



# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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## NEWSLETTER – November 2022

Note that items in this newsletter aren't in the order they're announced below as I needed to move them around to fit in more neatly.

The summary of last month's lecture, **Marine Archaeology in the Black Sea**, can't do justice to the excellent speaker and the amazing photographs and videos that she showed. You can find out more online, including some films on YouTube, by searching for 'Black Sea MAP'.

This month we have 'Hinton St Mary mosaic: fieldwork & excavations' with Richard Hobbs, focusing on the new fieldwork and excavations that have recently taken place at the Hinton St Mary Roman villa site: **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm BUT ON ZOOM, NOT IN THE HALL.**

There's an item on our possible **Field Trip to Kent** next year:  
**if you're interested, I need you to let me know as soon as you can.**

Andrew has kindly sent several items: **Wimborne All Hallows Day School 8th October**, about our presentation to the local community, a brief note on the **Dorchester Association Conference – Medieval Dorset** held in September, and a note on the **EDAS Membership 1998 – 2022** (analysis by Peter Walker).

Vanessa has provided an article about ancient DNA research involving the Museum of East Dorset: **Museum hopes to unlock past lives through ancient DNA**. Of course, we have the umpteenth edition of the interesting and relevant news that Alan has found on the internet: **October Weblinks** and **Weblink Highlights**. And there's a further outing for the aerial photos provided by Sue Newman and Jo Crane in **View from Above No. 48: Nunney Castle**.

How could I put together such a wide-ranging newsletter without contributions like these?

A longer article looks at **The Oldest House in Wimborne?** after my wife and I were invited to look around it by a friend who is helping to clear the contents after the owner passed away. Finally, as usual, there's the **EDAS Programme** and the listing of the lectures held by our friendly local archaeology societies in **District Diary**.

*Geoff Taylor*

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### EDAS Field Trip – Kent 17-24 June 2023

We need to see how many people would be interested in the planned Field Trip next year before we continue with detailed planning.

**Please let me have your 'expression of interest' as soon as possible:  
Email Geoff at [geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk) (and say how many people!)**

This isn't binding; we'll ask for actual bookings (and probably a deposit against up-front costs) in due course. Do, of course, feel free to ask any questions you may have.

The current plan, outlined below, is subject to change dependent on the availability of people and places (e.g. Richborough is currently closed and we're struggling to find out when it will re-open). There will be guided tours, and probably one or two early evening lectures, wherever they can be arranged. As ever we'll have, at least, both welcome and farewell dinners together.

This will be a two-centre trip – it's a pain to move mid-week but it reduces costs and travel quite a bit. We know driving long distances and at night can be a problem for some, so will do our best to put people together to car share.



Saturday: Arrive Sandwich; welcome meal

Sunday: 'Orientation' tour of Sandwich; Richborough Fort and Amphitheatre

Monday: Dover Museum (log boat); Painted House; Dover Castle

Tuesday: Deal and Walmer Castles/gardens; Minster and/or Manston Museum(s)

Wednesday: FREE (we'll suggest possible individual visits) and travel to Maidstone

Thursday: Rochester castle and cathedral; possible Roman excavation

Friday: Some of Igham Mote (NT), Oldbury Hillfort, Coldrum Longbarrow, Lullingstone area – actual visits very dependent on local people. Farewell dinner.

Saturday: Leave; possible optional extra visit.

**Geoff Taylor/Phil D'Eath**

## A History of Dorset in 40 Objects

It's disappointing that over 250 members could only provide 2 replies to last month's request for items as part of celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year (and just 1 promise of an article after my plea for contributions for the newsletter). We'd love to get your top 10 items, but if everyone sent just ONE we'd have loads to choose from and a good idea of what you feel is important to illustrate Dorset's history. Perhaps think about:

- Important people in Dorset's past (or present) and something that represents them, like a building or book
- Sacred, or other, buildings that figure large in our history because of what they represent or what is in them
- Important archaeological or historical sites
- Landscape features that 'say' Dorset
- Fabulous objects that have been found, or more mundane ones that represent the county or have in the past.

**Please give this just a little of your time and send your object(s) to Vanessa at [vanessaa.joseph@gmail.com](mailto:vanessaa.joseph@gmail.com)**

## Dorchester Association Conference – Medieval Dorset

Lilian and I were pleased to be invited to deliver talks about two EDAS projects at the recent Dorchester Association Conference on Medieval Dorset, held on 24th September.

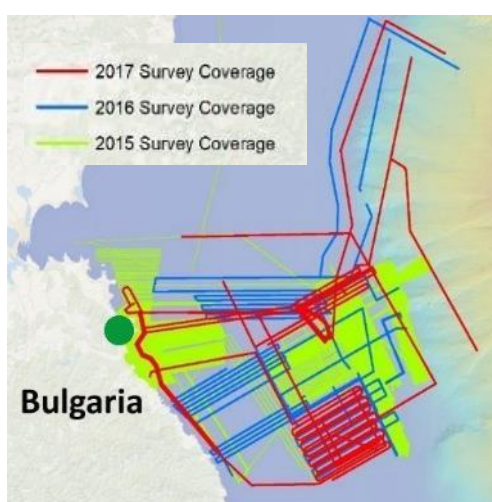
Lilian covered the Keeper's Lodge excavation and I explained the Wimborne All Hallows project. Mark Forrest, the curator at Wimborne St Giles House who has been working with Alan Dedden and Matthew Tagney, was very interested and we spoke at length afterwards.

**Andrew**

## Marine Archaeology in the Black Sea: Lecture by Dr Helen Farr

Helen Farr is an Associate Professor in Archaeology at the University of Southampton, a maritime archaeologist with a focus on prehistoric submerged landscapes and early seafaring. Amongst other things, she is a qualified commercial diver and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. She came to talk to us about the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project (“MAP”) and what this state-of-the-art survey, undertaken from 2015-2017, has revealed so far (though fully analysing the data will take decades).

Black Sea MAP is led by the University of Southampton’s Centre for Maritime Archaeology (“CMA”) and two major Bulgarian archaeological organisations, under the auspices of the Expedition and Education Foundation, funded by The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust. It was hoped to survey off the Turkish coast but permits weren’t forthcoming, whilst Bulgaria did everything they could to encourage the project.



The Black Sea has been linked with Noah’s Ark and ancestral memories of the catastrophic effects of a very rapid rise in water levels as the Mediterranean/Aegean flowed in. A particular aim of the project was, then, to locate evidence of human activity in reconstructed ancient landscapes that are now submerged, consider the pace of environmental change and human responses to it. Over the 3 years of data gathering, with ever larger ships carrying increasingly sophisticated equipment, including 2 Remote Operating Vehicles (“ROVs”), 6,000 linear km were surveyed covering an area of 2,500 km<sup>2</sup>. Various types of geophysical observations came first and then more detailed interventions followed up on these, particularly taking cores from the seabed and looking closely at anomalies in the geophysical results.

An ancient coastline was discovered dating to over 20,000 years ago and about 100m lower than currently. There were then progressive episodes of flooding from around 17-15,000 years ago as the northern European ice sheet melted. The connection between the Mediterranean and Black Sea came about 9,000 years ago, or a little later, but it was gradual rather than catastrophic and sudden.



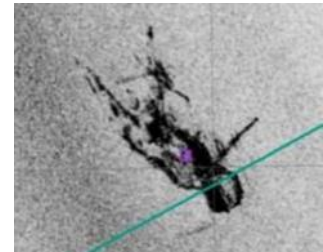
Settlement evidence was discovered at different depths, e.g. off Ropotamo (the green circle on the survey map above), where a Bronze Age timber structure was found with a hearth and pottery. It was radiocarbon dated to c.3000 BC. A Byzantine period harbour has also been found and the site of a 5,000 year-old settlement. Full analysis, interpretation and publication of these and of other settlement evidence will, though, be a little while in coming.

Helen gave us a list of the scientific analyses that were done, or are being done, on the 92 seabed cores that were taken, but I have to say that I would need to do further research to understand them. The most interesting was what is learnt from “utilising tephra [ash], chemostratigraphy and palaeomagnetism [to] establish a chronology for our Black Sea cores”. This gets around “the radiocarbon calibration issues

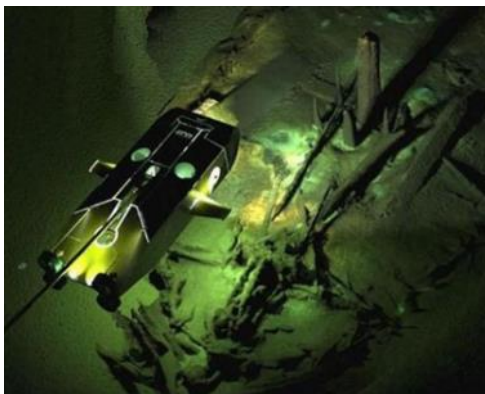
which have complicated previous studies within the western Black Sea” and that can be a problem with radiocarbon dates in other periods elsewhere. In other words, these methods provide much more accurate dating.

The Black Sea was once known as the ‘Inhospitable Sea’, perhaps because of the lack of marine life in its depths due to the anoxic waters, but maybe because of its wild storms or even the ‘barbarians’ living around it. There is little oxygen in the water below about 100m and hardly any below 200m. But the ancient Greeks renamed it the ‘Hospitable Sea’ because of its role in opening up trade routes from the Mediterranean and Aegean into Eurasia. As part of the objective of looking at human responses to environmental change, maritime connectivity is clearly important – how was the Black Sea used to connect people and for trade between them? Shipwrecks, of course, provide evidence of that.

The first anomaly to be looked at in more detail with the ROV was this one. It was assumed to be a modern metal fishing trawler because it gave such a clear reflection and appeared to have upstanding features. Surely nothing older and of wood could be that well preserved? Even with this relatively shallow wreck, at around 180m, they wondered if they would be able to see anything as the small pool of light from the ROV required considerable accuracy to hit the target; was the survey data good enough?



They needn’t have worried as this next photograph shows; in fact later anomalies were recorded in detail to depths of 2,150m. Although it’s not clear at this scale, this is a wooden wreck that’s close to intact, with the rigging remaining and equipment on deck, include a possible life boat that wasn’t able to be used. This picture is a composite using photogrammetry – detailed measurements and thousands of high resolution photographs, taken on several passes over 2-4 hours, then ‘stitched together’ by a sophisticated computer programme.



The ‘work class’ ROV has a box-like appearance and is relatively slow, though has functions through its robotic arms beyond the imaging and surveying of the ROV ‘Interceptor’ in the photograph. Interceptor can survey at about 6 knots, and operating it is rather like flying through space in a video game. Helen loved that, and the anticipation of what would be seen, so much that she would pilot the ROV into the night, long after her own work for the day was over. She once managed to get almost 7 knots out of it, but even being able to survey at a constant 6 knots, almost 3 times the speed of most ROVs, is a ‘game changer’ in the amount achievable for projects that are usually time-limited by funding and staffing constraints.

In total the expedition found 65 new wrecks from the Greek Classical Period through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all with wonderful preservation. Elsewhere there is usually only the cargo, but here there were almost complete remains of the ships. The Bulgarians wanted to raise some of the wrecks to examine them further and provide a unique museum display, but in reality they are much more fragile than they appear and the job would have cost a vast amount. It isn’t even very clear how the wrecks could be handled and, in particular, be successfully preserved.

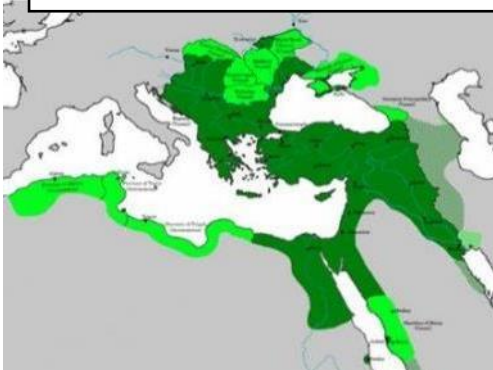
Sediment is slowly falling to the depths fairly constantly; in some of the videos Helen showed it looks like a light snowfall as can be seen in the photograph below. That can obscure the finer details yet, as in some of the pictures below, details of smaller items can be remarkably clear, as with the carving on this

Ottoman period wreck. Not only did the hulls of the ships survive, as well as masts, rigging and other larger items like capstans, but also much smaller objects. In some cases ropes can be seen coiled and tied on deck, and even the crew's cooking and eating utensils (how they remained on deck is a mystery). Seeing these things, particularly live and for the first time, gave a real sense of connection with the people whose lives were probably lost when the ship foundered.

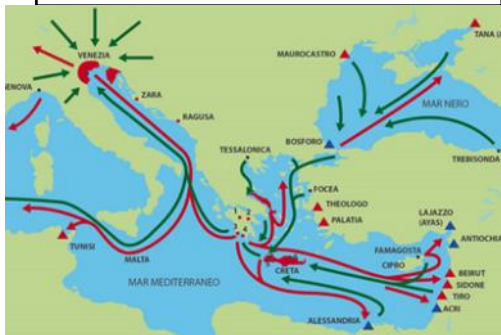


In the remaining space I'll mostly show a few of the remarkable images of the wrecks that we were shown, with maps relevant to their likely areas of operation.

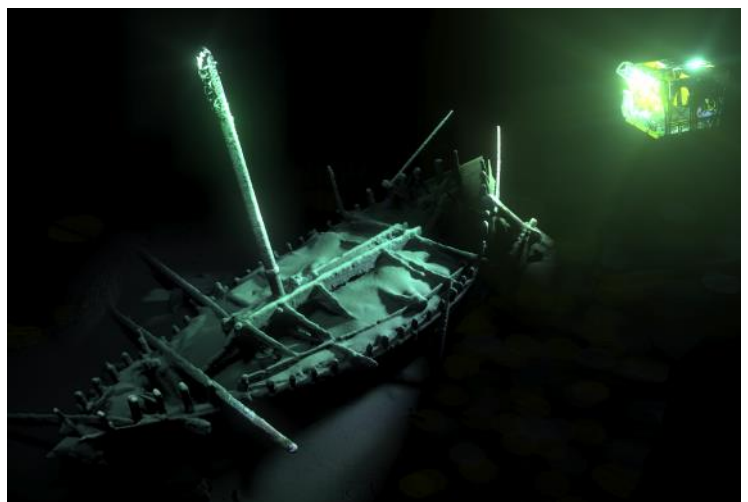
**Ottoman 17<sup>th</sup> century ship at 300m depth, and the Ottoman Empire in 1683.**



**13<sup>th</sup> century *cocha*, or 'round ship', 1102m down, probably Venetian, and the main Venetian trade routes. If this was Venetian, it was sailing at the height of their power in the time of Marco Polo.**



**A Roman wreck lying 2,017m down with the 'work class' ROV alongside, and the Roman Empire's greatest extent in AD117. The ship was radiocarbon dated to 50-220.**



But the most exciting shipwreck was last – on the final day of operation in true Time Team fashion.

The ROV was piloted down onto what was thought to be ‘just another’ Roman vessel, at 2,021m depth, which proved to be lying on its side in the sediment. This was a relatively small ship at about 20m long, though the bow was buried in the sediment, and with a 12m mast. Rowing benches showed that it was some sort of sailed galley, but it didn’t look Roman. With care, the work class ROV was able to suck off much of the sediment, and it became apparent that this was actually ancient Greek. In fact, it is very like the ship on the ‘Siren vase’ of c.480-470 BC in the British Museum, and very close to it in date, though the shape of the bow is uncertain as most of it is buried.

Since this, and a few similar vases, were previously the best evidence we had for such a vessel’s construction, you can imagine just how excited the team were to see this wreck. Prof Jon Adams, heading the Southampton CMA team, said “A ship, surviving intact from the Classical world ... is something I would never have believed possible. This will change our understanding of shipbuilding and seafaring in the ancient world”.



Whether the ship came from the long-established Greek colonies around the Black Sea or from one of their other colonies across the Mediterranean, as shown above, isn’t known.



All this in a total of just 100 days at sea, which also gave opportunities onboard to 32 STEM students, providing scholarships for disadvantaged young people. It has provided museum displays and a huge, award-winning, outreach programme to 23,000 schools, not to mention the basis of many years of further analysis and, no doubt, a stream of PhDs.

All images except the vase are credited to *Black Sea MAP/EEF Expeditions* and/or *Rodrigo Pacheco-Ruiz/Southampton University*.

**Geoff Taylor**

## Wimborne All Hallows Day School 8<sup>th</sup> October

We knew from the start that the opportunity to investigate Wimborne All Hallows graveyard would make a good community project, whatever the results. With that in mind, the EDAS proposal stated that on completion we would hold an event to share our findings with the community. During the field work we were visited by people on a daily basis, and we willingly explained what we were doing and informed them of the latest findings. Towards the end of the field work we held two Open Days to show what we had found to the community and EDAS members, and over 100 people turned up.

Earlier this year we discussed with Martyn Cubbitt, representing the Wimborne St Giles PCC, about holding a Day School at the Village Hall and settled on the date of Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October. The village, in turn, agreed to waive the hire charge for the hall and to provide refreshments.



The speakers were to be Alan, Vanessa, Ian and myself, who were the main organisers of the project. We were pleased that two of the experts who helped with the post excavation analysis accepted our invitation to participate, namely Dan Carter – who reported on the ceramic roof tiles and pottery assemblage – and John Winterbottom (with Diana Hall), who until recently lived in the village – who reported on the medieval floor tiles. We put together several display boards of material and brought a collection of finds for examination.



On the day we had an excellent turnout of just under 60 people, including the vicar, who was very engaged and appeared delighted with our findings, and there were many faces we recognised from our field work.



Martyn was later to say that it had been the largest number of people to attend an event at the village hall. The event ran very smoothly; we had a number of excellent questions and much enthusiastic feedback, on the day and subsequently, for a job well done.

**Andrew Morgan**

## Museum hopes to unlock past lives through ancient DNA

The Museum of East Dorset ("MED") is collaborating with the Francis Crick Institute in a nationwide research project. The project, funded by the Wellcome Foundation, aims to discover the whole-genome history and evolution of 1,000 ancient people from Great Britain. Whilst this is primarily to aid medical research, it will also give the museum new information and fresh insights into people from the past.

The Institute is an independent charity, established to be the UK flagship for discovery research in biomedicine, particularly aiming to understand the fundamental biology underlying health and disease. A better understanding of why disease develops will lead to new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat illnesses like cancer, heart disease and strokes. With over 1,500 scientists and support staff, it is the biggest biomedical research facility under a single roof in Europe.



Ancient DNA ("aDNA") will be analysed from the remains of people living thousands of years ago in and around Tarrant Hinton, found during Wimborne



**Jesse McCabe, a Laboratory Research Scientist at the Francis Crick Institute, carefully examines bone fragments from the Tarrant Hinton burials. Credit: Museum of East Dorset.**

Archaeological Group's excavations between 1968 and 1984. The area was occupied from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age and throughout the Romano-British period. Tiny samples have been taken from 17 burials, with aDNA analysis able to use three parts of the skull: the tiny bones from inside the ear (hammer, anvil and stirrup), a piece of the temporal bone from the cranium or a well-preserved tooth.

The museum has consulted closely with Dr Simon Mays (Historic England) and Prof. Alistair Pike (University of Southampton) about the possible research outcomes from this collaboration. In 2019, they were involved with analysis of MED's Iron Age TB skeleton from the Tarrant Hinton site, which gave a high probability that the man spent his early childhood in an area of Carboniferous Limestone to the west of Britain. This could be south or west Ireland, the Atlantic coast of southwest France or the Cantabrian Mountains of Northern Spain. Now it may be possible to identify the specific strain of TB, which differs depending on geography.

It is expected that the aDNA analysis could take up to 12 months to complete. Museum Director Chezzie Hollow said that they will await the results with great interest and, of course, share any significant findings with the public.

Pontus Skoglund, head of the Francis Crick Institute's Ancient Genomics Laboratory, said: "As part of this project, the unique heritage collections of the Museum of East Dorset will not only shed new light on archaeological questions, but also aid our understanding of genetic health and disease through our larger integration with the medical resources of the UK biobank."

***Vanessa Joseph***

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## Weblink Highlights October 2022

A previous Weblinks contained an item about a hoard of coins found under a kitchen floor in Yorkshire. This month's item on the same hoard reveals that they managed to get £754k at auction, three times the estimate of £250k.

Those of us who have been to Stockholm and seen the Vasa will be interested in the discovery of her



sister ship, also in Stockholm waters. The sister ship, however, served the Swedish Navy for 30+ years before being scuttled.

If you remember the fascinating EDAS talk by Dr Sophy Charlton in January 2021 on DNA revelations on prehistoric migrations, you will want to catch up with her latest work (now at the University of York) on human remains from Gough's Cave in Somerset and Kendrick's Cave at Llandudno, Wales.

***Alan Dedden***

## **October Weblinks**

### **7th Century Coin Hoard Found In Wall In Israel**

[Gold coins hidden in 7th Century found in wall - BBC News](#)

### **Stunning Statue Of Hercules Unearthed In Philippi**

[Stunning Statue of Hercules Uncovered in Philippi, Northern Greece \(greekreporter.com\)](#)

### **DNA From Skeletons Reveals Diverse And Complex Culture In Early Medieval England**

[DNA from skeletons 'challenges perceptions and understanding of ancient England' | Evening Standard](#)

### **Scottish Fossil Revealed To Be Pterodactyl Ancestor**

[Scottish fossil revealed to be pterodactyl ancestor - BBC News](#)

### **76 Child Sacrifice Victims With Hearts Ripped Out Found In Peru**

[76 child sacrifice victims with their hearts ripped out found in Peru excavation | Live Science](#)

### **Remains Of 240 People Found Under Haverfordwest Store**

[Skeletons: Remains of 240 people under Haverfordwest store - BBC News](#)

### **6,000 Year-Old Skull Confirms Taiwanese Legend Of Indigenous Hunter-Gatherers**

[Skull Confirms Taiwanese Legends Of Ancient Peoples Who Preceded The Austronesians | IFLScience](#)

### **Incredible Roman Mosaic Discovered In Syria**

[Incredible Roman mosaic uncovered in Syria is still intact | Metro News](#)

### **Neanderthals And Modern Humans May Have Copied Each Other's Tools**

[Neanderthals and modern humans may have copied each other's tools | Neanderthals | The Guardian](#)

### **Mummified Corpses Including Children Found In Peru**

[Mummified corpses including children found in Peru reveals key moment indigenous culture was lost \(inews.co.uk\)](#)

### **Hull Coin Hoard Sells For £754k**

[Lucky couple who found 264 gold coins dating back to reign of King James I sell them for £754,000 | Daily Mail Online](#)

### **'Superhighway' Of Ancient Human And Animal Footprints Found At Formby**

[Superhighway of ancient human and animal footprints in England provides an 'amazing snapshot of the past' | Live Science](#)

### **Anglo-Saxon Hall Where Kings And Warriors Dined Discovered In Suffolk**

[Anglo-Saxon hall where kings and warriors dined discovered in England | Live Science](#)

### **St Nicholas' Burial Spot Discovered In Turkish Church**

[Exact burial spot of St. Nicholas, inspiration for Santa Claus, discovered in Turkish church | Live Science](#)

### **Falcon Shrine With Cryptic Message Unearthed In Egypt Baffles Archaeologists**

[Falcon shrine with cryptic message unearthed in Egypt baffles archaeologists | Live Science](#)

### **50,000 Year-Old DNA Reveals First Look At Neanderthal Family**

[50,000-year-old DNA reveals the first-ever look at a Neanderthal family | Live Science](#)

**DNA Reveals At Least 2 Genetically Distinct Groups In UK At The End Of The Last Ice Age**

[UK had at least two genetically distinct human groups at end of last ice age, DNA reveals | Anthropology | The Guardian](#)

**Swedish Archaeologists Confirm Wreck Found In 2019 Is Vasa Sister Ship**

[Swedish archaeologists find 17th-century warship | Sweden | The Guardian](#)

**Probable Roman Road Found In Field Near Evesham**

[Hidden 'Roman road' discovered in field by workmen - Hull Live \(hulldailymail.co.uk\)](#)

The October '22 Chase & Chalke Newsletter is [here](#)  
 And the CBA Wessex November Newsletter is [here](#)

**EDAS Membership 1998 - 2022**

Peter Walker recently produced the analysis below of our membership numbers since 1998, when he became Treasurer. Over that period the membership has increased from 144 to 253. There have been 502 new members, an average of 21 per annum, and 393 have left the society, leaving a net gain of 109. Peter also commented that the attendance at our monthly meetings has remained consistent with about 50-60 people in the audience.

I'm not sure what constitutes a successful society, but I'm quietly pleased with the growth in the membership, and that we have a healthy turnover. It suggests that we are doing something right, but then again we are exceptionally cheap. Numerous people have said that the newsletter alone is worth the subscription, and I know many have joined because of the opportunities for practical archaeology. I hope there aren't many who have just forgotten they are members, but I thank them anyway.

I think that the small group of enthusiasts who started the society back in 1983 will be satisfied that it is in safe hands as we prepare to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023.

**Andrew Morgan**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Honorary	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student	2	5	5	5	6	7	6	6	3	5	7	7	5
Single	65	66	70	82	69	74	65	67	68	66	76	76	69
Family	72	76	82	74	72	84	96	106	100	98	106	104	98
Institutional	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
	<b>144</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>177</b>
New Members		22	31	26	12	26	18	25	12	15	29	20	10
Not renewed		-14	-21	-22	-26	-8	-16	-14	-19	-17	-9	-22	-25
Net		8	10	4	-14	18	2	11	-7	-2	20	-2	-15

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Honorary	3	3	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	5	5
Student	6	8	8	4	3	2	4	3	1	1	2	2
Single	79	85	90	95	99	97	101	101	106	111	124	123
Family	100	102	110	118	128	132	134	132	136	126	124	122
Institutional	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
	<b>189</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>253</b>
New Members	25	21	28	28	30	22	24	22	17	9	19	11
Not renewed	-13	-11	-13	-19	-16	-22	-16	-25	-10	-15	-5	-15
Net	12	10	15	9	14	0	8	-3	7	-6	14	-4

**Peter Walker**

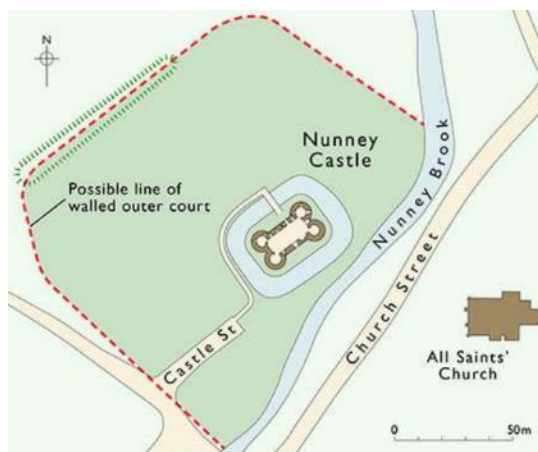
## View from Above No. 48: Nunney Castle

*Photo by Sue Newman and Jo Crane*



Nunney is a village in Somerset, 3 miles south-west of Frome (the name is Old English, probably from 'Nunna's island' rather than referring to a Saxon nunnery).

Roman settlement is shown by the nearby Whatley Combe winged corridor Roman villa built around 300 AD. An early Roman hoard was found around 1860 of at least 250 coins, 10 of gold and the rest almost all silver. The latest coin was of Claudius, who died in 54 AD. An estate in the area was apparently granted to Glastonbury Abbey by King Edred in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. By Domesday, in 1086, two manors held the area, but there is no mention of a castle.



One of the manors, owned by Elias de Meisi in 1166, descended to Sir John de la Mare, who obtained a licence to crenellate from Edward III in 1373. Sir John was of relatively modest means but was gaining royal favour, perhaps from his military service on the continent. The castle is clearly a statement of John's power and influence rather than a serious military stronghold; despite a walled outer court and a deep moat, it is on "an almost ludicrously ill-defended site".

Its design is said to have been based on the Bastille in Paris, and it incorporated features drawn from French practice. The most obvious are probably the towers, which had projecting battlements and, from a sketch of 1644, conical roofs.

Sir Richard Prater, a rich Londoner, had bought the castle in the 1570s for £2,000. The reconstruction shown below is a representation of the building in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, drawing together all that is known about the complete castle following Sir Richard's extensive modernisation of the building. His descendant, also Richard, held the castle for the king during the Civil War. However, it was lost to Sir

Thomas Fairfax, commanding Cromwell's forces, in 1645. The siege only lasted 2 days and ended when larger cannon arrived and blasted a hole in the north-west wall.

Thereafter it was ruined by Parliamentary order, particularly by removing the battlements and roofs. State guardianship started in 1926, with clearance of plants and rubble, consolidation of the fabric and the re-excavation of the moat. It is now looked after by English Heritage and can be visited free of charge.



**Geoff Taylor**

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### **The Oldest House in Wimborne?**

St Joseph's, 5 King Street, Wimborne, is opposite the Minster and right next to the Methodist Church car park. It is said to have been built in the 1540s, though I've not found anything to prove that date. Nevertheless, the Royal Commission (RCHM) put it as "of 16<sup>th</sup> century origin", whilst the Listed Building Schedule says it probably dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In looking for the 'oldest house', I'm considering the dating of a building's significant, upstanding and visible remains. Clearly many of the houses (or what were previously houses) in the centre of Wimborne, as elsewhere, will be built on plots that go back well beyond 1540, and may even retain some of the original layout or foundations. I have no doubt that some retain structural elements which are older, though mostly unknown and probably hidden.



It is clear from the photographs that alterations have been made to St Joseph's, but also that a good deal remains of the original town house. In fact, the RCHM says that it has only minor 18<sup>th</sup> century additions, although the wall facing the car park has clearly been altered, with the timber framing replaced by fairly poor brickwork in the front half and an apparently recent lean-to replacement at the very front. Although the ground floor window facing King Street seems to be a replacement, the first floor and attic windows are believed to be original.

The stairs also seem likely to have been moved from their original position, which was probably alongside the fireplace, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Deeply chamfered beams across the ground and first floor ceilings are also original, although many of the smaller cross beams are replacements. Perhaps the most obvious internal change is the very poor brickwork above and alongside the main fireplace. This backs onto the replacement brickwork on the outside of the house, so it seems that there were structural problems in this area at some time. The small sizes of most of the external replacement brickwork suggest that this was some centuries ago.



I was told that the house was almost derelict in the 1980s, but was renovated by the Council (?), after which the late owner, David Sims, bought it. The relevant Royal Commission volume was published in 1975, so clearly couldn't take account of any alterations in the 1980s. St Joseph's was first listed in 1952, and it isn't clear whether the listing has ever been updated (probably not).

The house is Grade II listed, like the vast majority of the 170 listed buildings in Wimborne. As you can imagine, I haven't been able to check them all to find out if any houses are said to be older. Old Manor Farm House (II\*), about a mile east of the centre, originally had a moat, of which much remains. It is recorded as "C16 origin, altered and part rebuilt C17, enlarged C18 and C19", so could be of a similar age to St Joseph's. The "Priest's House", as it's recorded (II\* and now the Museum of East Dorset, of course), is stated to be a late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century hall house. However, as covered in Vanessa's article in the May 2021 newsletter, *Historic house reveals its secrets*, many hidden earlier features were uncovered during the Museum's renovations. In particular, the earliest Purbeck limestone phases of the house had previously been obscured; they do appear typical of the medieval period, and are likely to date before 1500.

There are just two Grade I listings: Wimborne Minster, clearly much older in parts but not a house, and the 'manor house' – Deans Court, whose website claims Saxon origins. According to that, the earliest part was within the Saxon monastery founded in 705, probably the house of the Abbesses, then the Deanery to the College of the Minster from 1043 until the Reformation. John Hanham acquired it in 1548 and his descendants still live there. The website says "the Saxon hall was remodelled in 1868", with other building and alterations that look to have removed all upstanding traces of the earlier house. It may be that the Hanhams have further evidence but, as far as I can tell, the claims about the monastery and Deanery are fanciful. That isn't to say that they are definitely wrong, just that there appears to be no evidence that these claims are true. The listing and RCHM effectively dismiss the claims without even commenting on the monastery, whilst the house is "said to stand on the site of the mediaeval Deanery" with nothing visible of the medieval structure.

I was intrigued to see that Mr Sims had paid £100 in 2007 for a 10 year lease on the St Joseph's house in Wimborne Model Town & Gardens, a generous donation as he was required to pay all costs and expenses in respect of the model building but not allowed to make any alterations to it. He could, at least, visit the Model Town to view the property at any time. This photograph of the model gives an idea of how the house looked around 1950, but a very limited one because of the way the model is constructed (it does not, for example, show the side



construction details). As you can see, at that time the original Methodist Church was still there. This imposing building was built in 1869, when the congregation moved from their chapel in the Corn Market, and replaced with the present building in 1967

A much better view of the earlier construction of St Joseph's is given by photographs from the archives of the Museum of East Dorset; all the black and white photographs here are reproduced with the kind permission of the Museum of East Dorset. This first one, of the side, is from about 1960, and comparison with the earlier photograph shows how the front corner has been altered. I would guess that this part of the house had continued to suffer from structural issues despite (or perhaps because of) the many earlier repairs.



This photograph of the front is from 1915. Relatively little seems to have changed there over the following half a century, but parts do appear to be in poor repair, including the corner. I would imagine that the fashionable 'Tudor' black and white of the front came with the 1980s renovation.

Vanessa was able to add something that I'd missed: "These two intriguing objects known as 'grotesques' are on display at the Museum of East Dorset. They were donated to the museum in 1993. These sculptured heads once stood on corbels at the eaves of St Joseph's and looked out over the Minster Church. They probably formed the ends of an ornamental barge-board that covered the horizontal timbers of the roof. Today, they have been replaced by modern versions."



Perhaps you can add more to the story of St Joseph's, even about the origin of the name which I've not found? Otherwise, as far as I have been able to research details, it seems to me the St Joseph's has a reasonable claim to be the oldest inhabited house in Wimborne, but it's clearly not proven.

**Geoff Taylor/Vanessa Joseph/Dave Keig**

## EDAS PROGRAMME

Unless otherwise stated, and subject to any coronavirus restrictions, lectures are from 7:30 at St Catherine's Church Hall, Lewens Lane, Wimborne, BH21 1LE.

2022			
<b>Wed 9<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Lecture	<b>Richard Hobbs</b>	Hinton St Mary Mosaic: Fieldwork & excavations
<b>Wed 14<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Lecture	<b>Mike Gill</b>	Redefining the Neolithic Map: Recent work on Cranborne Chase and Avon Valley long barrows
2023			
<b>Wed 11<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Lecture	<b>Julian Richards</b>	The last wild Britain: the Mesolithic people at Springhead
<b>Wed 8<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Lecture	<b>Neil Meldrum</b>	Ancient China
<b>Wed 8<sup>th</sup> March</b>	AGM & lecture	<b>To be announced</b>	Subject tbd – recent EDAS work
<b>Wed 12<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Lecture	<b>Peter Cox</b>	40 years of archaeology in Dorset
<b>Wed 10<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Lecture	<b>Clare Randall</b>	The manor of Putton and the potential of medieval archaeology in Dorset

## DISTRICT DIARY

Some AVAS date are to be added and some of the Blandford Group's meeting details are provisional – watch this space!

2022			
<b>Wed 16<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Dorset folklore and traditional tales from the oral tradition	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Tim Laycock
<b>Thu 17<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Islands of Stone: Neolithic crannogs in the Outer Hebrides	<b>AVAS</b>	Dr Stephanie Blankshein
<b>Thu 17<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Experimental Archaeology at Wytch Farm	<b>Blandford Society</b>	Derek Pitman
<b>Wed 7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	The last wild Britain: Mesolithic people at Springhead	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Julian Richards
<b>Thu 15<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Title tbc	<b>AVAS</b>	Hayden Scott-Pratt
2023			
<b>Wed 18<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Meyer: a rebel with a cause	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Graham Knott
<b>Thu 19<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Bronze Age - Iron Age houses	<b>Blandford Society</b>	Olivia Britter
<b>Thu 19<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Experimental Health: Cræfting a Better Wellbeing	<b>AVAS</b>	Megan Russell
<b>Wed 15<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Rockbourne Roman Villa	<b>Wareham Society</b>	John Smith
<b>Thu 16<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Predicting the location of Neolithic Sites	<b>Blandford Society</b>	Alex ...
<b>Wed 15<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Update on Hadrian's Wall	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Mark Corney

<b>Thu 16<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Medieval ...	<b>Blandford Society</b>	Cindy ...
<b>Wed 19<sup>th</sup> April</b>	What's in a name? A history of Wareham through street names	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lilian Ladle
<b>Thu 20<sup>th</sup> April</b>	The Congresbury Kiln Assemblage.	<b>AVAS</b>	Amy Thorp
<b>Thu 20<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Archaeology and Mental Health	<b>Blandford Society</b>	Megan Russel
<b>Wed 17<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Dorset Churches	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Gordon Le Pard

### Archaeology Societies

- Avon Valley Archaeological Society: <http://www.avas.org.uk/>  
Meetings at Ibsley Village Hall, BH24 3NL (<https://ibsleyhall.co.uk/>), 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of month except June, July & August. Visitors £3.50; membership £10 pa.
- Blandford Museum Archaeology Group:  
<https://blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk/groups-and-projects/archaeology-group/>  
Meetings normally 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month September to May at Blandford Parish Centre, The Tabernacle, DT11 7DW. 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.
- The Christchurch Antiquarians: <https://christchurchantiquarians.wordpress.com/>  
No lecture programme but involved in practical archaeology projects. Membership £10 pa.
- Dorset Natural History & Archaeology Society: <http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/events>  
Events at various locations in Dorchester, usually ticketed
- Wareham and District Archaeology & Local History Society: Their website isn't updated but they are on the Wareham Chimes site [here](#), or contact Karen Brown at [karen.brown68@btinternet.com](mailto:karen.brown68@btinternet.com). Meetings at Furzebrook Village Hall, BH20 5AR, normally 7:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.