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# East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

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## NEWSLETTER – January 2023

*Wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year*

Many thanks to the good number of members who turned out on the very cold night of 14th December and, of course, to Mike Gill for his fascinating talk about finding new long barrows and other archaeological sites, summarised here as **Redefining the Neolithic map**.

Our first lecture of the year, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, features Julian Richards telling us about the Mesolithic people at Springhead, Dorset. Until the end of the Mesolithic, around 4500 BC, people lived as part of the natural world, before the introduction of farming in the Neolithic brought the end of the last truly wild Britain.

The article on **Mudlarking (along the Thames)** partly came about from a conversation with a friend who is a keen metal detectorist. In some respects these hobbies are similar to archaeological excavation, especially for people like my friend who is keen to identify, record and report finds.

Thank you to our member Gill Vickery, who now lives in Bath, for a follow-up to the November Zoom lecture by Richard Hobbs summarised in the last newsletter. The subject – **The Hinton St Mary mosaic** – relates to part of her recently completed MPhil thesis, on which she has promised to write a little more in future. Many congratulations to Gill for her achievement.

The article on **St Leonard's Church and the Beauchamp Almshouses, Newland** might give you an idea of somewhere to visit if you're in the Malvern area. It was also an excuse to include some photos of its lovely interior.

Alan has sent the 53<sup>rd</sup> **Weblinks** and **Highlights** – short this month for good reason, as you'll see. There's also the 50<sup>th</sup> **View from Above** and the 6<sup>th</sup> **From the Archives**, looking at early issues of the Dorset Proceedings.

The **EDAS Programme** and **District Diary** complete the newsletter, as usual.

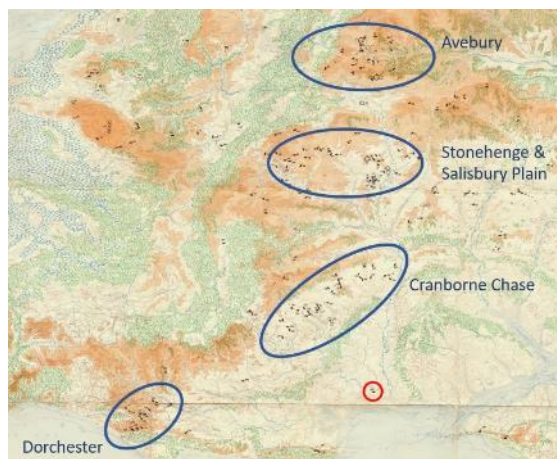
*Geoff Taylor*

## Redefining the Neolithic map: recent work on the long barrows of Cranborne Chase and the Avon Valley: Lecture by Mike Gill

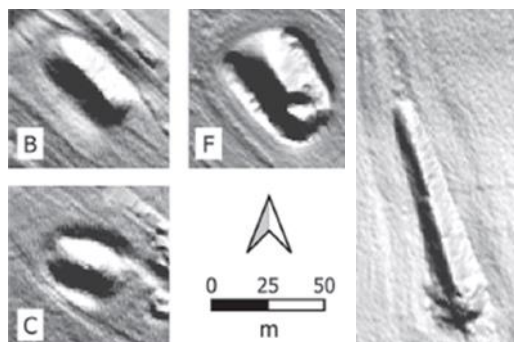
Mike is a member of the Avon Valley Archaeological Society (AVAS); as Jo Crane says, “the highly skilled driver of their recent fieldwork”, and particularly of their geophysical surveys that take advantage of the LoCATE Project. This collaboration between Bournemouth University and the New Forest National Park provides access to advanced survey equipment – resistivity meters and gradiometers – and training, without which none of this fieldwork would have been possible.

A starting point to discovering the known long barrows is the Ordnance Survey’s 1932 publication, *Map of Neolithic Wessex*, which also includes a gazetteer (a pdf can be downloaded [here](#)). Their distribution map is shown here with the four main groupings.

Additional information comes from several other publications, e.g. those listed at the end. All of these include possible long barrows that have proven not to be, whilst new ones continue to be found, especially by Mike and AVAS. They would, of course, prefer to find new long barrows, but correctly identifying suggested long barrows and other features is clearly also valuable new knowledge.



The Cranborne Chase group is on chalk geology, once thought to be a pre-requisite. There was a lack of identified long barrows along the Avon, except for the red circled ‘outlier’ at Holdenhurst on gravel, excavated in 1936. Although long known, it seems to have simply been considered to be an anomaly.



Long barrows come in many shapes and sizes, with these just a selection of those in Mike’s article in the Dorset Proceedings<sup>1</sup> (© Michael Gill). Overall they range in length roughly from 20-120m (deciding where the ends actually are/were makes finding the exact length difficult). They are rarely quite as obvious as Pentridge 20 below, though many still have some form of mound even if, like Chettle long barrow, it would probably not easily be seen. Mounds may be considerably altered or flattened, but ditch cuts

remain underground – often the main clue on aerial photographs.

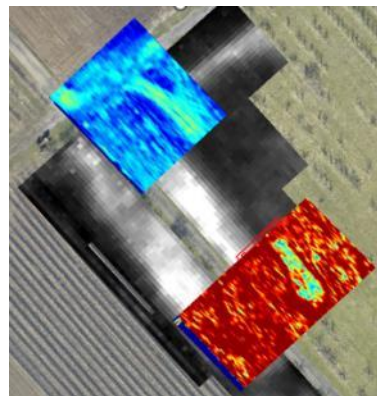
Long barrows are Britain’s earliest monuments, from the early Neolithic c. 3800-3500 BC. They may be earth mounds incorporating wooden mortuary structures or, like West Kennet, megalithic, i.e. with stone chambers (see January 2020 newsletter, p.9). Some long barrows have no human remains at all, and where they do the bones are often disarticulated. These are clearly large monuments and fairly rare, so that we are lucky to have such a concentration of them in this area.



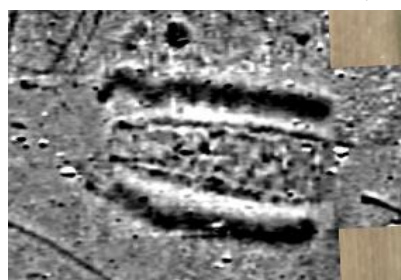
Mike took us through the many new examples that they have found. I can’t cover all of them in this summary, but have tried to give a range of the sources of evidence that can lead to confirmation (or not) of a site. Documentary evidence is relatively uncommon as the first thing that suggests a new site, but that is how their first discovery came about. That was a new long barrow at Sopley, near Christchurch –

well away from the main distribution but not far east of the Holdenhurst outlier.

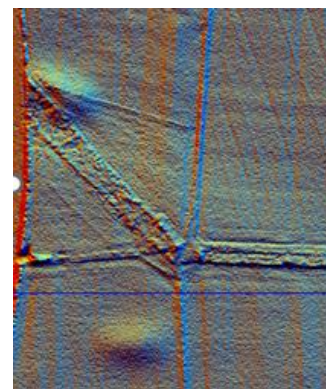
A fuller story of the excellent detective work that led to this site is covered in an article in the December 2019 newsletter, p.10-11, which you can find on our website. This was a barrow that was destroyed by WWII Winkton Airfield, but 1861 reports in *The Gentleman's Magazine* about the newly formed Christchurch Archaeological Association gave clues about its existence and location. Various historical map searches narrowed it down, along with reference to a website with memories of the airfield. Sue Newman even tracked down the son of a churchman who had complained to the officer in charge about the destruction of the barrow (he offered to put it back!). A resistivity survey, avoiding strawberries and fruit trees, clearly located it, whilst ground penetrating radar clearly showed the side ditches. A small section showed that its construction was very similar to the Holdenhurst barrow, and it is much the same size.



A mile further east, another long barrow was found near Bransgore, particularly by looking at aerial photographs taken in different years. This one is perhaps the best, and serves to show how the clues to a site aren't often easy to spot. This new long barrow, two new ones near Fordingbridge bypass, a new one near Downton and a couple of others are partly covered in the March 2020 newsletter, p.10-11. A clear clue to the long barrows at Fordingbridge, both on gravel by the Avon, was when LIDAR first became available, as shown right, although they had initially



been thought possible from Google Earth images. Prior to this, Mound 1 at the top was also obscured by foliage on the field edge. Magnetometer results for Mound 2 show curious kinks in one of the ditches, whilst the apparent offset of the trapezoidal feature might show two phases of construction.

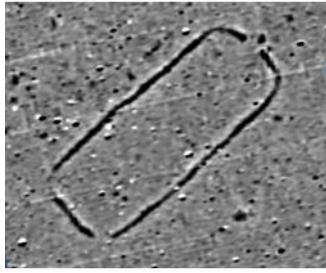


Similar suggestions of more than one construction phase are also seen elsewhere, e.g. a kink in the ditch of Chettle House long barrow. There are also suggestions of different work teams constructing the barrows, perhaps clearest in a section through Beckhampton Road long barrow near Avebury, with distinctively different fills in blocks along the barrow. That also seems to be the case with Mound 2 here, where aerial photographs show a distinctive lighter oblong area.

Sometimes, if rarely, new possibilities can be seen from the ground, as with Mike's lockdown walks around Old Sarum. In a field with a known long barrow and several ring ditches, he spotted this crop mark of two lines suggesting the ditches of a long barrow. It is mentioned in an article in Volume 114 of the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, but a full survey has yet to be done.

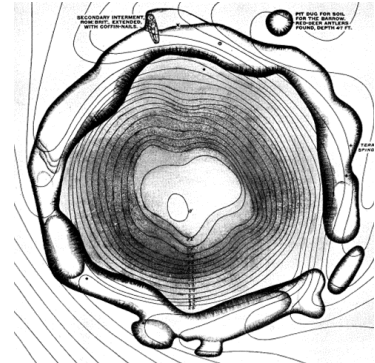


The new long barrow found near East Martin, west of Downton, is covered in the May 2021 newsletter, p.10-11, along with many other ancient features. The Royal Commission aren't always right and had this as "of unknown origin". Aerial photographs from Sue and Jo, and from the very useful *Historic England Aerial Photo Explorer*, seem very clear, and the mound is visible on the ground. Survey proved it; it's actually the longest in the southern groups (Dorset, Hampshire, Cranborne Chase) at 112m, longer than Wembley Football pitch. Jo and Sue spotted a shorter one to the west of Martin, only a few km away, which survey showed to have a probable pit at one end, something seen on some other long barrows.

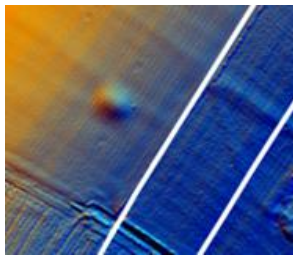


An apparently similar feature closer to Martin proved to be a long enclosure, probably mortuary in purpose, as shown left. A very similar, though longer, mortuary enclosure is only a little further west at Pentridge, close to the end of the Dorset Cursus and next to Bokerley Dyke. This is an area rich in ancient remains, including 3 clearly visible long barrows; there are two end-to-end right by the Cursus terminal, the third being Pentridge 20 pictured above. Their survey revealed a

ploughed out barrow next to Pentridge 20 that is very irregular like the one shown here just north of Wor Barrow (November 2020 newsletter, p.13-14); they are actually Neolithic rather than Bronze Age.

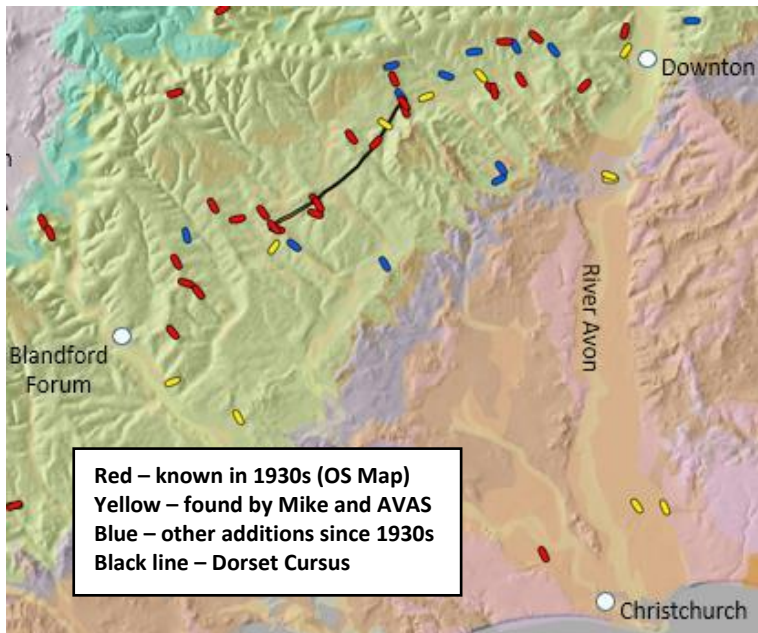


Nearby Pentridge 26, close to the cursus (in white), is scheduled as a bowl barrow, but this LIDAR view suggested it may not be. Sue & Jo's



aerial photograph made it very clear that it's actually a long barrow, and very similar to Wor Barrow. Investigation of another round barrow near Gussage St Michael gave very similar results. Illustrating another source of potential sites, a long barrow near Tarrant Keyneston was first spotted on Bing Maps.

I've shown LIDAR and survey results without comment, but these all result from Mike manipulating data to show things in the clearest way possible. But this data can also be used in a variety of other ways with suitable software, often built by Mike. For example, viewshed analysis shows what can be seen from a particular point, and it's often the case that two or more long barrows are intervisible. LIDAR images can be 'turned' to give side views, with heights exaggerated to bring out features, and so on.



I've cut this map down to fit it in, so that it doesn't show all the relevant long barrows, but there's enough here to show just how much Mike and AVAS, with support from Christchurch Antiquarians, have discovered. Long barrows are not just on the chalk (light green) and they are in the Avon Valley where there may be more, although hard to find given how much it has been cultivated.

Clearly Mike gets out into the field whenever he can to survey promising new sites. Other people spend a lot of time playing computer games, but Mike will be on his computer poring over images looking for promising new sites, or finding the best way to present information. It's not hard to decide which is most useful.



It will be no surprise that Mike's reports on what AVAS have found are of high quality, manipulating complex datasets to present them in understandable ways. They are normally available through the AVAS website and well worth reading. There's also:

1. M. Gill. 2021. Shedding New Light on the long barrows near the Dorset Cursus: A digital and geophysical approach. Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society 142

### Surveys

L.V. Grinsell, 1959, Dorset Barrows, DNHAS (and Wiltshire 1957)

Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset, Volume V: East, 1975, RCHME

Long Barrows in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, 1979, RCHME

P.S. Do you know any landowners in the Tarrant Hinton and Long Crichel area, where AVAS are looking for permissions to do surveys? If so, please let me know.

**Geoff Taylor**

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## **Mudlarking (along the Thames)**

I was motivated to write this article by a piece in the Telegraph online by Lara Maiklen, who had found what she most wanted to find after searching the Thames mud for 15 years. She doesn't use a metal detector, though many mudlarkers do, but prefers to search by eye – looking for the straight lines and perfect circles that aren't usually found in nature. For many, like Lara, the beep of the metal detector would be an intrusion into the experience - it's an escape from the city and the demands of modern living. I know that many metal detectorists feel similarly about their hobby, and both have been likened to fishing – on your own in the fresh air, getting some exercise but not doing a great deal for much of the time, and not necessarily getting much – but with the anticipation that you might. A bit like excavating.

For Lara then, her find was “the culmination of hours of searching in all weathers; of peering between stones and kneeling on wet sand, looking and looking and often finding nothing”. On a dark, deserted stretch of the Thames foreshore, in the same week the Portable Antiquities Scheme (“PAS”) announced its 1.5 millionth archaeological object, she found this medieval pilgrim's badge.



Such badges were made in huge numbers to be sold at the shrines pilgrims visited. Many would have visited the chapel of St. Thomas Becket (it seems “à Becket” isn't common usage any more) at London Bridge before heading to his shrine at Canterbury, returning with a badge pinned to their cloak or hat to show where they had been. A high

proportion of badges found by the Thames are of Becket, but this one is from the shrine of St Osmund in Salisbury, patron saint of insanity, mental illness, paralysis, and toothache! Osmund was Bishop of Salisbury and responsible for the first cathedral at Old Sarum. He died in 1099 but wasn't canonised until 1457; his tomb and shrine are in Salisbury Cathedral. Salisbury Museum has an identical badge, perhaps made from the same mould.



Mudlarking is the act of searching on the foreshore – the area between low and high tide – though the term is usually applied to searching along tidal river estuaries. All the foreshore in the UK has an owner, so that (in theory at least) searching and taking anything from the foreshore requires the permission of the owner. I have searched for the requirements on many rivers in England but it proved impossible to find more than very limited information; everything points back to London. So, permission may or may not be needed on your local estuary, but it certainly is for London.

Mudlarking – scavenging on the foreshore – seems to have started in 18<sup>th</sup> century London, but no doubt was happening elsewhere. The Thames was the largest port in the world, a vital link with the Empire and the rest of the world, with 11 miles on both sides of the river packed with docks, wharfs, warehouses, shipyards, markets, etc. Over 2,000 years of human activity along the river, countless objects must have been thrown or accidentally dropped into the water. The tides, erosion and activity on the water regularly reveal new items.

The original scavengers were often children, mostly boys, braving dangerous conditions to find anything they could sell, like coal, iron, copper nails and ropes, to help feed themselves and their families. They were mudlarking to survive, though their income was usually meagre and they were known for their tattered clothes, filth and smell. Henry Mayhew wrote in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), that one nine-year old had been mudlarking for 3 years, with bare legs and feet covered with chilblains and cuts from glass and metal when he sank in the mud to his knees.

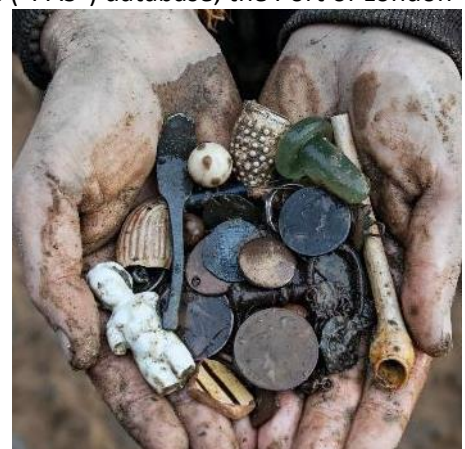


A mudlark was a recognised occupation until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, though today's mudlarkers are more interested in finding items that illuminate the history of the city than selling their finds. Lara lists things like glass trade beads bound for West Africa, an 18<sup>th</sup> century bone counter from the riverside pleasure garden in Vauxhall, a complete Bronze Age pot, Mesolithic flints and a 16<sup>th</sup> century wooden comb. The mud is anoxic and preserves organic materials, like the Roman woman's bone hairpin here, found by Jason Sandy and dated by the Museum of London to the first century AD. Another of his finds was this token of 1666, certainly from a dramatic year in London's history. It may, in fact, relate to the Great Fire as it was struck for Henry Hoppingham who had a haulage business in Devon, and perhaps was transporting materials for rebuilding the city.



Museums, particularly the Museum of London, have benefitted greatly from mudlarking finds in their collections, and from information on finds reported to them or identified by them. Large numbers of mudlarking finds also appear on the Portable Antiquities Scheme ("PAS") database; the Port of London Authority ("PLA"), who administer licences for the Thames, require finds over 300 years old to be reported to PAS. Of course, strictly speaking, all finds belong to the PLA or Crown Estates, who own some of the foreshore, though most can be kept by the finders.

For the Thames, at least, anyone searching the tidal foreshore from Teddington to the Thames Barrier – in any way for any reason – must hold a foreshore permit from the Port of London Authority. The full permit is £96 and valid for 3 years. A Standard Permit allows digging to a depth of 7.5 cm, but members of the Society of Thames Mudlarks and Antiquaries can have a Digging Permit which allows a maximum depth of 1.3 metres in some places. There is a strict limit on the number of digging permits and there is currently a waiting list for membership of the Society, for which you can only apply after 3 years with a Standard Permit and a history of reporting finds. One comment I saw said that the person had waited 6 years for membership.



The PLA apparently wish to discourage, at the very least, casual diggers because of the condition of the foreshore, presumably the reason why a day permit is £42 (valid for just one day in the month after purchase). River traffic has increased considerably over recent years, with the waves from each passing boat sucking away a little more of the foreshore. It seems the PLA would like to discourage all mudlarking, as there are many complaints online about the delay in receiving a full permit, even for renewals.



These photographs, taken 5 years apart, show erosion of the foreshore near Wapping.



Another reason for discouraging digging, especially casual digging, may simply be that the foreshore can be dangerous, not least because some parts can be very slippery, and with quite deep mud concealing sharp objects and even ammunition. The tidal range is 7-10m twice daily, currents are fast and the water is always cold (with those tides, of course, a day permit would only allow a few hours searching). One site also suggests avoiding areas near stormwater/ sewerage overflow pipes, for obvious reasons (it's about mudlarking generally, so may not apply to the Thames). For novices, an experienced guide sounds invaluable; as one comment about finding sites said, it's not hard to find maps of tidal rivers "but it's impossible to tell which are actually walkable and which are just death-traps of mud you'll sink up to your knees in."



Hundreds of garnets are found on the Thames foreshore each year, like these pictured by Jason Sandy, which look like pomegranates (which is where the name comes from). No-one can be certain how they got there. They're only found in certain areas and, since they're probably from India or Sri Lanka, these areas are presumably close to where the ships carrying them were docked. It's likely that many, perhaps most, came through the East India Company's trade routes. There are many theories as to how they ended up in the Thames, though it may simply be that the hessian bags in which they were carried accidentally fell

into the river. Jason likes the thought that dockworkers dropped a few bags into the river, intending to collect them from the foreshore later.

It seems that many of these garnets aren't of gem quality, or are too small to be of much use for modern jewellery. Few, if any, seem to have been faceted, although it can be hard to tell after long periods being moved by the tides. Smaller ones may have been used as abrasive agents in industrial processes after being ground up, as they are quite hard. It would be nice to think that some arrived in the Anglo-Saxon period to be used in jewelled items like those from the Sutton Hoo burial. With no British source for garnets, those used by the Anglo-Saxons certainly came from overseas; analysis has shown that many originated in Bohemia, but that some also came from India and Sri Lanka.



For anyone wanting to know more, these two books have received good reviews:

- Lara Maiklem, 2019, *Mudlarking: Lost and found on the River Thames*, Bloomsbury.
- Jason Sandy & Nick Stevens, 2021, *Thames Mudlarking: Searching for London's Lost Treasures*, Shire.

**Geoff Taylor**

## The Hinton St Mary mosaic

I appreciated being able to attend Richard Hobb's November *Zoom* lecture on Hinton St Mary as it complemented the talk given in October to Bath & Counties Archaeological Society by Peter Guest, the contracted excavator at the site in 2021 and 2022. One element of my MPhil thesis (of which more at a later date) looked at the continuing and late use of villa buildings; the iconography of mosaics and transformation of meaning from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. I had some questions after Peter's talk which I followed up, and these tie in with Richard's presentation.

One aspect of the history of the room which interests me is evidence of damage to the mosaic. The original photograph below (from RCHME [here](#)), and on-site photos taken at the time of excavation, show stone slabs placed over some of this damage. I assumed that these must have been found *in situ* as they were drawn and photographed in place, but I could not be sure they had not been placed there by excavators for stepping stones. Peter Guest could not help on this issue, so I wrote to David Neal (the original recorder of the mosaic). He replied that the slabs were indeed found upon excavation, and included in the original drawing because they were suggested as post pads. Furthermore, Kenneth Painter's report for the *British Museum Quarterly* (1967) indicates that these were stone roof tiles mortared into place.

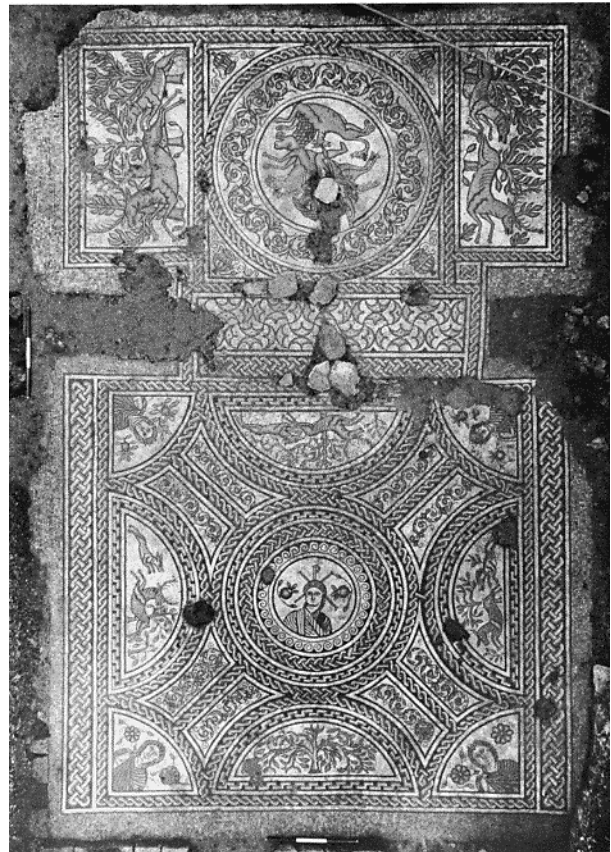
This suggests a deliberate attempt to preserve a functioning building, perhaps even after the complex was in decline. Furthermore, the pattern of damage and roof tiles suggest linear damage and repair, which could either indicate a well-worn (ceremonial?) path and/or standing areas, or perhaps later sub-divisions of the rooms for control of access and sight between the two.

David also pointed out an indentation of the southern wall in the "Christ" mosaic room, seen here but much clearer in his original drawing (*Roman Mosaics in Britain*, 1981, front cover). Cosh and Neal's 2005 volume of *Roman Mosaics of Britain* describes it as "alongside the south-east wall at Hinton St Mary was a parallel foundation, perhaps for a bench, which would be inappropriate in a dining room." They suggest that bipartite rooms were not dining rooms, as is so often argued.

One interpretation of this 'bench' could be as a type of *sedilia* – stone seats built into walls on the south side of church chancels near the altar, used by clergy during the course of services. If this is correct, then it would add weight for Christian practice within the building, which could have continued when the buildings were in disrepair with roof tiles re-used on the damaged mosaic surface.

The iconography of the mosaics is, of course, ambiguous. However, the early Christian church had no traditional practices or allegories of its own. As the religion was embraced by the Roman world, Graeco-Roman imagery was adopted by Christians along with Roman vocabulary and architecture. With the demise of the Roman state, this became associated with the Christian church rather than Roman culture. The mosaic, with its wear and tear, may represent a long sequence of activity and shifting beliefs and practices. The images and the bench function may therefore have been transformed in perception from their original intention.

The Chi-Rho was an accepted Greek symbol adopted by Christians: Constantine, for example, on his





conversion. The central image could be regarded both, and at different times, as Constantine (or Magnentius) and also as Christ. The image could, then, have blended beliefs for early Christians. Toynbee<sup>1</sup>, however, rejected the Emperor idea, as the bust carries no emblematic device. Instead, the central position of the bust could indicate Christ as the “Cosmocrator” surrounded by the dome of heaven. In this case the image of Christ is looking at the east wall, where the altar might be anticipated.

Toynbee also discussed the mosaic iconography within the understanding that, by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, images of everyday scenes represented allegorical meanings, particularly death and rebirth. Therefore, she proposed:

- Bellerophon and the chimera = Victory over Death and Evil.
- The four winds = The four Evangelists, their gospels carried to the four corners of the world.
- Hunting scenes = The natural world created by God, or the teeming life of Paradise.
- Spreading tree (an unusual subject for a mosaic) = The Tree of Life.
- Rosettes and pomegranates = Life and Immortality.

Of course, there may have been a long sequence of mutable beliefs and understandings. We will never be able to untangle how the mosaic was understood and the ways in which the room was used, but it does seem likely that it was in use for a longer period than the dating evidence can verify, and that possibly this continued as Christian practice.

1. Toynbee, J. 1964. A new Roman mosaic pavement found in Dorset. *Journal of Roman Studies*. 54: 1 & 2, 7-14

## ***Gill Vickery***

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### **St Leonard’s Church and the Beauchamp Almshouses, Newland**

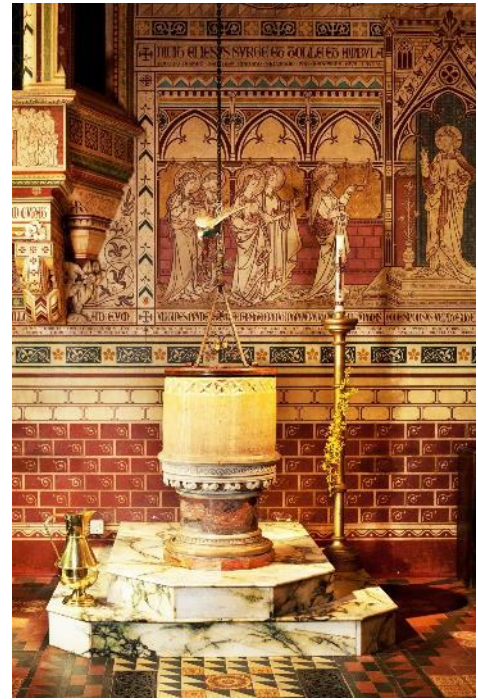
Newland is part of Malvern in Worcestershire, and my wife and I discovered this beautiful church on a visit there almost by accident. This article is really an excuse to show you just a few photographs of the remarkable interior.

The Beauchamp Almshouses (known as the Beauchamp Community) and St Leonard's Church were dedicated in 1864 for the benefit of the poor of the parish and retired workers from the Madresfield Estate. The estate is owned by the Lygon family, who have lived at moated Madresfield Court for almost 900 years, although the ‘manor’ is now mainly Victorian. Madresfield was the seat of the Earls Beauchamp, a title which died out on the death of the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl in 1979.



The Almshouses were the vision of Charlotte, Countess Beauchamp, early in the 1840s, to be financed by her dowry of £60,000 (of the order of £2.5m now). Sadly, she died in 1846 but her husband, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl, bequeathed the dowry to continue the work, mainly seen through by Frederick, who became the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl in 1866. Beauchamp Community is now a charity run by a board of Trustees, and provides “housing for poor people, usually of retirement age, who are able to live independently, and who are in Communion with the Church of England”. It has 45 flats and houses.

The first church at Newland was dedicated to St Michael around 1215 and rebuilt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was demolished in 1865 and St Leonard’s became the new parish church, though it is now ‘extra parochial’ and mainly serves the residents. St Leonard’s worship is generally Anglo Catholic, and it does attract locals who prefer this style. Some fixtures and fittings were re-used in the new church, most notably the 12<sup>th</sup> century font basin in one of the photographs. However, the main claims to fame are the frescoes, completed in the late 1870s and restored over the last few years



For more information about Madresfield Court see: <https://www.madresfieldstate.co.uk/>, whilst the Community and Church site is <https://www.beauchampstleonard.org/>. The latter has a lot of information and some better photographs, though I haven't got the written permission needed to reproduce them here. It also gives information on visiting, which can prove difficult – we were lucky to be able to simply have a look around as one of the officials was working in the church.



**Geoff Taylor**

## Weblink Highlights December 2022

Very few again this month, partly due to our move (and consequent lack of internet for 3 weeks!), and partly due to Christmas. However, many thanks to Geoff for sending me several links that I would otherwise have missed.

*Alan Dedden*

### November Weblinks No. 53

#### People In 2 Hidden Coffins In Notre Dame Spire Identified

[Notre Dame's spire had 2 hidden coffins beneath it. Now, scientists know who was buried there. | Live Science](#)

#### Tomb Of 'Jesus' Midwife Excavated

[Tomb of 'Jesus' midwife' excavated, revealing remarkable courtyard and oil lamps | Live Science](#)

#### Finds From Burial Mound Near Stonehenge Identified As Ancient Goldsmith's Toolkit

[Archaeologists say find near Stonehenge is ancient goldsmith's toolkit | Archaeology | The Guardian](#)

#### Nigeria Hails 'Great Day' As Horniman Museum Signs Over Looted Objects

[Benin Bronzes: Nigeria hails 'great day' as London museum signs over looted objects - BBC News](#)

#### 'Internationally Important' Medieval Necklace Found Near Northampton

[Medieval necklace found near Northampton 'internationally important' - BBC News](#)

#### More Finds From Rutland Roman Villa

[Rutland Roman villa: More finds discovered beneath farmer's field - BBC News](#)

#### Archaeologists Uncover Clues To Rievaulx Abbey Medieval Farm

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-63730202>

#### Oldest DNA Reveals 2 Million Year Old Lost World

[Oldest DNA reveals two-million-year-old lost world - BBC News](#)



CBA Wessex's January Newsletter can be found [HERE](#)  
EDAS gets a mention again this month

## From the Archives 6

The 6<sup>th</sup> volume of the Proceedings (1885) lists around 180 members, an increase of almost 80 over the 8 years since first publication. Honorary members had increased from 10 to 15 but, sadly, female membership seems to have declined a little, even allowing for the wives and daughters of male members.

This edition leans more to the Natural History side of the Society with only four ‘antiquarian’ papers. I wasn’t going to read anything further from Rev. Barnes after my comments in ‘From the Archives 5’, but two of these papers were from him so I felt I should, at least, skim them. The first, on the Roman invasion and Vespasian in Dorset, soon referred to Geoffrey of Monmouth’s 12<sup>th</sup> century *Historia Regum Britanniae*, or History of the Kings of Britain. This pseudo-historical account, originally *De gestis Britonum* (On the Deeds of the Britons) in the late 1130s, traces our rulers back to Brutus of Troy. It was very popular and mostly taken as factual for several hundred years, but was certainly given little credence by 1885. However, Barnes bases his article on the Welsh version, *Brut y Brenhinedd* (Chronicle of the Kings), despite that being mainly a translation of Geoffrey’s book, though some versions also include commentary and stories from bardic traditions.



Vortigern, king of the Britons, and Ambros watching a fight between two dragons, from a 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of *Historia Regum Britanniae*.

I still made the mistake of looking at Barnes’ second article, about the Belgae tribe in Britain, but soon found it based on similarly credulous notions. There follows a paper by Dr Wake Smart which destroys much of what Barnes had written in the previous volume about Bokerley Dyke (although addressed to Rev W Barnes with “... any statement that falls from your pen I receive with unfeigned respect ...”). Some of Dr Smart’s views would not find favour now, but he was helping to advance knowledge by clearly setting out his arguments and acknowledging which were conjectural. He need not have been too concerned about a reaction as Rev Barnes’ died in 1886; he was then 85, so a very good age for the time.

The final article in this volume is a short description and accurate sketch of what was then referred to locally as the Druid’s Temple, or Druidical Circle, at Poxwell about 8km SE of Dorchester (SY745835). Set



on a ridge with extensive views, Hutchins (1774) simply called this a “circle” of 15 stones, whilst an 1871 paper said it was the “remains of a Sepulchral Memorial”. The latter seems correct, as what is now referred to as the ‘Poxwell Cairn Circle’ is considered to be an integral part of a Bronze Age burial mound, now almost destroyed. It was probably originally a continuous stone wall inside the barrow. The surrounding ditch, which seemed to have almost disappeared in the century after Hutchins’ book, is said to be faintly visible even now.

**Geoff Taylor**

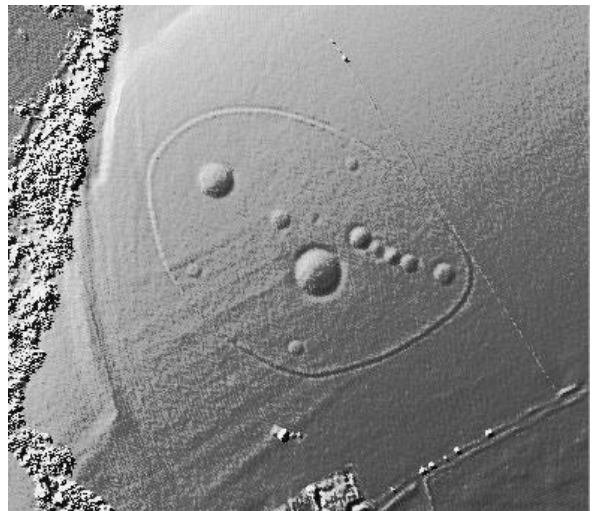
## View from Above No. 50: Winterbourne Stoke

*Photo by Sue  
Newman  
and Jo Crane*



The photograph shows a group of Bronze Age barrows within an earthwork enclosure on Fore Down, Winterbourne Stoke. The monument is in Wiltshire, just 5km west of Stonehenge. A larger cemetery containing all the different types of barrow (bowl, bell, disc, saucer and pond), many aligned on a Neolithic long barrow, is close to the A303/A360 roundabout to the south-east.

Although these barrows are all mounds, as you can tell from the LIDAR image, you may see them looking like depressions (at least I have sometimes!). Ten are bowl barrows and one a saucer barrow – the 4<sup>th</sup> from the bottom right in the alignment from south-east to north-west. Its mound is 10.5m in diameter and now 0.5m high, with a ditch 2m wide and bank 3m wide, partly truncated by the adjacent bowl barrows' ditches. Clearly it was earlier than them.



The largest barrow is 31m in diameter and 1.8m high. As far as I can see, it doesn't show the usual central hole resulting from 19<sup>th</sup> century digging. In fact, all these barrows are known to have been dug then, and it is perhaps surprising that all survive as earthworks. Almost all showed evidence of burials, both inhumations and cremation. Recorded grave goods include Bronze Age pottery, a bone arrowhead and drinking cups.

The date of the earthwork enclosure isn't known, though it has been suggested as medieval.

**Geoff Taylor**

## EDAS PROGRAMME 2023

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.

<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

<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>	Rockin' all over the world: Stone – an archaeological view	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lilian Ladle
<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>	Churches, chalices and baths: Recent work 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>Thu 16<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Impacts of environmental/ climate change on human communities over 800,000 yrs	<b>AVAS</b>	Alex Brown and Sander Aerts
<b>Wed 19<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Down to earth: the story of Sandford Pottery	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Patrick Andrews
<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
<b>Wed 21<sup>st</sup> June</b>	What's in a name?: A history of Wareham through its street names	<b>Wareham Society</b>	Lilian Ladle

### Archaeology Societies

- Avon Valley Archaeological Society: <http://www.avas.org.uk/>  
Meetings at Ibsley Village Hall, BH24 3NL (<https://ibshyhall.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.