

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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Established 1983

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NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2015

EDAS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 25th March 2015

Don't forget this year's AGM. An opportunity to support the society, provide feedback to the committee and to vote on three new committee members. Plus you can find out what happened on the 2014 Field Trip and learn about the Dorset Canal.

The MARCH LECTURE will take place at BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY 7.30 pm Marconi Theatre, Talbot Campus.

The campus is located on Wallisdown Road (the A3049). For Sat Nav users, the postcode is BH12 5BB. Parking on the visitors Carpark will be free.

There will be clear directions from the Visitors Car Park to the lecture theatre.

EDAS Lecture: The Protected Wrecks on the South Coast, with Sara Hasan, Nautical Archaeology Society

First we had to thank Sara for stepping in for her colleague; she gave an engaging talk about a subject she is totally dedicated to. In the audience we welcomed a number of new faces, in particular members of the Christchurch Scuba Diving Club, several of whom promised they would return for terrestrial talks.

Sarah explained that she is first and foremost a passionate diver but also a committed amateur archaeologist. She is a member of the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS). For further information please look at their web-site http://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/.

The NAS is a charity with the objectives to research nautical archaeology, to publish the results, provide educational support and training. Its scope is wider than you may expect and covers not only ship wrecks but also the shoreline, lakes and rivers. Around our coast there is a 12 mile marine zone affected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeology Act 1979.

One surprise was the sheer number of wrecks listed on an admiralty chart dated 1876-1877, there were thousands of dots each representing a wreck, demonstrating the perilous nature of our coast. But out of this bewildering array only 49 English wrecks have protection notices, with another six in Welsh waters and a solitary one in Northern Island.

Sarah explained that archaeological investigation requires a licence and that there are 4 categories: visit, survey, surface recovery and excavation.

The challenges are many; this is a cold, dark, muddy environment, with strong tides. It is inherently unstable, the conditions are ever changing. And work is restricted to short periods, dependent on air tanks and depth. But there are many rewards, not least because this submarine world helps preserve organic artefacts and materials, including textiles, basketry, skins/hides, wood, leathers; if conditions are favourable it can create a time capsule.

Sarah went on to describe work undertaken on four sites located off the south coast.

The Norman Bay Wreck: located two miles offshore in East Sussex, just south of Pevensey, near Eastbourne. The depth of water over the site varies from 7m to 15m. The wreck comprises a timber hull structure and in excess of 50 iron cannons have been discovered, as well as various other artefacts including a large anchor and a large ballast mound. There are also several areas close together which had a layer of uniform red bricks scattered around, believed to be the galley area and here there was also found various pieces of thin copper sheeting which

may represent fragments of the ships kettle. It is a large warship of the 17th century period, measuring approximately 50m long, with an approximate breadth of 10m. The number and size of the armaments and the anchor seem to suggest this was a third rate warship of 800 to 1000 tons.

Dendrochronological research by Wessex Archaeology showed that the wood of the hull section appears to have originated in Germany or the Low Countries dating from the middle of the 17th century, although it is still possible that it was a Royal Navy vessel built from imported continental timber.



It is quite likely that the wreck is a Dutch man of war lost in 1690 at the Battle of Beachy Head when an allied English and Dutch force was heavily defeated by the French. Seven Dutch ships were lost in the battle, at least three of these are supposed to have sunk in Norman's Bay. The most likely contender being the Wapen Van Utrecht.

The NAS are awaiting permission to undertake some work on one of the cannons to identify its origin.

One very interesting development is that the NAS have set up a diver trail round the wreck, using multi-media techniques to provide information before and during the dive.

Holland No 5 Submarine: this is a special piece of our naval heritage. She was the first submarine to be commissioned by the Royal Navy, in 1903. The Holland class of submarine rapidly become obsolete and in 1912 Holland 5 was destined for destruction and whilst being towed to Sheerness she sunk just six miles SE of the Royal Sovereign Lighthouse, Sussex, England. Sarah advised that Holland No1 submarine is on display at the Royal Submarine Museum, Gosport.



The wreck remained undiscovered until 1995 when she was found by Kent diver, Jerry Dowd. The Holland 5 was protected under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) in 2005. In 2011 the Holland No.5 was added to the Heritage at Risk Register by English Heritage.

The submarine is upright and in a fair degree of overall preservation. This is primarily because the single-hull design means that the pressure hull contains all of submarines workings, and is made of rare "S" Grade steel only seen these days on the Holland submarines and the Forth Bridge. The durability of this material is probably why the main hull of the submarine is still durable and intact.

However the upper superstructure has largely gone and the stern fins and propeller guard have also been pulled off. The periscope, which lay down on the deck when not in use, has been torn away along with the vent pipes for the interior and the external exhaust piping. There is no evidence of the upper steering position or compass binnacle and it is possible they were removed before her final voyage in 1912.

HMS Invincible 1758: originally a 74-gun French ship of the line which was captured and became a third-rate ship of the Royal Navy.

During the early part of the 18th century French shipbuilding developed quicker than the British and when the Invincible was captured, there was not one 74-gun ship in the Royal Navy. By 1805 at the battle of Trafalgar, three quarters of British ships of the line were of this singular design and the 74-gun ship had become the backbone of all major navies of the world.

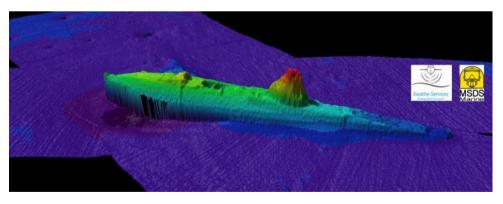
HMS Invincible sank in 1758 when it went aground on the Horse Tail Sands near Portsmouth and sank to a depth of 10-12m. It broke it back on the seabed. The finds collection is held at Chatham.

The wreck site was designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act on 30 September 1980. In 2013 the wreck was placed on English Heritage's list of ten most at risk heritage sites due to parts of the ship being exposed by changing seabed levels.

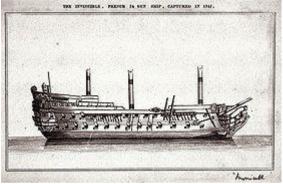
The NAS have undertaken a survey of the site during 2013-14 using advanced planning techniques including: 2D and 3D imagery, creating photomosaics and digital geometry.

HMS/m A1 submarine: This submarine was built by Vickers in 1902 and was the first British designed Royal Navy submarine. She was larger and an improved design to the earlier Holland class submarine, and featured a conning tower. It sunk after a collision in 1904, with the loss of all hands, but was recovered and by 1911 it was used for training and eventually used as a submerged target. It was not until 1989 that the wreck was rediscovered by a local fisherman at Bracklesham Bay. In 2013 the NAS with funding from English Heritage established a diver visitor trail on the submarine designated under the protection of Wrecks Act (1973) that sunk in in the eastern Solent in 1911.

Designing the trail involved collation of all the background information needed to design the underwater guides and the promotional materials. NAS also obtained images and video footage was used by 3deep media Ltd to create sophisticated online visualisation aids of the site.



Throughout the talk Sarah used an impressive array of visualisation tools, more common on a high quality television programme, which really brought each of the sites to life. Although the costs are a barrier these will surely become more commonly used to bring our archaeological heritage to life and generate a wider interest in archaeology. The warm applause at the end demonstrated how impressed we were when we thanked Sarah for her excellent talk.



Note: The Royal Navy rated its ships according to size and armaments. A first, second or third rate ship was regarded as a "ship-of-the-line". The first and second rates were three-deckers with three continuous decks of guns. The largest third rates, those of 80 guns, were likewise three-deckers from the 1690s until the early 1750s, but subsequently 80-gun ships were built as two-deckers. The smaller fourth rates, of about 50 or 60 guns on two decks, were ships-of-the-line until 1756, when it was felt that such 50-gun ships were now too small for pitched battles. The middle of the 18th century saw the introduction of a new fifth-rate type—the classic frigate, with no ports on the lower deck, and the main battery disposed solely on the upper deck, where it could be fought in all weathers. Sixth-rate ships were generally useful as convoy escorts, for blockade duties and the carrying of dispatches.

Andrew Morgan

DORSET PLANNING and HERITAGE ADVISORY GROUP- Pilot Scheme

As mentioned in the last newsletter members of EDAS have been asked to participate in a pilot scheme to assess whether an amateur society can perform a useful role in reviewing planning applications. The intention is to use local knowledge to better ensure that the archaeology is best served. The pilot will cover the East Dorset District, excluding Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch. This is NOT an exercise to discourage development, it is meant to complement the role of the Dorset County Council archaeology services, and there is NO intention to undermine or replace this critical service.

These are early days, but we are arranging preliminary meetings with the EDDC planning department and Dorset Archaeology Services. We intend to arrange an introductory meeting towards the end of March.

We need the support of keen members who are interested in this challenge, if you want further information please contact Andrew Morgan.

Email: <u>andrewmorgz@aol.com</u> Tel: 01202 731162

GREAT DORSET ARCHAEOLOGY & MYSTERIES QUIZ

The quiz run jointly by EDAS and the Priest House Museum was a great success and apparently enjoyed by all contenders. The questions were challenging but I think they were interesting, and not many were contested.

The Poole Pirates team, representing Poole History Centre won the event by ½ a point. They walked away with a bronze trowel and boxes of chocolates for their prize and they take with them the challenge for arranging the next quiz.

The proceeds have been shared between EDAS and PHM.

Thanks to Emma, Bryan and Andrew who organised it and everyone who supported the event.



EDAS Field Trip 2015



Sunday June 14th to Friday June 19th

Anyone who has organised a field trip will know the difficulties of sorting out an itinerary that's going to appeal to the wide diversity of interests within the society. This year there will be the usual eclectic mix of activities plus lots of socialising. The itinerary is very full, and although nearly complete, may still need some final tweaking. This means the customary day of rest may have to be cancelled this year!

We shall hopefully have guided tours of Grimes Graves the world renowned Neolithic flint mines; and the Bronze Age ritual site of Flag Fen that now houses the exciting find of the Must Farm Bronze Age boats.

We will visit Thetford, sacked by Sweyn Forkbeard and the Vikings, where we walk around the Norman castles, priory, churches and Saxon defences. For steam enthusiasts there will be the opportunity to visit the Burrell museum, or there is the Ancient House museum.

The monastery of St Edmundsbury was also sacked several times by the Vikings. It is ironic that Cnut the only Viking King of England granted it abbey status. In the year that we will be celebrating the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta it is appropriate that the field trip will be taking us to the place where in 1214 the clandestine and key historical meeting of the barons took place that eventually led to King John being forced to sign the original Magna Carta document at Runnymede.

We shall visit an Iceni hillfort, the suspected scene of a Roman massacre, we use the term hillfort advisedly – this is Fenland!

We shall spend a full day in Cambridge including a privileged guided visit to Corpus Christi library, where we will be able to see its many treasures including the Gospels of St. Augustine dating from the sixth century, and hear of the connection between Elizabeth 1st, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the consolidation of the Church of England. There will be free time to go punting on the Cam – magical if it's not raining!

We shall also spend time in the medieval towns of Long Melford and Lavenham, both rich in medieval buildings, and both founded on the wealth generated by the wool trade.

We will learn about the age of steam and the drainage of the Fens during a visit to the Prickwillow museum.

There will be the customary guest lecture and evening meal, and on the final night the Last Supper.

This is a very busy schedule, some visits etc have to be confirmed when final numbers are known, and there may yet be changes to the plan. I'm hoping that we may be able to visit an archaeological excavation during the trip, but we won't know that until later in the year.

The trip will be roughly based around Bury St. Edmunds, this is almost certainly going to be the place where the guest lecture/meal will take place. The group numbers will have to be strictly limited this year because of the visit to the Corpus Christi library.

Please contact me if you are interested in going on the trip:

Keith Allsopp: keith.allsopp@btinternet.com; or 01258 840 893



Last year EDAS Member Neil Meldrum gave a talk about Meso-American civilisations and mentioned that he would return to Belize to work on an excavation in the summer. He kindly accepted our request to write about his trip and this is the second part, which covers not only the archaeology but also his experiences and the people he met as he explored the area.

BELIZE July 2014, by Neil Meldrum – Part 2

Unlike the students, I did not have to write a report on my digging activities for a course, thank goodness, so I left the digging after a week and a half and went down to the south of Belize. This is an area still predominantly occupied by the modern Maya. I stayed with a Mayan chocolate farmer. A lovely guy and a lovely family, he said he had thirteen children, I asked him how many grandchildren, he wasn't sure but he reckoned that it was over thirty-five, there seems to be little prospect of the Maya dying out!

His philosophy was compelling. Although ostensibly a Christian, his beliefs were underwritten by an innate understanding of nature. He clearly appreciated the delicate balances which had to be preserved, and he mourned the continued destruction of the verdant forest in this part of the country by cattle ranchers and others. It did not take a great stretch of the imagination to equate his clear love of and healthy respect for nature to Ancient Mayan beliefs. Their doctrine was that not only all plant and animal life, but also the earth and the sky and everything in between, had spirituality and a specific purpose in the universe, and should be honoured. I left with a kind of inner calm (although this may have had something to do with the freshly roasted, pure chocolate which I was constantly given, quite delicious!)

Whilst with the farmer I visited two ancient Mayan sites. As with the majority of the ancient sites that I visited on this trip, these sites were somewhat off the beaten track, a lot of walking in the heat, (35 degrees C, and extreme humidity). I was the only visitor. I must say that I felt very privileged. I could take my time, and sit and stare and cogitate upon what life must have been like in these places all those years ago. One site, in particular, a smallish centre called Nim Li Punit was really quite charming, perfect stone work beautifully proportioned buildings, and exquisitely carved stelae.



The main acropolis at Nim li Punit



The idyllic rain forest in the Toledo district of Belize.

I made my way back to St Ignatio. Belize has a marvellous system of buses, there are not many roads and anything off the main highway is a dirt track, but the buses go everywhere, the rougher the road, the better. Invariably they are full, carrying a great cross section of Belizean society. Although generally reliable they do have their problems like the time when the bus suffered a puncture (I think that the pot hole was a bit bigger than the driver thought), nobody was phased, clearly not an unusual occurrence, everyone disembarked quite happily, helped the driver crank up the bus, take off the old wheel and put on the new one (yes, there was a spare) and off we all go again about an hour later.

The next day back in St. Ignacio, the 'kids' were all off to Acton Tunichil Muknal caves. I had put myself down for this trip the previous week, had I known what it actually involved I would have stayed in St. Ignacio resting in a hammock. The cave was some seven kilometres deep, we had to swim 40 metres across a pool to get to it, fortunately the water was quite warm. Once in the cave we stayed in the water, sometimes up to our necks for about a kilometre, but it wasn't a case of just walking along an internal river, we had to pass through tiny crevices, some I could only just get my head through while still up to my neck in water. This just wouldn't happen in the UK

or Europe and certainly not North America, health and safety was simply not on the agenda here. An exhilarating, if not somewhat worrying, experience.



Inside Actun Tunichil Muknal cave

We reached the end of the water, and climbed into vast caverns with the most fantastic geological formations, huge stalactites and stalagmites in all shapes and sizes. In daylight the colours would have been spectacular. But it was pitch black apart from the lamps on our helmets. At one stage our guide suggested that we turn off our lamps, which we duly did, I have never known such blackness, it really was quite disorientating. We arrived at a Mayan necropolis in the depths of the cave. Well preserved skeletons of men and women of all ages, including children, some of whom were clearly sacrificial victims.

There was exquisite and superbly preserved pottery, some clearly ritually destroyed but some intact with intricate and so well defined decoration. Bearing in mind the vastness of the cave and the complete blackness, it is reckoned that only a small fraction of its treasures have yet been yielded up, exploration continues. A truly memorable experience.

The Ancient Maya had a particular fascination for caves, and in this part of the world, due to the predominance of limestone, there are plenty of them. They were entrances to the underworld; they served as the abode of powerful and capricious gods and were places of both death and creation. The Maya believed that the deities who influenced life and death, those that controlled rain and agricultural fertility, and the earth spirits all resided in these dark and mysterious but sacred places.

A couple of days later I set out on a trip to Mexico. This involved taking a local bus to the border in the north of Belize, more cramped bone shaking for about four hours. At the border I crossed into the Mexican town of Chetumal, a modern thriving town on the Caribbean coast, and the contrast with Belize could not be more acute. A proper town with three-lane dual carriageways, department stores, ordinary cars (not pick-ups), large blocks of flats, smart municipal buildings and houses, quite a contrast to Belize.

I wanted to get to Oaxaca City in Mexico, to visit Monte Alban, a site only a few miles out of Oaxaca City itself. Not a Mayan site, but a Zapotec centre. The Zapotecs were generally contemporary with but were quite a different culture to the Maya. Mexican buses, which I must say are very spacious and comfortable, mainly run at night. To get to Oaxaca involved two separate and long nightly bus trips. After the first bus trip which I took that evening, at about 10 pm, to Villahermosa arriving at about 8am the following morning, I thought to myself, not sure I could do that again the following night. Sense got the better of me. I decided to stay in Villahermosa, and I must say that I am glad that I did.

Villahermosa is another lively vibrant Mexican city, situate in the swamplands of Veracruz on the Gulf coast. It is hot and sweaty, and prone to violent storms, but is thriving. After two and a half weeks of pretty basic, or extremely basic, accommodation I thought that I would treat myself to a decent hotel. I booked into the Olmeca in the centre of town for a couple of nights, very comfortable; I even treated myself to a decent steak!

Villermhosa is in the middle of Olmec country. The Meso-American mother culture, the Olmecs thrived from about 1000BC through to 200 BC. They were the first culture to build cities with pyramids topped with temples and palaces. Their art and sculpture are distinctive, their huge carved stone heads, probably representing kings, are unique in Meso-American culture. They developed a rudimentary form of writing, which was the basis for the later Mayan hieroglyphics. Although little is known of their history, it is unlikely that they formed a unified state, rather more likely a loose confederation of small city states.



I spent a very pleasant day at the recently completed Anthropological Park in Villahermosa where many of the best preserved Olmec sculptures and artefacts are now exhibited. The next day I spent in the Archaeological Museum,

again newly constructed and ultra-modern. This museum contained a unique exhibition of Mayan visual art and, thank goodness, all written in English, as well as Spanish. This exhibition, which I had not known about, was one of the highlights for me. The central theme of all Maya visual art is the human figure which was depicted naturally, anthropomorphically, supernaturally and even zoomorphically. The Maya idealized the human figure, revealing not only their own conception of man, but also their conception of man's place in the universe. Artists occupied privileged positions in Mayan society. Paintings and sculpture were signed by individual artists. There were workshops where a principal artist would teach his pupils, much like in Renaissance Italy. Some of the finest examples of this sublime art form were on display here in Villahermosa.



Part of the famous Bonampak Murals

I returned to Belize in the same tortuous manner, by over-night bus. I wanted to visit Cerros, a small Mayan site on the sea just inside Belize. There was one bus a day which went to a village about 5 miles from the site itself, but no return bus. Someone was bound to give me a lift. I got off the bus, there was absolutely no-one around. I started walking, my only thought being I hope that I have enough water as there was no shade and it was hot, hot,hot. I

walked the whole way, nothing and no-one passed me, but the site was certainly worth the trek. A small site, and thank goodness, a clear stream and cool water. There were mounds as far as the eye could see, which would all have been structures in their time.

The wonderful aspect of this site was its location right on the Caribbean Sea. The soft waves of the turquoise green sea lapping the shore line, the palm trees dipping into the water, it was an idyllic spot, quite unspoilt, quite sublime and completely deserted. I could have stayed for ever but I didn't, instead I worried about how to get back and what I was going to eat! I started on the long return trudge. Then out of nowhere I heard the sound of a motor, the first I had heard since getting off the bus. I flagged down the pick-up truck, the driver who clearly thought that



Cerros

I was crazy to be walking in the hot sun by myself miles from anywhere, took pity on me, I clambered into the back amongst the oilcans, and enjoyed an exhilarating ride all the way back, to the border, some 15 miles.

The next day I boarded a bus and headed for Laminai. Laminai has the longest known history of occupation in the whole Mayan area, from about 900BC to the Spanish Conquest. But as with most Mayan cities, what is visible now dates mostly from the late Classic period, the older structures being buried under the later buildings. Laminai again is in a beautiful location on the side of a lake. It had a plentiful water supply, and a commanding and highly defensive position. However as with so many other ancient Mayan cities, Laminai collapsed in the ninth century.

There are many theories to try and explain this collapse. Probably the most likely scenario is that over population resulted in more and more land being cleared for farming. When coupled with the ever increasing demand for stucco for the huge building projects of the seventh and eighth centuries this led to a degradation of the forest, and soil exhaustion. This would have greatly contributed to a natural process which was already ongoing of less and less rainfall. The consequent failed crops would have led to the population losing their faith in their 'Divine Lords', with the inevitable breakdown of society. Like other sites, Laminai continued to be occupied but on a far far lesser scale, no new buildings were erected, art, such as it was, was crude, hieroglyphic writing ceased, in fact all the accoutrements of the previous high culture disappeared, in this region along with the people.

I returned to St Ignatio on Wednesday evening, in time for my last trip, this time into Guatemala. Apart from Chichen Itza, in the north Yucatan, Tikal in Guatemala is probably the best known and most visited of all Mayan sites. In ancient times Tikal and the city of Calakmul, were rivals for supremacy of the whole Mayan area. Tikal is the better known, is much restored and the most visited. Calakmul by contrast, about forty miles to the north just inside modern day Mexico, is off the modern beaten track, is much less restored and studied, but in ancient times rivalled and for some time probably eclipsed Tikal. In those days the whole of this area would have been urban or semi urban, the outskirts of one city would touch the outskirts of the next. One of the biggest centres was Naranjo. Tikal and Calakmul would have had populations in excess of one hundred thousand, Naranjo

would have had a population in the region of sixty thousand people. Over the years I have been privileged to visit most major Mayan sites, including Tikal and Calakmul, the one that had escaped me was Naranjo. In my last couple of days I was determined to rectify this.

Like most Mayan sites Naranjo is not easy to get to, about twenty miles along a very rough track indeed, one of the reasons that I had not been able to get there on earlier trips was because this track was impassable, even in a four by four truck, due to the rains. This year the rains have been delayed, so the track was navigable. On reaching Naranjo I was not disappointed. Another huge site, and again, only a tiny bit of which has been excavated. Some of the



structures are enormous, and, as with other sites, these man-made **A ruined temple in Naranjo** mounds and hills go on forever. The centre comprised a number of acropolises, pyramids, temples and palaces, similar to other sites, but on an altogether different scale. There were piles of ceramics everywhere, although anything worthwhile has long since been grabbed by looters. Again this centre

reached its apogee in the eighth century, followed by a rapid decline, and a decimation of the population. My visit to Naranjo reaffirmed what I have always known, that the Ancient Maya had created a sophisticated and complex urban civilisation in one of the world's most inhospitable rainforests.

So there you have it, a very brief look at the charms of Belize, and the wonders of Ancient Mayan civilisation. A fascinating culture and a fascinating part of the world, and one that you feel is still waiting to divulge yet further secrets. There is so much more to learn. It seems that we will only ever have a smattering of how and why this marvellous and but strange culture evolved and endured and of what made the Ancient Maya tick. There will be much frustration, controversy conjecture and damn hard work, but, I suspect also quite a bit of fun, in the continued process of stripping away the layers of mystique from this civilisation in the jungle.

THE END

COUNCIL for INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGY

2015 Conference 19th September

EDAS is delighted to have been invited to host the 2015 conference and we will be finalising the arrangement over the next couple of months. It is a one day conference to be held on Saturday 19th September.

The conference will be open to all interested archaeologists; you do not need to be a member of the CIA to attend. We hope that members will support the event.

Further details to follow.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EDAS EVENTS – 2015
11 th March 2015	EDAS Lecture – Life & Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum, with Mike Stone
	To be held at the Marconi Lecture Theatre, Bournemouth University
	Check website for details or contact a Committee Member
25th March 2015	EDAS AGM followed by members' evening with: Brian Maynard on the 2014 Field Trip to Lincolnshire, and Alan Hawkins about the recently surveyed Dorset Canal
8th April 2015	EDAS Lecture – Catalhoyuk Neolithic Settlement, with Professor Peter Andrews, Curator of Blandford Museum
13th May 2015	EDAS Lecture – The Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Treasure Act, with Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen, Dorset Finds Officer
14th to 19th June 2015	EDAS Field Trip – Cambridgeshire area. Led by Keith and Denise Allsop. Details to follow.
19 th September 2015	Council for Independent Archaeology 2015 Conference, to be held in Wimborne

Note: unless otherwise stated all lectures start at 7.30pm and are held at St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.