

## **East Brent Parish History Group** **Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

### Meeting Notes

We again welcomed Margaret & John Thompson who visit the parish whenever possible usually at a time to coincide with our meetings. It was good to see them again for members to chat about their past experiences.

### War Memorial & John Puddy

A relative of John Puddy has been in contact and provided photographs of John, his brother Jim and an unknown soldier. John was born in Mark and prior to the outbreak of war, he had been in the employment of Mr W. Salvidge in East Brent. He was in the 1st Battalion, Prince Albert's Somerset Light Infantry and was killed in action 8 August 1916 just 20 years old.

If anyone has any history regarding John Puddy or his brother Jim, please let me know and I will pass anything on.



### Brent Knoll Hill Fort

A potted presentation was given on Brent Knoll Hill Fort. Interestingly, as seen in the Parish boundary map, the boundary passes specifically around the Hill Fort.

Brent Knoll possibly gets its name from meaning "burnt" in old English (perhaps by the Danes) or "briant" meaning "Law" or "High Place" in Celtic.

The area has been settled since the Bronze Age with the Hill Fort dating from about 2000 B.C.. The Fort covers an area of 1.6 hectares (16,000 sq.m. or about 3.9 acres) and consists of a single wall of about 10 metres and a single ditch with an entrance on the eastern side. It is surrounded by multiple ramparts which are now much reduced.



A 'Hollow Way' runs up to the entrance from the east/north-east side and may represent the original approach to the fort. The feature is a shallow gully about 5.5m wide with a later track overlying it at the entrance to the fort.

During the Roman occupation, the summit was possibly used as a "Castellarium" or small fort which probably existed in a ruined form until at least the 13th Century. Sandstone roof tiles and painted wall plaster do indicate a substantial building which was more likely to have been a temple than a villa. Coins of the Emperors Trajan and Severus were found at the site

prior to 1790. Archaeological finds can be seen at the Museum of Somerset, Weston-super-Mare Museums or the Blake Museum, Bridgwater.

In Anglo Saxon times, it is believed to be one of the possible sites of Mons Badonicus. This was a battle between Britons and Anglo-Saxons sometime between 490 and 517 AD.. It was a major political and military event but there is no certainty about its date or place. It is also believed to be the site of a battle in 875 where forces of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex drove away the "Great Heathen Army" led by Guthrum, the Viking ruler of East Anglia.. The Treaty of Wedmore, was signed three years later.

During the Medieval period, the land was held by Glastonbury Abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536.

Around the sides and top of the hill are several scarps which may be medieval strip lynchets' - a bank of earth that builds up on the downslope of a field ploughed over a long period of time. The disturbed soil slips down the hillside to create a positive lynchet while the area reduced in level becomes a negative lynchet.

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In the modern era, limestone was quarried during the 19th century. During World War II it was the site of a gun emplacement manned by the Home Guard. The remains of slit trenches with angle-iron stakes can still be seen on the western and south-western sides.

In 1979 the freehold (13.3 hectares) was acquired by the National Trust. A stone marker commemorates the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria and serves as a triangulation station. In 2006 a resistivity survey was undertaken at the northern end of the Hill Fort which It showed several linear features that might be structures.



### Meeting Dates

Meetings are held regularly on the first Wednesday of each month (Except August).

The following meetings will be held in the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012** and **Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013** both at 7:00 pm.

A scanner will again be made available and there will be further discussions concerning the history of the Parish of East Brent.

All are welcome, please come along.

Colin Loader

Tel. 01278 760713, Mob. 07931 429927

e-mail: [cloader2@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cloader2@tiscali.co.uk)