



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk

mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk

NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2010

Programme Change – just another reminder

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

Our last EDAS Lecture was "Cerne Abbas" with Rob Curtis, who is a Blue Badge Guide. Rob has already given us a very interesting walking tour around Sherborne, so we knew that we were in for a very enjoyable lecture.

Rob explained that the history of Cerne Abbas was a actually series of cycles. From a high point in which the Abbey was one of the largest and richest in Dorset, it was sacked by Canute. When he later became king and was then converted to Christianity another prosperous period started for the village. Subsequently, the dissolution of the Abbey started another long down turn. However, this may have reduced the amount of development in the village, thus helping the preservation of its wonderful medieval buildings.

Rob has now agreed to give us a professional guided tour round the village. This will take place on Saturday 15th May. Please see the article directly below for more details.

Saturday 15th May - Walk around Cerne Abbas with Rob Curtis.

After his recent lecture to EDAS, Rob Curtis has agreed to lead a walk around Cerne Abbas on Saturday 15th May. We will meet outside St Mary's Church in Abbey Street at 2.30pm. The church is in the middle of the village with a tall tower and there is car parking in the road on which the three pubs are situated.

Rob's charges for members will be met by EDAS funds. The wander should take about 1½ hours, and it is over reasonably flat ground with no great distance involved. There are a couple of tea shops in Cerne Abbas if you feel like refreshment afterwards. On the other hand, with three pubs close at hand, you may feel like a spot of lunch first!

Peter suggested a morning walk on the same day. One possibility might be to walk up to the Roman site Rob mentioned on the hill above the Giant and get a good view over the landscape. Susan and I intend to do that, and will be setting off from St Mary's Church at 10:30 am if anybody would like to join us.

History Research

Three members replied to the note in the November Newsletter to create a group researching the Poor Law and Bastard births in Dorset before 1837. This subject is being based on the researches of Cambridge University Population Study Group, published by Peter Laslet et al. The study revealed many fascinating things and destroyed many commonly held beliefs, such as that after a prolonged electricity failure there is an increase in births, but the facts are that there is often a decrease. The study also revealed that ages at marriage occur in swings. When marriages occur at later ages there is a fall in the illegitimacy rates and when occurring at early ages there is an increase, this being the opposite of general anticipation. The group have decided to limit their study to two factors. One, make out the percentage of bastards to legitimate births in Dorset before 1837 and compare these with the results of Laslets study of over 70 parishes; two, compare Dorset parishes with each other.

We have come across a number of interesting things and annoying problems. We are dependent on extant documents and often when one wants particular information the documents have not survived. Particularly annoying is that the transcribed Parish Registers on the internet are often inaccurate. Fortunately the transcriptions held at the History Centre, Dorchester, are of high standard.

“**A GUIDE to the TRANSCRIPTS held in the COUNTY RECORD OFFICE**” identifies 294 Parish Records that have been copied. Of these we believe about 150 are sufficiently complete to make research credible.

The book edited by Laslet, **Bastardy and its Comparative History** cost £24 when published in 1980. It is now out of print, but can be got on the internet for £235, !!! (I don't mind having an early birthday or late Christmas present)

An easier book to read, a Peregrine paper back, is Lawrence Stone, **THE FAMILY, SEX and MARRIAGE in ENGLAND 1500-1800**. Its content is much broader and is most informative and interesting. Costing, or did, only £3:95 in 1982, is well worth the money.

We have not given ourselves a time scale to complete this project, needing first to test how practical this would be against our early experience. We will, though, put occasional snippets in the Newsletter. After completion it is hoped to undertake a further piece of research, on the Cost of Maintenance of Bastard Children in 1835. This will be based on an article by Margaret Lyle in the Agriculture History Review.

Please do not fail to e-mail me if you would like to consider joining us. john.della@btinternet.com

John Day

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.

2010

- Wed 10 Feb ***Programme Change*** EDAS Lecture: “**The Swash Channel Wreck**” with Paola Palma & Dave Parham of Bournemouth University.
- Wed 10 Mar EDAS Lecture: “**Wessex from the Air - 80 years on**” with Julian Richards.
- Wed 31 Mar **EDAS AGM** followed by a talk by an EDAS member. More details to follow.
- Wed 14 Apr ***Programme Change*** EDAS Lecture: “**Tarrant Monkton**” with Jeremy Webster.
- Wed 12 May EDAS Lecture: “**Urban Studies: Topography and Development, A Winchester Study**” with Graham Scobie, Historic Information Officer, Winchester Museums Service.
- Sat 15 May **Walk around Cerne Abbas with Rob Curtis**. See the article earlier for details and meeting up, etc.
- Sat June 12th to
Sat June 17th **EDAS 2010 Field Trip to North Wales**. There will be more information in following Newsletters.