



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2009

RECENT EVENTS

At our last EDAS Lecture Frank Green, Archaeologist at the New Forest National Park Authority, gave us a talk about the "**Archaeology of the New Forest and its Coast**". I have to confess straight away that I have not really thought about New Forest archaeology much at all. I realised that this is because it is not very evident, unlike the towering hillforts we have in the west of Dorset. The New Forest archaeology is normally hidden under a layer of heather, which is then hidden under a layer of gorse, which is itself hidden by a covering of trees! However, Frank showed us that the forest is richly covered with archaeological sites: so much so that the area often scores near the top for the density and/or importance of certain types of site. Local archaeologists have learned how to 'see through' the coverings, and Frank showed us maps of Bee Gardens, Burnt Mounds, Charcoal pits and Roman Roads. This made us comfortable again with the area. The New Forest is also very fortunate in that it is very well protected from development, etc., and money is also being made available to the New Forest Centre, where the team are located. This funding means that the Centre is able to conduct mapping surveys, including LIDAR (a technique of accurately measuring the ground surface height from an aircraft), which are revealing all sorts of interesting features.

The New Forest is an area in which a lot of active, important archaeology is going on, and we thank Frank for a interesting talk.

Walk around Corfe Village and Corfe Castle on Sunday 20 September

Twelve members and two guests accompanied our member Nancy Grace on this walk. We walked from the Visitor Centre to the site of West Mill in the shadow of the castle. The mill was demolished in the 1920s and the stone used for the war memorial. Just up from the mill we saw the remains of a sheep wash. We then walked up a path which circled the castle and took us to the Square in the heart of the village. From there we walked along West Street where we saw the Town Museum situated in what was the Town Hall, reputedly the smallest in England. St Edmund the Martyr Church stands close to the museum. Apart from the C13th tower the rest of the church was demolished in 1859 and rebuilt by T.H. Wyatt. The churchyard is oval in shape and there is a possibility that a church stood here in the Saxon period. We then encountered a Civil War re-enactment group of soldiers walking along West Street towards the castle, more of which later on.

After walking to the end of West Street we then came to Corfe Common, the largest working common in Dorset. It was split into 3 by the turnpike and the railway. Nancy pointed out some of the many features of the common, such as tumuli, an Iron Age field system and hollow ways. These are the remains of old tracks which led from the quarries on Purbeck to Corfe. As the carts or sleds carrying the marble wore away a track it became a deep muddy gully, and when it became impassable they moved to one side and started a new track. We were then tasked by Nancy to find some Mesolithic flints and a search turned up several for her finds bag. Nancy then took us back to the village passing an area of the Common which was used in WW2 as 'Dig for Victory' land.

Because Nancy was suffering from spinal problems, she was unable to give us a guided tour of the castle after lunch. However, the majority decided to visit the castle where we saw 'Lord Hopton's Regiment of Foote' a Civil War re-enactment group. Some members carried muskets and others pikes and both groups carried out drill. We were treated to several very loud musket volleys.

We thank Nancy for a very interesting walk and trust that her health problems will soon be resolved.

Peter Walker

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wimborne Square Archaeological Investigation

Please see the last Newsletter for more details, and also *please note that any questions and discussions with onlookers should be taken by Lilian Ladle or John Day.* (In a busy place like Wimborne chinese whispers could easily get out of hand.)

EDAS Field week 2010

Next year's field week will be in North Wales and as usual will be in June from Saturday the 12th to Saturday the 19th. Plans are in the very early stages at the moment but there is plenty to do. More information will provided over the next few months.

PAST VOICES FROM DORSET

A series of Local articles, by John Day

Horton

I never cease to be amazed at things that have happened on our doorstep. Take for instance the case of Elinor Coshe.

Now to find out about her we have to read the Quarter Sessions reports. She had been a servant to Thomas Thornhull of Horton, but finding herself pregnant went home to her mother in Ringwood. Henry South of Horton admitted paternity and he said that he would marry her. The overseers of Ringwood, who were village officials responsible for people in poverty refused to help her and sent her back to Horton. At the time of the Quarter Sessions she was living in the streets and sleeping under the hedges. The Court decided that the Parish of Horton was not financial liable until she was nearer her time.

This event asks many questions including: What further part did Henry South play? When was she due to give birth? How much longer was she sleeping under hedges? Where did she get food and room?

We do not know the answers to these questions without further research, and probably not then. It is of course not necessary to go searching for her as this happened in 1630. But you may say the women of Horton would have set to and helped her. But, was that necessarily the case? In a not dissimilar case they bunched together and made short work of evicting a pregnant woman. This was in a period when financial help for people in difficulties was determined by the local overseers and the money came from the local poor rate. To save expenses it was not unknown for pregnant women to be hurriedly put in a cart and taken to the next parish, thus giving them the monetary responsibility.

Fires

At one time fires were commonplace, made all the more disastrous by inadequate fire appliances. Tongs to pull thatch off roofs can be seen in the porch of Bere Regis church. One of the worst fires in the village was in 1788 when starting from the Greyhound Public House over 44 houses were destroyed. To this day gaps in the lines of current property are where houses once stood.

A fire in Wimborne in July 1762 was followed by a Vestry meeting on the 18th, in which it was stated:

"Having taken into consideration the great mischief which happened by fire some of the inhabitants of the said Town of Wimborne Minster the 10th day of this instance July, we most earnestly desire all common Bakers and Smiths to tyle the roofs over the ovens and forges and

all inhabitants thereof to lodge but a very modest quantity of straw, litter, hay, faggotts of wood and furze not exceeding three hundred to any one housekeeper and cleft of wood in the said town at any time and no large quantity thereof so near town as to endanger its safety in case they should set on fire”.

Walking around Shapwick on Saturday morning Oct. 15th 1882 one would have seen and smelt the fire that had raged the previous evening, destroying 16 cottages and making 85 people homeless. The fire started in the roof of a pig-sty at Mr. Andrews Dairy, running on to cheese-loft, cowpens, hay-rick and barn. An adjoining cottage was destroyed and Mrs. Hammett and two little girls lost everything. Next, Henry Kerley, wife and children. Everything lost. Jeffrie Cutler, wife and seven children, lost a pig, household furniture, bedding and many other things. H. Foster and Mrs. Oats, the latter very deaf, and pulled from the fire. Lost everything. Martin Kerley and his family lost all. Mr. Feltham's Smith's shop was badly damaged, next door was Thomas Kerley and family, all lost, including 12 sacks of potatoes and a quantity of firewood. At this point the fire leapt across the road to Mr. Guy's Smithy and thence to other property. Wimborne and Blandford fire engine were in attendance.

A fire relief fund was established and a committee of local farmers chaired by the vicar and attended by Ralph Banks set about administering help. A name that was repeated a number of times was Kerley; a family that still resides in the village.

Bere Regis

Bere Regis church is a fascinating place and it is difficult to believe that anyone living in Dorset has not visited it. The village, though getting slowly altered, has many points of interest. What seems a calm and orderly place has though not always been so.

Writing in 1938 Ralph Wightman said “as little as 30 years ago Bere Regis was regarded as the toughest Police beat in Dorset”

In 1908 the Bishop wrote in the Parish Magazine: “I have interest in and love for Bere Regis, and many happy memories of visits to it. But, I have lately had reason to fear that some have yielded to temptation and there is great need for penitence and humiliation among you.”

In May, 1790 the village magazine reported, “The mob of Resolute Fellows rised at Bere Regis. They went to Kingston and forced men to go with them down ye vale. A very scandalous action.” There was a long standing feud between Bere Regis and Kingston.

In the 1914 Parish Magazine was an unusual contribution: “Found. A small piece of wire inside the padlock of one of the Alms Boxes in the church, also a hairpin that had been used to try and exact coins from same. These can be returned on application to the Vicarage”!!

Fields

Like many houses, roads, parks and people, fields have names. These can be found on Tithe maps and many estate maps. Such names are useful in purchasing land and planning cultivation. They are often of value in historical research. While many names do little more than indicate size: i.e “Eleven acres” in Pentridge, some add to this, such as Upper Five acre in Hinton Martel, indicating their site, and others such as Harris's 10 acre in Pentridge and Coles 5 acre in Wimborne St. Giles, name past tenants. Redman's Field in East Horton is named after an important village man in Horton. Reading old Church Accounts we see various family members hold village officer positions in several villages in the Allen Valley and the 1620 Holt Forest Map shows a Redman living in a large house in Horton, about where the Seviours now live. This spot has other interesting features, there was once a village cross there in what was the village square.

Other names, example, Snake Land Furlong in Hinton Martel, is a warning not to picnic here, in 1848 was 21 acres of arable land belonging to the Earl of Shaftesbury, tenanted by William Ainsworth and was part of his tenancy of 40 fields of a total of 429 acres that meant £138 had to be paid in tithes to the Rector. Some of the fields Ainsworth tenanted were Milestone Field, 15 acres (is the milestone still there?), Inwards Corner, West End, Ground High Ley and Pipers Ground. Some names have been corrupted over the years; Boys Wood, Wimborne St Giles,

had nothing to do with young males but is a corruption of the name of a French Owner. That was a long time ago.

Some names, for example, indicate past use, such as Dog Kennel Field in Wimborne St. Giles. Also in that Parish, Sheppards Down Close, Withy Beds and Chalk Pit field. Don't be deceived; Sheppards was the Tenant's name, Richard Sheppard, not a field of sheep. While John Bound really did have cows in 13 acre Cow Leaze field, most of the Parishes had cow and horse leazes.

Poor Ground, of which there are many examples, speaks for itself. While at present such ground is usually part of bigger ownership, during medieval times it often indicated use by the poorer peasants.

While names such as Stony Ground sometimes refer to a field with a scatter of natural stones, there have been instances when archaeological excavations have revealed it was the sign of earlier buildings or prehistoric monuments. A field named Kiln Field, but having no signs of a kiln, frequently leaves one in no doubt as to past industry which can be revealed by magnetometer surveys and excavation.

Names of fields are a fascinating study and can reveal much.

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 14 Oct EDAS Lecture: "**The Wyndhams of Dinton Park, a house born out of riots, the chase, and fine red wines**" with James Grasby

Sat 19 Oct **Wimborne Square Archaeological Investigation**. Please see an earlier Newsletter for more details.

Wed 11 Nov EDAS Lecture: "**Town life in Roman Britain**" with Dr Louise Revell of Southampton University.

Wed 9 Dec EDAS Lecture: "**Easter Island**" with Dr Kate Welham of Bournemouth University.

2010

Wed 13 Jan EDAS Lecture: "**Cerne Abbas**" with Rob Curtis, Blue Badge Guide

Wed 10 Feb EDAS Lecture: "**Tarrant Monkton**" with Jeremy Webster.

Wed 10 Mar EDAS Lecture: "**Wessex from the Air - 80 years on**" with Julian Richards.

Sat 12 – 19 June **EDAS Field Trip 2010** to North Wales. More details to follow in later Newsletters.