



Introducing Past Participate CIC

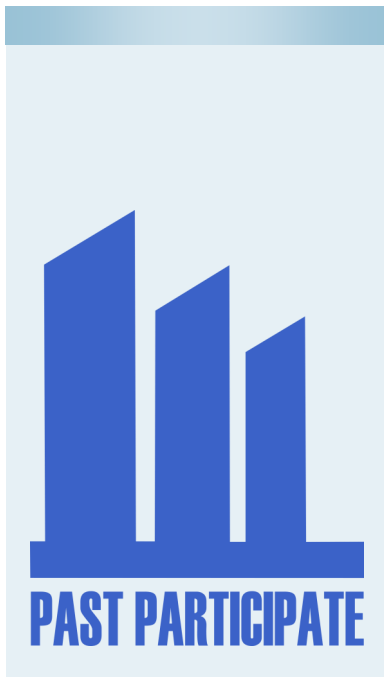
For those of you who are new to this mailing list please accept our warmest welcome to our community. In this newsletter we thought it might be helpful to provide you with a background to us, and to our research. We are a non-profit company who specialise in research-led archaeological and heritage activities for interested volunteers. We've found this includes all types of people, from those who have never been involved before, to experienced volunteers who also volunteer with other archaeological organisations.

We've been working primarily just north of the village of Abbotsbury at Tenants Hill, Dorset but have been slowly expanding (only held back by a pandemic!), into Somerset. We are a team of 3, Anne is our Managing Director, Jim our Director of Archaeology and myself, Hayley (Community Archaeology Manager). You can read more about us at www.pastparticipate.co.uk.

Fieldwork is the most obvious bit of our archaeological research, but the desk-based research and post-excavation work is equally important. We involve as many people as we can in the practical research (i.e. excavation, finds processing etc) but things like analysing the results can only really be done by professionals and specialists, and then we use this newsletter to communicate them to you. Your insights and thoughts important too, from working with us in the field or in workshops or walks and we take these into account with our interpretations and future plans. We also try to reflect your questions and suggestions in our newsletters, so please do get in touch.

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Tenants Hill

The site that we have been researching at Tenants Hill, Dorset is located near Abbotsbury on the South Dorset Ridgeway. This ridge is the setting for the Kingston Russell Stone Circle, and the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered long barrow, in addition to several other barrows and a later prehistoric earthwork enclosure, which are indicative of almost continuous activity between the Neolithic and Iron Age. These are prehistoric monuments that probably date to the Neolithic period and Bronze Age time periods

(4000 BC until 800 BC). Little is known about these specific monuments which is something we hope to change. Stone circles were places for people to gather and may have been connected to burial rituals. The one on Tenants Hill is now made up of 18 stones, which are between 1-2m in size and currently lay flat, although there is some evidence they were originally upstanding.

"This was an enthralling experience for me - I was delighted to have the opportunity to take part in some 'real' archaeology and to learn so much"

Feedback Welcome

We often come across resources that we share with you and we think will be helpful, useful and interesting, but we don't really know if they are!

We'd love to know which resources you found useful and why. Please don't be afraid to ask questions if you're not sure about something, or even if you can't access something we directed you to. It means that we can reflect on the information we're providing, or add in more detail or recommendations!

Early Neolithic Monuments

Long barrows and chambered tombs date to a similar time period and they were places of human burial. The Grey Mare and her Colts has several large standing stones which would have been the entrance and perhaps formed a facade to a forecourt. They are too big and unwieldy to have been moved, so once they were erected it is possible that the chamber was no longer accessible. A similar architectural arrangement can be seen at the West Kennet chambered tomb near Avebury, Wiltshire.

This simple video, produced by English Heritage <https://youtu.be/DBnWxKaxLIU>, helps to explain the when and how the different types of monuments were used. For a more detailed summary of the time periods try reading www.ancientcraft.co.uk/post/prehistoric-britain-timeline or [Introductions to Prehistory | The Prehistoric Society](#). Information on the West Kennet chambered tomb can be found here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Kennet_Long_Barrow



2019 Excavation of pits

Our Excavations

In 2019 and 2021 we conducted excavations where we found the postholes of a large, circular, building, the entrance of which aligns with the stone circle. The jury is still out on the exact dating as we have conflicting evidence at the moment indicating construction in either the early Bronze Age (around 1900-1700 BC) or the late Bronze Age (c. 930-830 BC), but it was probably occupied at the same time as when the stone circle was being used.



Recording archaeological features in 2019

Neolithic Chalk Drums

As part of the World of Stonehenge exhibition at the British Museum, they have displayed the Folkton Drums— three intricately carved artefacts excavated from a child burial in Yorkshire over 150 years ago. Excitingly, another one was discovered also in Yorkshire a few years ago and is displayed here for the first time.

Anne and her colleagues published a paper a few years ago about the chalk drums and how they may have been used as measuring devices in the Neolithic, and it is open access while the exhibition is on.



The full reference and link to access it is

Teather, A., Chamberlain, A.T. and Parker Pearson, M. 2019. The Chalk Drums from Folkton and Lavant: Measuring Devices from the Time of Stonehenge. *Journal of the British Society for the History of Mathematics*. 34:1:1-11 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17498430.2018.1555927>

Excavation Dates

We will be excavating again this year 6-22nd June on Tenants Hill. We'll be welcoming volunteers 10am-4pm weekdays Monday-Friday. We're delighted to have several professional archaeologists join us but we are not taking students this year.

If anyone would like to join us as a volunteer, you will need to book . Please be aware we will not be running transport up the hill, and you will need to park in the layby by the Grey Mare and her Colts and walk to site. We will have toilets and shelter, and ask you to bring your own lunches.

Previous experience is not important, if you'd just like to try it out please sign up! Places are limited so it is important to book in with us for the day/s you would like to excavate.

Please contact
Hayley@pastparticipate.co.uk for booking and further information.

Surveying Sarsen Stones In Dorset

This winter we conducted a field survey to find out how many, and where, sarsen stones are found on Tenants Hill. We reasoned that this would help us to understand how past populations have interacted with the sarsen stones and how this relates to the wider landscape. For example, it has long been assumed that the large stones used to build the Grey Mare and her Colts, and the Kingston Russell Stone Circle were brought onto Tenants Hill in prehistory, transported from the Valley of Stones (about a mile away as the crow flies). During previous

landscape wanderings we had identified lots of stones within the field banks and hedges on Tenants Hill and therefore wondered if there was more to this story.

Willing volunteers joined us for workshops where they were loaded up with information about sarsen stones before searching for the stones by themselves, or with friends and family. Once all the stones had been found the volunteers retraced their steps with Anne and Jim and our lovely archaeologist colleague Heidi, to verify and GPS locate the stones.

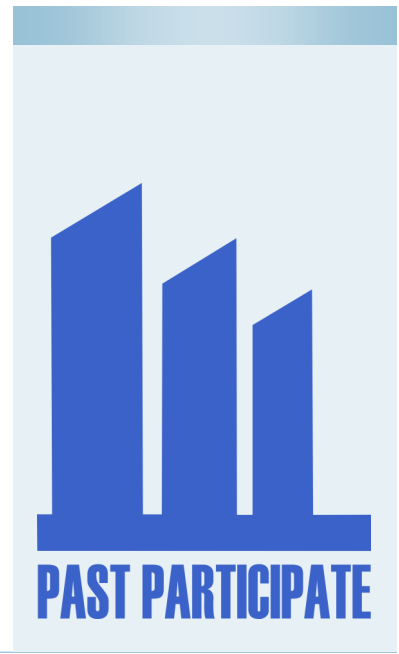


Katy Whitaker's wonderful talk in February introducing us to the latest research on sarsen stones

Sarsen Survey Results

In total we identified 323 stones, of which 221 were sarsen, 26 greensand boulders, 25 flint nodules and 6 pieces of chalk, limestone or concrete. All of these turned out to be interesting. We are still processing much of the data but there is a very obvious pattern as all the sarsen is located in the eastern half of the survey area, the end closest to the Valley of Stones. It also looks as though there are lots of small natural occurring sarsen on the hilltop, but that this is a different type of sarsen to that used in the monuments!

This was pilot project, partially conducted to see if successful research results can be gained from this way of working, as well as seeing if it would be enjoyable from a volunteer perspective. We think we were successful on both accounts and are currently writing funding applications to enable a similar exercise next winter. Does this sound like a project you might want to be involved in?



"I walk regularly in Dorset so information about the landscape does enhance the enjoyment of these expeditions"



Surveying sarsens in cold but lovely weather



The World of Stonehenge Exhibition at the British

In February, Jim Rylatt and Anne Teather attended the new British Museum exhibition *The World of Stonehenge*. This was really exciting for both of them because both Jim and Anne have excavated on several sites that are represented in the exhibition. Together they have excavated at Durrington Walls and other sites as part of the Stonehenge Riverside Project, and also the Welsh bluestone quarry sites and the Ness of Brodgar! Of course, this is just a small part of the exhibition that also has fantastic examples of archaeology from Continental Europe and the incredible Nebra Sky Disc. Closer to home, there are some really exceptional examples of materials from Bronze Age burial mounds in Dorset and Devon. We'd heartily recommend visiting before the exhibition closes on 17th July 2022.

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