East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – October 2023

For the first lecture of the 2023-24 season, we were treated to the story of the trams which operated between Poole and Christchurch by Gordon Bartlet, also a story of different communities and with many interesting photographs of the area around a century ago: **The Rise and Decline of Bournemouth & Poole Tramways**.

The next lecture is by Anthony Firth on 'The historic character of the River Stour', highlighting a new methodology to look at the importance of cultural heritage. As ever, it's at St Catherine's Church Hall, Wednesday 11th October, 7:30pm.

Alan Dedden has organised and led quite a few walks for, or including, EDAS members, but I'm not sure that we've ever reported on one. That's a pity given the effort and research Alan puts in, but we now have an article on the latest one thanks to Robin Dumbreck: **Cranborne Chase Walk 7th September 2023**. It has enough detail to allow you to do this excellent walk yourself, though obviously without all the information Alan can give.

As you'll know from previous member announcements, we organised two beginners flint knapping courses for members during September, reported here as **Flint knapping at ATC**.

Continuing Vanessa's and my shorter articles on 40 Dorset 'items' for our 40th anniversary, this month we have: **Dorset Buttony**, the **Victorian Hall, Dorset Museum**, **Bronze Age gold working in Dorset** and a **Folding knife from Druce Farm Roman Villa**.

We also have Alan's **Weblinks** and **Weblink Highlights**, now on their 60th outing, and **From the Archives 12**. I've skipped 'View from Above' this month because of space.

Before the **EDAS Programme** and **District Diary**, there's an article inspired by a visit to the Imperial War Museum in London, for the first time. That made me wonder what its building was originally for and inspired the article **The Imperial War Museum and Bethlem Royal Hospital**.

EDAS Gift Aid Declaration - IMPORTANT

HMRC ask that we keep records of people's current address for Gift Aid purposes. If you have changed your address since signing the Gift Aid Declaration (either a separate declaration or as part of your application to join EDAS) then please let our Treasurer, Peter Walker, know so he can update our records. A new GAD is not required.

Please email Peter at peter@peterwalker.info

THE CBA Wessex October Newsletter is here with, amongst other things, a couple of conferences and a reminder and link for Bournemouth University's Annual Pitt Rivers lecture on the 31st.

Geoff Taylor

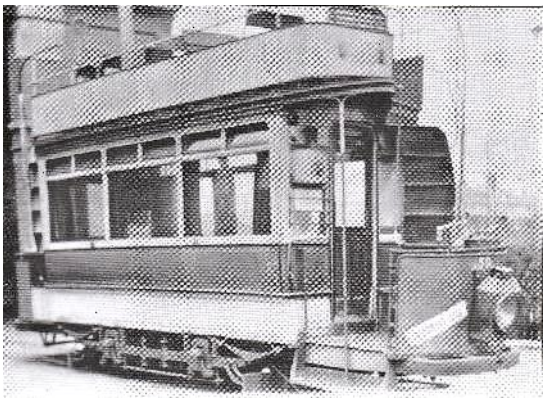
The Rise and Decline of Bournemouth & Poole Tramways: Lecture by Gordon Bartlet

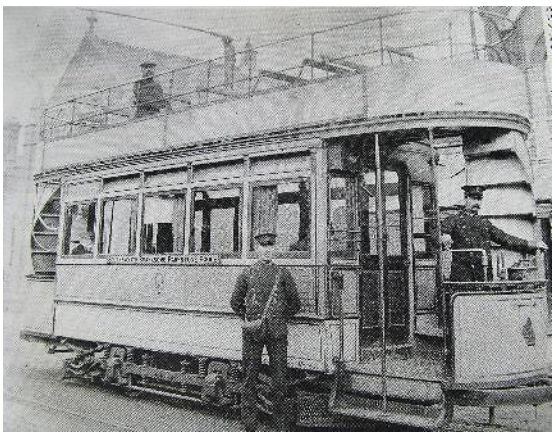
Ostensibly a lecture about the trams which operated between Poole and Christchurch, as Gordon emphasised this was also about transport systems that united, and in some cases divided, different rival communities.

Christchurch was an ancient market town and small port, while Poole was also ancient, with a fishing fleet and considerable industry, particularly in ceramics. Bournemouth was the upstart newcomer which liked to see itself as posh, especially compared with industrial Poole. A map of 1800 shows Poole and Christchurch, but there's no Bournemouth at all – in fact, hardly any significant habitation between Lilliput and Tuckton. The early 19th century well-to-do and aristocracy favoured Brighton but moved west when the railway arrived there in 1841, bringing in the 'lower classes', and the Bourne Valley and Mouth became a desirable area. There was, of course, no railway to the area then as there was nothing there; it didn't arrive in Bournemouth until 1870, reflecting the new town's popularity. Even then the route, via Ringwood, was circuitous until the current direct route was opened in 1888.

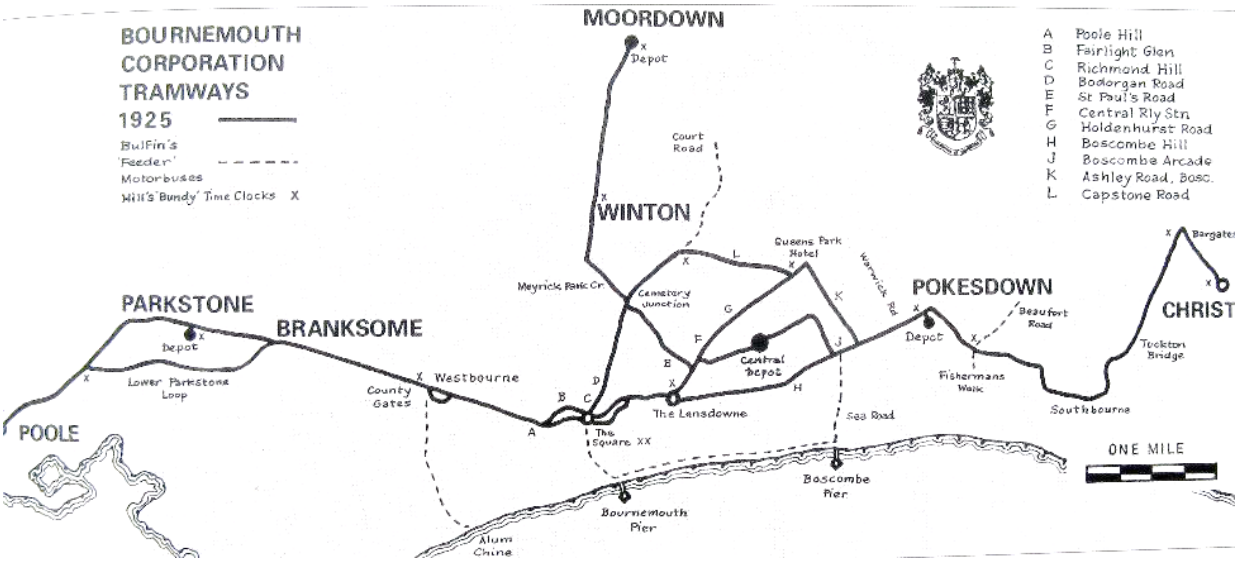
Whilst the railways really took off from the 1830s, local transport generally remained limited and expensive, but the idea of 'rails in the street' and horse-drawn trams gained popularity from the 1860s. However, the Tramways Act of 1870 included restrictions that limited the incentive to invest. Lewins of Poole (and London), who made "small locomotives for all purposes", tried to introduce horse-drawn trams in the area in 1878, but failed. A tramway was then proposed from Poole to Christchurch in 1881, which Poole and Christchurch welcomed. Bournemouth turned it down; they didn't want to encourage the hoi polloi visiting!

Electric trams were developing from the 1890s and, in 1899, the British Electric Traction ("BET") company proposed to develop a system from Poole through to Christchurch. Predictably, Bournemouth wanted nothing to do with it, so the Poole and District Traction Co. Ltd. opened in 1901 with a single line running from near Poole Station to County Gates at a fare of 3d. That was the Bournemouth boundary and, of course, then the boundary with Hampshire. They had 17 trams from 3 different manufacturers, so there was clearly no standardisation to simplify maintenance, as you can see from the photographs. The trams were fairly basic, open at the ends and for passengers on the upper deck and, oddly for an electric tram, with an oil headlamp.



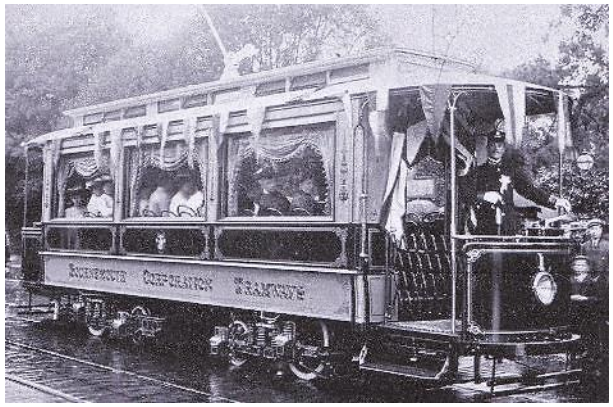


But Bournemouth had changed its mind, and obtained the powers to build a tramway in 1901. They wanted the whole system under their control and Poole Corporation agreed to lease their tracks, but not the trams, to Bournemouth Corporation. By 1902 Bournemouth had opened a line to Boscombe and the systems were linked at County Gates at the start of 1905, with the extension to Christchurch completed later that year; Poole to Christchurch cost 10d and took about 90 minutes.



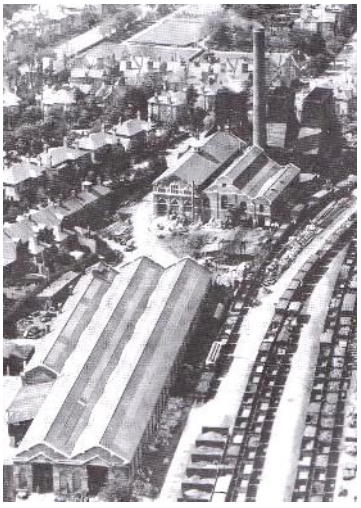
The full system on the map developed quite quickly, but not without some issues along the way. Twin tracks were mainly concentrated in the central Bournemouth area, with separated lines into and out of Bournemouth Square. Elsewhere, single tracks had frequent passing places; quite close together as they were used by line of sight and not signalled. Feeder buses (the dotted lines on the map) also became part of the system.

Bournemouth Corporation wanted their own trams and not the various existing ones, but BET objected



and took them to court, lost and then won on appeal. Eventually commonsense prevailed and compensation was paid to BET of £117,000, rather than the £430,000 they originally wanted. The Bournemouth Corporation Tramways trams were top of the range, with leather seats rather than the usual wooden benches, smart paintwork always kept clean and uniformed staff (their status particularly defined by their headgear, from bowler hats to cloth caps). No. 1 shown here was the pride of the fleet, and the only single decker alongside a final total of 151 double deckers.

Bournemouth also didn't want overhead cables across their centrepiece – The Square (there's a theme developing here!) – and used a 'side slot conduit system' with underground electrical pick-ups alongside one rail. They'd copied this from systems studied in Brussels and Paris; looking at London's similar approach wouldn't have been as good, apparently. However, it was inefficient, requiring trams to stop to change from underground to overhead, and prone to failures. One problems was children rolling metal hoops, a favourite pastime: when they slipped into the slot a large blue flash brought the line to a halt. So, overhead cables were used from 1911.

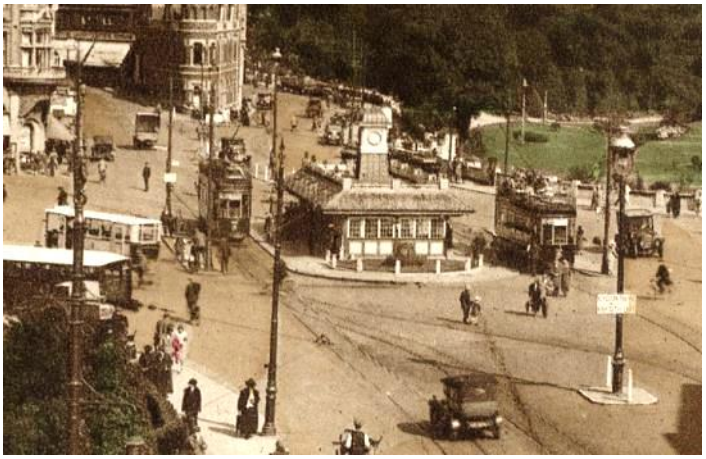


Underground cables were required for this system and in many other places, which meant employing a special team of cable-laying ferrets. Depots were obviously needed for the trams, as well as a large electricity supply – generated by the Electricity Works next to the main depot, alongside Bournemouth Station. As you can see, this required a lot of coal.

Sadly, there was a disaster on Mayday 1908, when a tram descending Avenue Road into The Square gathered speed rather than slowing, overturned on the bend and plunged 20 feet down the embankment. Seven people were killed and 26 seriously injured. The control handle didn't work and even braking, helped by dropping sand from a hopper onto the line (also used to help grip on steep uphill sections) had proved ineffective. The driver, William Wilton, was praised for helping survivors despite his own injuries. The Corporation were castigated as it was found that their management was poor, with no regular inspections. The tram involved had had repairs the day before, but no-one was told and they had been botched. Of course, the 'great and good' sought to cover their backs, but Ignatius Bulfin, the chief electrical engineer, offered to resign. He became the general manager subsequently, introducing improvements such as proper wind-down brakes.

Bournemouth Corporation showed another difference from Poole and Christchurch in the matter of Sunday running, which it held out against from 1903 despite some imaginative protests. One was the 'Sunday Tram', akin to a carnival float pulled by two horses but looking remarkably like a tram. Reluctance may have been the influence of Congregationalists, but was also said to be because Bournemouth didn't want the 'dirty' workers from the other towns visiting on their day off. There was certainly a class basis to fares, as shown by the ticket. Sunday services in the town after 2pm started in 1913, but it wasn't until 1926 that the trams ran all day on Sundays.

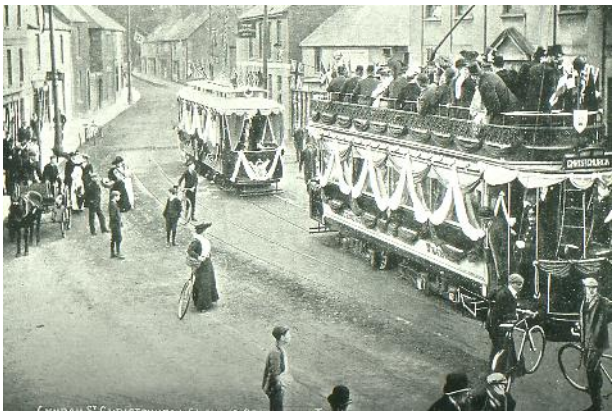
Issuing paper tickets in wind and rain on the upper deck must have been difficult for the conductor, not to mention unpleasant for passengers. Windscreens were added to shelter drivers, but there were never roofs over upper decks as the 3' 6" narrow gauge used meant that the trams would have become unstable. This was one of the reasons that the trams began to fall out of favour, but the photograph of the central shelter/tram stop in The Square shows others. As motorised transport, including private cars, increased, the trams were adding to congestion. Tracks were along the centre of streets – dangerous to reach for passengers and in the way of other traffic. As a 1930 government report on urban transport also pointed out, trams were inflexible. Trolleybuses started to be introduced, much quieter and more comfortable, and the tram service ran down, with the last service journeys in 1935.



An electrical section box remains in-situ in Poole bearing the BET logo, but otherwise little is left. The trams were, of course, well-made and had years of life left. Ten ran for another 20 years in Llandudno and Colwyn Bay, but it was mostly the bodies that were kept, e.g. as a bus shelter in Pokesdown or even garden sheds, mostly long gone or now in ruins. One is in Wareham, restored as a summer house, and another used as an office by 'Plankbridge', who make huts in Piddlehinton. Only one seems to have been kept intact and, having moved several times, is now at the Crich Tramway Village near Matlock, Derbyshire.

If you can't see the actual trams, enthusiasts have made models, and Gordon brought along two excellent ones he'd built from

scratch. One of them is the first picture in this article, with the interior matching the high standards adopted by Bournemouth Corporation. I couldn't include most of the large number of photographs Gordon showed, including processions of trams with dignitaries and specially dressed tramcars for new routes and occasions like the coronation of George VI. I think the audience sometimes found the early 20th century street scenes as interesting as the trams, so here are just a couple to finish this summary.



Geoff Taylor

Cranborne Chase Walk 7th September 2023

We met Alan at the car park off the A354 where Bokerley Ditch (or "Dyke") crosses the main road, and the 5 of us set off south along the Ditch on that hot day. For various reasons, the much larger booked group ended up rather smaller, and with only 2 EDAS members.

Passing the old rifle ranges, Alan explained how the markers on the range were used to signal results back to the riflemen. Just to the south, the 'Townsend Lane' footpath crosses the ditch and, heading west, passes the easterly end of the Dorset Cursus, with large long barrows visible nearby. Back at the main road (A354) we crossed into Woodyates, originally Wood Gates as it was one of the entrances to Cranborne Chase. Of course, the Chase, a hunting forest rather than a Royal Forest, is now much smaller than it was originally.

We heard about the former coaching inn there (initially the Woodyates Inn, then The Shaftesbury Arms), that had been a favoured resting point on the Salisbury-Blandford coaching road. It had also been a place to change post horses, immortalised by a nearby plaque commemorating a particularly important message – the news of Nelson's victory and death at Trafalgar in 1805. Showing the plaque big enough to read would take up most of this page, but it can be seen here, for example.

After Woodyates we followed the footpaths along to the west, passing West Woodyates Manor. The previous owner had a grass runway in a convenient field, and a hangar (now demolished) that once held a Hornet Moth biplane. The manor grounds contain scheduled earthwork remains of an 18th century formal garden, including 'The Mount', a 4m high earthwork believed to have been a prospect mound to view both the gardens and the Chase. Despite The Mount being only a few yards away, we couldn't see it through the growth of trees and bushes, so there is presumably not much of a prospect from it now.

We'd been introduced to Mike Swan of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, resident of Pentridge and employed part time on West Woodyates Farm within the estate. He told us about the conservation projects he advises on, started by the previous house and estate owners but now being developed and expanded by the people who bought it in 2022. Amongst other things, they are reintroducing native wild flowers and many species of endangered wildlife. The low flying Apache helicopter gunship seen below (they often train around there) did make Mike's talk a little difficult to hear!

We stopped in Garston Wood, a couple of kilometres north of Sixpenny Handley, for a break and refreshment. As you can see from the photographs, the sun was bright, but the wood gave plenty of dappled sunlight in which to rest. Garston Wood is famous for its bluebells in the spring, and is a protected area owned and managed by the RSPB [the Ancient Technology Centre continue the ancient coppicing of hazel there each year (ed.)]. Walking through the woods, by the border with Wiltshire – here an ancient route called the Shire Rack – we passed the fairly well hidden Mistleberry hill fort pictured. It's quite small and appears to be incomplete on the western side.

Continuing downhill we passed through Shermel Gate (probably 'shiremill' originally) and northwards into Wiltshire, through Stonedown Wood. Like Garston, it's designated an ancient woodland by Natural England – a beautiful wood with organised tracks and pathways. Our lunch break was in Stonedown, where we were lucky enough to see a deer passing nearby. After lunch we turned back eastwards past Middle Chase Farm and along a short tarmac road to the north; there's another grass runway there, with a hangar housing a twin-engine light aircraft.

Continuing east, we were on a section of the ancient Ox Drove which runs along the escarpment overlooking the Chalke Valley; some think that its origins are pre-Roman. Turning to pass Chettle Head Copse, we headed south-east to Vernditch Chase woodland, passing Kitt's Grave and a stumpy long barrow, hidden in the woods [If you look at the Ordnance Survey map on the Dorset Explorer site, Kitt's Grave is marked just outside the wood; zoom in and there's nothing there and it's shown in the wood further south. That seems to match stories of searching for the grave, such as on the 'Hidden Wiltshire' and 'Weird Wiltshire' websites, with different ideas about what it is and how the name arose (ed.)].

The path through the wood crosses Grim's Ditch, which the schedule suggests is Bronze Age or early Iron Age, and then emerges at Ackling Dyke where that road heads across country towards Old Sarum, diverging from the modern road. Ackling Dyke is, of course, a Roman road, dating originally from the post-invasion 'military period' of occupation. A long stretch of it is visible towards Salisbury, and a shorter section the other way to the crossing with Bokerley Ditch at 'Bokerley Junction', just off the A354.

Returning to our cars we'd walked just under 9 miles. Alan kindly invited us to Wimborne St Giles Village Hall, where his wife, Lindsey and her friend Judith had prepared tea and cakes. Alan and Lindsey had arranged a wonderful day out, allowing us to learn a little of Alan's in-depth knowledge of the area – much more than I was able to include here. I'll look forward to enjoying walks like this in the future.

Robin Dumbreck

PS A long way from Chettle Head Copse above, I recently passed the Chettle Long Barrow just to the east of Tarrant Gunville (Chettle II, ST 937 135; not Chettle I near Chettle House). It has long been obscured by the bushes and trees of a small copse, so it might be interesting to anyone who is passing that way to know that the ground has been cleared and the long barrow is visible and accessible.

Flint knapping at ATC

We have to thank the Ancient Technology Centre in Cranborne for hosting our two flint knapping courses in their 'Pavilion'. Recently built, this is basically a round house without sides. Particular thanks are due to the tutor, Antony Whitlock, for two fascinating and fun days - a mix of history, archaeology, practical information and actually just having a go at knapping flints with a lot of help and guidance.

Antony took us through the history, known from archaeological finds, of stone tool making going back millions of years to *Australopithecus* or before, very clearly illustrated by the replica tools he had made. The theory of how struck flint behaves, depending on the angle and strength of the strike, and on the 'hammer' (e.g. harder or softer stones, shaped antler), was clearly vital. Some of us were even able to put it into practice and produce recognisable tools, like Maryanne Pike's hand axe and arrowhead pictured below.

Even if some of us produced little more than flakes, these would have been usable to cut or scrape materials. Having seen the results of many strikes, and with Antony's explanations, we'll all be better equipped to identify any flints we find in future. And I'm sure we'll have a greater respect for the skill of knappers.

The Ancient Technology Centre hope to arrange more courses in future and I'll definitely let everyone know if their limited staffing allows that. Perhaps, as requested, we can arrange EDAS follow-ups so that those who, unlike me, made something that looked like a flint tool can refine their skills.

Geoff Taylor

Dorset Buttony (VJ)

Dorset buttons were first made in 1622, in Shaftesbury, by Abraham Case. They were predominantly white, made either by stitching over small knobs of sheep's horn or wool, or by winding thread over wire rings. Initially, Case restricted production to small conical shaped buttons, covered in fine thread, known as High Tops (left), which found great favour as waistcoat buttons at court. As business thrived, new buttons were developed such as the Singleton – a rare black button – and the Dorset Knob (right), a flatter version of the High Top. The Birds Eyes, softer buttons formed by buttonhole stitching around a tiny ring of fabric, were thought more suitable for children's clothes. Later Dorset thread buttons used wire and thread – the Dorset Cartwheel and Blandford Crosswheel.

The Dorset button industry lasted up to 1851, employing over 4,000 people at its height and exporting across the world from the 1750s. During the 18th century, a business in Bere Regis employed women in Sixpenny Handley who worked in their cottages. Agents arrived at collection points at predetermined times, providing raw materials and payment for finished buttons. After carding with coloured papers to denote size and quality, they were sold to wholesalers and then retailed for between 8d and 3/- a dozen.

By the 19th century, over 100 different types of button were made in sub-depots around Dorset. However, the industry declined as machines began to make buttons and factories in Birmingham became the main producers. Handcrafted Dorset Buttons were no longer a source of reliable income. Many hundreds of rural Dorset families, impoverished by the collapse of buttony and agricultural depression in the late 19th century, became economic migrants to Australia, Canada and the USA.

Lady Lees at Lytchett Manor revived the industry in the early 20th century and it flourished in Lytchett Minster until the outbreak of the First World War. Today, the W.I., the Arts and Crafts movement and others continue to keep this craft alive.

Queen Victoria owned a dress lavishly trimmed with Dorset Knobs. It is said that Charles I went to his execution wearing a silk waistcoat with Dorset Buttons. Recent research by Anna McDowell BEM, Dorset Button maker and artist, credited with all the images here, uncovered two possible candidates. One was held by the Museum of London and the other by Longleat House in Wiltshire, but photographs showed that they did not have Dorset Buttons. So where did this misconception originate? Did such a garment even exist?

Victorian Hall, Dorset Museum (GT)

The Dorchester museum building was built of Portland stone in 1883, designed and constructed by George Rackstrow Crickmay, a Weymouth architect. The cast-iron columns, arches and the other metalwork in the aisled Victorian Hall, inspired by the Great Exhibition of 1851, were cast in Frome. As the person who suggested this item as one of our 40 said, "raw engineering … epitomising Victorian building and … ever changing with the natural light", which comes from the rose window at the end. The black & white photograph shows the hall

before 1903, when local businessman Charles Hanford supported the installation of the mezzanine floor shown in the other photograph.

The hall was, of course, part of the museum and included display cases. I'm sure that many will remember when there were also display cases around the mezzanine. But the mosaics laid on the floor were, and are, perhaps the most memorable part of the hall – there are very few others in the whole of Europe that you can walk on. The first mosaic was found in Olga Road in 1899 and presented to the museum a year later. The building it came from is only about 400m outside Dorchester's Roman walls, described as a villa although only parts of three rooms were uncovered. The other mosaic came from a building in Durngate Street in 1905, uncovered a metre below ground when a school was being built. Although this seems to have been the only room discovered, I imagine that the building was a Roman townhouse.

Many will remember when 'Dippy', the diplodocus from the Natural History Museum, was displayed in the Victorian Hall in 2018 during its tour of British museums. Since the museum's new extension, the hall has been emptied of museum displays and is now available to hire for functions. It is usually open and the refurbished space can be better appreciated now it is clear of display cases. If you are lucky you may chance on music in the hall, as we did when a piano player and singer were rehearsing there.

Bronze Age gold working in Dorset (VJ)

In 2016, the Museum of East Dorset was lucky enough to display a goldsmith's anvil from the later Middle Bronze Age. It was found by a metal detectorist in the Tarrant Valley and was reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). This is a find of note, designated as of national importance and one of only six such objects found in the United Kingdom. It was a privilege to handle the artefact and, if you looked carefully, you could see it still had minute flecks of gold on the bronze work surface.

In Europe the earliest evidence for gold working dates to the 5th millennium BC. By the end of the 3rd millennium, gold working had become well established in Ireland and Britain, together with a highly productive copper and bronze working industry. Goldsmiths had to be skilled in forming metal through filing, soldering, sawing, forging, casting and polishing metal. The anvil was an important tool of their trade – a complete workshop in your hand.

The composition of this anvil (a high tin bronze) made it harder than a classic bronze, so that it could be used to work more typical alloys. Its "complex" form was, however, probably used for the creation of intricate items of gold work and fine metalworking. Each feature is for working metal in a different way:

- The beak, or spike, was used to secure the anvil to a surface.
- There are two work surfaces with different grooves.
- The hole through the centre could have been used in punching holes, for holding metal wire in place, or for the creation of small repoussé circles (hammered into relief from the reverse side).
- The swage (grooves of V, W or semi-circular cross section) were used for creating gold wire or forcing a sheet of metal into a pre-made shape.

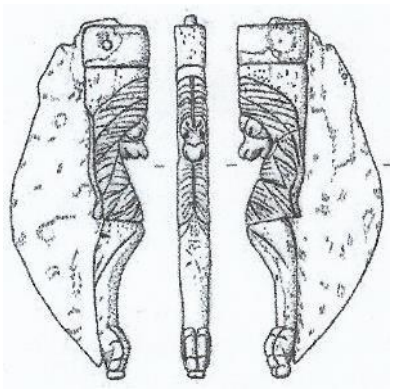
To take a closer look, see the 3D model image here done by Derek Pitman of Bournemouth University.

Other rare and beautiful gold objects from this period also deserve a mention. The Tarrant Valley lunula ('little moon' in Latin, below left), discovered in 2014, dates to the early Bronze Age and is one of only 13 lunulae recorded in mainland Britain. These crescent-shaped objects are thought to be personal

adornments, although their small size and angled terminals suggest they hung from something other than the neck. There are only 3 on the PAS database and this is the most complete. None were previously known from Wessex, so this is a rare and important find, and weighs half as much as all the Bronze Age gold previously found in Wessex. The Bronze Age Clandon Barrow burial assemblage, excavated in 1882 by Edward Cunnington near Maiden Castle, includes the gold incised lozenge shown right. Dorset County Museum says "The precision and accuracy of [the lozenge's] decoration suggests sophisticated tools and knowledge of geometry. The gold probably originated in Ireland".

Folding knife from Druce Farm Roman Villa (GT)

One of the most interesting finds from Druce Farm, and one of the few complete objects from the site, was a folding knife with a lion-themed bone handle. Dated to about 300 CE, it is 72mm long with an iron blade and copper alloy ferrule. The handle isn't very robust, suggesting that this was for relatively gentle, indoor use, for example for cutting thread or as a fruit knife. We often call such items 'penknives', relating to when similar knives were used to cut and shape quill pens. This Roman knife could well have had a similar use, particularly as there are good reasons to think that Druce villa may have had an official use.



Folding knives aren't particularly rare on Roman sites, and the 'table leg' feline representation form is well known across the Empire, imitating the legs of tripod tables. However, such items are usually cast in metal, and are mostly of a lioness or a panther. Even when a male lion is depicted, like this one, they are seen as walking or resting, and face in towards the blade. The use of a bone handle and type of lion design was thought to be unique by the expert who wrote on this in the Druce monograph – the late Anthony Beeson.

The animal here recalls examples of tripod table legs made of Kimmeridge shale; a complete one is in Dorset Museum (see photograph in 'From the Archives 12' below).

Weblink Highlights September 2023

A more modest collection of weblinks this month, but nonetheless varied and interesting. There is, however, one story I did not include in the list which carried the pure click-bait headline 'Stonehenge Breakthrough' (it can be found at Stonehenge breakthrough as 'amazing discovery' could unlock mystery | Science | News | Express.co.uk if you are curious). While looking around for the Daily Express original, I noticed that this was not the first time that this story had made it onto the pages of that journal. It also appeared in the Daily Express (by the same journalist) in December 2021 and June 2022 (and earlier in other sources, e.g. New Scientist November 2009), and there appears to be no new element to the story. I can only think they were short of copy. Or possibly a freelance journalist has found a way to get multiple payments for the same story.

The last item is about the Sycamore Gap tree; I imagine you've all been following it.
Alan Dedden

September Weblinks - No. 60

Population Collapse Almost Wiped Out Human Ancestors
Population collapse almost wiped out human ancestors, say scientists | Evolution | The Guardian

Archaeology Found On Solar Park Site In Lincolnshire
Archaeology found on solar park site (lincolnshireworld.com)

Gaza's Fight To Keep Archaeological Treasures Safe At Home
'It's heartbreaking, our heritage is being stolen': Gaza's fight to keep its treasures safe at home | Gaza | The Guardian

Man Who Raised The Alarm Over The Great Fire Of London Identified
Museum of London identifies man who raised alarm over Great Fire | London | The Guardian

Analysis Suggests 1.4 Million Year Old Stone Balls Were Intentionally Shaped
Were these stone balls made by ancient human relatives trying to perfect the sphere? | Science | AAAS

Did Humans Wear Shoes 148,000 Years Ago?
148,000-year-old discovery suggests humans wore modern everyday item back then | indy100

4 Roman Swords Found In Dead Sea Cave
Dead Sea reveals four 1,900-year-old Roman swords in cave - BBC News

Detectorist Finds 2 Rare Roman Cavalry Swords In The Cotswolds
2 rare Roman cavalry swords from 1,800 years ago discovered by UK metal detectorist | Live Science

Discovery Of Roman Walls In Swiss Alps Called 'A Sensation'
Ancient Roman walls discovered in Swiss Alps are an 'archaeological sensation' | Live Science

Archaeologists To Excavate Former Council Office Car Park In Weymouth
Archaeologists to dig former Weymouth council office site - BBC News

4,000 Year-Old Canaanite Arch Found In Israel
No one 'expected to find what we did': 4,000-year-old Canaanite arch in Israel may have been used by cult | Live Science

500,000 Year-Old Wood Structure Unearthed In Zambia
Half-million-year-old wooden structure unearthed in Zambia - BBC News

Complete Arrow 3,000 Years Old Found In Norway
Deadly weapon hidden in ice for 3,000 years is revealed in rare find for scientists | World | News | Express.co.uk

Complete Cursus Found On The Isle Of Arran
Archaeologists uncover complete Neolithic cursus on the Isle of Arran | Archaeology | The Guardian also Ritual monument discovered in Scotland dates to the time of Stonehenge | Live Science

125 Tombs Found In Roman Era Cemetery In Gaza Strip
Archaeologists discover 125 tombs including two rare sarcophaguses at Roman-era cemetery in Gaza - ABC News

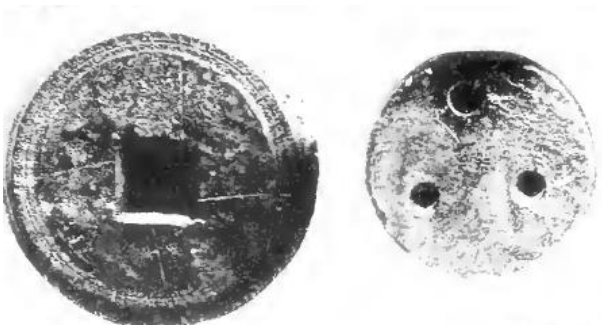
High Angle Battery And 'Ghost Tunnels On Portland, Dorset To Get Lottery Funding
High Angle Battery and 'ghost tunnels' get lottery funding - BBC News

Exceptionally Well Preserved 15 Million Year-Old Giant Spider Fossil Found In Australia
Scientists find 'giant' dinosaur spider fossil in Australia | indy100

Sycamore Gap tree at Hadrian's Wall 'felled overnight'
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-66947040

From the Archives 12

There is just one more article to cover in Volume XIII of the Proceedings, describing so called 'coal money' of Kimmeridge shale, and some of the variety of Kimmeridge shale artefacts then known and where they were found.



Various theories had been advanced as to the 'mysterious' origins and use of coal money, but it was well known by then that they were the waste pieces from turning out circular objects, like rings and bracelets, suggested as on a pole lathe. The holes on each side were then where the piece of shale was attached to the lathe – often square on one side and with up to 4 circular ones on the other.

The objects pictured in the article didn't reproduce clearly here, but included armlets and two fairly poorly preserved feet and legs, suggested as being from a stool (not too dissimilar to the bottom part of the famous zoomorphic shale leg from a small 3-legged table found in Colliton Park, Dorchester, and shown here). At that time coal money seems to have been commonly found in fields near Kimmeridge, with shale objects and sometimes coal money found in graves. Many of the finds were clearly of Roman date; others seem to be earlier, although the article says there is no strong evidence of pre-Roman shale working. Large concentrations suggesting production areas came from Povington, Tyneham and Corfe and distribution was said to extend well into Wiltshire (although the furthest mentioned sites are Pitt Rivers' excavations close to the Dorset/Wiltshire border).

My knowledge is limited but I know that many more production sites have now been identified, including ones from the Iron Age (and I believe earlier working of shale is known). The use of lathes seems to begin in the late Iron Age. Distribution of Kimmeridge shale objects is also wider than then thought, although determining the source of the shale isn't straightforward. Shale is, of course, bituminous and will burn, though produces an offensive smell, so that waste shale and other pieces may be brought to settlements as fuel.

The first article in Volume XIV (1893) is a description of visits to both Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall. It is fairly clear, accurate and not burdened with the fanciful notions that sometimes appear in Proceedings articles from this period, so no doubt of interest to members of the Society then. However, there's nothing I could see that would be of particular interest to us now.

There is an article about the Roman walls and gates of Dorchester, though it adds little to the one in Volume XII ('From the Archives 10'). It does, at least, attempt to base its conclusions on evidence, of which there sadly seemed to be very little (e.g. workmen digging through what seemed to be a Roman road heading for a gate, but with few details of exact location). Unfortunately, the last couple of pages descend into conjectures about who passed through the Roman gates, such as Vespasian (hardly), King Arthur (!) and Cromwell.

Finally, a piece on Maiden Castle describes Edward Cunnington's 1865 discovery of Roman buildings on the summit which, in his view, strengthened Hutchins' feeling that the hillfort was actually Roman. The author, Rev. Barnes, comprehensively demolishes this view with clear arguments. For example, despite views to the contrary, it is plain to see that the ancient Britons were entirely capable of such construction from other examples, whilst the form of the construction matches theirs and not any known Roman work. Similarly, he dismissed the groups of fairly small pits being Iron Age personal shelters as too ridiculous for words, saying that (as we now believe) they were for grain storage.

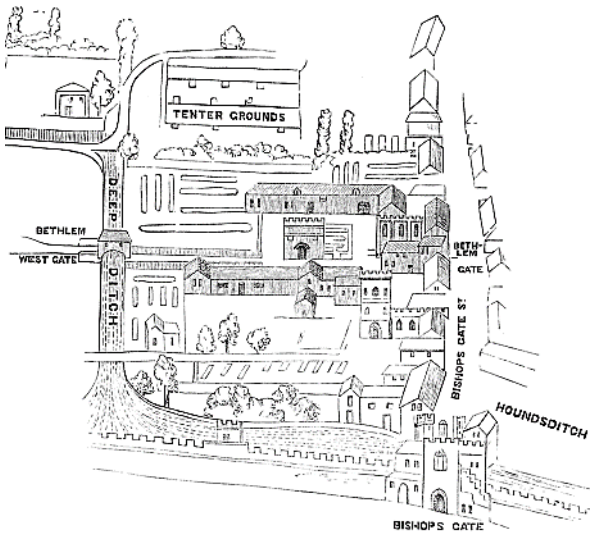
Geoff Taylor

The Imperial War Museum and Bethlem Royal Hospital

The Imperial War Museum in London has a grand neoclassical frontage. I thought it looked Georgian, but the wings seem very short for the large columned entrance and, particularly, the huge, out-of-scale, dome above it (though not clear, the wings don't extend quite as far as the edges of the photograph). That made me wonder what it was originally built for, as the museum presumably didn't date back that far.

In fact, the Imperial War Museum opened in 1920, initially in the Crystal Palace, but moved to South Kensington in 1924 and then to this site in Southwark in 1936 (the year the Crystal Palace burnt down). It now has branches at Duxford airfield in Cambridgeshire, HMS Belfast on the Thames, the Cabinet War Rooms in Whitehall and in Manchester.

But the building in Southwark was originally the Bethlem Royal Hospital in 1815, successor to the medieval hospital in the Priory of St Mary of Bethlehem, Bishopsgate Without – i.e. just outside the city walls as shown on the plan (the site is now covered by Liverpool Street Station). In common parlance it was, or at least became by the 14th century, "Bedlam", though the everyday use of bedlam to indicate chaos and madness probably didn't happen until the 17th century, perhaps as a result of the use of Bedlam to depict mental disorders in several plays.



The hospital was founded in 1247, though not as a hospital in the clinical sense that we would understand, but as a centre for collecting alms to support the Crusader Church and as a link to the Holy Land. In medieval usage, a hospital was an institution for the care of the needy, and the Priory did house poor people. However, its links to the wider Church became less strong and, in 1346, the City of London took the hospital under its protection. It is unclear what this entailed, except that the City played a part in managing Bethlem's finances. It still remained a dependent house of the Order of St Bethlehem, now based in France, into the 1370s when Edward III took control. This was aimed at preventing funds from the hospital enriching the French via the Avignon papacy during the Hundred Years War.

At the Dissolution Sir John Gresham, Lord Mayor of London, petitioned the Crown to grant Bethlem to the City. This was partially successful with, from 1547, the Crown retaining the land and buildings but the City taking responsibility for revenue and administration. From 1557, although remaining a separate institution, it was administered by the governors of Bridewell, the prototype 'house of correction'.

Whilst there are suggestions that Bethlem specialised in mental problems from early in its existence, even the Church Commissioners' visit in 1403 only recorded six male inmates who were '*mente capti*'. By about 1450, though, the Lord Mayor wrote the words shown, and it is likely that Bethlem was wholly for those with mental disorders not long after that. There is little to suggest how it was thought patients should be treated to help effect a cure.

> *A Church of Our Lady that is named Bedlam. And in that place be found many men that be fallen out of their wit. And full honestly they be kept in that place; and some be restored onto their wit and health again. And some be abiding therein for ever, for they be fallen so much out of themselves that it is incurable unto man. William Gregory*

However, for a very long time, the position of master (or "keeper") was a sinecure given to loyal servants or the 'great and good'. They, and

other staff, provided little care and mainly sought to profit at the expense of the patients, generally referred to as “the poore” or “prisoners”. Conditions were terrible, with the buildings dilapidated, food limited and poor (there are reports of near starvation) and even basic items such as clothing and eating vessels often lacking. Some improvements followed from time-to-time, such as after the passing of the Poor Laws in 1598, but they were often short-lived. Even a change to the management of the hospital, including an ostensibly ‘tiered medical regime’ proved little different. Bathing was introduced in the 1680s, though only during the warmer months.

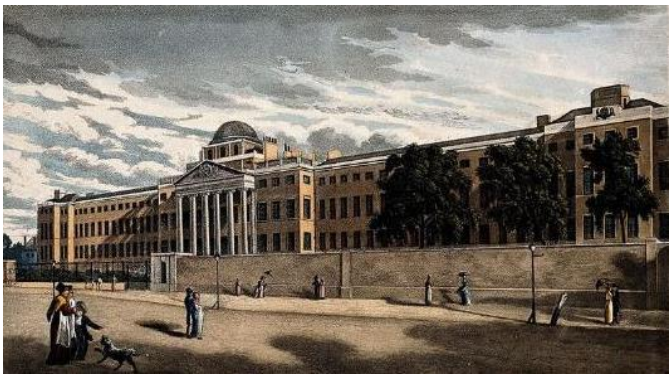
Visits by friends and relatives had always been allowed, indeed it was expected that friends and family would provide food and other essentials. Bethlem was, though, particularly known for allowing the public to visit, perhaps even as early as 1598. Visitor numbers seem to have been relatively limited for much of the 17th century, though many more are known later in that century and into the next, after the hospital was moved. One source says that over 100 visited in an Easter Week in the mid-18th century. Visiting then is most notably seen in Hogarth’s *Rakes Progress* (1735), with Tom Rakewell’s immoral living causing his incarceration.

Perhaps surprisingly, there seems to have been no official fee for visitors, although a large obligation to contribute to the ‘Poor Box’, much of which found its way to the staff, particularly as the Governors actively sought visits from “people of note and quallitie”. Nevertheless, the hospital received £300-350 each year from 1720 until free public access ceased in 1770. While visitors had subjected the patients to many abuses, they also provided some public oversight, and the worst staff abuse happened after 1770.

Initially Bethlem only had 21 patients, though expansion by 1667 raised that to 59. It wasn’t long before it was clear that this was nowhere near sufficient, especially as some buildings were close to collapse. A new building was constructed quite quickly, and at considerable expense, by 1676. It was at the edge of the large open space of Moorfields, screened by a stretch of London Wall at the rear and an 8 foot wall at the front. This monumental building was over 500 feet wide and about 40 feet deep, and designed for 120 patients initially. The scale was meant to impress and help to obtain charitable funds, with cells and chambers on one side and great galleries on the other, designed for public display.

Towards the end of the 18th century, additions and crowding had raised occupation to 266 but the building was physically deteriorating. Reports laid the blame on slipshod construction, but it seems clear that lack of maintenance was equally to blame. The most dangerous parts were gradually taken out of use and patient numbers fell by more than half to 119 in 1814, before financial and other constraints were overcome to allow construction of a new building on a new site – the building pictured below that eventually became the Imperial War Museum.

The land in Moorfields was swapped for a 12 acre site at St George’s Fields in Southwark, previously the site of the Dog and Duck Tavern and St George’s Spa. This was in a highly populated, industrialised area, with ground that was quite swampy. It did, though, provide space for patients to exercise outside. The new building (below), opened in 1815 with 122 patients, was 580 feet wide and, other than the central features, “a dreary expanse of brick”. With additional wings behind the frontage, and blocks to the rear, the capacity eventually rose to 364. The central cupola was replaced by the existing copper-covered dome in 1846, apparently to enlarge the chapel beneath it.



Whilst conditions and treatment remained primitive by today's standards, many improvements were made during the 19th century. For example, patients were separated by gender, and by the type and severity of their conditions, with the "criminally insane" held in their own block until Broadmoor opened in 1864. Qualified medical staff were increasingly employed and proper provision made to provide adequate food, clothing and amenities. Public access was, of course, stopped.

In 1870 a convalescent home was opened at Witley, near Godalming in Surrey, for patients on the way to recovery. The main institution was moved to new premises near Addington, Surrey, in 1930 and Lord Rothermere bought the Southwark site. The side wings and parts of the rear of the Bethlem buildings were demolished, leaving the central part much as looks today, with the rest of the grounds turned into the Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park in memory of Lord Rothermere's mother. Amongst the facilities and monuments it now contains there's a Tibetan Peace Garden, opened by the Dalai Lama in 1999.

The Imperial War Museum opened on the site in 1936, though was considerably damaged by bombs in 1940, 1941 and 1944, re-opening in 1946. As the *Survey of London* (1955) says "It is perhaps appropriate that a building occupied for so many years by men and women of unsound mind should now be used to house exhibits of that major insanity of our own time, war."

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 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

Note: BNSS haven't had archaeology lectures available to non-members for some time and I don't always check their events. DNHAS lectures only appear here if I'm specifically notified, but their events (and others from various county organisations), which I hear of, are notified in the member mailings.

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
Thurs 14th December	What's new in the British and Irish Neolithic	**DNHAS**	Alison Sheridan
Thurs 15th January	A source of confusion: New Investigations on the Dorchester Roman Aqueduct	**AVAS**	Harry Manley
Thurs 15th February	Recent results from Avebury (tbc)	**AVAS**	Josh Pollard
Thurs 21st March	Recent significant recent excavations near the village and Coombe Bissett the important artefacts discovered.	**AVAS**	PAS staff

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: https://www.dorsetmuseum.org/whats-on/
  Events in Dorchester, usually ticketed and charged unless you're a DNHAS member.
- Wareham and District Archaeology & Local History Society: 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.