East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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Founded 1983

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NEWSLETTER – October 2026

Dear EDAS members,

Our next speaker, on Wednesday 14th October at 7:30, will be Gail Wakeham. She'll be telling us about Cotswold Archaeology's fairly recent excavations that revealed a settlement dating from the late Bronze Age through to the mid-Roman period: 'Emerging insights into a long-lived settlement at Station Rd, Fordingbridge'.

Many thanks to Alan Dedden for arranging last month's speaker and for his comprehensive summary of the talk: **Women in the medieval period: How to find them.**

The next few shorter items need your attention please, and possibly responses, with Alan again featuring strongly:

- **EDAS NEEDS YOUR HELP – please don't ignore this.**
- **Better LIDAR:** Alan found a link to higher resolution LiDAR than the generally available DOE version, which you may find useful. This article gives the details and more information about the *Links* page of our website.
- **Everything you wanted to know about Knowlton but were afraid to ask** tells you about a major piece of research by 'friend of EDAS' John Oswin, the resulting report and how to obtain a copy if you're interested.

What would I do without Alan, as the next two items also come from him: i.e. **Weblinks 90** – a shorter item than usual, as he explains in **Weblink Highlights**.

The last newsletter included the start of a new series about the Roman period in Egypt. The second article is here, **Rome in Egypt 2**, particularly looking at the Roman conquest of the country and what led up to it.

From the Archives 34 is about the Dorset Proceedings for 1911 and a little of the 1912 volume.

Then there's **View from Above 81: Stanwick Iron Age settlement** about this huge defended area in the far north of Yorkshire.

And finally, you won't be surprised that the newsletter ends with the **EDAS Programme** for the season, and the **District Diary** of talks at other local societies.

Geoff Taylor

Women in the medieval period: How to find them
EDAS lecture by Dr Cindy Wood

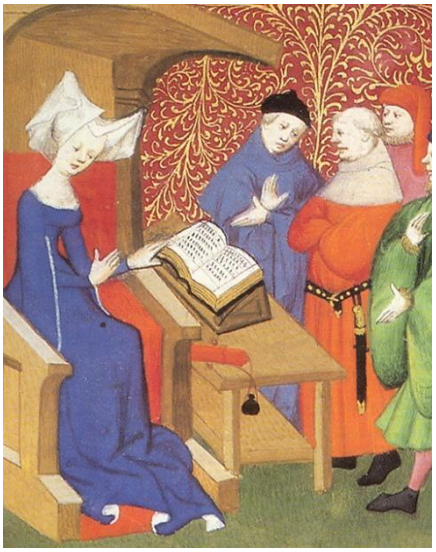
It seems to be generally believed that women are invisible in the medieval period, which Cindy defined as from the Romans leaving Britannia *c*.410 CE to the Tudors and start of the Renaissance in 1485. Her talk demonstrated that, at least for the latter half of the medieval period, this is far from the truth – looking at the origins of this misapprehension and then at how women can be revealed.

Obviously women were always about 50% of the population, but documents were written by men - partly because almost no women were taught to write and they weren't taught subjects like Latin. Almost all women were married, and they tended to be recorded linked to men, e.g. 'Joan, wife of John Smith'. This wasn't just sexist, but partly to minimise the use of scarce and expensive writing materials – parchment, ink and quills.

Women were excluded from many areas of medieval life, such as the church – extremely important in medieval society. Both men and women would suffer penalties for non-attendance without good reason, but women could not hold office. Only men could be members of Parliament or own land, although no-one truly owned land except the monarch, who granted lands to lords and barons who, in turn, granted land to lesser knights or tenants. All these were, of course, men, but a widow could benefit from and manage the land as a dower, though the title passed to a male heir of her husband (if the land had come from her family by marriage, then it would pass back to a male heir in her family). Women could act as a legal witness, but only in a few areas related to domestic matters, such as childbirth.

Study of the medieval period started in the early 19th century by historians with a classical education, predominantly men. Many original sources were translated and transcribed, but the focus was on 'kings, bishops and battles' – with a clear male bias. However, after WWI female historians emerged with a different perspective; one pioneer was Eileen Power of Girton College, Cambridge and then LSE, who concentrated on social history. After WWII the focus shifted again to 'history from below' or 'people's history', re-evaluating the sources to consider the common people – labourers, slaves, women and the poor – and the ways in which they lived and brought about change.





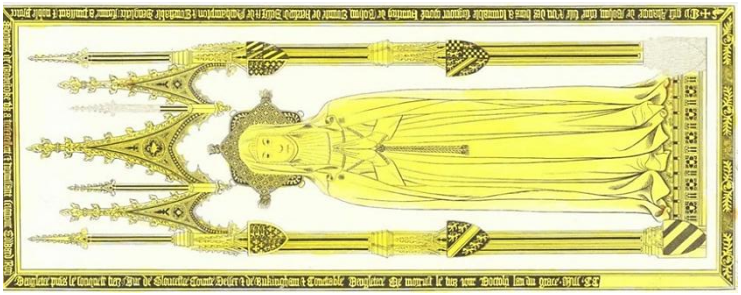
There were, of course, exceptions of women who left their mark on history, unsurprisingly particularly queens and royal consorts. Others included Joan of Arc (*c*.1412-1431) and Christine de Pizan (1364- *c*.1430), who became the first professional female author in Europe. Although Italian, her father was astrologer to Charles V, so she was brought up in the French court. Married at age 15, she was widowed after 10 years, which left her needing to support her 3 children, then her niece and mother when her father's circumstances worsened. A prolific writer of verse and prose, her patrons were spread across Europe, including the 4th Earl of Salisbury. Christine is now seen as the first feminist, celebrating women's accomplishments and showing their abilities to be equal to men's.

Margery Kempe's extraordinary life (1373-1438) began as the daughter of a wealthy merchant in King's Lynn. She married at 20 and had at least 14 children, but saw visions of demons and eventually of Christ. We would see her condition as a mental disorder, but it could then be seen as in keeping with the social norms and her

devout religiosity. She embarked on numerous pilgrimages, as far away as Jerusalem, and we know much about her life from 'The Book of Margery Kempe' – dictated to scribes and thought of as the first autobiography. Around 1413, Margery sought advice from another notable woman of the period, Julian of Norwich (1342-after 1416). While both were very devout, the practised their devotion in radically different ways – Margery visually and vocally to all around her, while Julian (her real name isn't known) became an anchoress, living in isolation in a cell at St Julian's Church, Norwich. After she nearly died in 1373, she experienced a series of visions of Christ and the Virgin Mary, which she then recorded in what is believed to be the first manuscript written in English by a woman: 'Revelations of Divine Love'.



Beyond these exceptions, the ease of finding medieval women in the historic record obviously reduces with social class, with 'élite women' the most visible. Royal, aristocratic and local gentry families maintained records of their ancestry, partly for inheritance reasons, so we know of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths. They had access to some education, could petition the Crown, could create wills and featured in court and financial records. For instance, a widow could request the right to choose her next husband on payment of a 'fine', as with Christina, widow of Henry of Braybrooke, who appears in the 'Fine Rolls' (financial records of the Chancery) in 1234 with a fine of 60 marks (equal to £40). Women were a key witness for proofs of attaining the age of maturity for inheritance purposes, as recorded in 1311 by Alina, widow of John de Brereton, in respect of their son. Among the many known wills of women is that of 1399 for Eleanor de Bohun, Duchess of Gloucester, widowed on the murder of her husband on the orders of Richard II in 1397. She is buried in Westminster Abbey.



Medieval women of the 'middling sort' were usually urban, or had guild connections, and appear in a wide variety of historic records. Births and baptisms were not recorded as parish registers didn't start until 1538, but they could inherit, wrote or dictated letters, they could be landowners, hold tenancies or leases and they could make wills.

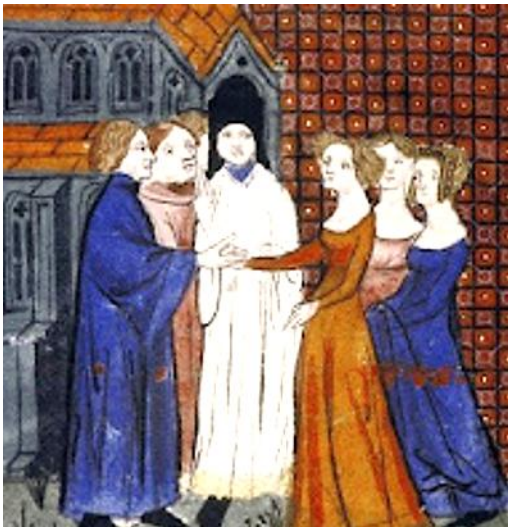
A remarkable example of leaving her mark was Juliana atte Floude of Winchester seeking a writ from Edward I to restore her water supply which the city had blocked from her and others. Edward's verdict, after the findings of a commission of local residents, was that 'water has always been common'. He attached several regulations to the commission's report forbidding contamination of the local water supply, lifting the findings from Common Law to Statute Law. Juliana's role was recognised at the time and she became 'Juliana de la Floude' – Juliana of the Water. The ruling has been enshrined in UNHCR and today provides a legal basis for securing access to fresh, flowing water for billions of people round the world. Other examples of women in the Winchester Court Rolls included Matilda Red, who was fined by the Aldermen for not doing her night watch in the High Street in 1365.



The acceptance of women into guilds varied greatly and, while there were always more men, there were a few female-only guilds, such as one of midwives in the Low Countries. Guilds would accept some women as apprentices and included widows of deceased members to continue their work (implying they were practising it previously). Eleanor Morgan of Bristol was apprenticed to Robert Jeffries, and his wife Johanna, in 1542 to learn the trade of a mercer; on completion she was to be granted Freedom of the City.

The most difficult to find in the records are peasant women, still living a mainly rural, feudal and hierarchical existence (serfdom began to decline from the Black Death, but wasn't finally ended until 1574). Births were rarely recorded, but a few inheritances were, though a will could only be made where 'moveable goods' exceeded the large sum of £5. Very few peasants had any form of formal education, so hardly any could read or write, and there are no letters. However, peasant women could hold leases and tenancies, and they particularly appear in secular or ecclesiastical court records as witnesses, accused and even plaintiffs.



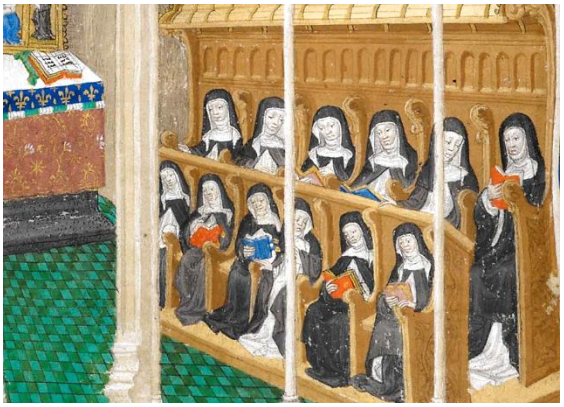


Church courts dealt with moral issues and non-attendance at church, with punishments mainly penances or fines. In Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex, in 1458, John Mone was found to have 'committed fornication with Joan Poppe and is to have 3 whippings'. That same year, and in the same place, a marriage contract was made between Robert Poppe and Isabella Copyn in front of witnesses, and the church court set a date by which it had to be solemnised. In Droitwich, Thomas Louchard admitted to beating his wife with a stick in 1300, and was sentenced to be 'whipped in the usual way around the market'. In 1518, two women were tried in Pendle, Lancashire for not attending church, but found to 'have no clothes'. Whilst this could mean they had some clothes but not of a good enough standard for church, this illustrates the extreme poverty some suffered.

'Leyrwite' was where an unfree bondwoman had engaged in sex outside marriage or conceived an illegitimate child. It was treated as a crime to be tried in the manorial courts – a feudal and economic issue rather than a moral one. At Wakefield Manor in 1316, 'the jurors of Alverthorp say that Julianna, daughter of Jhon Sibson, was deflowered before she was married and has not paid the fine for incontinency and the fine for marriage.' The fines were rarely paid by the man involved, underlining the servile status of women.

Though in the minority overall, medieval women are also found in religious organisations – not just nunneries but also in religious guilds formed by the laity for charitable and devotional purposes, where women were around 40% of the members. While they could not be masters of the guild, female members were very influential. The Guild of the Holy Trinity, Luton, was founded in 1474 by 13 men and 11 women. Some churches had a separate aisle for these guilds, underlining their importance.

There were many nunneries across the country, and Dorset had its share as at Tarrant Crawford, Shaftesbury, Wimborne and Wareham. The power of the establishment depended on the wealth of the lands it held, and Tarrant Crawford was reckoned one of the wealthiest in England. Whilst any woman could become a nun, she had to satisfy entry requirements, which included a financial contribution. This clearly favoured women from higher social classes, as was the case with religious guilds. While women could not celebrate mass, their prayers were seen as valuable asset, as they were made available to those who could provide a sufficient financial donation!



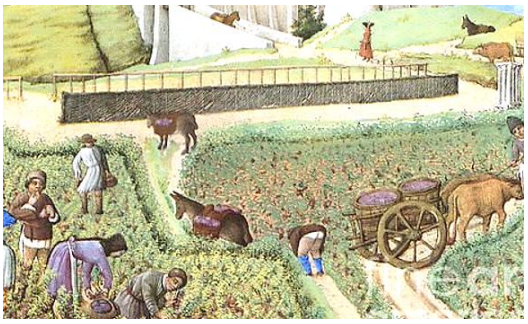
Women of all social classes can be found pictorially in many places, as with all the illustrations above which show them in a wide variety of roles and situations. The genealogies of the noble families often

pictured the women of the family, such as the Rous (or Warwick) Roll, created by John Rous up to 1485 as a rather biased 'history' of the Earls of Warwick. Both that (left hand picture) and The Beauchamp Rolls (or Pageants) include fine pen and ink drawings. The latter were created 1483-85 for Anne Beauchamp as a pictorial account of the life of her father, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick ('the kingmaker'). It is believed to be a calculated piece of propaganda to help restore the family's status and certainly contains inaccuracies, such as Anne shown here as the wife of Richard III.





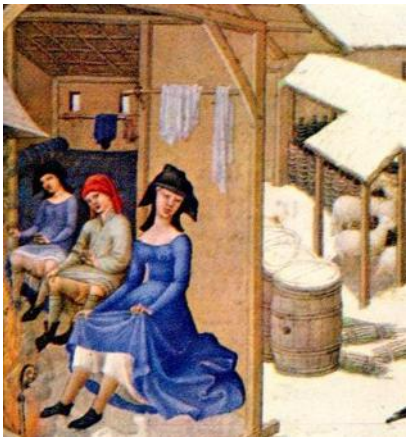
Religious books were often used to learn to read, but many were richly illustrated. That was particularly true of psalters, containing the Book of Psalms, and Books of Hours, which were personalised devotional material including prayers and reading structured around the eight canonical hours of the day. The Lutrell Psalter of *c*. 1325-1335, commissioned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Irnham, Lincolnshire, is particularly rich in illustrations of everyday rural life, both in the main text and the margins ('marginalia'), with many of the scenes showing women at work. The larger paintings in the Duc de Berry's Book of Hours (1412-16) are similar, though include more religious scenes. A small selection is shown below.











Cindy's many examples showed where medieval women at all levels of society can be found in the historic record, and clearly played their part in the operation of society. Whilst not as prominent as men, the long-held view that medieval women were hidden was perhaps more a reflection of our culture, rather than theirs. Even today marriage certificates give the fathers but not the mothers, and until the late 18th/early 19th century, baptisms were generally added to parish registers in the style 'John son of John Smith'. Although the lives of medieval women were limited by their gender and/or status, they did have legal rights. Finding them, as in many endeavours, is just a matter of knowing where and how to look for them.

Alan Dedden

EDAS NEEDS YOUR HELP

Thank you to all those who help EDAS in various capacities, from putting the chairs out at lecture meetings to volunteering on fieldwork projects. All contribute to keeping our society as healthy and successful as it is. But without the people who do the most, especially (but not limited to) committee members, we would struggle to provide the events, activities and information we've become used to.

Alan Dedden is clearly one of those key people, particularly for his very long-standing Weblinks in the newsletter and having been our Programme Secretary for almost 10 years. He's decided to resign as Programme Secretary at the next AGM, giving us lots of warning, though we'll continue to benefit from his knowledge and advice on the committee.

We do need to find a new Programme Secretary to make sure we can continue our monthly lectures, and now would be a good time to become that person, with this season's lectures all booked and even two for the 2027-28 season. The role is mainly to co-ordinate speakers' bookings – gathering, recording and circulating the necessary details. Of course, your suggestions for speakers will be valuable, and it would help if you can be the lead organiser for one or two talks each season. We expect the rest of the committee to contribute suggestions and to organise most of the speakers, and they would provide whatever support the new Programme Secretary needs. Alan will, of course, be there to give guidance.

Please act now if you can take on this role; don't just leave it to everyone else. In the first instance, contact Geoff and we'll take it from there – geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk

And we'd also like to find a 'Social Secretary', preferably, but not necessarily, a committee position, to co-ordinate and help make arrangements for our other activities – walks, visits and trips. Is this you?

Better LiDAR

You might not know that the **Links** page on our website gives access to a wide variety of websites that you might find useful for all sorts of things, including local and national information, and for research. As Alan mentions in this month's Weblink Highlights, it's one way to search the internet for current archaeological news.

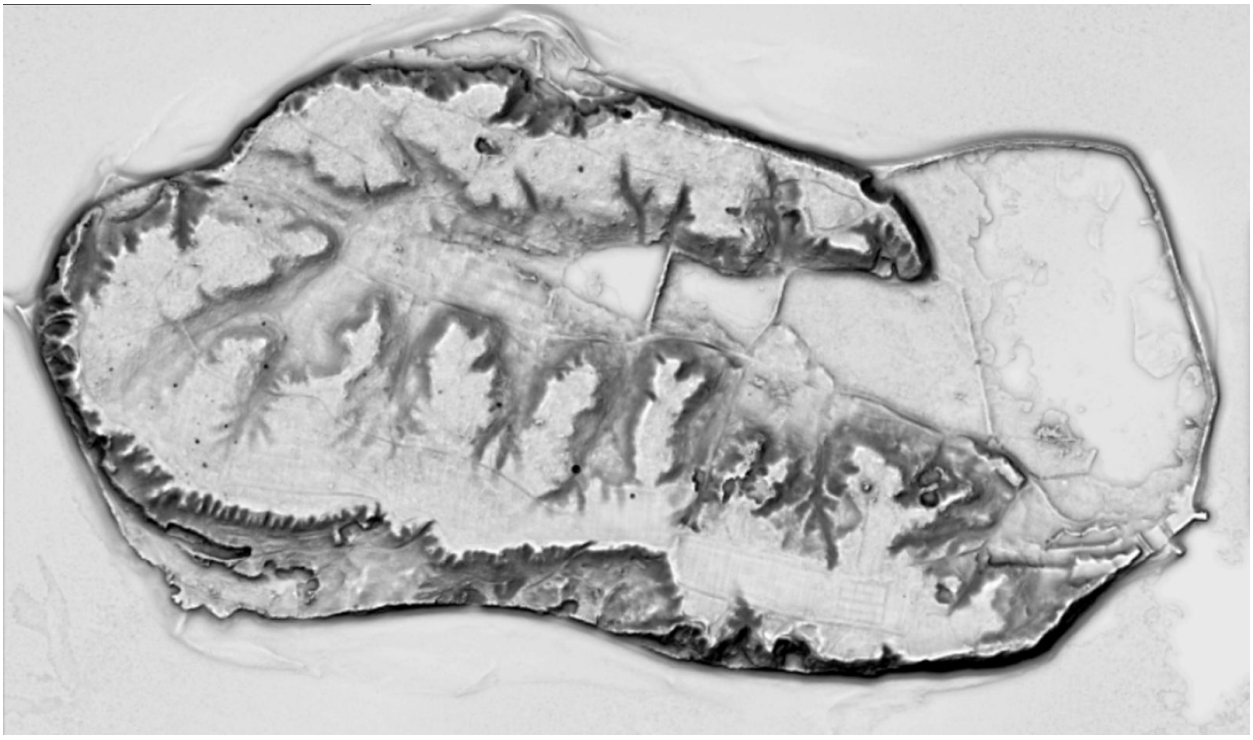
The headings are:

- Local Organisations and Societies
- Local Events
- Museums
- News and Journals
- Universities
- National Organisations
- Research

One of the sites listed under 'Research' is the *Library of Scotland historical maps*, which provides a vast range of maps of the UK and beyond. Alan has recently found that the library has done some graphics magic to enhance the generally available DoE LiDAR, showing up features that aren't so obvious on the

DoE version. There are tools to zoom in and to vary the transparency of overlay so you can see the background map for closer geolocation. You can explore the other tools there (i.e. we haven't, yet!).

Just go to the link and scroll down to 'Georeferenced Maps viewer' (under 'Quick search and browse'). With the vast range of choice for the underlying maps and overlays, you'll probably have to play around for a time until you get what you want. Alan sent this one of Brownsea Island that he'd produced:



And if you do use the Links on the website, please report any that are broken.

Everything you wanted to know about Knowlton but were afraid to ask

John Oswin, a member of Bath and Counties Archaeological Society, has been a 'friend to EDAS' for many years – you may, for example, remember the Electrical Resistance Tomography work he did at St Mary's Church, Lytchett Matravers, to complement Robert's GPR surveys (see Midsummer newsletter). One of his projects has been to gather together information on all the archaeological interventions and every published detail about Knowlton Rings and related sites. The result of this huge piece of research is his report entitled ***What we know about Knowlton***, an invaluable aid to anyone researching the area or just wanting to know more.



I have a copy, but it's a bit large to send to everyone without potentially being picked up by spam filters. It will be on our website in due course, once a new page for field reports can be set up. Meanwhile, if you'd like a copy please email me.

Geoff Taylor

Weblink Highlights October 2026

I have no idea why the list of weblinks this month, at two, is the smallest number since I started with the October 2017 newsletter. Is it an update to Windows so that the algorithm does not select archaeological or history items? Or is it simply that there were not many items that caught the eye of the media editors this month? I suggest a trawl of the specialist websites listed on the EDAS website under 'Links'.

Here's hoping this is a freak month, as I find it an informative and at times amusing way to keep up, but there will be little point in continuing with Weblinks if this becomes the norm.

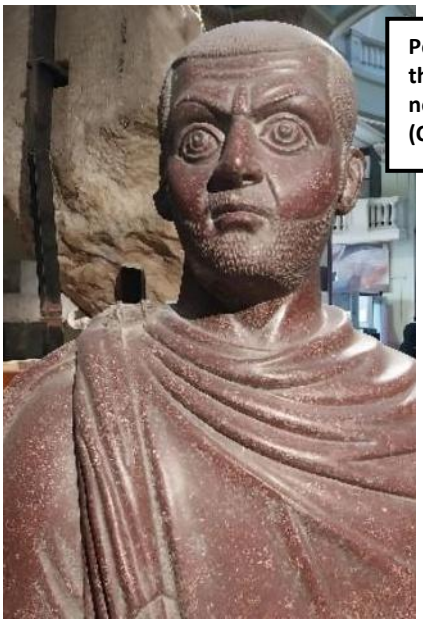
However, you might find these programmes from BBC Radio 4's 'In Our Time' history series of interest instead. They expand on some of the women in Cindy Wood's talk summarised in this edition:

- In Our Time - Margery Kempe and English Mysticism - BBC Sounds
- In Our Time - Julian of Norwich - BBC Sounds
- In Our Time - Christine de Pizan - BBC Sounds

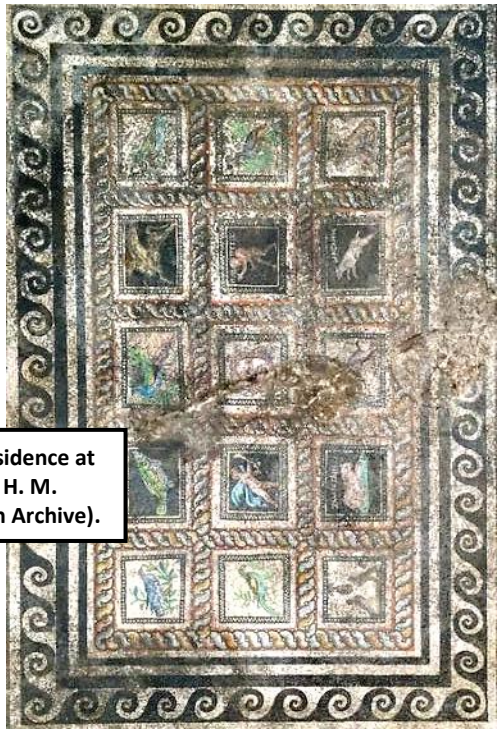
Alan Dedden

Weblinks No. 90 – October 2026

Roman Emperor's Lavish Bath Found In Palace In Serbia Archaeology News Online Magazine



Porphyry bust of a tetrarch thought to be Maximinus Daza, now in the Cairo Museum (Credit: Udimu, CC BY-SA 4.0).



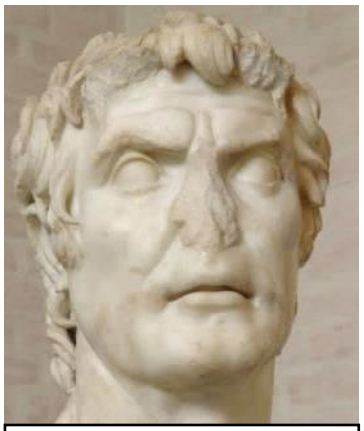
The mosaic in a Roman-era residence at Adramytteion, Turkey (Credit: H. M. Özgen/Adramytteion Research Archive).

Roman Mosaic In Turkey Features 'Emerald' The Cat And 'Ocean' The Dog Live Science

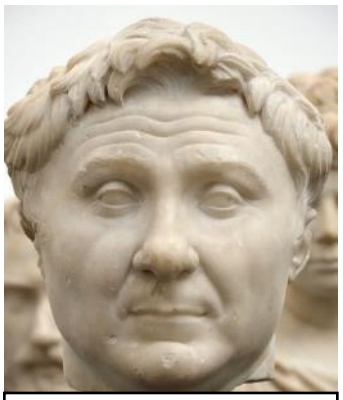
Rome in Egypt 2

As mentioned in the previous article, from the 2nd century BC Rome's increasing power across the Mediterranean effectively guaranteed Egypt's independence. It mediated in dynastic disputes, initially perhaps so as to be seen to be speaking for the Greeks of southern Italy and Sicily. Egypt's status as a client was probably first demonstrated in 168 BC when Rome forced the Seleucid Antiochus IV to leave Egypt after his successful invasion. The Hellenistic states' rivalry meant they never joined forces against Rome and, whilst Rome did not initiate their decline, her increasing power made it hard for them to reverse it. Rome took Cyrenaica (essentially the eastern half of Libya) from Egypt in 96 BC and Cyprus in 58 BC.

Egypt's position was also tied up with the machinations of powerful figures in Republican Rome. The dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla put his protégé on the throne as Ptolemy XI in 80 BC, while Pompey 'the Great' restored Ptolemy XII to the throne in 55 BC. Despite Egypt's wealth and Rome's clearly dominant position, annexation was delayed, perhaps explained partly by its remoteness.



Sulla (Munich Glyptothek)



Pompey (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen)

Egypt's resources were very important to Rome, with grain first known to have been shipped to Rome around 210 BC, and becoming increasingly central to the Roman economy thereafter. By Augustus' reign some suggest that over a million tons was transported from Egypt annually. The *annona*, or 'grain dole', grew from an emergency measure to help feed the urban masses in Rome to a permanent social welfare programme by the end of the Republic, providing a monthly allowance of grain (later bread) at a subsidised price for those entitled to it. For those in charge, this was a way of keeping the potentially restive people of Rome quiescent (as the poet Juvenal put it later, the emperors provided "bread and circuses"). The operation was highly regulated, with production shipped down the Nile and stored in Alexandria, then loaded onto ships in May or June, taking about a month to reach Rome.

Egypt provided exports of other agricultural products such as grapes, dates, olives, wine and oil, both olive and palm. Papyri and glass were also important exports, as well as flax and linen. Then there was the mineral wealth of Egypt. Ancient texts report the vast quantities of gold (and some silver) used for statues in Egyptian temples, presumably known to the Romans, although almost none has survived (we do, of course, have the large amount of gold that came from Tutankhamun's tomb). It has been suggested that Egypt's gold resources sustained Pharaonic Egypt's Empire as much as, or more than, its military might. Mines existed in Nubia, but were mostly throughout the middle and south of the Eastern Desert.



Cleopatra VII (Altes Museum, Berlin); a damaged bust in the Vatican has very similar features.

Egypt was also central to trade with the Orient – particularly with India and through it to the Far East. This developed in the Ptolemaic period and trade through Egypt came both into and out of the developing Roman Empire – particularly providing sought after 'luxury goods' for the Roman élite.

Despite Rome's growing power and interest in Egypt's wealth, Cleopatra (VII) "exploited the ambitions and affections of Roman politicians", including Julius Caesar of course, to keep Egypt independent, or nominally so, for 20 years. Under the will of her

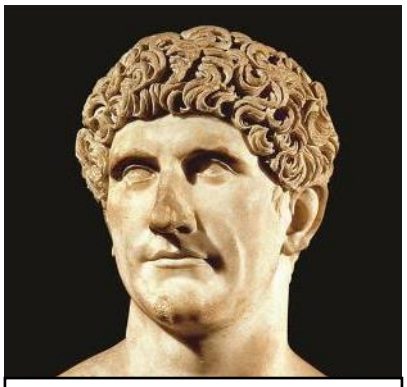
father, Ptolemy XII, she was married to her younger brother, Ptolemy XIII, and ruled with him from 51 BC. Civil war broke out between them by 48 BC, the same year the defeated Roman general, Pompey the Great, fled to Egypt followed by the victorious Julius Caesar, both bringing their soldiers. Ptolemy XIII appeared to welcome Pompey but had him murdered, hoping to curry favour with Caesar, who was actually disgusted.

Cleopatra was more successful in gaining Caesar's favour, and became his lover. Her faction of the army and the fairly small initial Roman force fought Ptolemy's faction inside Alexandria; the burning of the great Library of Alexandria seems to have happened then. Whilst the initial battle appears to have been inconclusive, Roman reinforcements arrived and Ptolemy fled, apparently drowning in the Nile. Cleopatra then married her youngest brother, aged about 12, and named him co-ruler (Ptolemy XIV) in 47 BC. This seems simply to have been a concession to Egyptian tradition. In any case, she and her son by Caesar, Caesarion, were in Rome from 46 BC, only returning to Egypt after Caesar's assassination in 44. It is thought that she then had her brother murdered, when she named 3-year old Caesarion as co-ruler.

There is considerable uncertainty about the location of the library and its fate. It is thought to have been near, or part of, the Mouseion of Ptolemy I, a centre of study and learning in the north-eastern part of the city set back from the sea, not far from the modern Bibliotheca Alexandrina opened in 2002. Its destruction, or partial destruction in some accounts, is often said to have been accidental, but it seems that no archaeological remains of the library have been found. A 'daughter library' (remains pictured) was situated in the Serapeum temple (to the god Serapis), south of the Mouseion and near the southern city wall. It survived until the late 4th century AD when many pagan temples were destroyed under Theodosius I.



Following the assassination, the triumvirate of Octavian, Caesar's adopted heir, Mark Antony and Lepidus gained almost absolute power over the Roman world from 43 BC, and Mark Antony's rule grew to the eastern provinces. Lepidus was forced out in 36 BC and an increasingly uneasy peace between Antony and Octavian followed..



Bust produced in the Flavian period, traditionally identified as Antony (Vatican Museums).

Cleopatra's liaison with Antony had started in 42 BC, produced 3 children, and they were eventually married. In 34 BC, they elevated Caesarion to 'King of Kings' and declared him as the true heir of Julius Caesar. This was a clear challenge to Octavian's authority, but also gave him the opportunity for propaganda portraying Antony as an enemy of Rome attempting to establish a monarchy over the Empire with Caesarion as ruler, bypassing the Senate. War was clearly inevitable.

Initially, the two sides may well have had similar forces before the battle, thought to be about 4-500 ships and perhaps 70,000 men. Octavian trapped the opposing fleet in the bay of Actium (or 'Aktion') on the north-west coast of Greece. Clever movement of ground forces meant that Antony's legions were also caught in a pincer, and it appears that many deserted to the opposition. Octavian attacked on 2nd September 31 BC, and when Antony's fleet attempted to escape they lost many ships to the smaller but more manoeuvrable galleys of Octavian. It seems that some of Cleopatra's fleet may have returned to Egypt before the battle, but that Antony and some of his fleet were able to escape due to last minute efforts by the remaining Cleopatran ships. An alternative story is that Antony and Cleopatra and some of their fleet fled before the battle. In any case, the lovers and the

remnants of their forces returned to Alexandria, followed later by Octavian's fleet and army, which arrived 1st July 30 BC.



Part of the Actium Victory monument with a reconstruction of the ships' rams recovered from the sea and originally fitted into the *c.* 36 sockets. © Insitute for the Visualization of History, 2002



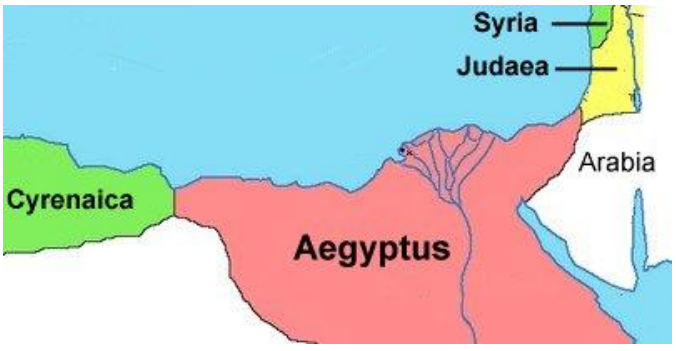
An early 1st century AD Roman relief depicting the Battle of Actium (provenance uncertain; collection of the Dukes of Cardona, Cordoba).

The siege of Alexandria progressed slowly for a month, with Octavian launching various probing assaults without finding serious weaknesses in the defences. With some desertions from Antony's army, and Octavian more able to stand the constant attrition of these assaults, the main assault at the start of August proved successful and Alexandria was captured on 3rd August 30 BC. The cost was huge, suggested as of the order of 10,000 dead on both sides.

Antony committed suicide the same day. Octavian may have planned to parade Cleopatra in triumph in Rome, leading to her suicide 9 days later, although the details of her death are disputed. Octavian returned to Rome with Antony's children and seems not to have harmed them (see "The 'other' Queen Cleopatra" in the April 2023 newsletter). Details of the fate of Caesarion are uncertain, but it is thought that he was executed before the end of August. Any pretence of an independent Egypt was clearly over.

Octavian (born Gaius Octavius) was granted the honorific 'Augustus' in 27 BC, and I'll use that name from now on. In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus' record of his achievements, there is no mention of Antony, and the annexation of Egypt is covered in just 5 words: *Aegyptum imperio populi romani adieci* (I added Egypt to the rule of the Roman people). The 'original' *Res Gestae* inscription on bronze pillars near Augustus's tomb in Rome didn't survive, but an almost complete one in Ankara was use for this modern stone copy near the site of the original.





Egypt was renamed as the province of *Aegyptus* under Augustus (*Arabia* on the map was a client kingdom until 106). The next article in this series looks at the Roman approach to governing their new province.

Geoff Taylor

From the Archives 34

This article starts with the Proceedings volume XXXII for 1911, which has no obviously archaeological articles. Even the record of places visited for meetings held around the county revealed nothing that I thought worth including, so there's more historical information here.

In the President's address, there is mention of a widespread 'rat scare' because rats carrying plague bacilli had been found in Britain. As he said, there had been no cases in the UK for centuries (other than a few imported ones), so we shouldn't be concerned, and that's still the case. Perhaps more relevant to us today is his mention of another "regrettable" attempt to bring in a Daylight Saving Bill. That failed to pass but, of course, British Summer Time was introduced in 1916 and we still have to live with it.

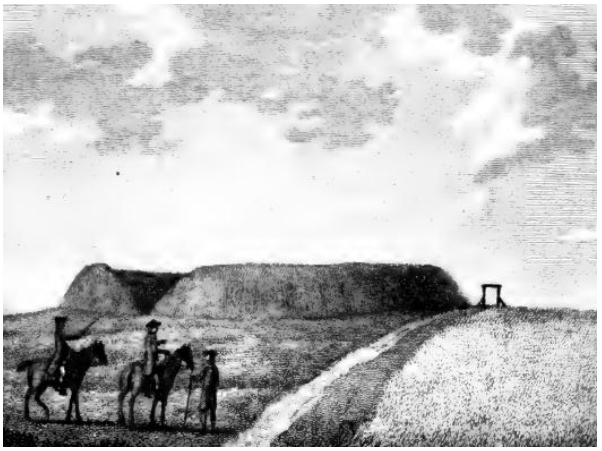
Amongst a short list of items added to the Dorchester Museum, I was intrigued by "The Coin of Urbica is also a valuable acquisition. This Queen, or Princess, is, I believe, unknown to history, and her coins are rare, the *Numismatic Chronicle*, the journal of the Numismatic Society, recording only one example among hoards discovered in Great Britain." We now know that Magnia Urbica was the wife of Emperor Carinus who reigned 283-285 AD, but she is only known from coins and a very few inscriptions. Carinus is also relatively obscure, partly from his short reign and also from uncertainty about the truth of his reputation as incompetent and dissolute, perhaps propaganda from Diocletian (284-305) who defeated and replaced him.



Gold aureus of Magnia Urbica, Rome 283 AD (20mm diameter).

Interestingly (to me at least), by this time longer aeroplane trips had been achieved, including a 500 mile trip from Paris to Pau and one over the Simplon Pass 6,600 feet up. One plane carried 12 passengers with a weight of 1,439lb (very light people!), but fatal accidents remained very common.

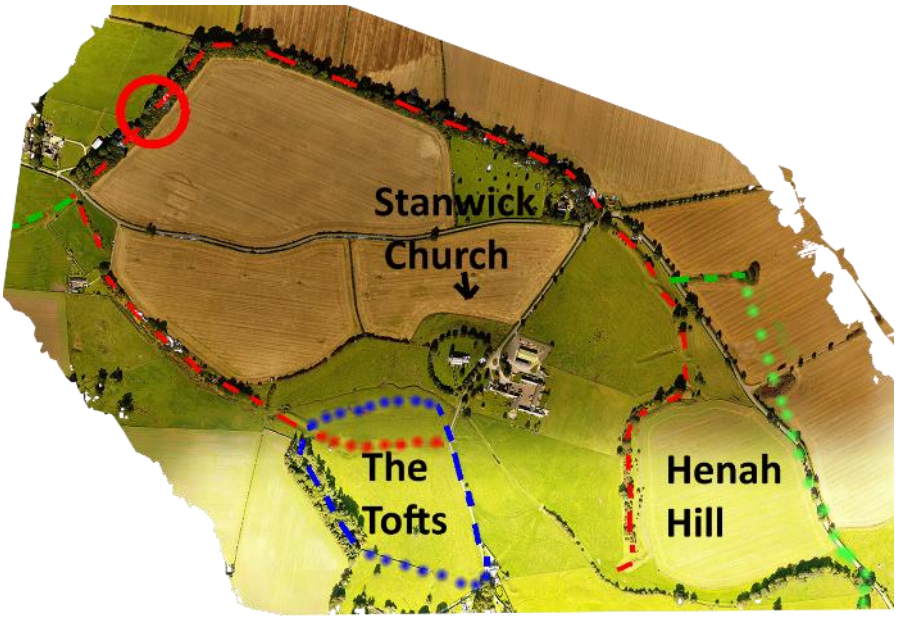
A little more history comes in the form of a description of Dorchester's gallows, starting from Speed's map of 1610 when the gallows was at 'Gallows Hill', a mound where Icen Way crosses South Walks (close to the south-east corner of the Roman town). This was the site of executions for the unfortunates condemned by Judge Jeffries, before the gallows were moved around 1700. The new site was by the Weymouth road just to the west of Maumbury Rings, as shown in the engraving here from 1755, where crowds watching executions caused considerable damage to the amphitheatre bank. It was then moved to North Square, outside the prison, *c.*1795, and remained in public until 1863, with the final use in Dorchester in 1887.



There are more archaeological items in Volume XXXIII, but the first item which caught my eye was among the limited number of "exceptional" objects added to the Dorset County Museum – a model of a sturgeon. It was unusual because the actual fish had been caught, with rod and line, in the Frome at Bindon Mill, just to the east of Wool. Sturgeon are 'Royal Fish' and belong to the Crown; this one, noted as 9ft 3½in long and weighing 203lb, was presented to King George. Because of their decline, for many reasons including illegal hunting, sturgeon are now a protected species and it is an offence to land one. More are now being seen in our coastal waters, particularly from French efforts to increase numbers.

Geoff Taylor

View from Above 81: Stanwick Iron Age settlement



This aerial picture is of a site in North Yorkshire just 7km north-west of Scotch Corner on the A1. It's based on an orthomosaic provided for free public use by Yorkshire Archaeological Aerial Mapping – a highly accurate aerial view from stitching together large numbers of aerial photographs.

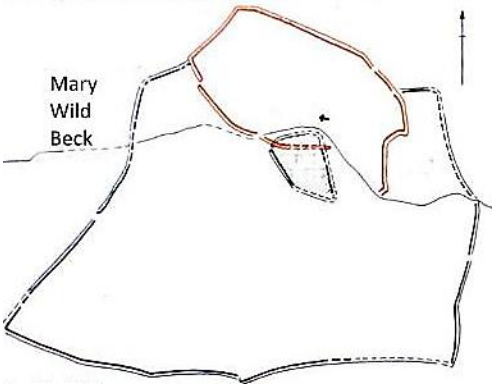
The site is sometimes called Stanwick Iron Age hillfort, though it's not really on a hill, so "defended" or "fortified" settlement is more accurate. It's also described as an *oppidum*, or Iron Age tribal capital, though some dispute that. As a hillfort it would be the largest by area in Britain at 310ha (775 acres) at its full extent.

On the aerial, dashes are fairly certain lines of rampart and ditch defences, with dots for less clear lines. Blue is the earliest fortified enclosure, red and green the later northern and southern enclosures.

You might have figured that sources differ in interpretation, sometimes considerably, starting with the works of the Roman historian, Tacitus, whose accuracy is uncertain. Some of Mortimer Wheeler's conclusions from 1951-2 excavations are uncertain too – as with Maiden Castle, his military background led him to some military views. I'm inclined to err on the side of Colin Haselgrove's views from major excavations for Durham University in the 1980s, but various aspects still remain unclear.



In essence, it seems that a settlement started around 400 BC on the low hill called 'The Tofts', though Haselgrove says *c.*80 BC. At some point, perhaps initially, an area of *c.*7ha was defended by at least a palisade, though later work has covered or obliterated most of the original defences. The settlement seems to have grown quite rapidly in population and wealth. Around 20-10 BC large ramparts (pictured) were built around The Tofts, with a stone gatehouse into the high status enclosure it was becoming. Finds from excavation showed trade with the Roman world by the mid-1st century. Around AD 50 the large northern and even larger southern enclosures were constructed, with a total outer length of about 9km.



As can be seen from this map (based on Wheeler's), the aerial picture above mainly covers the northern (red) part. Fortifications along the beck east of The Tofts seem not to have been needed as this area was very marshy and prone to flooding (the later church was built on higher ground, presumably partly for that reason). There are suggestions that a dam kept it flooded, though I can't find evidence of one. The northern part seems to have encompassed settlement expanding from The Tofts, with the southern part perhaps mainly animal enclosures and a market, though the limited

areas of excavation were insufficient for any certainty. Some think that the northern part was built first, though Haselgrove thought that the outer circuit came first and was then subdivided. Whatever the sequence, it all seemed to have happened over relatively few years.



I've not found full details of the size of the defences, and they probably varied around the circuit, but they seem to have consisted of a ditch up to 3-4m deep, sometimes cut into the bedrock, from the bottom of which the bank is up to 7 or 8m higher. In places the bank appears to have been revetted with stone, perhaps with a stone wall on top. As pictured (© English Heritage), Wheeler restored a 5m section of the bank in the area circled on the aerial view, although not completely (i.e. the ditch wasn't as deep or the bank as high). It has a partial revetment with a wall on top, 60cm high, but Wheeler thought it would originally have been over 4m tall.

In Tacitus' narrative, 'Queen' Cartimandua and her husband Venutius ruled the Brigantes – probably the largest Iron Age tribe (or confederation of tribes) in Britain, whose territory covered much of the north of England. They were described by Tacitus as loyal to Rome and "defended by our arms". Caratacus, the leader of British resistance, sought sanctuary with Cartimandua in AD 51 but she turned him over to the Romans. It isn't clear whether this caused the split between her and Venutius, but they divorced and she took Vellocatius, her husband's armour bearer, as consort. It seems that Venutius was favoured by a large proportion of the Brigantian population, leading to civil war. He attacked her forces *c.*AD 57, but was defeated with Roman support. He tried again in the 'Year of the Four Emperors', AD 69, and she had to be rescued by Roman forces, with Venutius becoming the Brigantian ruler and leader of resistance to Rome. We know nothing of Cartimandua or Venutius after this, but the Brigantes were defeated by the Romans by AD 79, although not completely subdued for several decades after.

Tacitus provides no place names for these encounters, although it is often suggested (per Wheeler) that Stanwick was the Brigantian capital and Venutius' base after 57, with Cartimandua then based at the Brigantian hillfort of Castle Hill at Almondbury, near Huddersfield. Any suggestion of a battle at Stanwick clearly needs good evidence and, with less than 1% of the ramparts investigated, that would be hard to come by unless other relevant remains have been found. I've found no evidence of them, but Wheeler thought there was a Roman attack, based mostly on his view that some of the northern ramparts had been slighted. Haselgrove thought that the huge length of ramparts was simply too long to be defended and that they were mostly built to impress.

In any case, it seems that the site declined considerably from the 70s. Finds indicate that the settlement had been wealthy and traded widely, no doubt controlling trade and resources in the native economy. As Roman power and authority expanded, the power and influence of the Stanwick élite was, of course, considerably reduced.

Wheeler's excavations uncovered a severed skull in a ditch terminal by the main north-western gate, badly damaged by sword or axe blows. He didn't take this as resulting from warfare, but suggested it may have been hanging from the gate as a warning. An Iron Age sword was also found in a waterlogged area, still in this well-preserved ash scabbard 73cm long. The large Iron Age Stanwick Hoard of 1845 was actually found some way from the settlement as, indeed, was the much larger Melsonby Hoard of 2022



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Geoff Taylor

EDAS PROGRAMME

Unless stated lectures are at 7:30pm at St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.
The hall won't be open before 7pm.

Wed 14th October	Lecture	**Gail Wakeham**	Emerging insights into a long lived settlement at Station Rd, Fordingbridge
Wed 11th November	Lecture	**Phil Trim**	A Tale of Two Kilns: Roman pottery production at Arne, Poole Harbour
Wed 9th December	Lecture	**Luke Mouland**	Life in the Victorian Workhouse
2027			
Wed 13th January	Lecture	**Cheryl Green**	Re-discovering the lost medieval manor at Putton Lane, Chickerel, Dorset
Wed 17th February	Lecture	**Lorraine Mepham**	Fifty sherds of grey: making sense of Pottery NOT 2nd WEDNESDAY
Wed 10th March	AGM and Lecture	**Robert Heaton**	Exploring opportunities with GPR
Wed 14th April	Lecture	**Colin Edwards**	Dorset & Dr Beeching
Wed 12th May	ZOOM Lecture	**David Roberts & Denise Wilding**	Garson's Field Roman villa

DISTRICT DIARY

DNHAS meetings aren't included here unless I'm notified – please check their website.

Sat 10th October	SPECIAL EVENT: 40th anniversary afternoon. See their website here	**Wareham Society**	Lilian Ladle & Julian Richards
Thurs 15th October	From the Solent to the Downs. Southern Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in Late Iron Age and Roman times	**AVAS**	Tony King
Thurs 15th October	Archaeology at Arne, Wareham	**Blandford Group**	Fiona Pink
Wed 21st October	Viking Dorset	**Wareham Society**	Wayne Bartlett
Sat 24th October	General knowledge quiz For details see the Museum's website here	**Blandford Group**	Questionmaster: Julian Richards
Wed 18th November	Arne and Stoborough though time	**Wareham Society**	Ben Buxton
Thurs 19th November	The English Civil War - local people and places	**AVAS**	Neil McLocklin
Thurs 19th November	The Mortar shipwreck at Poole	**Blandford Group**	Tom Cousins
Wed 2nd December	In Search of Caratacus: Great king of Iron Age Britain	**Wareham Society**	Miles Russell
Thur 17th December	Hidden in Plain Sight: Reminders of WW2 in the New Forest	**AVAS**	Marc Heighway
Thur 21st January	Title tbd	**AVAS**	Sophy Charlton

Archaeology Societies

- Avon Valley Archaeological Society: http://www.avas.org.uk/
  Meetings at Ibsley Village Hall, BH24 3NL (https://ibsleyhall.co.uk/), 7:30pm 3rd Thursday of month except June, July & August. Visitors £3.50 CASH; membership £10 pa.
- Blandford Museum Archaeology Group:
  https://blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk/blandford-museum-archaeology-group/
  Meetings normally 7:30pm 3rd Thursday of each month September to May in the Corn Exchange, 19 Market Place DT11 7AF. Visitors £3; membership £10 pa.
- Bournemouth Natural Sciences Society: http://bnss.org.uk
  Events at 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BN1 3NS; lectures Tuesday 7:30pm/Saturday 2:30pm. In-house archaeology talks are, as far as I can tell, free for non-members (donations appreciated). There are also some *Zoom* presentations, particularly aimed at members, though non-members can email bnssmembership@gmail.com to see whether they can send you a 'link' for the talk.
- Dorset Natural History & Archaeology Society: https://www.dorsetmuseum.org/whats-on/
  Events in Dorchester, usually ticketed and charged unless you're a DNHAS member.
- Wareham and District Archaeology & Local History Society: https://wareham-archaeology.com/
  Meetings at Furzebrook Village Hall, BH20 5AR, normally 7:30pm 3rd Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £5; membership £15 pa.