



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2010

WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND
THEIR FAMILIES A HAPPY NEW YEAR

WINTER TRAVEL

Those who get their Newsletter by e-mail will receive this before the meeting on Wednesday. We all hope that the current snowy weather will have finished by then, but we have also made some extra arrangements so that a lecture should still go ahead even if the scheduled lecturer, who is coming from near Cattistock, is stopped by the weather.

For members intending to come to the meeting, please do check the weather and road conditions in your own area, and don't travel unless you are sure it is safe. When you get to St. Catherine's also be aware that the car park could be very icy if it has not been salted.

IMPORTANT – Programme Change

Paola Palma and Dave Parham were due to speak to EDAS on the 14th April but are now unable to make that date, so we have agreed a swap with Jeremy (Jim) Webster. Paola and Dave will now do the 10th February and Jim the 14th April. The 'Dates for your Diary' has been updated below.

Recent Events

Last EDAS Lecture

Dr Kate Welham of Bournemouth University talked to us about "**Easter Island**". This place is famous for its extreme remoteness, and also for the mystery about the ancient culture on the island. Well known archaeologists such as Thor Heyerdahl have introduced us to these mysteries and have tried to explain some of them.

An early Easter Island language can be seen in engravings on the cliffs, but only fragments of them can now be understood. The more modern version of their language has similar words to other Polynesian languages such as native Hawaiian. Few mysteries of the large Easter Island figures, which look back towards the centre of the island, have yet been solved, but one understanding is that they were put there for their 'manna' (which is the ability to observe islanders' behaviour) and thereby keep the population well behaved. (This must be the earliest example of CCTV in operation!) There is also some evidence of there being ancient roads on the Island, some of which might be way-marked by the figures.

Kate, and others from Bournemouth University, have been to Easter Island a number of times, and they actively involved in the archaeological assessment of the Island, including the roads and the history of the ancient language. The work that they have been doing is little by little shedding a bit more light.

Owing to its current fame, the island is now experiencing a very different phenomenon: tourism has 'exploded'. A large international airport has been built, and the islanders are trying to get a proper, deep water harbour. Both of these are bound to increase the already large visitor numbers. Already the archaeological sites are not properly supervised, and the hurried 'coach trips' are inadvertently causing some damage.

Easter Island is an extremely precious and interesting site, as shown by the large number of questions asked at the end of the lecture. We can only hope that the authorities there manage to balance the income benefits from tourists with proper conservation and investigation of the sites.

We thank Kate very much for such a interesting lecture (and hope for an update when more is known about the language and roads).

EDAS Field Trip 2010

Malcolm and Maureen are leading this year's Field Trip to North Wales. They are already veteran organisers, with two very successful Field Trips under their belts (East Sussex in 1996, and Canterbury in 2000). The 2010 trip will be centred on Caernarvon, and the dates are Saturday June the 12th to Saturday the 19th. (We recommend that you do not leave booking your accommodation until the last minute.)

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.

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| <u>Wed 13 Jan</u> | EDAS Lecture: " <u>Cerne Abbas</u> " with Rob Curtis, Blue Badge Guide |
| <u>Wed 10 Feb</u> | * Programme Change * EDAS Lecture: " <u>The Swash Channel Wreck</u> " with Paola Palma & Dave Parham of Bournemouth University. |
| <u>Wed 10 Mar</u> | EDAS Lecture: " <u>Wessex from the Air - 80 years on</u> " with Julian Richards. |
| <u>Wed 31 Mar</u> | <u>EDAS AGM</u> followed by a talk by an EDAS member. More details to follow. |
| <u>Wed 14 Apr</u> | * Programme Change * EDAS Lecture: " <u>Tarrant Monkton</u> " with Jeremy Webster. |
| <u>Wed 12 May</u> | EDAS Lecture: " <u>Urban Studies: Topography and Development, A Winchester Study</u> " with Graham Scobie, Historic Information Officer, Winchester Museums Service. |
| <u>Sat June 12th to Sat June 17th</u> | <u>EDAS 2010 Field Trip to North Wales</u> . There will be more information in following Newsletters. |