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East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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NEWSLETTER – Summer 2019

Notes:

May lecture: big thanks to Dave Stewart for his talk about the iconic hillforts of Dorset, it drew in a large audience and was very well received. Don't forget the book, an ideal Christmas present.

September lecture: we are very pleased to launch our next season on 11th September with a talk by Adrian Green, curator of Salisbury Museum, who will discuss some of the amazing **Archaeological treasures from Wiltshire.**

Dorset during the Viking Age – part 1: a few months ago I was contacted by local author Wayne Bartlett volunteering to give a talk to EDAS, of course we were delighted to accept and it is now scheduled for our 2020-2021 season, Sensing an opportunity I asked whether he would write an article for the newsletter and he graciously agreed to provide a two part paper about the Vikings in Dorset. (See part-1 starting on page 7).

Vanessa's MYSTERY OBJECT Photo Quiz: an opportunity to explain the inexplicable, see page 6. Reasonable prize for the best caption.

Scillonian Entrance Graves: Neolithic burial chambers on the Atlantic Seaboard (page 11).

Keepers Lodge Excavation: the excavation proposal has been accepted by the NT and we will start on 9th September for a three week period. You will receive soon an email about the dig and the opportunities for training. If not please contact me.

Archaeology Excellence: two opportunities to hear some of the country's leading experts on archaeology who will be speaking at two conferences in November:

- **Dorchester Association Day School – Prehistoric Dorchester:** 2nd November (page 14)
- **CBA Conference - Sunrise Over the Stones: Recent Research into Neolithic and Chalcolithic Wessex:** 9th November (see page 15). EDAS will have a stand at this event.

The Crick Crack Club presents Beowulf: on 14th September a special opportunity to experience the wonderful traditional art of storytelling at its best, held in the evocative Iron Age round house reconstructed at the Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre (see page 16 for details).

John Day's 90th Birthday: John really enjoyed a small birthday celebration on 3rd July with some thirty or so of his old friends. He is in good health apart from poor eyesight and still able to entertain a group with his good humoured and perfectly timed anecdotes. He is keen for visitors and this can be arranged via his son Alwyn mobile: 07768698414.

New Editor: I am pleased to announce that Geoff Taylor has agreed to become editor of the EDAS Newsletter. Eight years ago in April 2011 I was approached by John Day, our previous chairman, and asked to edit the Newsletter and after 82 editions it's about time to hand it on. I would like to thank everybody who has made contributions over the years. I was always rather pleased, if not relieved, when occasionally somebody commented on an article or even when they pointed out a spelling mistake or three (special thanks to Peter), at least it was evidence that it was being read. I have actually really enjoyed putting the newsletter together, especially in recent years when there have been a number of regular contributors. Good luck Geoff and thank you.

Andrew Morgan

Once upon a Hill: a study of Dorset hillforts (or 'Fantastic Forts and where to find them') by Dave Stewart.

Britain has many hillforts, generally thought of as built in the Iron Age, sometimes small and with a single bank (univallate), with others large, imposing and multivallate. Dorset has 34 scheduled 'hillforts', including the less common small multivallate types. Our last presentation of the current session was by EDAS member Dave Stewart, who has



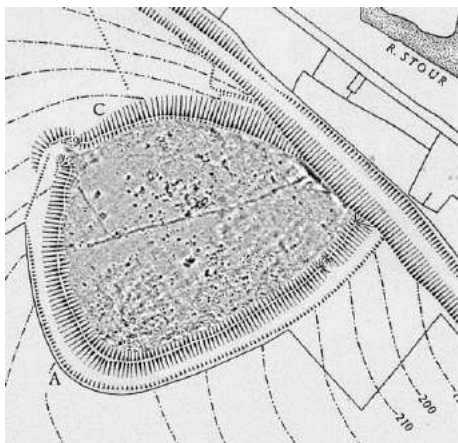
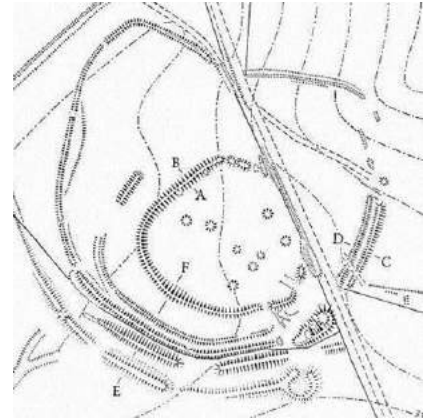
surveyed a large proportion of them as the basis of *Hillforts and the Durotriges*, published in 2017.

As Dave pointed out, many were originally built in the Bronze Age, some even earlier, some aren't even on hills and a good number would be difficult to describe as forts. Other than that, the description is fine.

A case in point is Banbury, near Sturminster Newton, where Jo & Sue Crane's aerial photograph shows a small, almost flat area within a single bank and ditch. It was probably a Bronze or early Iron Age farm enclosure. Badbury is more defensible but the wooded interior, with considerable undergrowth, makes geophysical survey rather difficult – just one of the issues facing Dave over

the couple of years or so it took to complete the work. Another common issue is metal interfering with the equipment readings – often fences that are, at least, visible, but not infrequently their remains long buried in the ground. That often accounts for the blank or fuzzy areas on the plots. Did you know that Badbury has a Neolithic twin in High Wood beyond the eastern gate, now cleared by the National Trust though badly damaged by quarrying?

Buzbury Rings (right) is just along the B3082 Blandford Road from Badbury, in fact cut through by the road but on private land. Its double enclosure is sometimes thought to be crossed by causeways, suggesting a Neolithic origin, though the final form appears more like the banjo enclosure of a Middle Iron Age farmstead. Part of the earthwork north of the road is now a hazard by the 16th green of Ashley Wood Golf Club, whilst a golf course also covers part of Bulbury 'Camp' at Slepe, with large anomalies in the survey because of fences, a cattle trough and farm wall.

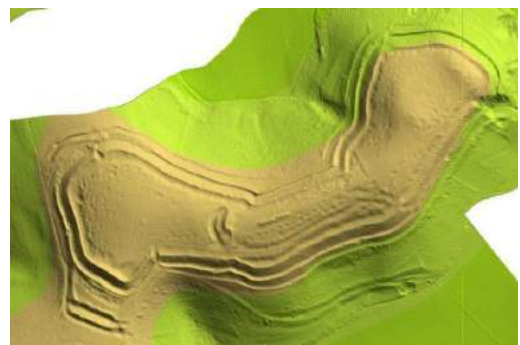


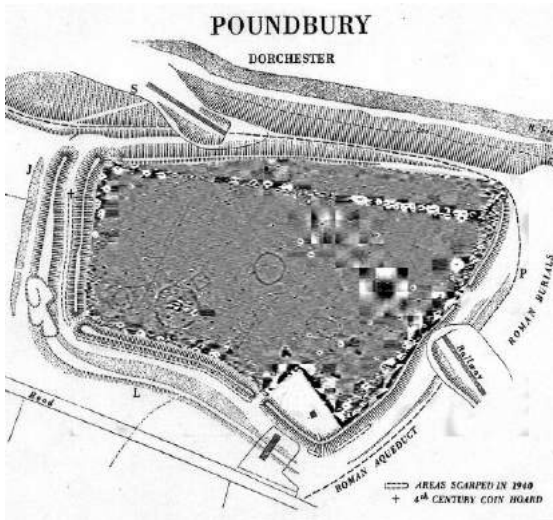
Although just off the Dudsbury golf course, Dudsbury hillfort at least has a public footpath through it (if the Guide Association haven't managed to close or divert it); their camp, a private house and scrubby woodland militate against a useful survey. Dudsbury is more fort-like, dominating the Stour like Spettisbury Ring (or 'Crawford Castle') further upstream. Spettisbury was famously truncated by a railway cutting in 1857 when at least 70 skeletons were found in the ditch, often interpreted as defenders slaughtered by the Romans. There is, of course no detailed information to review this and the remains have long since disappeared. The interior shows traces of pits and huts despite having been heavily ploughed;

rectangular ones may be Anglo-Saxon or huts for Victorian navvies. A footpath gives access from the nearby railway bridge and the views of the Stour flood plain (below) show one reason for construction here. In fact, views from many of the higher hillforts, like the small multivallate Rawlsbury on Bulbarrow Down overlooking Blackmore Vale, are often spectacular, another reason for visiting them. Not far to the west along the escarpment, in the centre of the county, is the wonderfully named

Nettlecombe Tout, a promontory fort with a single bank and ditch guarding the only easy access from the south. Although on private land, and showing little evidence of habitation, it overlooks the Dorset Gap and its 5 bridleways.

Hod Hill, the largest hillfort in Dorset and unique for the Roman fort built in the corner, was the subject of Dave's presentation 5 years ago (see April 2014 Newsletter). Its neighbour on Hambledon Hill shows 3 construction phases: a Neolithic enclosure at the northern tip, expanded to include a Neolithic long barrow and then a second oval enclosure with a more complex entrance on the flatter southern approach. These, and especially the traces of hut platforms terraced into the steep slopes, are perhaps best seen on the Lidar image (right).

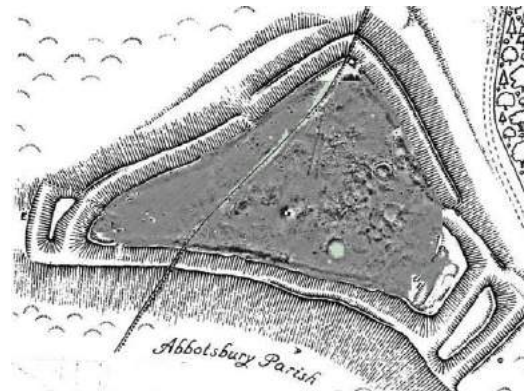




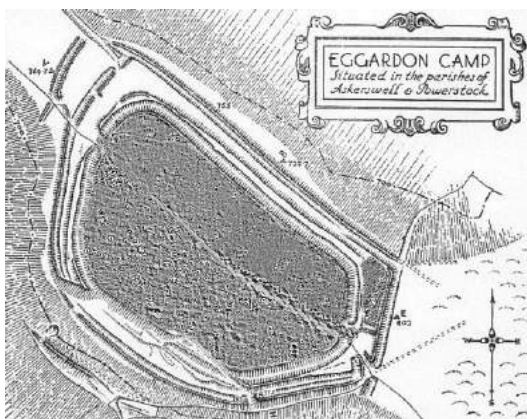
To its south, Dorchester has two accessible hillforts – the well-known Maiden Castle with its very impressive ramparts and clear signs from the magnetometry of its Neolithic origins, and Poundbury with a helpful interpretive sign provided by the Duchy of Cornwall to describe its complex history. Bronze Age barrows were enclosed by a single rampart, joined by a second in the Late Iron Age, then the Romans used the edge for the Dorchester Aqueduct and set a large cemetery to the east (square structures inside the fort may be Roman mausolea, or 17th century plague houses!). Brunel's plan to make a railway cutting through the fort in the mid-19th century was thwarted by local opposition and a tunnel built, showing as interference on the

magnetometer plot despite its depth. The plot is also affected by the remains of fences and uses in several conflicts, such as a WWI PoW camp, WWII anti-tank defences and the Observer Corps spotting post in one corner.

Near the coast, Flowers Barrow is up a steep path from Tyneham but best accessed on the longer, flatter, route from the viewpoint. A good portion has tumbled down the cliff and it is only open when the army aren't shelling; given the unexploded shell there that Dave showed us, this might be one to miss. West along the Ridgeway, Lidar of Chalbury clearly shows barrows and hut platforms. Although on private land, a path leads up from a small quarry, giving good views of the surrounding barrows and across to Portland. Further west, Abbotsbury looks across to Portland over the Fleet from the other side and is on the S.W. Coastal Path. Hut platforms are clear in the eastern part, as is the stone bank of the parish boundary and traces of wartime activity in two corners.

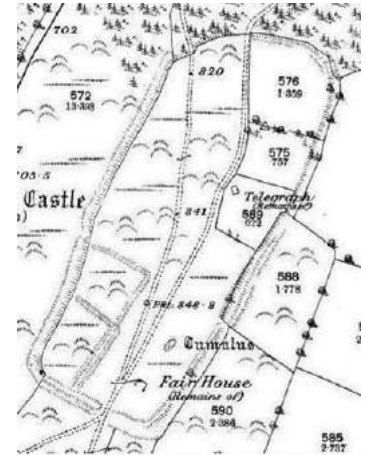


Univallate Chilcombe is one of the larger forts, almost touching the south side of the A31 but very easy to miss near Askerswell on the way to Bridport. Although actively ploughed, there are still traces of Middle Iron Age occupation, a barrow and cross-dykes suggesting an early origin. The smaller, partly overgrown, Shipton is just 2km to the west and there are good views of each from the other. From Chilcombe, the slightly larger multivallate Eggardon is only 3km north and easy to access. This is a hillfort of two halves, with the north under farmland and showing hardly any



features and the south, owned by the National Trust, clearly showing pits, ditches, a pillow mound (artificial rabbit warren) and an octagonal feature in the centre. This is the earthworks apparently used to protect a stand of pine trees planted by the smuggler Isaac Gulliver, who owned Eggardon Hill Farm, as a navigation aid for his ships. The views are magnificent, as with many of the West Dorset hillforts.

Four hillforts, all on National Trust land, sit close to the western end of the county. Lambert's Castle (shown) was the site of a Napoleonic War period signal tower on the same line as Nettlecombe Tout, along which a signal was sent from London to Plymouth and back in 3 minutes in 1806. It has been used for fairs, like Woodbury Hill, as a racecourse and then subdivided into small fields. Coney's Castle, a roughly kite-shaped enclosure is split by a road and has suffered from quarrying for chert, leaving few signs of habitation. The name may well be a corruption of the Saxon word for 'king', rather than relate to rabbits, as it is recorded that King Egbert camped here in 831 on his way to fight the Cornish. Lewesdon, though heavily wooded, is worth a visit and is now known to be the highest point in Dorset, actually 2m higher than Pilsdon Pen, which is accessible by a steep climb from the car park. The magnetometry shows that it was more densely occupied than most forts, whilst there are standing earthworks of barrows and a pillow mound (the warrener's house was once a landmark for ships). It is said, perhaps with some justification, that the turf for Thomas Lord's cricket ground came from the Pen.



Although this article misses a few of the hillforts described by Dave, and doesn't do justice to his interesting and amusing comments about them, one more merits mention. This unscheduled fort at Chalbury Common, now labelled Colesbarrow, was only recognised from a Kingston Lacy estate map. It has been damaged by quarrying and residential development, although part of the single bank and ditch is visible, thought by a previous owner to be a ha-ha!

Clearly Dave's surveying counts as a monumental undertaking, and the illustrations here don't do justice to the detailed information as many would need to be A4 size, or larger (buy the book!). Apart from some difficulties already mentioned, there's the issue of sliding down steep and slippery slopes when trying to walk steadily in a straight line. Or (perhaps actually not all at the same time) a long drive, difficult to park, a tough walk up a steep hill, cold and wind-swept, lay out tapes (now colder).... and the machine decides not to work. So, we owe a debt to Dave for his persistence in providing a very valuable legacy, with even more detail than in the book available in the scheduled monument reports provided to Dorchester (contact Claire Pinder if you want to research a particular site).

So, not only a thank you for a fascinating presentation but, as I heard a few people say, "well, that's our walks sorted for this summer".

Geoff Taylor

VANESSA'S MYSTERY OBJECT

PHOTO QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHY?



What are friends for if not to make use of an opportunity to take an embarrassing photograph?

A special prize will be awarded at the EDAS September meeting for the best caption.

Answers to Vanessa, email: vanessaa.joseph@gmail.com

Please note that no four-legged animals were harmed during this exercise

Dorset During the Viking Age: Part 1

The Viking Age, which simplistically spans the years 789-1066 in England, had a huge impact on Wessex. Wessex in turn had a great part to play in the formation of the country we now know as England during this crucial period. As an important element in Wessex, Dorsetshire was close up to some of the seminal events of the time. In the earlier part of the Viking Age, Dorset in common with many other parts of the country was subject to Viking raids. In the latter part, the focus was more on Viking conquest and settlement rather than raiding, leading to some crucial events in the formation of modern England which in retrospect appear to be of great interest but at the time must have been truly terrifying.

On the eve of the Viking period, Dorset and Wessex were important regions but were largely in the shadow of Mercia, broadly speaking in the western part of the modern Midlands of England. The great Mercian king Offa, famous for the construction of the dyke on the borders of England and Wales, was the supreme English monarch, very much a first amongst equals. To a more or less formal extent (it varied somewhat over time), other states such as Wessex, Northumbria, East Anglia and Kent acknowledged his superiority and he corresponded frequently with the great Frankish emperor, Charlemagne, making him a player on the European stage.

The 8th Century was one of great economic expansion which had significant benefits both for Francia (broadly France, the Low Countries and the west of modern Germany) and the English kingdoms. Important trading ports such as Hamwich (Southampton) and Gipeswic (Ipswich) prospered as no doubt did other less renowned towns where goods could be traded and shipped. Alongside this prosperity though came risk. There were those who sought to benefit from the increased level of wealth and were not too concerned whether this came about through fair means or foul.

At the close of the 8th Century, Beorhtric was the ruler of Wessex. Beorhtric ('magnificent ruler') was an ally of Offa, though apparently very much the junior partner in the relationship. He became king of Wessex in 786. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* report the arrival of three strange ships in 789. Not untypically, the different versions of the *Chronicles* extant give contradictory information, saying that these men came from Hordaland (in western Norway) but also referring to them as Danes. At the time, a Norwegian point of origin would have been more likely. The king's reeve (sheriff) came down to meet them. Something went wrong after he tried to compel them to come to the 'king's town' with him, there was a fracas and he was killed, the first known victim of Viking raids in England.

The *St Neots Chronicle* relates that these men came ashore at 'the island called Portland', meaning that the nearby king's town was probably Dorchester. The reeve is even given a name, Beaduheard. If this is accurate information, it was the first of an unfortunate series of raids involving Portland which became a regular port of call for the Vikings. From this we can surmise that Portland was a point with some trading significance at the time, making it an attractive target for the Norsemen.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* describe horrifying events such as the sack of Lindisfarne in 793 but then go silent on further raids on England for the next few decades. However, we know from other accounts that the Vikings were very busy in Ireland and Scotland during this period. Beorhtric died in 802 and was buried in Wareham probably where the Church of St Mary now stands near the Quay; there was formerly an important priory nearby. He was succeeded by Egbert who would be

king for over three decades and it is during the latter part of his reign that raids on England are recorded again in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*.

In 840, early in the reign of Egbert's son and successor Æthelwulf, we read the following revealing statement in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*: 'Ealdorman Æthelhelm fought against a Danish raiding-army on Portland with the Dorset men, and for a good while they put the raiding-army to flight – and the Danish had possession of the place of slaughter and killed the ealdorman'. It is an evocative picture, of a hard-fought battle between the local Dorset militia (known as the *fyrð*) and the Vikings where the local army at first had the upper hand but was gradually worn down and their ealdorman and the leader of their force, Æthelhelm, was eventually killed. The Vikings (the term 'Danes' is a kind of shorthand for them in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* and does not necessarily mean that they actually came from Denmark) won the day and presumably moved off with the spoils of war.

A few years later (848) there was some retribution for this reverse: 'Ealdorman Eanwulf with the Somerset men, and Bishop Ealhstan and Ealdorman Osric with the Dorset men, fought against a Danish raiding-party at the mouth of the Parret, and made a great slaughter there and took the victory'. This is an interesting entry for several reasons. It is a good example of the *fyrðs* of two counties, in this case Somerset and Dorset, combining forces to face up to the Viking threat. It also introduces a slightly odd phenomenon, the fighting bishop. Ealhstan was bishop of Sherborne and would be so for over forty years. He was an important political player and his diocese was extensive, covering at the time Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

These years were ones of regular raiding across the south of England. An important and deeply disturbing change in direction was noted in 855 when the Vikings over-wintered in England for the first time, setting up camp at Sheppey in Kent. This suggested that they were now interested in a longer-term presence in England. About ten years later, there was a quantum leap in the scale of the threat when what was known as 'The Great Heathen Army' came over. Over the course of the next few years English kingdoms fell like dominoes: Northumbria, a king of which, Ælle, was allegedly killed in a gruesome ritual called the 'blood-eagle' and East Anglia whose king, Edmund, was shot to death with arrows. Mercia too effectively came under Viking control. Only Wessex remained free of Viking control and it was by now in grave danger.

This brings us to 870, a hugely significant year known as 'The Year of Nine Battles'. A Viking army pushed into Wessex, initially basing itself at Reading. Despite what was sold by the chroniclers as a great Saxon victory at Ashdown, the Vikings pushed progressively westwards. One of the nine battles was fought at Meretun, which may be Martin on the Hampshire-Dorset-Wiltshire border. In command of the Saxon army there was King Æthelred I and his younger brother Alfred. By the end of the year, Æthelred was dead, perhaps mortally wounded at Meretun. There is an old Dorset tradition that he died at Witchampton. He was certainly buried at Wimborne, where a later memorial brass to him can still be seen in the Minster. Alfred was elected king. Æthelred left a son, Æthelwold, but he was only a child – and this was no time for Wessex to have a child-king. Thirty years later, when Alfred died, things would be somewhat different as Æthelwold sought to claim what he regarded as his rightful inheritance.

Shortly after becoming king, Alfred was defeated at Wilton. Thereafter, the Viking menace abated for a few years; the most likely reason for this being that they were bought off, though the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* are unsurprisingly quiet on this. However, an absence of war is not the same as peace, as the people of Wessex were about to find out. In 876, a Viking raiding army burst through the outer defences of Wessex, reaching Wareham. They soon found themselves besieged though and were forced to agree to return to their lands in East Anglia and exchanged hostages as a form

of surety. They also swore on their arm-rings, a pagan symbol which was highly regarded in Viking society, to honour the deal.

Neither the hostage exchange nor the arm-rings achieved very much though. Instead of meekly returning east, the Vikings rode rapidly west to Exeter (they were very good horsemen as well as sailors). Once again, they were trapped inside the city and were forced to exchange hostages. This time, they did as they agreed to do and travelled north to Mercia. Perhaps this was because they had by then suffered a serious reverse.

On the seafront at Swanage is an interesting Victorian monument, anachronistically replete with cannonballs, proclaiming that in 876 a Viking fleet was destroyed by Alfred's navy in Swanage Bay. Actually, there is no evidence at all that this was the case. Instead the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* give a more prosaic version of events, namely that 'they met a great storm at sea, and 120 ships were lost'. Given the fledgling nature of Alfred's navy at this time, a natural disaster seems by far the most likely explanation; and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, which were first written up in Alfred's reign, are unlikely to miss a chance to eulogize their hero if they have a chance to do so, and the fact that they do not mention a battle is highly suggestive.

A period of calm followed, a false dawn. Without warning, a Viking army descended on Chippenham 'after Twelfth Night' 878. The raid achieved total surprise. Alfred was forced to run for cover, which he found in Athelney in the Somerset Levels. From here, he launched a fightback, gathering his army at Egbert's Stone which may have been close to the site of Alfred's Tower which stands close to the borders of Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire near Penselwood. Surprisingly, although the *fyrds* of Somerset, Wiltshire and that part of Hampshire 'on this side of the sea' – i.e. excluding the Isle of Wight – met there, there is no mention of the men of Dorset doing so. In any event, Alfred went on to win a famous victory at Edington. The Vikings were forced to leave Wessex and their leader, Guthrum, was baptized.

Alfred then moved on to secure the fruits of his victory. One of the measures he took was to establish fortresses – *burhs* – across Wessex. There were eventually four in Dorset, at Dorchester, Wareham, Bredy (Bridport) and Shaftesbury. The town walls of Wareham, though added to during World War II, provide perhaps the best surviving example of what a *burh* would have looked like; a document from the following century called the *Burghal Hideage* lists Wareham as one of the largest *burhs* in Wessex. A *burh* was more than just a fortress; it was a place of refuge for people from the surrounding area in times of war and also somewhere that trade could safely take place. They also allowed trade to be closely regulated by the king's officials and all due taxes collected. Shaftesbury was effectively established as a town in Alfred's reign. He established an abbey there, putting his daughter, Æthelgifu, in as its abbess. The abbey thrived and at the time of the Dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII 650 years later it was the second richest nunnery in England. Alfred also appointed a Welsh cleric, Asser, to be bishop of Sherborne. Asser wrote a famous royal biography of Alfred. This was an early example of such a work, though the trend had been established earlier in the century when Einhard, another cleric, wrote one on Charlemagne.

Although Alfred continued to face challenges from Viking raids throughout the rest of his reign, they were mainly in the east of his kingdom towards London and Kent. Dorset seems to have remained mainly peaceful and prosperous until Alfred's death in 899. All that would suddenly change with a good old-fashioned succession dispute.

Wayne Bartlett, FCCA, MBA, CPA, PhD

(See next newsletter for Part-2)

Guided Walk – Revealing 18th and 19th Century Wimborne, led by David Reeve

The weather was kind thankfully and a good number of EDAS members and friends turned up on the last Sunday of April for Dr David Reeve's third and final historical walk of Wimborne focussing this time on the 18th and 19th century.

We met on the corner of the churchyard and Cook Row on the site of the Widow Darby's House, which was the last remaining medieval house, purchased in 1824 by the churchwardens as the churchyard was extended to its present size.

The town now would have looked very similar to that of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century with the timber framed cobb and thatch houses of the 16th and 17th centuries replaced by more spacious brick and tile houses (though behind these facades many of the older houses).

David walked us around the core of the town discussing a number of topics including the growth of the middle classes through families such as the Castleman's; education in the town both for the middle classes and later for the poor; religion; the workhouse, the growth of the utility companies and the town and county councils and trade in the town. We also walked to the site of Wimborne Railway Station built in 1847, thanks largely to Charles Castleman, which transformed the town reducing the time to London from 14 hours to 4.

We also looked at the history of some of the buildings such as 5 King Street, the Priest House Museum; the Olive Branch (home of William Castleman) and the Allendale.

We finished in the town Square outside the Kings Head, the HQ of the local excisemen who fought, at times a losing battle against Isaac Gulliver and his gang of smugglers in the late 18th century. Whilst there is little evidence of who his network included Gulliver's daughter married William Fryer, an important banker, draper and wine merchant (silks, linen, wine and spirits being favourites amongst smuggled goods) who owned half of Wimborne and some remote farms between Wimborne and Poole. Their daughter married Edward Castleman (son of William). William Castleman, the lawyer and steward of a number of estates (including the Bankes, Hanham, Corfe Mullen and the Anglesey estates), proved Gulliver's will. However, this will always remain a tantalising theory only!

David Reeve

We thank David for another really interesting walk. This was the third and final exploration that has explained the development of Wimborne through the ages and revealed the wealth of historic evidence that can still be teased out of the buildings and street plans, if you know what to look for. He brought the town to life through his stream of anecdotes about local personalities and ne'er do wells who have shaped the town. We also thank David for providing the above article.

Entrance Graves of the Isles of Scilly – Cultural Exchange along the Atlantic Seaboard

As you know the Isles of Scilly form an archipelago off the western point of Cornwall, as though casually flung into the Atlantic Ocean. They are formed of the same granite intrusion that stretches under Cornwall and Devon that is so gloriously exposed on the uplands of Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor.

One of the most intriguing archaeological features found throughout the Isles of Scilly are 79 megalithic tombs called Entrance Graves. Some are proud and prominent whilst others are more discrete, merging into a rocky outcrop.



Entrance Grave at Porth Hellick Down, St Mary's

The Scillonian Graves have been roughly dated from the Middle Neolithic and remained in use into the Early Bronze Age c. 3000–2000BC. They are made from the local granite and are generally uniform in plan. They comprise a roughly circular mound with a narrow entrance which leads into a rectangular stone lined burial chamber covered by a small round stone cairn and usually revetted with a stone kerb. In some examples a stone sill blocks the entrance. The walls of the chamber themselves are either orthostat slabs or stone courses, covered with several large capstones. There is no discernible orientation to the entrance of the graves. They often exploit natural stone outcrops or boulders in their construction as shown below.



Ella examines the Buzza Entrance Grave on St Mary's



Entrance Grave West Coast, Bryher

The earliest known finds include fragments of Carn Brea type ware, dating from the Middle Neolithic. The tombs were used for deposition of multiple cremation and inhumation burials and the Knackyboy Carn on St Martin's was found to contain the cremated remains of at least 60 individuals. Entrance graves seem to have continued in use on Scilly long after individual burial had become the usual practice on the mainland.

The sea levels were lower in the past and the landscape would have been very different from today with fertile coastal plains linking several of the islands. At low tide the remains of prehistoric field boundaries are still exposed in some places.

The entrance graves are yet another example of the shared cultural links of people living and travelling along the Atlantic seaboard; they are also found in Ireland, Brittany and the Channel Islands. In England, this type of burial chamber is confined to the extreme south west, with 79 recorded examples found on the Isles of Scilly and 14 located on the Penwith peninsula at the western tip of Cornwall. The Atlantic Seaboard is recognised as one of the main migration routes into Britain during the early Neolithic and was undoubtedly an important migration route in earlier times. It remained important for thousands of years into the Iron Age with important trade links and the post Roman period with the development of the distinct Celtic Church throughout this area, and it offered a safe haven for Britons fleeing the advancing Anglo Saxons.

Andrew Morgan (assisted by Ella)

**View from Above No 20:
Oakley Down Bronze Age Cemetery and Ackling Dyke**



This site is located south of Sixpenny Handley close to the A354, it is probably one of the most evocative Bronze Age landscapes in Dorset, featuring a spectacular array of burial mounds and the cemetery includes some very rare disc barrows that date from the Early Bronze Age. In the background numerous shadows can be seen of the many ploughed out barrows. On the right hand side can be seen the arrow straight embankment of Ackling Dyke, the Roman road linking Badbury Rings to Old Sarum some 20km away. The way that Ackling Dyke cuts through one of the barrows was forensic evidence that enabled early antiquarians such as William Stukeley to conclude that the barrows were pre Roman.

Jo Crane



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Further research to be done on the earliest known TB skeleton in Britain

The Priest's House Museum and Garden has been awarded a "Small Grant Big Improvement" grant of £1000 from South West Museum Development towards further research into the earliest known TB skeleton in the U.K. This project entitled **"The Iron Age TB skeleton – going beyond the glass case"** will investigate the origins of the skeleton and the grant will be used to commission specialists to perform isotope analyses (Strontium and Oxygen) to answer this question. The results will enable the museum to draw new conclusions and improve the interpretation of this significant artefact for a range of audiences.

The Iron Age skeleton was discovered in a Romano-British grave in a multi-period site in Tarrant Hinton, Dorset, during excavations undertaken between 1967 and 1985 by the Wimborne Archaeological Group. According to Dr Simon Mays, Human Skeletal Biologist for Historic England, this is still the earliest known skeleton in the U.K. exhibiting Tuberculosis (TB). Radiocarbon dating in 2003 indicated that the man, aged between 30 and 40, died between 400 and 230 BC. It is not known whether the man, who also exhibits signs of Spina bifida, was native to the UK or came from elsewhere. Professor Alistair Pike, Professor of Archaeological Sciences at the University of Southampton, will undertake the isotope analysis and it is hoped that results will be available during the autumn.

The project is funded by South West Museum Development using public funds from Arts Council England and contributing Local Authorities. It is hoped that the results will shed more light on Iron Age society and allow the museum to show that East Dorset has more connections with the wider world than were previously known.

Museum Director, Emma Ayling, an archaeologist herself, said: "We are delighted to have received this grant, which is supported by a very generous donation from one of our volunteers. More specialist knowledge about the origins of our Iron Age TB skeleton will enable the Priest's House Museum to display and interpret him properly for the first time, linking past with present and enhancing the story of East Dorset for the public. We will also use the knowledge gained to develop new education sessions and resources."

Vanessa Joseph



Day School - Prehistoric Dorchester

Saturday November 2nd 2019

at The Dorford Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester DT1 1RR

*A Day School in memory of Peter Woodward,
Archeologist and former Assistant Curator of Dorset County Museum*

- Professor Tim Darvill - Early farmers in central southern Britain
- Christopher Sparey-Green 'For sight of barrows, I believe not to be equalled in the world' Dorchester's Prehistoric Landscape'
- Dr Phil Harding - Flints and the South Dorset Ridgeway
- Alastair Barclay - Re-dating Rowden and the earliest Neolithic pottery of Dorset and beyond
- Professor Niall Sharples - Rethinking the chronology of the Neolithic enclosure on Maiden Castle
- Peter Cox – Title TBC
- Ann Woodward - Peter in Pictures
- Dr Mike Allen - 'Dorchester Chalklands: re-analysis of Beaker and prehistoric downland settlement and economy'
- Dr Andrew Lawson - 'Twisted, bent and broken' Bronze Age metalwork in Dorset
- Dr Rebecca Redfern - 'The Durotriges of Maiden Castle hillfort: a bio-archaeological perspective of life in Iron Age Dorset'
- Dr Miles Russell Title TBC
- Paul Cheetham Title TBC

Tickets from Michael Rice, hon.sec@dorchester-association.org.uk tel. 07780 992799

Members of Dorchester Association and/or DNHAS £20, non-members £25

For further details see: <http://www.dorchester-association.org.uk/>



THE
PREHISTORIC
SOCIETY
SINCE 1935

Sunrise Over the Stones: Recent Research into Neolithic and Chalcolithic Wessex

Kimmeridge House, Talbot Campus, Bournemouth University

Saturday 9th November 2019, 08.45 to 17.30

Professor Tim Darvill (Bournemouth University): *Stonehenge Rocks.*

Professor Josh Pollard (University of Southampton): *Living with Monuments: routine life and monumentality in the Neolithic of the Avebury region.*

Professor Mike Parker Pearson (UCL, Institute of Archaeology): *Stonehenge in Context: recent research into Stonehenge's people and stones.*

Gareth Chaffey (Wessex Archaeology): *Extracting the Past: Early settlement and monuments in the Middle Thames Valley.*

Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (Wiltshire Council): *What Lies Beneath.*

Dr Mandy Jay (University of Durham): *The Beaker People Project: Isotopes and what we can('t) do with them.*

Dr Peter Marshall (Historic England): *Dating some old friends: chronologies for Neolithic and Chalcolithic Wessex.*

Julian Richards (Archaemedia): *Stonehenge: the long and personal view.*

Dr Alison Sheridan (National Museums Scotland): *Trans-Manche issues for Neolithic and Chalcolithic Wessex, post-Brexit(?): where we need to be looking for improving our narrative.*

Tickets prices

Members - Early Bird (by June 30 th 2019)	£30
Members	£35
Non-Members - Early Bird <i>ditto</i>	£40
Non-Members	£45
Students	£20

More details at: <https://www.cba-wessex.org.uk/product-category/conference/>

The Crick Crack Club at the Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre

In a field on the outskirts of Cranborne village, there is a hill, and it has a door....



One of Dorset's best kept secrets, the Earthhouse is a 200-seat theatre – lit by lamplight and fire-light. Here audiences sit on wooden benches, under an earth roof, held up by 21 huge oak tree trunks....they come to listen to stories.

The fabulous Crick Crack Club provides an opportunity to experience a contemporary performance of the traditional art of storytelling to stimulate your imagination.

BEOWULF

Saturday 14th September 2019, 8pm (doors open 7.30pm).

(Running time 70 mins, no interval).

With Jesper La Cour & Troels Kirk Ejsing of The Telling Theatre

Imagine how you would feel if you were the King of Denmark in the 7th century with gold, glory and a big reputation.... but your only problem was a 500 pound ugly and fetid troll, named Grendel, killing your men at random.

Maybe you would call it a true nightmare, but 1300 years later, storytellers call it the magnificent beginning of a great story. Danish storytellers, Jesper la Cour and Troels Kirk Ejsing, bring their physical, vital and comedic version of Beowulf to the Earthhouse. Sitting face to face across the Viking ship, the distance between the action and the audience is minimal.

This is a prize performance of an ancient story that's not to be missed.

'I was spellbound – ' THE TIMES

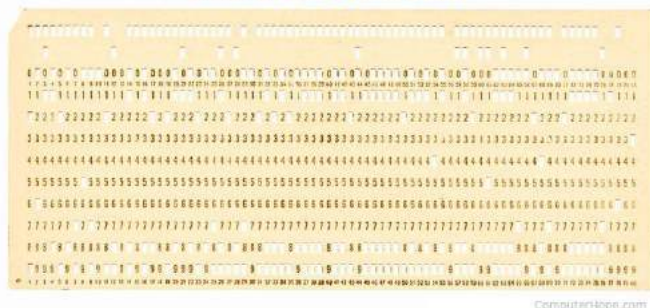
'the art of storytelling is in the surest, safest hands here' REMOTE GOAT
'it's grim, it's exciting, it's exceedingly funny, and it keeps its audience tuned in the whole way through.' **Now Toronto**

For more details see www.crickcrackclub.com/earthousecranborne

Web Link Highlight June 19

The list this month (OK, 6 weeks) includes some fascinating discoveries and news of new research on old finds. Which item appeals to you most will of course be guided by your own interests, so I make no apology for including the item on the Moon landings. This event has to be one of the most significant historical events of our lifetimes, but what will be known of it in 100 years time? It is all too easy to think that with all the different books, newspaper articles and so on (including NASA archives) that nothing will have been missed, and all will be available. There have been many programmes recently on the moon landings, including the very good BBC "8 Days: To The Moon And Back". There were some rare insights into the parts of this story that you do not usually get, but good as this programme was, I was disappointed that it did not include the reason for the timing of the landing and subsequent moonwalk. Apparently this was to ensure maximum TV audience across the US - Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon's surface at 21.56 Eastern Daylight Time, 18.56 Pacific Daylight Time on Sunday night. Perhaps this will be lost when the story is looked at again in 100 years time. But with the digitisation of almost everything, why would this (and all the other less trumpeted facets of this event) not be there for all to Google? Quite apart from the almost certain fact that many parts of the story have either not been told or recorded (who knows at the time of any event what will be of interest to future researchers?), there will be the hurdle of future computers (or their replacement) reading old formats. How many working computers these days can read a computer punch card?

Example of a punch card



You needed a whole stack of these to run a simple programme, often overnight, that a mobile phone today could execute in less than a second.

But why did I highlight the item on the fake Moon landings theory? For one thing, it is a very good account of the origin and growth of this theory. The author points out that alternative theories inevitably arise around implausible events - sound familiar? Anybody fancy dragging 4 ton rocks nearly 200 miles? However, it also highlights the surprising (to me, at least) longevity of such stories. I know I should not be surprised, given that there are many long running conspiracy theories (many, including the fake Moon landings, analysed in David Aaronovitch's excellent book 'Voodoo Histories'), and that so much of the so called evidence for the fakery has been conclusively discredited, not least by the high resolution images returned by the NASA Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter showing the footprints of the astronauts in the lunar dust. This item also highlights how easy it is for theories with, at best, tenuous links to reality can become normal currency. No doubt once we have returned to the Moon, revisited the Sea of Tranquillity and found the Lunar Module and American flag, there will still be those who choose still to believe Bill Kaysing that it was faked. But then there are those who believe that the Earth is flat, or that it is only 6000 years old. One part of the Guardian article did not surprise me - the first TV 'documentary' proclaiming the landings as false was broadcast by Fox News.

Alan Dedden

June Weblinks

Viking Coin Hoard Recovered During Police Raid

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/viking-coins-british-history-durham-police-alfred-the-great-a8939201.html>

Previously Unknown Human Group Discovered In Siberia

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jun/05/ancient-siberia-was-home-to-previously-unknown-humans-say-scientists>

Unknown Tomb To Unknown Paston Found In Norfolk Church

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-48530068>

Bath Abbey East Wing Reopens After Floor Restoration

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jun/09/bath-abbey-east-wing-reopens-after-floor-restoration>

Mesolithic Evidence From Doggerland

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/atlantis-britain-stone-age-north-sea-archaeology-artefacts-discovery-a8952721.html>

Earliest Evidence Of Cannabis Smoking Found In China

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jun/12/earliest-known-signs-of-cannabis-smoking-unearted-in-china>

New Evidence Dates Some Crannogs To Early Neolithic

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-48625734>

Human Bones Found On Canadian Beach Identified As Irish Famine Emigrants

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48575903>

Recreating Ancient Beers

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2019/05/26/723983713/beer-archaeologists-are-reviving-ancient-ales-with-some-strange-results?t=1561138534817&t=1563029981059>

Mesolithic DNA Analysis Reveals Two Hunter-Gatherer Groups Colonised Scandinavia

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/news/stone-age-chewing-gum-reveals-history-of-scandinavia/>

Metal Detectorist Claims Ring Belonged To Two Of Henry VIII's Wives

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7143613/Treasure-hunter-52-finds-20-000-ring-worn-two-Henry-VIIIs-wives.html>

Rare Roman Coin Found In Metal Detectorist's Collection

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-48583329>

Evidence Of Plague In Roman Britain - And The Dangers Of Relying On Limited Evidence

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/do-these-skeletons-hold-the-secret-to-the-fall-of-the-roman-empire>

More Finds From Vindolanda

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-48745656>

Bush Barrow Dagger To Be tested For Origin Of Gold

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7170983/After-4-000-years-scientists-set-unlock-secrets-Bronze-Age-dagger-covered-gold-shards.html>

Drought Reveals Ancient Palace Under Iraq Reservoir

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/ancient-palace-iraq-mosul-dam-tigris-kemune-mitanni-empire-a8979571.html>

Exploring The Pyramids Of Nubian Pharaohs

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/07/dive-ancient-pyramid-nuri-sudan/>

Earliest Modern Human Outside Africa

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-48913307>

Why Do So Many People Believe The Moon Landings Were Faked?

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jul/10/one-giant-lie-why-so-many-people-still-think-the-moon-landings-were-faked>

Bird Fossil Of New Bird Species Found

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jul/11/fossil-of-99m-year-old-bird-with-unusually-long-toes-found>

Coin Hoard Found In Suffolk Possibly Linked To Boudiccan Revolt

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-48968933>

Alan Dedden

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EDAS PROGRAMME – 2019 - 2020

2019			
Wed 11th Sept 2019	Lecture	Adrian Green, Salisbury Museum	Archaeological treasures from Wiltshire
Wed 9th Oct 2019	Lecture	Rob Curtis	Turnpikes and Dorset coaching days
Wed 13th Nov 2019	Lecture	Bob Kenyon	The ancient DNA Revolution – waves of migration into Dorset
Wed 11th Dec 2019	Lecture	Miles Russell, Bournemouth Uni	Arthur and the kings of Britain
2020			
Wed 8th Jan 2020	Lecture	Monique Goodliffe	The aristocrat and the ironmaster (Dowlais and Wimborne)
Wed 12th Feb 2020	Lecture	Josh Pollard, University of Southampton	Settlement and monumentality of the Avebury landscape To be held at Bournemouth University
Wed 11th Mar 2020	Lecture	AGM and members talk	The Druce Neolithic Site- Lilian Ladle and Andrew Morgan
Wed 1st Apr 2020	Lecture	Emma Ayling, PHM	Taking community museums into the 21st century
Wed 13th May 2020	Lecture	Tim Darvill, Bournemouth Uni	Sticks and stones and broken bones

Note: unless otherwise stated all lectures are from 7.30 – 9.30 pm and are held at **St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.**

<http://www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk/>

DISTRICT DIARY

This is a diary of interesting events held in the area. We cannot be held responsible for the arrangements so please check on the associated web-sites.

2018 Programme				
Date	Event	Group	Who	Title
Sat 14th September	Beowulf	Crick Crack Club		At the Ancient Technology Centre (see page 16 Summer Edition for details)
Sat 2nd November	Prehistoric Dorchester	Dorchester Association	The elite of Dorset Archaeologists	Special Conference in memory of Peter Woodward. (See page 14 Summer Edition)
Sat 9th November	CBA Conference	CBA	Various	CBA 2019 conference 'Sunrise over the Stones: recent research into Neolithic and Chalcolithic Wessex'. Held at Bournemouth University. (See page 15 Summer Edition).

