Green, Archaeologist at the New Forest National Park Authority.

Sat 19 Sep **Wimborne Square Archaeological Investigation.** Please see the form inside the Newsletter.

Sun 20 Sep **Walk around Corfe Village and Castle** with Nancy Grace. More details to follow.

Wed 14 Oct EDAS Lecture: "**Subject to be Confirmed**" with James Grasby