



Founded 1983

East Dorset Antiquarian Society

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NEWSLETTER – February 2024

The next lecture, on **Wednesday 14th February at the later time of 7:45**, will be by Miles Russell of Bournemouth University. It's on the Frampton Roman Villa, discovered in 1796 but thought to have been lost by the mid-19th century. Dorset Wildlife Trust discovered the site recently and Miles led the team that excavated it to find out what remains.

Because of use of the church that evening, people may still be leaving the car park up to 7:15. **PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 7:15.**

We have to thank member David Reeve for the January lecture, summarised below: **Which is the oldest secular building in Wimborne?** It was, of course, on *Zoom* so that you didn't have to come out on that cold night; thank you to the 70+ people who 'tuned in'.

This month sees the completion of the 40 short articles on 'items' suggested by members as epitomising Dorset to them, in celebration of EDAS's 40th anniversary. I'm grateful to Vanessa Joseph for writing two articles every month, including two of the four final items here: **The Shapwick monster, Corfe Castle, Dorset Place Names** and the **Poole log boat**.

There were a few surprising omissions from the list, and some suggestions that we couldn't take up, so there may well be further short Dorset articles in future.

What would we do without Alan's very longstanding look at archaeology and ancient history in the news? This month sees the 64th edition of **Weblinks** and **Highlights**, I think the longest list yet. Sue Newman and Jo Crane have also contributed to the newsletter for a very long time, and this month has number 60 in the View from Above series on **Bulbury Camp**.

Early castles in Britain 4 is the final article in the short series, and the series looking at old Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, as it then was, continues. **From the Archives 15** sees my reviews about the journal entries close to the end of the 19th century.

As usual, the newsletter concludes with the **EDAS Programme** and the **District Diary**, though most local societies aren't announcing speakers all that far ahead at present.

Geoff Taylor

Which is the oldest secular building in Wimborne: Zoom lecture by David Reeve

David is a long-standing EDAS member and known to us from his extensive researches on Wimborne and his conducted tours. He retains a strong interest in the town after having moved to Clevedon, near Bristol, in 2015 for work. The lecture was inspired by my article in the November 2022 newsletter, written after seeing inside 'St Josephs', 5 King Street, sometimes claimed as the oldest inhabited dwelling in Wimborne.

David had already researched each of the buildings mentioned in the newsletter, so could add considerably to the earlier information. These, then, are his views on the likeliest candidates for the oldest (excluding churches). Of course, other candidates could well be lurking behind Georgian and Victorian facades; you only need to look up at rooflines along the High Street, and especially in the Corn Market, to figure that they're much older than the fronts.

In 4th place comes Leigh Manor Farm (or 'Old Manor Farm'), on Leigh Common about a mile east of the town centre. Locals pronounce 'Leigh' as 'Lye' as that (among other spellings) was what the area was called. The house is set slightly above Leigh Road, then the main road between London and Exeter, and was moated (some of which remains). It was intended to stand out in the landscape and is clearly of high status, with hand-made brick and criss-cross patterning (like Hampton Court), though the right hand side looks like a poor extension.



The construction shows that this is 16th century, but the inside has been altered so much that any possible earlier parts can't be seen. The moat could be much older and it is possible that it's the Grange referred to in 1338 monastic dilapidation records. Other documents of ownership show a property in Lye in 1526 that could well be here, but detailed research suggests a mid- or later-16th century rebuild.

Lesson 1: Just because it's not on a map doesn't mean it's not there: the 1624 map of the Blount family estate shows a farm marked 'Jaye' (left), referred to in the Kingston Lacy archives. But there's no moated manor, and the Hanham estate title deeds show Leigh Manor Farm rented to the Wareham family? Then someone brought a 1604 map to Dorset History Centre, where David then worked, which solved the problem (centre). Clearly, the moated manor then had other buildings; much has changed (right) but evidence of the track between the two properties seems to survive, though it's now a drainage ditch.



It is entirely likely that there was an early building at Leigh Manor Farm, and perhaps that some traces remain, but the evidence dates the current house to the mid-16th century. Turning, then, to number 3 – 5 King Street, opposite the Minster – called 'St Josephs', but that is really nothing to do with the house, or Wimborne, and seems to be no earlier than the 1980s.

Stephen Price, then curator of the Priest's House Museum, lived in the house in the 1990s. It was in a terrible state and various bodies came together to renovate it, giving Stephen the opportunity to look in detail at the construction. Stephen's architectural knowledge will combine with David's documentary research, which they intend to publish as soon as they can. The earliest known resident was Rev William Stone in the 1660s, but probably earlier, before the Civil War. His father was a master at the next-door school from 1601, so may have lived there. David has a great deal more on the owners and inhabitants over the centuries, which I don't have space to cover here, though one thing gives rise to Lesson 2: Just because it's in print (or on the internet) doesn't mean it's true. This is a claim that the Cox family lived in the house in the 18th century, with much about them that might confirm this, except that someone else lived there in the years the Coxes were known to be in Wimborne.

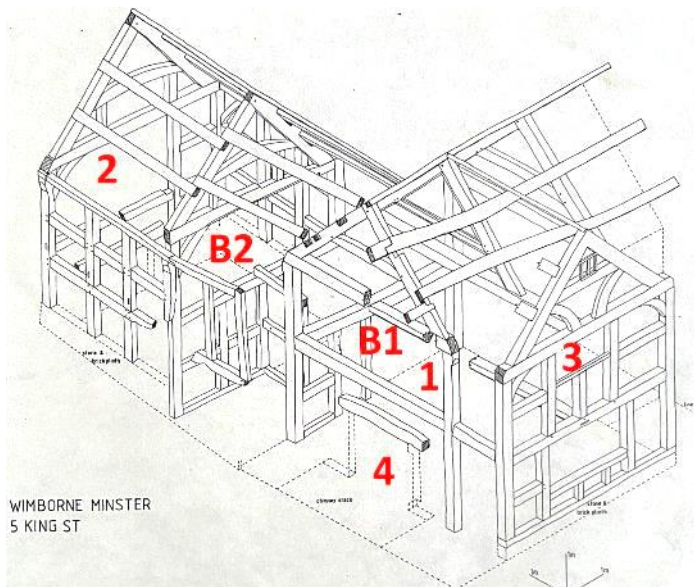
Just starting with this picture, though, you can see that the front gable is set on a stone plinth. The door is set back and in line with the roof at top left, under which is a 'lean to' with more modern bricks and not on the plinth. There's brick in the set-back parts too, not like the gable (which would presumably have been wattle and daub between the timbers). However, an 18th century drawing of the side shows the roof running all the way down to the lower wall at the left. Photos that David showed, like those in the earlier article from 1915 and c.1960, show the door flush with the gable and the roof coming down to just over it. They also show the front, excluding the beams, covered in a sort of pebbledash and a bottom window divided into three, at one point with shutters.



It seems that there were major alterations in the 17th century, with wattle and daub replaced with brick then, later, the brick covered with the 'pebble dash'. The front seems to have been changed again as part of the renovations. But the overall story is more complex and partly explained by the 1624 map of Wimborne, where no.5 is part of the row at the bottom right. No gables are shown and this was an addition. In summary, internal/architectural features show a sequence of:

1. A 2-bay timber framed building (B1), in its earliest phase pre-16th C, probably a shop. It seems to have been an unheated open hall (no blackened beams).
2. A 2-bay building (B2) added to the rear, a 16th C dwelling for the shop.
3. Also 16th C, a front gable shop extension with original front wall removed.
4. 17th C brick additions (formerly wattle and daub), including a chimney with remains of the neighbouring house, demolished in 19th century.

So, the original buildings ran east-west parallel to King Street. Roof timbers continuing into no. 6 are unlikely to remain after alterations, including rooms in the attic.



A short rescue excavation^[1] west of no. 6 in 1983 involved some EDAS members. They found 10th/11th century pottery and evidence of a large pre-12th century timber-framed building, perhaps relating to the College of Secular Canons or even the monastery. There's evidence of c.12th century shops along King Street, but we can only say for sure that 5 King Street has pre-16th century structural remains.

Number 2 on the list is the Museum of East Dorset (MED), the Priest's House Museum as it was when the photograph was taken. Since Vanessa wrote about the early structural remains found during the renovations 'for' MED in the May 2021 newsletter, I'll keep this quite short.



The building has two 16th century wings with a central courtyard, apparently enclosed in the 1700s. Behind the courtyard is a 17th century hall, whilst excavation in 1990^[2] gave evidence of a pre-15th century building in this area. There's also a cobbled area under the 'courtyard' which is thought to be 13th or 14th century.

David's records of leaseholders go back to 1701 (with possible occupants for a century or more before), starting with one person or family and then various sub-divisions, before returning to a single name from 1778. That clearly impacted the internal walls and layout, and the renovation work for MED uncovered a great deal of evidence of changes going back to the first building(s) on the site, some of which are now revealed in the museum. The 1990 excavation, and one in 2012, showed activity on the site in the Saxon period, sealed by the first building around the 12th century. The 'best' find was this penny of Beorhtwulf, King of Mercia 840-852. Again, while there is considerable evidence of early activity and building on the site, there is nothing that definitely dates parts of the current building before the 16th century.

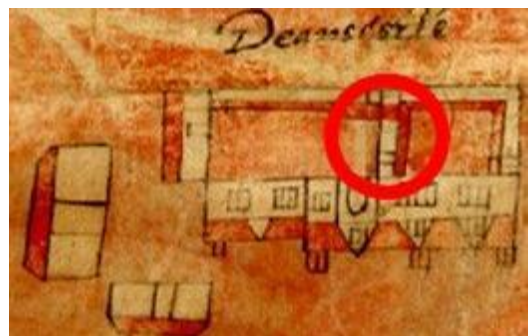


David's Number 1 candidate for the oldest is Deans Court, despite my scepticism in the earlier article. His



third lesson was 'things are not always what they seem', and the building certainly appears to be a Georgian mansion (built 1725) with Victorian extensions. There are few records of the small College of Secular Canons until its dissolution in 1548, but it was established in the middle of the 11th century with its first dean from about 1075. The dilapidations list from 1338 (mentioning the Grange above) includes issues with the hall, kitchen and various other buildings. So there was a hall in the 14th century, on this site from title deeds, probably there from the 11th/12th century.

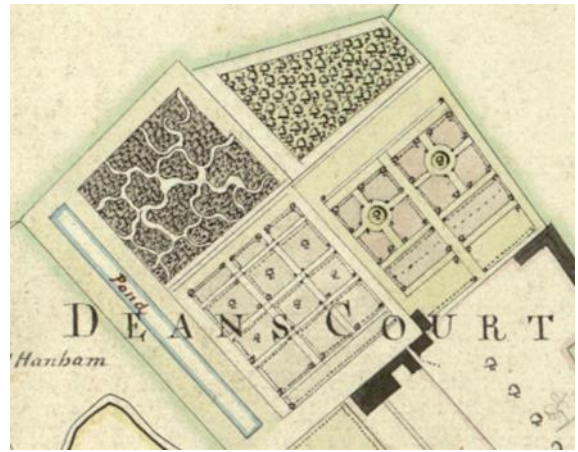
A Tudor range was then built in the mid/late 16th century, shown on the map of 1604 and including the tithe barn at the left. The cellars show that it was probably of hand-made brick and a document of 1626 refers to the original purchase as "on the site of the late college or free chapel", confirmed as the dean's in the title deeds. The front of the current mansion is on the alignment of the Tudor range, i.e. bottom on the map (facing north), with the hall behind (circled). The hall, with walls obscured by Georgian and Victorian alterations, had a room built alongside in the Victorian period. Two original outside walls were retained, though, and they're 4 feet thick. From the cellar, they appear to be heathstone – the reddish stone particularly used in the Saxon parts of the Minster. So Deans Court appears to have medieval, possibly even late Saxon, parts within it.



The fishpond (shown on the 1774 map below) was drained and cleaned out about 20 years ago, and a Saxon brooch found under the blue clay that lines part of it. We also know that a Saxon Royal palace was in this area, long thought to be the earthworks in Abbott Street Copse near Pamphill, though David says

that was disproved by recent archaeological work. Clearly, it would be a stretch to claim it was here, although years ago National Trust archaeologist Martin Papworth thought it a good candidate, partly as it's close to the double monastery. More work would obviously be needed to consider if the Saxon links have a strong basis, or simply to strengthen the dating. David put this first on his list though, because the thick walls are the walls of the medieval (at least) hall.

- [1] Graham, A.H., 1985. Wimborne Minster, Dorset: Excavations in the Town Centre, 1983. *PDNHAS* 106, 77-86.
 [2] Coe, D. *et al.*, 1995. Excavations at 29 High Street, Wimborne Minster, Dorset 1990. *PDNHAS* 114, 135-144.



Geoff Taylor

The Shapwick Monster (VJ)

There is no nautical reason why Shapwick, a Stourside village in the heart of Dorset sheeplands, 10 miles from the coast, should have an Anchor Inn and a local legend surrounding a crab. The tale of the Shapwick Monster illustrates the insularity of many villages at a time before the age of the stagecoach and turnpike roads.

On October 12th, 1706, a travelling fishmonger from Poole bound for Bere Regis dropped a live crab on the outskirts of the village. It was found by a 'country clown' and 'panic fear assail'd his mind'. He rushed to tell the other villagers, none of whom had ever seen a crab before. They believed it was some kind of devil or monster, and armed themselves with sticks and pitchforks to drive away the creature.



The fishmonger eventually returned in search of his lost crab and saw the commotion caused by the villagers. Amused by their ignorance, he casually picked up the crab, put it back in his basket and continued on his journey, spreading the word of the dim-witted villagers of Shapwick and 'laughing at them at his leisure'.

It seems that no one from the village then dare visit a fishmonger's stall at the local markets in fear of being ridiculed. Today, the weathervane showing the crab and villagers atop the roof of the aptly named Crab Farm, Shapwick, is a reminder of the story.

John Symonds Udal's publication *Dorsetshire Folklore* includes a similar tale, although the monster is identified as a tortoise or lobster. He also mentions that, as a proverbial saying, "A Shapwick Monster" is something 'too extraordinary to be explained'.

The story was obviously part of an oral tradition for at least a century before it was written down. The Kingston Lacy Estate has this unframed calligraphy in oils on canvas in its collections telling the story of 'The Shapwick Monster'. According to the information on its web site, which might be wrong, the event occurred on the 12th day of October 1686 and the story was composed and written by a member of the Joyce family in about 1830 (although the calligraphy is attributed to Jeremiah Joyce (1783 – 1816), but with its date unknown).



The Shapwick Monster is perhaps best remembered in an amusing poem published in 1841, written and illustrated by East Anglian artist Buscall Fox, whilst lodging at the home of Mary Harrington and her family at West Street, Sturminster Marshall.

Corfe Castle (GT)

This imposing ruin is said to be “One of Britain's most iconic and evocative survivors of the English Civil War”. It is mentioned in many recent newsletter articles, including the ‘Castles series’. Its siting is certainly dramatic, particularly for me that first full view when approaching from the north. “Corfe” comes from the Old English *ceorfan*, relating to the cuttings or gaps in the Purbeck ridge that separate the 55m high castle hill, made more dominant by the 21m high keep set on top.



The gaps are, of course, the only easy natural routes into the Isle of Purbeck, and this was probably a fortified site long before the Norman conquest. While the castle works have covered most evidence of that, there was a Saxon royal hall on the western edge of the hilltop. It was perhaps there that the teenage King Edward was murdered in 978 when visiting his half-brother, Æthelred. He, of course, became ‘Æthelred the Unready’, and the murder is often thought to have been at the instigation of his mother, Ælfthryth (This, like a couple of things below, is mentioned in the December newsletter; that’s just how it worked out!).



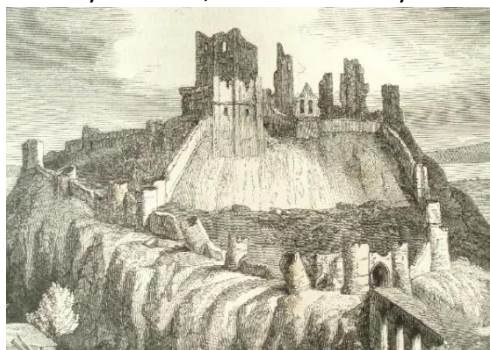
The Norman hall on the same site was the first castle building in stone, around 1080, with the keep completed under Henry I about 25 years later. In 1139, the castle was held for Henry’s daughter, the Empress Matilda, and withstood a siege by King Stephen’s supporters. This must have been a determined campaign given the effort to build the ‘adulterine castle’ whose earthwork remains are ‘The Rings’, 300m southwest of Corfe Castle (bottom left of map).

This was one of King John’s favourite castles, and he spent a great deal on improvements, as did his son Henry III. The workmen’s camp for the ongoing construction seems to have been the origin of the settlement.

While the castle remained in royal ownership until 1572, it seems that there were few significant alterations before Elizabeth I sold it to her Lord Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton.

Sir John Bankes bought the castle in 1635, but it was his wife, Lady Mary Bankes, who led its defence against Parliamentary forces during the Civil War as Sir John was initially with the king and then died in 1644. The Bankes had spent considerable sums to create a luxurious home as the centre of their estates, but the castle remained formidable. With only about 80 men, Lady Mary held out against the first attack and siege, in 1643. By 1645 the Royalist cause was in trouble and a further siege of 48 days into 1646 was successful, but only after treachery by one of the garrison.

Sadly, it seems that the romantic story of Lady Mary being given the keys at the end of the siege in honour of her courage is probably not true, as documentary evidence suggests that she was in London the whole time. The castle was plundered and then Parliament ordered its destruction, which took several months and a huge amount of gunpowder. The drawing shows the remains around 1660.



Dorset Place Names (VJ)

Have you ever wondered about some of the weird and wonderful place names in Dorset?

The first survey of Dorset place names was Anton Fagersten's doctoral dissertation, *The Place-Names of Dorset*, Uppsala 1932. By 2010, with the help of the English Place-Name Society and many other scholars and historians, David Mills had produced four in-depth volumes. In 2023, the fifth and final volume for Dorset was published. The books represent the collection of an enormous amount of evidence and linguistic expertise, providing explanations of the origin of many thousands of place names. Most Dorset place names are of Old English ("OE") or Anglo-Saxon origin. The oldest names are of Celtic origin, particularly river names like Cerne, Char, Lim, Trent and Wey.

Names ending in -ton or -ham, meaning village or homestead, are common, and so are those containing 'don' (hill), 'mor' (mere or pond), 'combe' (valley), and 'borne' (stream). The same root can lead to different spellings, most obviously with the Winterbornes or Winterbournes. Of course, the origin of a name isn't always obvious; for example, 'don' often comes from OE and means hill, but it can come from a Celtic word meaning valley. Clearly, pinning down derivations isn't straightforward, and etymologists don't always agree.

Dorset has many double-barrelled place names. These generally consist of an originally Saxon name with an added 'surname' showing either post-Conquest ownership, the church dedication, or some local characteristic. For example, Wootton Fitzpaine and Okeford Fitzpaine belonged to Robert Fitz Payne in the second half of the 13th century.

Thanks to the four volumes in the Museum of East Dorset's library, here are just a few more examples:

- Dorchester comes through Durnovaria from Celtic *durn*, though the rest is rather uncertain, plus OE *ceaster* – fort or walled city.
- Wimborne is derived from *winn*, *wynn* and *burna*, originally the name of the River Allen. The addition Minster is from *mynster* (monastery), referring to the nunnery founded by Queen Cuthberga in 705 AD.
- Farnham translates as an enclosure where ferns grow.
- Dewlish, an old Celtic name for black stream, is believed to mean devilish. The stream that runs through the village is called Devil's Brook.
- Evershot is from OE *eofor* meaning wild boar and the Saxon *scīete*, meaning upper end of the valley (in which the River Frome rises). This suggests an area where wild boar roamed freely.
- Ryme Intrinseca takes its first part from the Manor of Ryme, OE *rima*, meaning an edge or a border (possibly the nearby row of hills). The affix is the Latin for inner, meaning this village lies within the bounds of the manor.
- Tingleton is thought to be from OE *tynicel* meaning small farm or valley of small farms.
- Fleet derives from OE *fleot*, meaning estuary, inlet or creek, i.e. the channel between Chesil Beach and the mainland.
- Mapperton is a farmstead where maple trees grow.
- Shapwick come from the West Saxon for sheep farm.
- Witchampton seems likely to be the farm of dwellers at a place called Wic-ham (i.e. a village associated with a Romano-British settlement or vicus).
- Chalbury is Ceol's fortified place (OE), referring to the hillfort.



Poole Iron Age logboat (GT)

This was described in the summary of Tom Cousins' lecture in the December newsletter – a 10m long boat carved from a single oak log around 300BC and found in 1964. It has been in Poole Museum since 2007 but, until the museum re-opens (date unclear), their comprehensive information isn't online. Actually, the boat isn't currently in the museum, but was moved to temporary storage a few months back.

In fact, moving the massive Swash channel wreck's rudder mast and the log boat as part of the redevelopment, both done on the same day, were the biggest challenges in clearing the museum site before construction. Disassembling the log boat's purpose-built glazed cabinet wasn't easy, and the crew had to decide the order of the panels as they went, said to be like a "giant (horizontal) game of Tetris". Threading the long, heavy, but quite fragile, logboat around the wooden columns close by "was tricky", but it was all achieved successfully.



Hollowed-out tree trunks are the earliest known form of boat, from c.7000BC in Denmark, and are still used in places like Africa and the Pacific islands. This one came from an oak trunk of about 1.7m diameter, perhaps from a pocket of remaining ancient woodland since, by 300BC, most of the nearby fertile land had been cleared for agriculture and the heathlands already existed. The Poole logboat is twice the size of most others, making manoeuvring difficult, so it may have had a ceremonial use.



As mentioned in the earlier article, sugar solution was used to preserve the wood. Once it had dried, the excess sugar crystals had to be removed by volunteers, including several from EDAS, alongside the specialists. As an internationally significant object, the logboat has been fully recorded digitally using 3D scanning, with details in the Archaeopress 2019 monograph covering everything about it from when it was first discovered (£16 for the pdf version, found [here](#)).



Weblink Highlights January 2024

I cannot recall as many weblinks in one month since I have been compiling them for the newsletter. The number has been boosted by apparently random articles on the subject of archaeology or history. These do not appear to relate to any recent discovery or event, indeed there are also a couple of editorials. One can only assume the media are responding to an increasing interest in these subjects; we can only hope. These articles do not, however, fully explain the flood of articles this month – and I have tried to weed out the annoying repeat appearances of items first published months ago. An outstanding example

of this (on a totally different subject) happened recently when MSN repeated a Telegraph article (actually about OS map symbols being changed) from almost exactly a year ago!

One of the random articles in *The Express* described the Romano-British settlement Chysauster in Cornwall, which then appeared almost verbatim in the Mirror. Chysauster was visited during the 2013 Field Trip, which was reported in the Midsummer 2013 Newsletter (available on the EDAS website).

The seeming total lack of editorial oversight of headlines is a particular bug-bear of mine, and there were two that stood out in the last month. The first you can see in this month's list told of 'unlocking a 2,300 year-old secret', but when you read the article it was about events in the 4th century AD, so somebody added 300 years to 2,000 instead of subtracting them – and nobody checked! The other – not included in this month's list – proclaimed “Check out the world’s 60 unmissable ancient modern wonders”!!!

Excuse my scepticism when somebody decides they have identified the UK's oldest town. In this case it's Amesbury on the basis of continued habitation, as evidenced by the discoveries at Blick Mead dating back to the early Mesolithic [Blick Mead is 700m from the centre of Amesbury and 2,700m from Stonehenge – ed.]. They actually call it a city but, leaving that aside, the lack of evidence in most other towns (or cities) is almost certainly the result of the continuous developments either destroying or obscuring evidence of early habitation. 'Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence' seems very appropriate here.

Alan Dedden

January Weblinks - No. 64

Devon Castle's Tower Brought Down By Storm Gerrit [here](#)

To see the castle before the collapse, go [here](#)

Pen Dinas Historic Monument Fenced Off After Rock Fall [here](#)

1,500 Year-Old Decorated Gold Buckle Found In Kazakhstan [here](#)

Medieval Cemetery Excavated In Wales [here](#)

'Toddler T Rex' Fossil Mystery Solved [here](#)

and **Distant Cousin Of T Rex Discovered In Museum** [here](#)

Exceptional 315 Million Year-Old Fossil Found In Irish Cliff [here](#)

Excavation Finds The Poor Were Buried At Tintern Abbey After The Dissolution [here](#)

Preserved Roman Village In English Countryside [here](#) and [here](#)

The UK's Largest And Best-Preserved Deserted Medieval Village [here](#)

Car Park Discovery Unlocks 2,300 Year-Old (?) Secret [here](#)

Babylon's Ishtar Gate (right) May Have Different Purpose Than Previously Thought [here](#)

Greece Reopens Alexander The Great Monument [here](#)

The Guardian View On Archaeology And Writing [here](#)

2,000 Year-Old Celestial Calendar Found In Ancient Chinese Tomb [here](#)

Magnet Fishers Pull Centuries Old Cannon From River Don [here](#)

Medieval Wall Paintings Found By Builders At Christ's College Cambridge [here](#)

Complete Mammoth Tusk Accidentally Discovered By North Dakota Coal Miners [here](#)



Scientists Solve Mystery Of How MS Gene Spread [here](#)

What Killed The Largest Known Ape Species? [here](#)

Opulent Tombs Revealed At Recently Discovered Roman Necropolis [here](#)

Medieval Grave Of Very Powerful Man And 4ft Sword Unearthed In Sweden [here](#)

4,500 Year-Old Egyptian Tomb With Artefacts Uncovered [here](#)

New Archaeological Park And Museum Opened Near The Colosseum, Rome [here](#)

Huge Ancient Lost City Found In The Amazon [here](#)

European Megalith 2,000 Years Older Than Stonehenge [here](#)

'Unique' UK Remote Island (right) Where Humans Lived For 5,000 Years Then Abandoned It [here](#)

Ancient Fortifications Revealed Under Bronze Age Settlement On Italian Island [here](#)

Part Of Hadrian's Aqueduct And Rare Greek Coins Unearthed Near Corinth [here](#)

Dorset Museum In Bid To Buy Rare Bronze And Iron Age Treasure (below) Found In Dorset [here](#)



1st Ancient Case Of Turner Syndrome Found In Ancient DNA [here](#)

2,000 Year-Old 'Bullet' With Roman Dictators Name Inscribed [here](#)

Ancient Greek Temple Filled With Hidden Treasures [here](#)

Burials From Unknown Hunter-Gatherers Discovered In Brazil [here](#)

9th Century Sword With Possible Viking Origins Found In Vistula River In Poland [here](#)

Some Of World's Oldest Fossils Dating Back 565 Million Years Found In UK [here](#)

UK's Oldest Town Holds Vital Clues About Stonehenge [here](#)

Woolly Mammoth Steps Retraced Based On Chemistry Of 14,000 Year Old Tusk [here](#)

1,800 Year-Old Roman Arm Guard (right) Reconstructed From 100 Pieces [here](#)

'Exceptionally Rare' Ancient Structure Found In Yorkshire [here](#)

Did Ancient Europeans Arrive In Americas? [here](#)

Ancient Underground Tunnels Found In Ruins Of 4,300 Year-Old Town In China [here](#)

Engraving On 2,000 Year-Old Knife Thought To Be Oldest Danish Runes [here](#)



Remains Of 'Lost' Bronze Age Tomb Found In County Kerry [here](#)

Skeletons Found In 1,000 Year-Old Graves With Rings Around Necks And Buckets On Feet [here](#)

Bronze Age Jewellery Found In Poland Was Part Of Ancient Water Burial Ritual [here](#)

'Ancient Artwork' Found On Tusk Discovered In Remote Siberian River [here](#)

Mudlark Finds Tiny Rosary Bead (right) In River Thames [here](#)

Ancient Hunting Implements Found In Mexican Cave [here](#)

New Research Challenges Hunter-Gatherer Narrative [here](#)

UK To Loan Back Ghana's Looted 'Crown Jewels' [here](#)

Bellaghy Bog Body: Human Remains Are 2,000 Years Old [here](#)

Race Against Time To Unlock Secrets Of Erebus Wreck And Doomed Franklin Expedition [here](#)

Abandoned Town Was Once A Thriving Centre For Ancient History [here](#)

Emperor Caracalla's Triumphal Arch Unearthed In Serbia [here](#)

Early Giant Whale From Australia Changes Understanding Of Whale Evolution [here](#)



Bayeux Museum Lands 1872 Reproduction Tapestry (left) From Rolling Stone's Estate [here](#)

Life And Death For Roman Legionaries - British Museum Exhibition [here](#)

Tools Used By Humans 12,000 Years Ago Unearthed In Israel [here](#)

Prehistoric Jewellery Reveals 9 Distinct Cultures Across Stone Age Europe [here](#)

5,500 Year-Old Neolithic Tomb In Sweden Is Mysteriously Missing Skulls [here](#)

Humans Migrating To Europe 45,000 Years Ago Were Resilient To Harsh Climate [here](#)
and 45,000 Year-Old Bones Found In Cave Are Oldest Modern Human Remains In Central Europe [here](#)

Nottinghamshire Metal Detectorist Finds Rare Bronze Age Artefact (right) [here](#)



Apologies for anything in the following newsletters that's out of date or happening very soon; I've been away for a while and unable to pass them on:

The *Chase & Chalke Bumper Late January Newsletter* is [here](#). Of particular interest is the information on their Champions of the Past project discovering sites through the Cranborne Chase LiDAR portal. There's also an invitation to learn more about geophysical surveying.

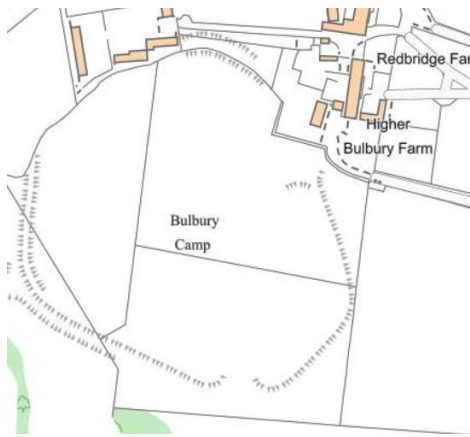
The *CBA Wessex Newsletter February 2024* can be viewed [here](#). Our next meeting is advertised, as are those for the Blandford Society and AVAS.

View from Above 60: Bulbury Camp

*Photo by Sue Newman
and Jo Crane*



Bulbury Camp, pictured here looking eastwards, is next to Bulbury Woods golf course, just north of Sleppe on the A35 and 2km south-west of Lytchett Matravers. The hillfort is 220m east to west and 200m north to south, enclosing about 3.5ha. It is, though, very difficult to see, even with the photograph viewed much larger, because of ploughing reducing most of the earthworks. The only part that I'm certain about, since field boundaries have changed vs. the map here, is the 'C' curve of trees middle left in the aerial photograph (i.e. the northern part of the monument).



Dave Stewart commented, when he spoke to EDAS in May 2019, that many hillforts are neither on hills nor much like forts, and Bulbury certainly appears to match that description. It is on a slight rise in the ground, but the only natural defences seem to have been drops a few feet high at the north and along part of the south-west side, where there was a small stream and the best preserved section of the bank and ditch were said to remain in 1996. There is marshy ground to the south, and Historic England commented that "wetter conditions may have increased its defensive potential [but it] is much less commanding than any other hill-fort in SE Dorset".

Bulbury (named as "Belbury") was first recorded by Edward Cunnington in *Archaeologia* XLVII (1884; online [here](#)) following the chance find of a late Iron Age hoard in 1881. Some of the monument was in fairly good condition then, with banks up to 10 feet above a ditch up to 40 feet wide, but with parts being destroyed by the plough. Ploughing had certainly reduced the earthworks by the time it was scheduled in 1933 and, as is too often the case, it appears that scheduling the monument has proved ineffective against further damage. Even Historic England's 1996 Research Report says the Camp "has been further reduced by ploughing".

The hoard included both bronze and iron items; including "Two bronze cast figures about 4 inches long with bull's head and horns". Some of the finds are held by the County Museum, including parts of a bronze mirror, chariot fittings, an iron axe and part of a sword hilt. Probably best known is the iron anchor 4½ feet long with an attached iron chain (pictured in 'The Maritime Archaeology of Poole Bay', December 2023 newsletter).



Geoff Taylor

Early castles in Britain 4

Previous articles have shown how the early castles in Britain were quite often poorly sited, designed, constructed and manned to fulfil a strictly military role, despite the expense they might have entailed. The wish for visibility and accessibility could outweigh some defensive concerns; providing a level of comfort for the owner and his family could be just as important as providing the highest level of safety and security. Projecting prestige and power was important, and we've also seen an element of symbolism, not least in taking over sites that were important prior to the Conquest.

Castles were symbolic and ideological instruments, intended to establish the Normans' legitimacy to rule for reasons in addition to their martial strength. Ecclesiastical foundations were also important to the Normans in terms of establishing their authority, and they were deployed together from the beginning with the abbey at Battle and castle at Hastings. Other examples are Norwich, where the castle and cathedral were planned together, and Durham, with its cathedral and castle perched together high above a loop in the River Wear.



Of course, building your castle over a Saxon manor gave a very clear message. The symbolism of controlling and altering high status sites, especially those connected with earlier royalty, could hardly be missed. Castles built within Roman defences, as at Exeter, might even bring thoughts of their empire, quite apart from providing stronger defences. Old



Sarum extended the symbolism further by combining castle and cathedral within Iron Age defences, which had also been associated with both the Romans and the Saxons. This suggests reasons for the establishment of Corfe Castle, partly related to its association with the Church but also demonstrating continuity with, and respect for, the royal past. This was emphasised by the early rebuilding in stone of the Saxon hall where, at least in telling the story, Edward the

Martyr was assassinated in 978.

Corfe, it seems, was particularly about demonstrating authority and status with its highly visible and commanding position, emphasised by whitening the keep (as with the White Tower in London). We might also take the view that the castle was favoured because William I liked to visit and hunt in the Royal Forest of Purbeck, something emulated by King John later. Corfe was certainly favoured in royal 'budgets', as far as we can tell from remaining documents, especially the Pipe Rolls. Spending on building and maintenance work at Corfe seems to have been at a similar level over time to that at more strategically important castles like Windsor, though less than at the most important strongholds like Dover and London. Like most, if not all, castles Corfe also acted as a legal and administrative centre, a key role of the urban castles at the heart of most of the Saxon shires.





Costs were clearly an important factor if, perhaps, less immediately an issue for the king. The land was the main source of a lord's wealth and castles had, in some sense, to 'pay their way'. Economic development of a lord's estate was important, and probably particularly pressing for the lesser nobility. Whilst a small village grew up around the entrance to Corfe Castle, founding or expanding a town and market close to a castle was one means of economic development. Old Sarum is a good example, but perhaps the clearest is the planned 12th century town of New Buckenham in Norfolk,

next to the circular moated castle with its circular keep. As can be seen, the town retains its original gridded layout.

The lack of finances must be one of the main reasons so many of the less important motte and bailey castles fell out of use quite quickly, leaving nothing more than earthworks to remind us they existed. Of course, if they were of wood then they were effectively temporary structures anyway, though the use of stone sleeper-walls could lengthen their life considerably. Documentary evidence is usually lacking, though, so putting numbers or dates on when such castles went out of use is difficult. For example, little or nothing is known of the motte and bailey just outside Cranborne, in an unusual location away from the village. The site may have been chosen for its strength, which presumably proved not to be needed, since the manor house was built in the village early in the 13th century (perhaps even on the site of the Saxon manor), though said to be a hunting lodge for King John initially. Meeting the ongoing maintenance costs of the castle was probably seen as an unnecessary burden.



It's clear that many or most early Norman castles need to be seen as much in social as in military terms. They were the homes of the ruling class, legal and financial centres, and symbols of authority and status. Perhaps, this quote from Shakespeare (*Macbeth* Act I, scene vi), though clearly much later, sums up the point that defence was quite often not the most important factor:

This castle is in a pleasant place. The air is sweet and appeals to my refined senses.

And finally, some of the points I glossed over in the narrative, or in the choice of examples:

- As early as 862, Charles the Bald licensed private landowners to build 'castles' (probably more like fortified manors) against the Norman threat.
- There were probably at least 3 motte and bailey castles in Herefordshire before the Conquest.
- After the conquest, the level of immediate threat to the Normans was quite likely uncertain.
- Apart from obvious places, like the major towns and cities, what was strategically important may also not have been clear initially.
- William I instituted a programme of castle building, both royal and by his lords and their followers.
- An earthwork and timber castle need not have been costly using forced labour and timber from your newly gained lands (though it took people away from the land, the source of your wealth).
- Stone keeps on artificial mounds weren't that common. Where they were built, foundations could be sunk deep into the mound (as at Wareham, where the mound may even have been built around the foundations).

You may well know of other points and, though I don't think they'll change the conclusions above, they may change the emphasis. I'd be interested in any comments.

Geoff Taylor

From the Archives 15

Continuing with Volume XVII of the Proceedings 'for' 1896, there's an article about a whirlwind at Bloxworth which gives me the excuse to include a photograph. This was the scene in the local vicar's orchard on the morning of 11th November 1895 after a storm had blown itself out just after midnight with an additional strong rushing sound like a train going by. The Reverend tracked the damage, which he could only attribute to a whirlwind as it left a clearly delineated path of destruction 60-80 yards wide. It started almost immediately north of what is now the A35, 120 yds east of the Bloxworth junction, and continued for almost exactly a mile north-east. Half of the 50 year-old apple trees in the orchard were ripped from the ground and left lying in all directions, with even old oaks broken at the trunk. Luckily, no-one was hurt and the whirlwind missed the few buildings, some by just a few feet.



An article on the Knowlton church and earthworks is particularly concerned with how poorly they were looked after. As the photograph shows, the church was very overgrown with ivy, whilst the interior was almost impassable because of bramble and elder. Many of the earthworks were similarly overgrown, including barrows with trees growing in them. It was also difficult for the writer to properly trace and record earthworks in the nearby fields as they had been ploughed flat in the 50 years since a previous writer had provided detailed descriptions. One had been cut through to make a "duck puddle". The henges weren't then described as such, but the writer makes the point that such monuments could hardly be defensive with the bank inside the ditch. The comments made suggest this may not have been appreciated previously.

The final sentence of the article states "It seems strange that a Christian church should have been placed in what was evidently once upon a time one of the sacred circles or places of worship of a barbarous tribe, perhaps where the Druid priests conducted their mysterious rites." It is odd that the writer didn't suggest that the point was for the Church to appropriate previously pagan sites.

Volume XVIII has very little on historical or archaeological subjects, except for a short piece about the sun revealing buried archaeology. Initially this relates to parch marks in dry weather, apparently known for some time, though the marks were thought to relate to differences in the ground material, e.g. chalk fills in an area of normal soil. The low sun casting shadows could sometimes reveal traces of otherwise indistinguishable bumps and hollows. It seems that the mechanisms for differences in plant growth weren't then widely understood. In any case, these phenomena could only have very limited application without aerial views, which came over two decades later with the pioneering work of OGS Crawford.

Volume XIX 'for' 1898 has rather more archaeological and historical articles, although some are probably of limited interest or require a more detailed read for those with a specific interest in the subject matter. For example, there is a detailed article providing evidence for the large number of medieval altars that are, or have been, in Salisbury Cathedral.

(Written a while back, much of this paragraph has now been covered in the last few newsletters!) Notes on documents, such as pipe rolls, relating to Dorset in King John's reign show that he visited his palace at Gillingham frequently. Gillingham was then in the middle of a large forest, presumably excellent for hunting, and 'King's Court Palace' is within Gillingham Deer Park. Both are scheduled, though there is little left of the palace except the remains of a large moat. A royal residence seems to have been in existence from at least 1132, although John spent considerable sums on improvements. It was demolished in 1369 then, in the 18th century, even the foundations were dug up for road repairs.

Geoff Taylor

EDAS PROGRAMME 2024

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

Wed 14th February	Lecture	Miles Russell	Frampton Villa excavations STARTS 7:45 PLEASE DON'T ARRIVE BEFORE 7:15
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

Notes: DNHAS lectures only appear here if I'm specifically notified. BNSS had an archaeology lecture in January but I've not yet seen any more. Other societies have slots booked but not yet filled.

Sat 10th February	Archaeology Group Quiz Night	Blandford Group	Quizmaster Julian Richards Details HERE
Thurs 15th February	Recent results from Avebury	AVAS	Josh Pollard
Thurs 15th February	Corfe Castle excavations	Blandford Group	Nancy Grace
Thurs 21st March	The Coombe Bissett Landscape Research Project	AVAS	Alyson Tanner and Alix Smith

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. In-house archaeology talks are, as far as I can tell, free for non-members (donations appreciated). There are also some Zoom presentations, particularly aimed at members, though they non-members can email bnssmembership@gmail.com to see whether they can send you a 'link' for the talk.
- **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:** See 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.