

News, Views, Reviews, Obituaries

Dates for the diary – 2009

Saturday 18 July

National Archaeology Open Day at Upper Row Farm 10am - 4pm. Activities for the whole family including a children's hands-on archaeology trail and guided tours of the Iron Age/Romano-British site at Blacklands.

Monday 13 July – Friday 21 August

Provisional dates for the Training Excavation at Blacklands – cost £120 members, £135 per week non-members. Members are welcome to volunteer at the dig, bring your own trowel or you can buy one from Anny, donations would be welcome to help cover the costs, particularly tea and biscuits! Any offers from experienced diggers to supervise the trainees would also be welcome.

Saturday 5th September

Excavation Open Day at Upper Row Farm 10am – 4pm. Activities for the whole family with a second archaeology trail for children and guided tours of the trenches, get the latest update on the 2009 dig.

British Archaeological Awards 08



On Monday 10 November 08 all the great and good of the world of archaeology and heritage gathered at the BP lecture theatre in the British Museum. The venue was perfectly fitted for such an occasion despite the weather which had certain affinities with the summer of 2008, i.e. it was raining heavily outside! Within the calm inner sanctum of the British Museum the November wind and rain made little impression.

A small gathering from BACAS had assembled for the occasion drawn from

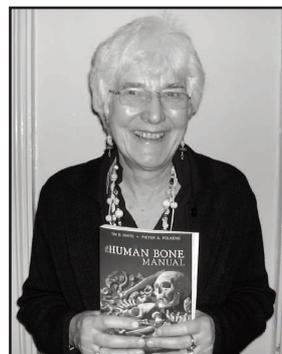
around the west and even Essex! It was quite a pity that other organisations had not added to the numbers as the lecture theatre would probably have seated twice as many people as were present.

This was the first awards since an effort at streamlining the various awards had been made and we were there as nominees for the 'Best Amateur Project' category. We have been before (in 2002 & 2006), but had only been Highly Recommended on previous occasions, so our hopes were not too high. But you could imagine our surprise when we were called up for *The Graham Webster Laurels* awarded for the best project with an educational emphasis. The prize was presented to us by Carena Lewis and Bob, Tavis and I went down to receive it.

Well done to all our members who have worked hard over the last few years to make the Society so successful. **Jayne Lawes**

Clive Peacock Memorial Award 2009

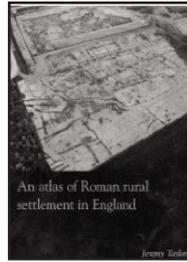
The winner for 2009 is Dawn Hodgson, who was nominated for all the work she has done in two key areas for the Society. Firstly, as Finds Supervisor for the annual training excavation, where she has been responsible for the washing, identification and marking of all the finds during the last eight years and secondly for the osteo-archaeological input she has provided, particularly during 2008 with the Romano-British burials at Combe Down and Thomas Street.



Congratulations to Dawn, who is pictured with her prize...and Owen Dicker, winner of the 2008 Clive Peacock Award reviews his prize from last year.

An Atlas of Roman Rural Settlement in England **by Jeremy Taylor**

Published by Current Archaeology Research Report 151. £19.99



This book is packed to overflowing with information and is exactly what it says on the tin. Evidence has been obtained from a survey of every Sites and Monuments Record, plus other published and unpublished material. The intention is to recommend to the Secretary of State which sites should be protected with in the English Heritage Monument Protection Programme.

The survey recorded 117,000 possible sites, of which 13,000 have been chosen to set out three main forms of settlement i.e. Enclosed, Linear and Open or Unenclosed. Patterns of settlement layout (morphology) have been analysed and recorded by region. They are shown shaded to indicate their height above sea level. Comparisons are from excavation, evaluation and rescue observations and are shown for settlements recorded as Earthworks, Crop Marks, Soil Marks, Roundhouses, Rectilinear Buildings, Villas, Shrines and Temples. Also included are corn dryers, cemeteries, kilns and iron and salt production sites, rivers and roads. In other words, no stone is left unturned. However, settlements known only from field walking, metal detecting or trial trenching could not be used to characterise settlements in this form. One critical comment; an indication of some Roman cities on the maps would have been a useful location tool.

While the conclusion of this regional and national study does offer some emerging trends, they are in a sea of complexity. However if the Romano British period is for you, then this book should be at the front of your bookshelf. **Owen Dicker**

Food Frome's Roman Booklet

The Food Frome project started in 2005. It was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and has now produced four booklets and a film all of which are about food in the Frome area. My booklet 'Fish Sauce and Mendip Wallfish' is a basic introduction to the food

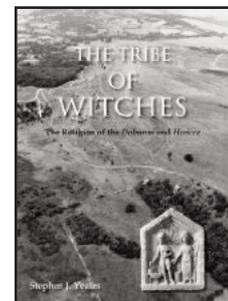
and drink of Roman Britain, what was grown, what was imported and how it was cooked and eaten.

The booklet was inspired by the BACAS Blacklands project and has a section on the Blacklands villa and the Roman Garden at Upper Row Farm. There is also a recipe leaflet containing recipes based on *De re Coquinaria* by Apicius all of which I have tested with the exception of the Mendip Wallfish (snails).

Readers of Camertonia may also be interested in the film 'Quince, Venison and Peas'. This is a 48 minute film about the reconstruction of a 17th century feast which might have been enjoyed by the Duke of Monmouth when he stayed in Frome. Food Frome are now planning new projects one of which is a Roman Feast film, if any BACAS members are interested in contributing to this they can contact Food Frome via the website www.foodfrome.org.uk. Food Frome booklets (£2) and DVDs (£5) are available from Hunting Raven bookshop, Cheap Street, Frome. **Julian Back**

The Tribe of Witches – in the Religion of the Dobunni and Hwicce **by Stephen J. Yeates**

Published by Oxbow Books, 2008. £30



Stephen Yeates examines the relationship between two tribes, the Iron Age *Dobunni* and the early medieval *Hwicce*, whose territories in the Severn Valley and Cotswolds overlapped. He attempts to define pre-Christian religion by the study of associations between religion and the natural environment, the socio-political organisation and other themes. Yeates acknowledges that attempts have been made to demonstrate the relationship between the *Dobunni* and the *Hwicce* before, but it was believed that it was not possible to due to the lack of written sources. However, through his investigation of the topography, associated historical information of the forest landscape, study of the origins of words and place names plus

any factors which might give evidence of past religious significance, Yeates reveals trends which he claims have never been identified.

I found this book a fascinating read and although Yeates himself admits that often the available information is very fragmentary, if you approach his investigations with an open mind, some, although not necessarily all, of his conclusions do seem feasible.

My only criticism with the book was the number of typing errors. This was very frustrating and I found myself actively looking for spelling mistakes which rather detracted from the book. That aside, I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the landscape, etymology, onomastics and early religion. **Sophie Hawke**

BACAS thanks Jayne Lawes



As members will know, last year Jayne Lawes stepped down as a Committee Member and Trustee. The Committee wanted to acknowledge Jayne's contribution to the Society and at the 2009

AGM it was announced that Jayne would continue her work with the Society as Director of the Blacklands Project and as a consultant archaeologist to the Committee. Bob Whitaker presented Jayne with a copy of Mortimer Wheeler's Excavations at Maiden Castle and said that he was pleased that there would be another two seasons of the Blacklands dig, and when the Project comes to a close Jayne would be focusing on Volume 2 of the report, Volume 1 is currently in progress. Bob said that he was sure that Jayne's reports would rank alongside William Wedlake's books on Camerton and Nettleton. The Chairman thanked Jayne on behalf of the Committee and the Society for all her hard work and commitment over the years.

Gordon Hendy 1945-2008

Gordon, the owner of Upper Row Farm Hemington died on Saturday 10 May 2008 after a long battle against leukaemia. Gordon became interested in archaeology many years ago, finding objects from prehistoric to medieval times, after ploughing and

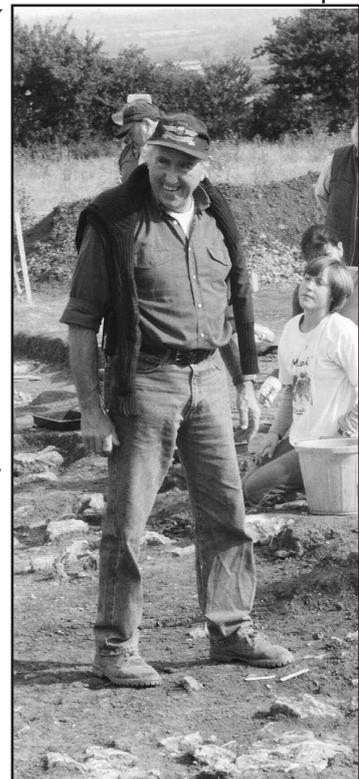
cultivating the fields on his farm as well as wondering about the reason for the many humps and bumps that were evident in fields and all with curious names, such as 'Three Houses Field' and the name of the farm itself, Upper Row Farm.

The field name 'Blacklands' intrigued Gordon and it was after excavating one of the humps in 'Homefield', and discovering a Medieval building, that Gordon invited BACAS to look at the many Romano British objects he had found there, over many years.

This was the start of a long and lasting relationship between Gordon and the Society, which over a period of eight years has carried out excavations on this remarkable landscape, with an occupation history from the Bronze Age, through the Iron Age, Romano British times and into the Medieval period. The Society, with support from the Hendy family, has developed the Blacklands site with a permanent 'footprint' of the Romano British farmstead and gatehouse.

In addition a display of finds has been set up in the Museum Barn, and with the help of 'Time Team' a Roman Garden has been established which will soon be extended.

In 2007 a Heritage Lottery Fund grant enabled the Society to appoint an Educational Officer to promote and develop a project, 'Archaeology for All at Upper Row Farm.' None of these things would have been possible without the enthusiasm and support of Gordon, Jess and the family and we would all be poorer in our understanding of this remarkable landscape without their involvement and support.



Bob Whitaker MBE

