



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2010

Recent Events

Our last EDAS Lecture was "**The Cadbury Castle Environs Project**" with Clare Randall, who was attached to Bournemouth University during her involvement in this large project. We learned that the Cadbury site was occupied for a long period, covering the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages. The site was excavated in the late 19th Century, but no report from that is available.

One important aspect of the Environs project was to look at the whole landscape and its many various contexts. Extensive site mapping, Geophysics and LIDAR were used to produce as much 'passive' information as possible, and Clare commented that it must be one of the best measured sites in the south of England. Some early identifiable features are long 'linear banks', which could have been long-distance routeways, or alternatively have served as boundary markers. These seem to have been respected by the earliest group of settlers, many of whose buildings were aligned with respect to them. As the community expanded, the siting of houses seemed to occur in a more haphazard and ad hoc way.

As it had evidently been a busy and prosperous community, there was a wealth of archaeological sites to be investigated. A number of graves and pits were excavated as required, and these included novel finds, such as a dog buried head-first next to a pillar. Another unusual feature was a related line of linear pits which, when excavated, each contained a dead cow, as though they were leading a way outside the camp. The prehistoric farming aspects were also very important, and the use of scientific measuring meant that the prehistoric 'farm tracks' were more easily visible. They seemed to be quite similar to those that we could see on modern farms: perhaps farmers have known their trade just as competently for many thousands of years.

The use of 'passive' techniques and analyses must be part of our archaeological future. In recognition of this very important work, Clare has just been awarded her PhD. We thank her for a very interesting and thought provoking lecture, and one which has given us a glimpse of the possibilities to come.

Fritham Walk with Henry Cole

This was cancelled because of forecast bad weather. It will be rescheduled in the spring, so watch out for it being listed in the newsletter next year. Peter

The March 2010 Meeting.

Just a reminder that our meeting is on the **third** Wednesday of the month in March, **not the second one**. The church won't allow us to hold our meeting on the second Wednesday as it is Ash Wednesday.

Report on the **Dorset History Forum day at Bridport** **Saturday 8th May 2010**



This report is produced with kind permission of Kay Kearsley, Secretary and Joint Editor of the Dorset History Forum.

After the welcome from Cecile Amor, Chairman of the Bridport History Society, and Katherine Barker, Chairman of the Dorset History Forum, the programme for the day got underway.

Richard Sims spoke on The Bridport Rope and Net Industry, the subject of his recently published book¹. We heard about the processing of hemp and the mills where this took place. These often had several functions: boiling, brewing and milling corn. Work was also undertaken as a home industry until machinery was introduced later at the mills. Children often worked in the spinning walks. Some of the mills mentioned were Priory Mill and Pymore Mill at Bridport, Mangerton Mill at Lodgers. The well known Gundry family were maltsters and twine merchants. The brewery was eventually taken over by Palmer's who now have a large collection of archives relating to the Gundrys. The records of Bridport more generally are also very good. The development of West Bay and later the railway were crucial to the expansion of the industries of Bridport.

It seems that Bridport sailcloth was more expensive than that purchased by the navy during the American War of Independence and the advantage was with the Americans whose better quality sailcloth enabled them to make the most of the wind. The navy's sails were inefficient, allowing the wind through the sails making them slower. Non-conformism was strong in Bridport, a frequent feature of industrial societies in the past. Partnerships between

¹ "Rope, Net & Twine: the Bridport textile industry" by Richard Sims, published by the Dovecote Press.

families in the industry and even occasionally with competitors were also common as a practical response to difficult times. More recently the industry has adapted to produce cargo nets, camouflage netting, knotless netting, arrester barrier nets. Edwards company produce nets for Wimbledon, for cricket, and for fishing. Another claim to fame for Bridport was the production of netting used to stop the space shuttle on landing.

Beaminster's past through old photographs by Professor Duncan Harris and Jenny Cuthbert took us on a "tour" of Beaminster and the surrounding parishes through old photographs taken from the extensive collection held in Beaminster Museum. Many of these have been published in *The Book of Beaminster* and about one thousand have been scanned and digitally stored. The scope of the photographs and the local knowledge and research undertaken were impressive.

The Bridport Charter was the subject of Katherine Barker. The origins and purpose of the writing of the Charter in 1253 were explored and set in context of those times. A copy of the charter is held at the Dorset History Centre whilst the original is in the National Archives at Kew. Katherine took us through her detective work to explain why an additional payment was made to the Crown in 1253. By examining maps of Bridport and comparing the history of Lymington charter of 1256 she made a case for the possibility that this additional money was for a new area of development in the borough. She also proposed that in these early times it may have been possible to access the town by towing flat bottomed boats up from the coast.

Forum Session

- Jacqui Halewood gave members a brief update on the developments at the History Centre. The volunteer group had almost finished transcribing Jury Lists from the Quarter Sessions papers for the period 1830 to 1870. The lists of those eligible to serve on Juries were compiled by the Churchwardens and Overseers of each parish every year. They include names, occupations and, in some cases, an indication of the address, name of a farm or street for instance.
- The Friends of Dorset Archives has been reorganised to become the Dorset Archives Trust and will continue the work of FODA to raise funds for the Dorset History Centre.
- The Dorset Local Studies Library at the History Centre has been completely re-catalogued (more information on the new look Local Studies Library at Dorset History Centre appears in the September 2010 edition of "The Digest").
- Bournemouth Local Studies Group is hosting the Saturday Forum and AGM in September and Jean Sutton outlined the interesting programme being arranged which includes the option of choosing one of several guided walks. *[A report on the day will appear in the next EDAS newsletter].*
- A number of members spoke about their particular areas of interest including family history, migration and industrial archaeology.

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In the afternoon many of those present took part in a guided walk around Beaminster led by Professor Harris, which meant that some of the photographs seen in the morning were brought to life in 21st century Beaminster. An interesting visit to Beaminster Museum rounded off the afternoon.

Kay Kearsley

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 Nov

EDAS Lecture: "**English Coins**" with Peter Preston-Morely, Secretary of the Wessex Numismatic Society.

Wed 8 Dec

EDAS Lecture: "**Prehistoric Cave Art**" with Dr Andrew Lawson, former Director of the Trust for Wessex Archaeology.

2011

Wed 12 Jan

EDAS Lecture: "**Rockbourne Roman Villa: its History, Excavation and Conservation**" with David Allen, Senior Keeper of Archaeology, Hampshire County Museums & Archives Service

Wed 9 Feb

EDAS Lecture: "**Collapsing time: the strange tale of the Salisbury Hoard**" with Ben Roberts, Curator, European Bronze Age, The British Museum.