



Founded 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

Charity No: 1171828

www.dorset-archaeology.org.uk

mail@dorset-archaeology.org.uk



<https://www.facebook.com/dorset.archaeology>

Edited by Geoff Taylor, email: geoffnsue@hotmail.co.uk, Tel: 01202 840166

224 Leigh Road, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2BZ

NEWSLETTER – September 2023

The new 'season' of lecture meetings starts on Wednesday 13th September with *The Rise & Decline of Bournemouth & Poole Tramways* by Gordon Bartlet. The tram system linked rival communities and, as Gordon will cover, sometimes united and sometimes divided them. He will also look at where the relics are.

As ever, the meeting is at St Catherine's Church Hall in Wimborne from 7:30pm.

No summary of the last lecture this month as, of course, it was in the Midsummer Newsletter. Instead, many thanks to Robin Dumbreck for giving us an insight into the experience of being involved in Bournemouth University's ongoing excavations at Winterborne Kingston: **The 'Big Dig' 2023**.

Thanks to John Oswin for telling me about **Gill's Big Day** and to the participants for information about the courses they attended under the auspices of the **Teffont Archaeology Project**.

They're followed by an article from me, written quite a while back when I came across much of this information 'by accident', but for which there never seemed space: **Disastrous fires in Dorset**. I sometimes ask for information on newsletter articles but, sadly, often get very little back. In this case I really would be interested to know of any major fires in Dorset that I've missed, or anything more about those I've covered – please use my personal email address above.

Vanessa and I continue to provide short articles for our 40th anniversary, covering the 40 'items' members felt represented Dorset. This month we're half way with: **Wareham Walls, Red finger posts, Maumbury Rings and Port and settlement, Hengistbury Head**.

If Alan's Weblinks No. 58 was a bumper edition, this month's **Weblinks No. 59** is a mega list covering August and the last half of July, with items that should prove fascinating whatever your particular interests. I'm grateful to him for continuing to provide us with this information, and his **Weblink Highlights**, over such a long time.

Of course I'm equally grateful to Sue Newman and Jo Crane for the aerial photographs that underpin View from Above. This month it's the last in a short series: **View from Above No. 56: Tenantry Farm, part 3. From the Archives 11** continues that series, now looking at the 1892 issue of the 'Dorset Proceedings'.

The **EDAS Programme** and **District Diary** conclude the newsletter as usual, with the programmes from our other nearby societies now starting to fill up.

Geoff Taylor

The CBA Wessex September newsletter is [here](#), including a link to this year's Pitt Rivers lecture at Bournemouth University on 31st October

The 'Big Dig' 2023

Bournemouth University's (BU) 'Big Dig' continued this year with their field school from 5th June to 7th July, in which EDAS members were invited to participate. About a dozen EDAS members took up the opportunity, which was done without charge. Access to an excavation free of cost is a rare and valuable privilege; BU used to charge for this, as do most other organisations. We owe a massive thanks to the university and especially to Miles Russell, site director, for this opportunity.

The Durotriges Project started in 2009, to investigate Iron Age life before the Romans and to look at how Britons and Romans actually interacted. This was to be an objective approach, moving away from the dramatic interpretation of Roman 'histories' with Vespasian's legions defeating Durotrigian resistance and then eradicating their culture and identity. The main focus of excavation is, and was, north of Winterborne Kingston, but surveys and ground interventions have been done elsewhere in Dorset. Discoveries range from an Early Bronze Age cemetery to a small Roman villa, but are mainly from the Iron Age and native peoples which are the focus of the project. In particular, many Late Iron Age roundhouses and associated features show that there was an extensive settlement in the area, one of the biggest in Britain. It has been called 'Duropolis'.

This year's field school and training excavation was, again, at North West Farm, Winterborne Kingston. The excavation site is north of the main farm buildings, up a ¼ mile track on the edge of the farm (with a ride uphill possible for those arriving on time). The River Winterborne runs through the lower fields of the farm and eventually joins the Stour at Sturminster Marshall.

The university had opened the dig to volunteers this year, with an additional trench of about 100m² for them, shown here during the first week. The volunteer trench (trench L) attracted many different excavators this year, a good proportion from EDAS (like Vanessa shown below in an Iron Age pit), but also including locals, work experience school students, and even family holiday groups.



Trench L was under the overall management of Dave Stewart, who many of you will know as an EDAS member with strong connections to Bournemouth University's Archaeology Department (for example doing the geophysics at Lake Farm Roman Fortress as pictured in the last newsletter). He has been involved in these excavations for many years and also had the assistance of 2nd and 3rd year students who were the designated 'trench supervisors'. This meant that there was plenty of help and advice, including on the administration forms, procedures and identification of finds, all within easy reach.

This year the weather was very hot, which meant little time was lost to adverse weather. The team of excavators were well supplied with fresh water and shade during the breaks. At the start of each day the organisers gave a briefing on progress and 'housekeeping' matters. At the end of each week everyone was taken round to see the progress on the whole site. It was interesting to see other features and it helped to understand the overall context of the ditches and pits.

Below is a selection of the finds I was able to photograph, many still to be cleaned up by the finds team.



Found by Phil D'Eath in the first week; probably sheep



An early pot sherd found by Rupert Hardy

There were, of course many other finds of pottery and bone, both human and animal, some ritually deposited at the base of pits. Various other artefacts included loom weights, a bone comb and a needle, some included as grave goods. At the end of week four of the dig, an open day was arranged for the general public to show them the excavations, finds and provide information on the interpretation of the site.



Shaped antler, probably a tool, possibly Bronze Age

In conclusion, I would say it's very satisfying to be the first person to see an artefact for the first time in several thousand years. The people in trench L were all very supportive, helpful and willing to assist anyone who needed help. A big thank you to Dave Stewart for coping with the difficulties of a range of volunteers of varying experience and often intermittent attendance. It was well worth attending and I can recommend it for anyone who wants to understand modern archaeological practices.

Robin Dumbreck

Gill's Big Day

Just after the Midsummer Newsletter went out, we had news of Gill Vickery's graduation ceremony for her MPhil thesis on "Continuity and Change in the British Roman Lifescape of East Dorset c. AD 350-650". You may remember the article she kindly wrote about it in the May Newsletter, particularly about excavations at Witchampton in the 1920s and the (probably) Anglo-Saxon chess pieces found there and now in the British Museum (if they've not been stolen!).

The ceremony was at Cardiff University on 22nd July, and here is Gill in all her glory with an obviously very proud John. Very well done to her.

John Oswin/Geoff Taylor



Teffont Archaeology Project

You'll no doubt remember the various messages about this project in south-west Wiltshire, run by Dr David Roberts at Cardiff University in conjunction with the Chase and Chalke Landscape Partnership. The ongoing project, started in 2008 through York University, aims to uncover the heritage of Teffont Magna and Teffont Evias, this year looking at a Roman settlement site in the latter village. They kindly offered us digging/training opportunities – not just without charge but even covering expenses. The Open Day on 19th August was also advertised.

However, David also very kindly offered EDAS two free places on each of two two-day courses on Roman pottery with Dr Rachael Seager Smith (Wessex Archaeology) and on Zooarchaeology with Dr Clare Rainsford (freelance, ex York Archaeological Trust). They were taken up by Mark Johnson (both), Heather Tidball (zooarchaeology) and Bart Wordsworth (pottery) and look to have



proved worthwhile in expanding knowledge amongst our members.

Heather said “The course was really interesting and reminded me of things I thought I had long since forgotten as well as teaching me lots of stuff I never knew”. Bart said they

“covered such a stimulating array of diagnostic approaches, and relevant reference books that my head is still swimming!”. He thought it was a privilege to have attended, but now needs some fieldwork to put it into practice.

Mark told me that both courses were fun and informative, including a tour of the excavation and their evolving thoughts on interpretation. They were both ‘hands on’, giving the basics of the subjects as well as more specific details and then involvement in handling and identifying, as relevant, bones and potsherds found on site. He concluded that “I hope that [the courses] can be rolled out to other archaeological societies and groups across the UK, as I believe David hopes to”.

While I know that the Teffonts are some distance for many of our members, I hope that we can, in some small way, be involved in future work there and hear more of what they found.

Mark Johnson/Heather Tidball/Bart Wordsworth



Disastrous fires in Dorset

Large fires were common in the post-medieval period with buildings, mainly of timber and roofed with thatch, huddled close together along narrow streets and lanes. Dorset had a number of disastrous ‘Great Fires’, as in London, that destroyed large parts of towns or villages. In some cases, information about these fires is relatively easy to find, albeit occasionally contradictory. Searching for other ‘known’ fires produces limited results and conflicting dates, with some not even mentioned on sites purportedly giving the history of the settlement. For example, I have found nothing about the apparently disastrous fires in Affpuddle (1741) or Puddletown (1753).

No doubt more could be found from delving into documentary archives, which I’ve not done (for example, I know from Alan Dedden’s article in the September 2022 newsletter that Sixpenny Handley suffered at least 3 big fires before the one described here), but do let me know if you know of other major fires or more about the ones here.

Dorchester 1613

Details may be incorrect as the few and limited sources do differ. After an exceptionally hot and dry

summer, with a strong breeze (features of many of the fires below), the fire started on 6th August after a candle maker spilt boiling tallow in his workshop. Hutchins records, perhaps exaggeratedly, that the fire razed 300 homes – wiping out two-thirds of the town, with the eastern part most affected. Another feature of this, and many accounts below, is that the fire happened at harvest time, so that many people were away from their homes.

It seems that only one person was killed, and there are several stories of people's actions. One lady saved her own possessions at the expense of the inn where she was resident, and the Town Bailiffs rolled 40 barrels of gunpowder away from the Shire Hall. Prisoners in the town jail were given buckets of water to aid in saving the building; 5 were pardoned for their efforts.

The conviction that the fire was 'God's judgement' was part of the reason Dorchester became the most Puritanical town in England. A high proportion of emigrants to the New World from Dorset ports were those badly affected by the fire, with many settling in 'new' Dorchester, now just a naval base and bay in Boston. The suburbs of Boston include Wareham, Milton and Weymouth.

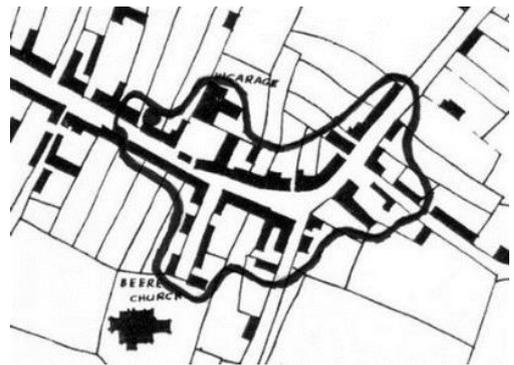
As far as I can tell, such compensation as became available was unfairly distributed, the 'great and good' benefitting most. It seems that reformation of the town was generally agreed to be needed, but seems to have consisted more of sermonising than rebuilding in a more fire-resistant way.

Bere Regis 1633

William Whiteway's diary records: "1633, Aug 29. This day the town of Bere Regis was burnt, the most part of it to the ground, with great quantity of corn. The loss is valued at £20,000. The country sent them about £500 speedily to relieve their present want.

Dorchester sent them in about £40." This is the only record and may well have been exaggerated, as £20,000 would be over £14m today.

Other large fires are recorded for 1634, 1644, 1717, 1723 and 1767, though details are limited. The "Great Fire of Bere", in June 1788, began at The Crown pub on West Street with the westerly breeze carrying it into the heart of the village. The vicarage and the parish registers were lost, but the church was saved, as shown on the map. An appeal raised £1,280, distributed in proportion to people's losses based on a judgement of need, the worst affected receiving 70% and the least 37.5%.



Beaminster, 1644

Although Beaminster was held for Parliament in the Civil War, it was occupied in 1644 by soldiers of the Royalist army of Prince Maurice, who started a major fire by firing muskets into the thatched roofs of the houses. Starting in North Street, the blaze took most of the town, 144 houses in total, with only East Street and part of Church Street spared. There was another major fire in 1684 (Hutchins says 1686 or 7), when a large part of the town, including the Market House and shambles, was burnt down, and other sources report a further large fire in 1741.

Sturminster Newton, 1729

All I could find was that the devastating fire of 1729 (some sources say 1730) seems to have destroyed much of the northern part of the town, with many buildings being replaced in the mid-late 18th century. However, the town plan seems to have changed little since the 16th century.

Blandford, 4th June 1731

The 'Great Fire' destroyed around 90% of the town, about 300 buildings (some say 480) as well as much of nearby Bryanston and Blandford St. Mary villages, with over a dozen people thought to have been killed. The blaze started around 2pm in a tallow chandler's shop, from having too large a fire under boiling soap, and spread rapidly, with most of the damage done by early evening. Surviving buildings (yellow on the map below) were often ones rebuilt in brick and tile after a smaller fire in 1713.

The fire coincided with a smallpox outbreak in the town, forcing the victims into the fields and

hedgerows. This actually contributed greatly to the understanding of the disease, as almost all of those forced out of domestic confinement survived.

Rebuilding was helped greatly by charity collections and even George II donated £1,300. Barrack-like temporary buildings were thrown up to help shelter the displaced families. Yet, despite the well-known dangers of closely packed buildings, narrow medieval streets and thatched roofs, the only change in layout was to widen the Market Place.

Wareham, 25th July 1762

The fire destroyed about two thirds of the town, about 130 buildings in all, though it seems no-one was hurt.

It was said to have started when a servant at the Bull's Head threw hot ashes onto a rubbish heap, and was then fanned by the wind on that hot and sunny day. Firefighting proved totally inadequate and the blaze spread through buildings that were mainly timber framed with thatched roofs.

As in Blandford, support came quickly: Blandford send two cartloads of bread and cheese and help came from Poole and Bere Regis. A Special Act of Parliament resulted in an Appeal Fund which raised £7,400, including £500 from George III, against the estimated damage of £10,000 (some of which was insured). Unlike in Blandford, rebuilding was under strict rules requiring non-combustible materials and no new thatching. Thatched buildings in Wareham often mark the edge of the fire.

The fire nearly caused the loss of Hutchins' two volume *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*. Rev. John Hutchins was away from his rectory in Pound Lane at the time of the fire, but it is thought that his wife saved almost all of his collected information, though the building and John's library were lost. Publication came 12 years later, a year after John Hutchins' death.

Sixpenny Handley, 20th May 1892 (pictured)

Over a third of the village's buildings were destroyed in just 5 hours and 186 people made homeless. After a very dry Spring, a spark from the blacksmith's forge landed on a thatched roof, setting it alight and quickly spreading. The men were out in the fields and took time to arrive, there is no nearby river or stream and the wells' wooden frames burnt; it was 3 days before the fire was completely out. Other communities rallied round with donations, the government sent tents and local farmers supplied shepherd's huts, but it was probably a decade before the rebuilding was mostly completed, often to a poor standard.



Geoff Taylor

Wareham Walls (VJ)

A walk around the ancient walls and town of Wareham will take you about an hour, by which time you will have encountered one of the best-preserved Saxon town defences in England.

Wareham is located between the Rivers Frome and Piddle, on a site that was occupied as far back as the Iron Age, with pottery and coins from Roman times. The name is of Saxon origin and means 'homestead by the weir'. During the Anglo-Saxon period (410-1066), Wareham developed into one of Dorset's most important towns and cross-channel ports, trading mostly salt and potters' clay.

As a strategic target for hostile Viking attacks, which it had suffered in 875, King Alfred ordered



Wareham to be made into a burh. These towns, belonging to one of the earliest groups of planned medieval towns in Western Europe, were typically protected by defensive walls to provide local people with a safe refuge from hostile invaders. According to the Burghal Hidage, a document which dates to the early 10th century AD though probably originated earlier, there were 35 fortified centres in Wessex.

Wareham's walls were the fourth largest in the Kingdom of Wessex. They extended over two kilometres, or 2,200 yards, surrounding the heart of the town on three sides whilst the fourth was defended from a land army by the River Frome. It is believed that about 1,600 local men would have been needed to defend and maintain them (In fact the Burghal Hidage allocated 1,600 hides to Wareham and each hide (area of land) had to provide 1 man to maintain and, if necessary, defend the walls. The Saxon standard seems to have been 4 men for each 5½ yards of wall, so 1600 would cover 2200 yards. The puzzle is about defending the river in case of attack by Viking longships.

Excavations have revealed that the earth walls were built up and topped with a timber faced rampart. During the reign of Ethelred the Unready (10th century), the walls were reinforced and a stone wall at least two metres wide was added to the earthworks. After the Norman Conquest, some of the stone wall on top of the earthworks was robbed and most likely used to build Wareham's new castle. The walls probably never regained their full defensive strength again.

During the Middle Ages, the town declined as the river silted up and trade transferred to the new port of Poole. The town was also besieged several times in the second Civil War (1642-46), changing hands several times. It was Parliamentary forces that removed masonry from the defensive walls and reduced them to half their previous height.

The last section of West Walls is known as Bloody Bank from its use for executions. After the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685, five (some say six) prisoners were hung, drawn and quartered here, with their quarters placed on the bridges and their heads set up in the marketplace. West Walls were altered again in 1940 to act as a tank barricade.

Wareham Walls were classed as a 'Scheduled Ancient Monument' in 1978. Today, the walls have been conserved for wildlife, with some grassy areas left uncut for the encouragement of wildflowers.

In 2013, a series of information boards were unveiled at the site of Wareham's ancient Saxon walls. Spot our very own Lilian Ladle, who wrote the historical texts for the boards.

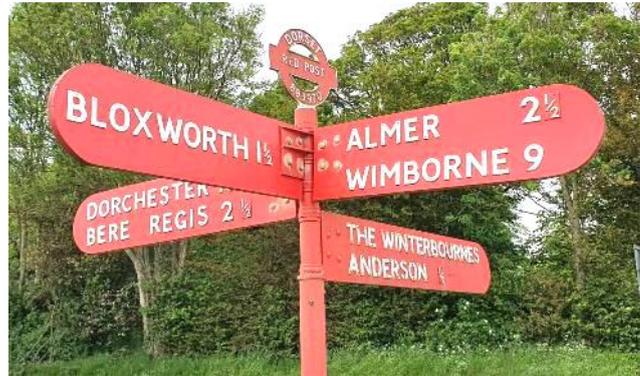


Red finger posts (GT)

Traditionally, finger posts giving directions have black lettering on a white background, and originated when the General Turnpike Act of 1773 made it compulsory for signposts to be erected at road junctions. There are said to be about 700 of these left in Dorset, roughly half of the number in the 1950s, though many are in a poor state of repair. Local authorities have not been required to maintain these signs for over 50 years, and for a time were encouraged to replace them with modern ones. There are, though, community groups and individuals restoring such signs. For example, the Dorset AONB and

Dorset branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England aim to encourage ‘fingerpost champions’, the latter providing small grants.

Dorset has 4 red finger posts, the most famous probably being the one on the A31 pictured. It, too, was in very poor condition until it was restored in 2017 through the AONB. There are many theories as to why these signposts are red, the most common apparently suggested by the location of the Bloxworth sign close to Botany Bay Farm (and Inne), where prisoners on their way from Dorchester for transportation from Portsmouth were held overnight (it seems that the farm barn still has shackles). So, it is said that the signs were to help the illiterate prisoners’ guards.



But there are red fingerposts in other counties that rather overturn the theory. It also doesn’t make sense for the other red fingerposts in Dorset, at Benville Bridge near Evershot (below), Poyntington north of Sherborne, and Hewood Corner near Chard. It has been said that these relate to 13-14 mile walks – i.e. Bloxworth to Dorchester, Dorchester to Benville, Benville to Hewood and Benville to Poyntington. A quick check shows that’s probably true, but it’s hardly an obvious pattern unless someone knows a reason for such walks. And it’s clearly not just a Dorset county tradition; in fact, Hewood was originally in Somerset.



Another theory is that the red signposts mark the sites of gallows or gibbets. One place where this seems to hold true is in Cornwall, near the ‘Red Post Inn’ on the A3072 crossroads, 3.5 miles east of Bude. The gibbet was particularly used in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the inn was a favourite haunt of smugglers. Sadly, it can’t be evidenced for most of the other red finger posts.

So, we may never know why just a few fingerposts were painted red.

Maumbury Rings (VJ)

The earthwork of Maumbury Rings is located, perhaps incongruously, next to Dorchester Police station and opposite the skate park. This monument has been an important part of Dorchester for nearly 5,000 years. A henge, amphitheatre and fieldworks are superimposed on one another, with visible remains of all three elements. The Rings’ survival is probably due to this adaptation to suit various purposes throughout the centuries.



The Neolithic henge is a large circular earthwork, 85 metres in diameter, with a single bank and internal

ditch and an entrance to the northeast. Excavations in the early 20th century revealed that the ditch was created by digging a series of at least 45 funnel-shaped shafts up to 11m in depth into the chalk, so closely positioned as to create a continuous trench. Some scholars have proposed that the henge could have been a place of ritual or astronomical observation. Finds included antler, animal and human bone, flints, carved chalk including a phallic-shaped object and limited pottery, including a Grooved Ware sherd and a Beaker sherd from secondary fill material.

The rings were modified in roughly 100 AD when the Roman town of Durnovaria (Dorchester) made them a place of entertainment – an amphitheatre. The inside of the henge was lowered, with the material produced piled onto the banks. They added an oval, level arena floor and cut seats. The entrance was retained, and an inner enclosure built in the south west is interpreted as being for the use of the performers. The rings would probably have been host to gladiatorial fights and executions.

Later, during the Civil War, the site was repurposed as an artillery fort guarding the southern approach to Dorchester when the Royalists were thought to be advancing. The site as it exists today is a product of the remodelling during this era – the most significant modification being the large ramp opposite the entrance.

The Rings were reutilised in the late 17th and early 18th centuries as a place of public execution. In 1685, at the close of the Monmouth Rebellion, Judge Jeffreys ordered 80 of the rebels to be executed here. However, perhaps the most famous execution was that of Mary Channing, aged 19, in 1705. She was sentenced to be executed by strangulation and burning at the stake for poisoning her husband. The bloody tale was immortalised by Thomas Hardy in the poem 'The Mock Wife'.



The site was then used as farmland, as it probably had been many times in the past. Today, it's far more peaceful: a public open space used for open-air concerts, festivals and re-enactments and the occasional Shakespeare play.

Port and settlement, Hengistbury Head (GT)

The Hengistbury peninsula has presumably been eroding since the sea broke through the chalk ridge between the Needles and the Old Harry rocks. It was slowed, or even stopped, by ironstone boulders eroded from the softer material. Extensive ironstone quarrying in the mid-19th century caused continuing erosion, with considerable work to halt it since the 1930s having a good deal of success. All the same, it is thought that 150m have been lost from the south in the last two centuries, and Ordnance Survey maps show a loss of 25m in the 50 years from 1915.



Human use of Hengistbury Head goes back a considerable time, starting with the oldest known finds there of hundreds of tools from the Upper Palaeolithic around 14,000 years ago, with later evidence of

Mesolithic hunter gatherers. There are 11 Bronze Age barrows on the Head, of which 9 are known to have been dug in the early 20th century. There is evidence of an important port in that period, but of its even greater importance in the Iron Age.

Iron Age settlement seems to have begun around 700 BC, with the construction of the 'Double Dykes' to cut off the headland. This fortified area grew over the centuries, with the port on the north side particularly important in the 1st century BC – the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA). Several excavations, but particularly those under Professor Barry Cunliffe in the 1980s, brought the port and settlement to light. They also showed its decline later in the 1st century BC, no doubt because Caesar's conquests in Gaul disrupted trade.



Finds have, of course, been considerable, and important casual finds still continue to be made occasionally. There are strong indications that Durotrigian coins were minted at Hengistbury. Iron Age coins minted in France are one indicator of foreign trade, but the amphorae found there are one of the most important pieces of evidence for the existence of widespread trade with the continent during the LPRIA, and confirm the significance of Hengistbury as one of the main trading ports. In particular, the Italian Dressel 1A amphora assembly is the largest group known in Britain – made in central Italy from c.130 BC, these were predominantly used for Italian wine. Other types of amphora brought olive oil and fish sauce - sophisticated tastes all those years ago.

Weblink Highlights July-August 2023

This collection of weblinks may well be the most in the 6 years I have been compiling these lists, with a very wide range of topics covered. To add to the number, I have included the item about the introduction of archery to Europe because I missed it in February.

The item on the Pompeii kitchen was covered by the BBC 'Today' programme on 19th July, during which they announced there would be a 3 part series on this early next year.

As DNA science advances so research is able to recover it from ever more challenging sources. The ability to recover DNA from bricks is perhaps even more astonishing than recovering it from soil in caves. However, do not be misled into thinking of this example as a fired brick, as it was formed from river clay and dried in the sun, not fired in a kiln. It remains to be seen if it will ever be possible to recover DNA from fired ceramics.

The last item on this month's list seems to have suffered somewhat in their editorial process, with text errors and the captions on 2 of the pictures interchanged. More haste?

Alan Dedden

July-August Weblinks - No. 59

Bronze Age & Roman Burials Found Ahead Of Roadworks In Barry [here](#) and [here](#)

'Hugely Exciting And Rare' Neolithic Polishing Stone Found In Dorset [here](#)

Censored Pages Of History Of Elizabeth I Reappear After 400 Years [here](#)

3,000 Year-Old Twisted Gold Torc Found In Essex [here](#)

York Maze Reopens With Tribute To Tutenkhamun [here](#)

New Book Claims To Identify Jack The Ripper [here](#)

Homo Sapiens May Have Brought Archery To Europe About 54,000 Years Ago [here](#)

Giant Sloth Pendants Indicate Humans Settled The Americas Earlier Than Thought [here](#)

3,000 Year-Old Untouched Burial Of 'Charioteer' Found In Siberia [here](#)

Dinosaur And Mammal From 125 Million Years Ago Found 'Locked In Mortal Combat' [here](#)

Kitchen Shrine Serpent Plus More Fascinating Pompeii Discoveries [here](#)

Arrests Made In Germany In Celtic Gold Treasure Theft [here](#)

Remains Of Tiny Roman Pet Dog Found At Villa In Oxfordshire [here](#)

Were Small-Brained Early Humans Intelligent? Row Erupts Over Scientist's Claims [here](#)

10 Year-Old Girl Walking Her Dog Finds Neolithic Flint Axe Head [here](#)

Remains Of Iron Age Warrior On Scilly Isles Identified As Female [here](#)

Perfectly Preserved 2,000 Year-Old Roman Cargo Shipwreck [here](#)

2,000 Year-Old Roman Shipwreck Found Off Coast Of Italy [here](#)

Archaeologists Dig For Medieval Cerne Abbas Abbey [here](#)

Bronze Age Burials Found At Shetlands Rocket Launch Site [here](#)

'Exceptional' Winged Medusa Mural Found In Spain [here](#)

Crusader Sword Found In Holy Land Possibly Bent In Battle [here](#)

Ancient Roman Boat Unearthed In Serbian Coal Mine [here](#)

Roman Road Network In Devon And Cornwall Identified In New Research [here](#)

300,000 Year-Old Skull Suggests Hominin's Family Tree 'Needs Another Branch' [here](#)

Rising Star Cave Discoveries Challenge Our Understanding Of Human Evolution [here](#) and [here](#)

Hulk On Sutton Hoo Estate Given Legal Protection [here](#)

Slaves Bedroom Found In Pompeii [here](#)

Face Of Oldest Known Homo Sapiens Recreated [here](#)

US Returns Haul Of Stolen Artefacts To Italy [here](#)

Bone Found In French Cave Researchers Now Believe Points To New Homo Sapiens Lineage [here](#)

Researchers Extract DNA From 2,900 Year-Old Clay Brick [here](#)

Bronze Age Deer Sacrifice Found By Rescue Archaeology In Lincolnshire [here](#)

Stolen Totem Pole Prepared For Return To Canada [here](#)

Underworld Discovery Challenges Our Understanding Of Human Evolution [here](#)

Archaeologists To Monitor Building Work At York Hotel [here](#)

Villager Who Damaged 4,500 Year-Old Artwork To Pay For Restoration [here](#)

Mystery Of Missing Roman Hoard Coins Replaced By More Valuable Coins [here](#)

Archaeologists 'Startled' By 18,000 Year-Old Discovery [here](#)

Fountains Abbey Charter On Display In Exhibition Of Medieval Documents [here](#)

British Museum To Display King's Solid Gold Message Studded With Rubies [here](#)

Early Humans Used Expert Woodworking Skills To Make Weapons [here](#)

2,300 Year-Old Glass Workshop Is Oldest Known North Of The Alps [here](#)

Stone Age Dartmoor Viewpoint Uncovered By Archaeologists [here](#)

Elite Sniffer Dogs Help Archaeologists Find 3,000 Year-Old Skeleton [here](#)

Study Claiming Human And Ape Ancestors Originated In Europe [here](#).

Scientists Find Oldest Known Evidence Of Humans In Europe Using Fire To Cook [here](#)

Scheduled Castle In Yorkshire To Be Gated After Damage By Detectorists & Off-Road Bikers [here](#)

German Archaeologists Excavate 400 Year-Old Ship In The Baltic [here](#)

Contemporary Documents Reveal Edward IV Died Of Syphilis [here](#)

3,000 Year-Old Arrowhead Made Of Iron From A Meteorite [here](#)

Exeter Cathedral Dig Reveals Tomb Of Bishop Warelwast, William The Conqueror's Nephew [here](#)

'First English Slave Fort In Africa' Uncovered On Ghana's Coast [here](#)

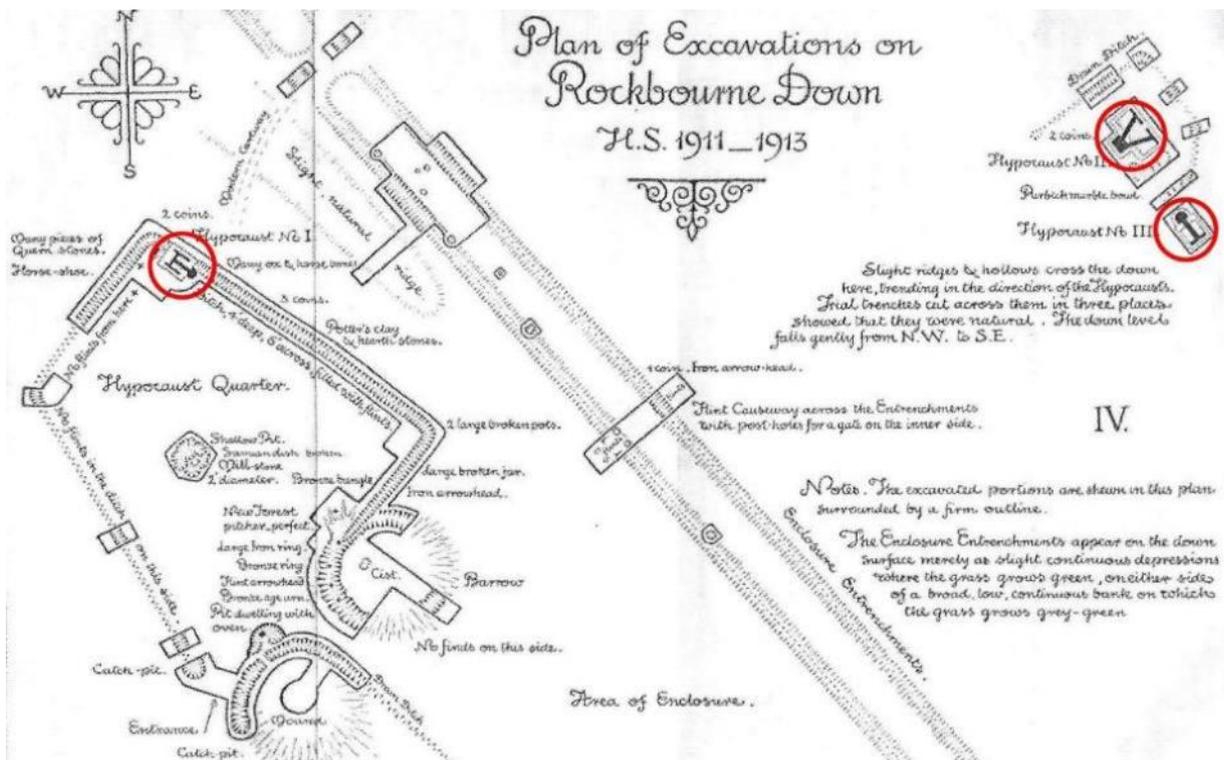
6,500 Year-Old Festival Site Found Near Carlisle [here](#)

View from Above No. 56: Tenantry Farm, part 3

Photos by Sue Newman
and Jo Crane
Overlay by Mike Gill, AVAS

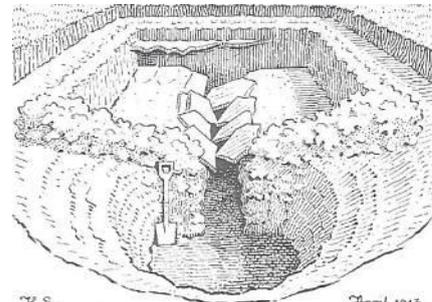


The cropmarks in the areas where Heywood Sumner excavated over a century ago were shown in part 2 of these articles on Tenantry Farm. Sue and Jo's aerial photograph above shows a different view of much the same area, overlain with Sumner's plan of his excavations below.



I don't intend to describe or critique Heywood Sumner's excavations in any depth here. He followed the principles laid down by Pitt Rivers a few decades earlier, in essence to measure and record everything. Whilst clearly not up to modern standards, he seems to have done this well and was very much ahead of his time. He also backfilled his excavations soon after completion to preserve the remains.

The 'Hypocaust Quarter' to the left, named for the single 'hypocaust' (No. I) near the northern corner, is a ditched enclosure incorporating two Bronze Age round barrows. This is suggested as a settlement area, although no building traces appear to have been found other than over the supposed hypocaust, described as the "principal bakehouse of the settlement". Built over the ditch, it would seem to be later than this small enclosure, and the charred wheat grains in the 'hypocaust' actually show that it was a grain dryer (or malting floor in some archaeologists' opinions).



Hypocaust No III. Probably a Bake-house.

Similarly, the settlement area outside the main enclosure has the remains of buildings over two further 'hypocausts'. No. II is V-shaped, and could possibly be an actual hypocaust as no wheat grains seem to have been found there. No. III is T-shaped and identical in form to the grain dryer found at Druce Farm, though with rather more of its construction remaining, as shown here. It contained large amounts of charred wheat grains.



There is a decent list and drawings of the finds, which included 9 coins, although their find spots aren't all clear. At best we can suggest that activity in this area started in the second half of the 3rd century and continued until at least the mid-4th century.

I'll finish this with another of Sue and Jo's aerial photographs, taken in July 2020 and from a different angle than the earlier ones. The two circles are the barrows on Sumner's plan.

Geoff Taylor/ Jo Crane

From the Archives 11

This series has now reached Volume XIII (1892) of the Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, as it then was.

My summaries based on extracts from the diary of William Whiteway of Martinstown, covering 1618-1634, give some appreciation of how life was then:

- In October 1621 a group of men arrived with government authority to dig for treasure in a hill at Upwey, no doubt a barrow or barrows. After 3 days work with nothing to show but bones, they left to try again near Bincombe.
- Winters could be hard and there are several mentions of high mortality, particularly of children through smallpox, and even of people frozen to death on the highways.
- Travel for any distance was perilous from the poor state of even the main roads, but particularly from highwaymen robbing and murdering travellers. It must have required very important business for William to travel to London in 1623 (a journey of 3½ days each way), and people made their wills before setting out. The road had deep ruts, even between Westminster and the City of London, which filled with water in wet weather so that pedestrians were in danger of sinking to their knees.
- The influence of Puritanism was clearly growing as several stage and other performances were refused permission from at least 1620 (22 years before the outbreak of the Civil War). Dorchester was, apparently, then the most Puritanical town in England.

- Sir Robert Mellor died in 1624 and was buried at midnight in St. Peter's, Winterbourne Came, apparently a custom for those of position and wealth. The village is now deserted and the church, shown here, cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust.



- The plague recurred intermittently from 1625 to at least 1630. London and Exeter (at least) were badly affected, there were limited outbreaks in Salisbury, Blandford and Shaftesbury, though Dorset generally appears to have escaped lightly.

- People were troubled by the appearance of lights in the sky in February of 1629; it was actually the 'Northern Lights'.

William's sister had died of consumption (TB) in 1629 and late entries suggest he was suffering similarly, before the diary ends abruptly 22nd March 1634.

I had thought an article by George Bennett on 'Wareham: It's Invasions and Battles' might prove of use but, sadly, not. It starts with more flowery language than usual, jumping to fanciful conclusions about the character of British leaders and warriors, then goes on to draw further conclusions based on conjectures and on evidence that's irrelevant to the point. You can tell that I wasn't impressed!

The following article on 'Roman Wareham and the Claudian Invasion' (sic) actually concentrates on the likelihood, in his view, that Wareham Walls are of Roman origin. The author, John Bellows, at least admits that his argument rests more on analogies with other settlements and on more negative than direct evidence. Curiously, whilst there is a map of Gloucester and a plan of the Praetorian fort in Rome, there is no map of Wareham to be able to check his analogies. As far as I know, there is little to suggest Roman origins for the walls and even the question of Roman settlement remains uncertain. No doubt someone will correct me if that's wrong.

Geoff Taylor

EDAS PROGRAMME 2023-24

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

Wed 13th September	Lecture	Gordon Bartlet	The Rise & Decline of Bournemouth & Poole Tramways
Wed 11th October	Lecture	Anthony Firth	The Historic Character of the River Stour
Wed 8th November	Lecture	Tom Cousins	The Maritime Archaeology of Poole Bay
Wed 13th December	Lecture	Gordon Le Pard	Dorset Churches
2024			
Wed 10th January	Zoom lecture	David Reeve	The oldest secular buildings in Wimborne
Wed 14th February	Lecture	Miles Russell	Frampton Villa excavations

Wed 13th March	AGM & Lecture	Phil D'Eath & Geoff Taylor	The 2023 Field Trip to Kent
Wed 10th April	Lecture	Harry Manley	The Dorchester Aqueduct
Wed 8th May	Lecture	Andrew Morgan	The Origins of Dorset – in search of the Dorset/Hampshire Shire Boundary

DISTRICT DIARY

Wed 20th September	AGM and Giants, Skeletons and Mosaics	Wareham Society	Nance Grace
Thur 21st September	The Royal Palace of Clarendon	AVAS	Cindy Wood
Thur 21st September	The late hunter gatherers of the Upper Kennet Valley	Blandford Group	Abigail George
Wed 18th October	Rockbourne Roman Villa	Wareham Society	John Smith
Thurs 19th October	Marine Archaeology in the Black Sea	AVAS	Helen Farr
Thurs 19th October	Pot Dealers: the distribution of Verwood-type pottery.	Blandford Group	Dan Carter
Wed 15th November	In search of the Anglo-Saxon shire boundary between Dorset and Hampshire - from Bokerley Dyke to the coast	Wareham Society	Andrew Morgan
Thurs 16th November	Adventures in Archaeology – highlights from 41 years of finding things beneath the ground	AVAS	Paul Cheetham
Thurs 16th November	tbd	Blandford Group	tbd
Wed 6th December	Stonehenge – What's New: A decade of science and speculation	Wareham Society	Tim Darvill

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; membership £10 pa.
- **Blandford Museum Archaeology Group:**
<https://blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk/groups-and-projects/archaeology-group/>
Meetings normally 7:30pm 3rd 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. Meetings at Furzebrook Village Hall, BH20 5AR, normally 7:30pm 3rd Wednesday of each month except July & August. Visitors welcome for £3; membership £10 pa.