



East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER - MAY 2010

Membership Renewal 2010

Would any members who have not renewed yet this year please contact Della Day to fill in a renewal slip or a standing order.

Recent Events

Our Last EDAS Lecture

EDAS Lecture: "**Tarrant Monkton**" with Jeremy Webster. At our last lecture Jeremy talked to us about henges. There are many of these monuments in Britain and Ireland. They are usually built following certain standard designs, and consist of an outside circular bank with an inside ditch. They are also 'causewayed' with entrances over the bank and ditch, and so cannot really be considered as defensive structures. This leads archaeologists to a interpretation of them as a religious or sacred structure. The number of entrances can differ, and they are correspondingly classified into Type 1, Type 2, etc. Jeremy also emphasised that a henge was normally devoid of any standing objects or other structures inside. This means that sites like Stonehenge and Woodhenge could possibly have been used for different purposes.

Jeremy had undertaken a great deal of research into the physical sites themselves, and also the many archaeological records available. The direction of their entrance(s) did not seem to follow any 'standard' alignments, and the artefacts found were almost entirely 'day-to-day' objects that might just have been accidentally dropped. Henges seem to occur singly (apart from Priddy Circles and Thornborough Henges), and are generally in open country, and do not seem to be obviously associated with local settlements or burial sites.

However, by looking at ancient maps and re-inserting many now 'lost' sites, Jeremy has suggested that there may possibly have been larger collections of habitation and religious sites that formed into local groups. Henges are very enigmatic sites, and we hope that work like Jeremy's will significantly increase our understanding. We thank Jeremy very much for an interesting and thought-provoking lecture.

25 April 2010 - Walk with Henry Cole over Stoney Cross Airfield

Only 4 members and a friend turned up for the walk by our member Henry Cole. As we have some 190 members this was a very disappointing turnout. The walk started at a memorial plaque which has recently been installed to commemorate the World War Two airfield. The airfield, which was one of 450 built during the war, was not started until 1942. It was briefly used by the RAF but its main use was by the Americans in the build-up to D-Day. There is still clear evidence of runways as the gravel which had underlain the concrete is visible. The latter was removed when the M27 was built. These runways were 50 yards wide and little, if any, vegetation grows there. We also saw 2 other runways which had been formed from the pre-war roads in the area, the longest of which was 2,000 yards.

Henry pointed out many features which to the untrained eye would not have been noticed. These included the sites of the control tower, water tower, toilet block and aircraft parking areas. The latter are now used by caravans. He showed us many photos of the airfield and its occupants and told us stories about them. One of the airmen was Barack Obama's grandfather Sgt Stanley Dunham.

This was a fascinating walk, and we thank Henry for leading it. *Peter Walker*

Forthcoming Events

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

After his recent lecture to EDAS, Rob Curtis has agreed to lead a walk around Cerne Abbas on Saturday 15th May. We will meet outside St Mary's Church in Abbey Street at 2.30pm. The church is

in the middle of the village with a tall tower and there is car parking in the road on which the three pubs are situated.

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

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

Field Week 2010 - North Wales – 12th to 19th June

Thanks to all those who have returned their form and deposit. Please could anyone who is definitely coming and has not let us have their form and / or deposit let Malcolm and Maureen have it at the next meeting or email the details to them. Malcolm and Maureen will be sending out more detailed programmes to Field Trippers nearer the time. These will include OS Grid references for sites, etc.

News from the Priest House Museum

Firstly, on behalf of the membership of EDAS, I would like to extend our congratulations to Emma Ayling, the curator of the museum, who has recently been awarded an MA with Distinction from Southampton University in "Museum and Galleries: Collections management".

Two new displays are on show at the Priest House Museum for this season. The first has been produced in partnership with local representatives of Girl Guiding and celebrates 100 years of Guiding. Among the exhibits, the display features a lovely model of a guide camp and for all you old Brownies and Guides is well worth a viewing. I am sure it will bring back many happy memories of toadstools and camp fires. The second is "Dressing the Family" a display of original clothing showing how our parents and grandparents dressed back in the 40s and 50s. Who does not remember the boys' school uniform of the grey "Banner" shirts and long shorts!

The plans for the extension to the Museum have been revised following the disappointment of the original bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund being turned down. Planning application for the revised design is about to be forwarded to the Planning Department for consideration. The first stage of a new HL bid has been submitted, the result of which shown be known in June.

If anyone has some spare time and would like to help at the Museum in the shop or tea room, even if they can only spare half a day a week, volunteers are always welcome. Just go along to the Museum or ring them on 01202 882533. **Gill Broadbent**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The dates for EDAS events are underlined. The monthly evening lectures start at 7.30pm.

Walks and field visits usually meet at 10.30 am at the published Grid Reference. Ring the leader if the weather is doubtful or if more details are required.

2010

Wed 12 May

EDAS Lecture: "**Urban Studies: Topography and Development, A Winchester Study**" with Graham Scobie, Historic Information Officer, Winchester Museums Service.

Saturday 15 May

Walk around Cerne Abbas with Rob Curtis. See earlier for details.

Sat 12th June to
Sat 19th June

EDAS 2010 Field Trip to North Wales. See earlier Newsletters for more information.

Sun 26 Sep

Walk with Henry Cole – looking at Heywood Sumner's landscapes and archaeological sites. More details in the September newsletter.