

## It's Roman-tastic!

### Dorchester Roman Festival 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010

We worked with Dorchester Town Council this spring to bring the Roman Festival to Dorchester. Around 1400 people visited Maumbury Rings over 22 and 23 May to experience more about life in Roman Britain. Demonstrations of Roman domestic and military life took place alongside workshops, storytellers and displays. The town's former Roman Amphitheatre came alive with the sounds of steel and armour and a centurion shouting commands in Latin.

The festival began when a troop of Roman Legionaries and Auxiliary soldiers from Living History group Legio II Augusta marched along South Street and continued with military and gladiatorial displays inside the arena. Children who took part in the Gladiatorial display made the most of the opportunity to challenge the gladiators and then their parents to a 'sword fight'. Fortunately the 'swords' were made of foam and no serious injuries were inflicted!

Staff and volunteers from the Dorset County Museum were on site with a small display of very special Roman objects found in Dorchester. A beautiful ivory sword handle proved of great interest to today's 'Romans'. Members of the Ancient Wessex Network were kept busy with jewellery making and soap carving workshops. Storytellers Margie Barbour (Saturday) and Graham Rogers (Sunday) thrilled young and old with tales of ancient Rome, and Ben Kane impressed us all with his best-selling novels *The Forgotten Legion* and *The Silver Eagle*.

Not to be outdone 240 children from schools across Dorset took part in two days of Roman-themed activities at the Roman Town House last week. Members of Legio II Augusta were joined by staff from Dorset County Museum and Dorset County Council at **Roman Revels**, a day of workshop activities for the children to enjoy and discover more about Roman-Britain.

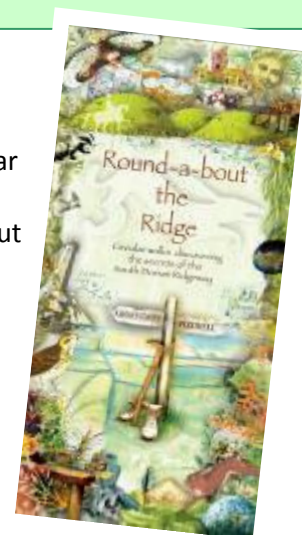
Photographs of Roman Festival and Roman Revels by Dave Penman



## Round-a-bout the Ridge .....on your ear

Following last years incredibly successful launch of the **Round-a-bout the Ridge**, a pack of circular walks discovering the secrets of the South Dorset Ridgeway, we have now developed two of the walks into audio trails. Share the experience of both experts and local residents as they talk about the landscape, wildlife and personalities associated with the routes. Each tour is designed to be played on an iPod, mobile phone or mp3 player. You can take it with you as you enjoy the walk or listen to the complete tour at home.

The tours can be downloaded from the South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project Website at [www.southdorsetridgeway.org.uk](http://www.southdorsetridgeway.org.uk).



## Web-map project for Sutton Poyntz

We have been working with a team from the Sutton Poyntz Society to develop a web-based village map – a ‘web-map’. This novel concept has developed from a fusion of ideas from Sutton Poyntz villagers – in particular from the History and Biodiversity Groups – and from the Dorset AONB team. It will take the form of a village website in which a Village Map provides one of the main means of navigation, to some extent replacing the more conventional Site Map. A village Web Group is currently doing the detailed planning of the website, which will include a Village Map providing links into the history, geography and biology of the village, as well as to its pubs, shops, halls and social groups. The Village Map (a prototype is shown here) will allow users to see views of the village, rather like Google’s Street View, but including both current and historical pictures, and providing pictures of small vernacular architectural details as well as complete scenes. This website will go live on the Internet in the autumn, thanks to a grant from the South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project.

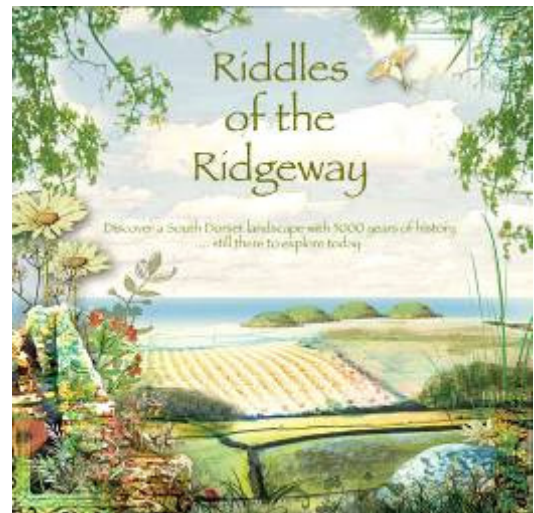


If you think your village would like to do something similar then please contact Sarah for more information.

## More News in brief

Dorset AONB is pleased to announce the appointment of Ian Rees as Countryside Officer. Ian started work in Dorset on 8th June and previously worked for Lincolnshire Wolds AONB on Chalk Streams. Part of Ian’s new role is to manage the work of the South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project.

**Monument surveys – an update...** Bournemouth University’s research programme into Round Barrows on the Ridgeway will now continue this Autumn. The 2008 survey of Bronkham Hill is already published and last years work at Clandon Barrow is awaited. This year the project will explore the area around Clandon Barrow near Martinstown more widely. If you are interested in taking part in this geophysical survey and would like to find out more please contact John Gale at Bournemouth directly at [jgale@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:jgale@bournemouth.ac.uk).



**Riddles of the Ridgeway** The Dorset AONB publication about the project and South Dorset Ridgeway has been published in a new format. Designed by Artist and designer Yvonne Lee the publication provides an interesting introduction to the South Dorset Ridgeway. The booklet is available from TICs, Libraries and directly from the Dorset AONB Office.

## Coming very soon—the South Dorset Ridgeway Festival 16th –31st July

**Don’t forget the festival. Visit the website for the full programme and book soon—places are filling up fast!**

*Storytelling, artists, walks, talks, archaeology, geology, churches, Shakespeare, film, Thomas Hardy ..... there’s more on the South Dorset Ridgeway this July*

For more information about the South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project contact:  
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