

## **SSARG wins Dorset Archaeological Award! (well OK, we won part of it....read on)**

Members will recall how we were asked to participate last year in fieldwork relating to the find of an important Early Bronze Age lunula in North East Dorset. There is still work to be done in understanding the object and its setting, but the project was nominated for the Dorset Archaeological Committee (DAC) (part of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society) Dorset Archaeological Award. This is given every two years to projects which make an outstanding contribution to the archaeology of the county. The citation for the award was as follows:

### ***Tarrant Valley Lunula Project***

*South Somerset Archaeological Research Group, RMA Trevarthen Archaeological Services, Terrain Archaeology, Stour Valley Search and Recovery Club, Mr N Harding, and the Finds Liaison Officer, Portable Antiquities Scheme*

*In 2014 a metal detectorist unearthed an incomplete Early Bronze Age lunula (a crescent-shaped gold neck ring) a unique find for Dorset. This project brought together a number of amateur and professional groups to explore the immediate context and the wider setting of the findspot through targeted excavation, geophysical survey, metal-detector survey and landscape study, all supported by the landowner.*

The awards ceremony took place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October in Wareham Town Hall, hosted by Wareham Town Museum (soon closing for the winter, but if you get a chance, please visit – a fantastic small museum). The awards were presented by Julian Richards, who had to put up with me winding him up. The project was up against stiff competition which included Bournemouth University's fantastic Durotriges Project and the Druce Farm Villa Project run by East Dorset Antiquarian Society under the direction of Lilian Ladle, who has spoken at SSARG meetings on a number of occasions. Both sites are of regional importance, so it was rather a surprise that the Lunula Project carried the day. I gather that the judges had to make some tough decisions, but in the end felt that the way in which the project was put together between the Stour Valley Search and Recovery Club members, SSARG, and professional archaeologists, to respond to an unexpected find of something of national importance, really stood out.



This was personally rather embarrassing for me. I was recently elected chair of the DAC, and was presiding at my first awards ceremony. I had not expected to end up as the SSARG representative receiving the award with several of our friends from the SVSRC! This explains the slightly wonky way in which I proceeded to guide the rest of the evening, right up to the monumental faux pas of failing to offer my thanks to Claire Pinder for all her hard work in organising the awards and the evening. I have been taking every opportunity since to apologise.

Discomfort apart, I am extremely pleased that the nature of the project as well as the importance of the archaeology was recognised. The lunula was subsequently acquired by Dorset County Museum, with a private donation and a grant from the V&A, and now has pride of place in the newly refurbished Ancient Dorset Gallery at DCM, which opens officially on 7<sup>th</sup> December. A brief report of the lunula (including a name check for the organisations involved) has just been published in the DNHAS Proceedings Vol 136, which flopped through my door only this morning. Thank you to everyone who was involved in the work, which is now being touted around as an example of best practice. Well done SSARG!

Clare Randall



*A more than uncomfortable SSARG representative, moonlighting as DAC Chair (the one with the official looking badge), with faintly embarrassed PAS FLO, Ciorstaidh Hayward-Trevarthen, her husband Mike (far left, Terrain Archaeology) and members of the Stour Valley Search and Recovery Club.*



*Clare and Ciorstaidh with the oak bowl trophy. Having known each other for more than thirty years, we're both wondering if the other one will notice if we stuff it into our handbag.*