

**PROJECT DESIGN FOR EXCAVATION AT THE GOBLESTUBBS COPSE
ENCLOSURE COMPLEX, EASTER 2016**

By Gordon Hayden

1 Introduction

This project design details the planned excavation of a site at Goblestubbs Copse, west of Arundel, owned by the Norfolk Estate.

In the late summer of 2014 David McOmish of English Heritage (subsequently re-named Historic England) and Worthing Archaeological Society (WAS) member Gordon Hayden, had the opportunity to walkover the site in preparation for an article on previous work undertaken in the area for a subsequent *Sussex Archaeological Collections* volume (McOmish and Hayden 2015). The walkover identified a series of features, some of which had been recognised but un-surveyed by WAS (Allison 2009). The features consist of a number of unrecorded earthworks leading off both the west and east enclosure components and at least one field system underlying the enclosure complex. The newly recognised earthworks are suggestive of earlier phases of activity but of unknown date. This interpretation was further enhanced by the LiDAR survey carried out on behalf of the South Downs National Park Authority *Secrets of the High Woods* project. It is postulated that the Goblestubbs Copse enclosure complex forms part of a larger *oppida* (McOmish 2013). These are not unusual features, having been recorded at several other sites in the United Kingdom. However, if the *sub-oppida* theory is correct it would be the first time that one has been positively identified on the chalk downs of West Sussex east of the Chichester Entrenchments. Alternatively given the presence of pottery datable to the Bronze Age and earlier phases of the Iron Age found at the eastern component (McOmish and Hayden 2015), these earlier earthworks could pre-date the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods.

David McOmish was keen to continue research at this regionally important site, particularly as it sits within themes outlined in the Research Agenda (English Heritage 2005), namely *Discovering, studying and defining historic assets and their significance* and *Engaging and developing diverse audiences*. It is with his collaboration as a consultant that further work by WAS is proposed here.

2 Site Location & Geology

The site (Figure 1) lies at a height of approximately 44m above Ordnance Datum. The western component of the enclosure complex (hereafter referred to as Goblestubbs Copse West) is a scheduled site (SAM No. West Sussex 59; NMR No. SU 90 NE 16) and is centred at SU 9843 0760. The eastern component (hereafter referred to as Goblestubbs Copse East) is situated outside the scheduled area approximately 50m to the east. The underlying geology consists of chalk overlain by a substantial tertiary capping of clay-with-flints, with the enclosure complex situated on a sand and gravel terrace.

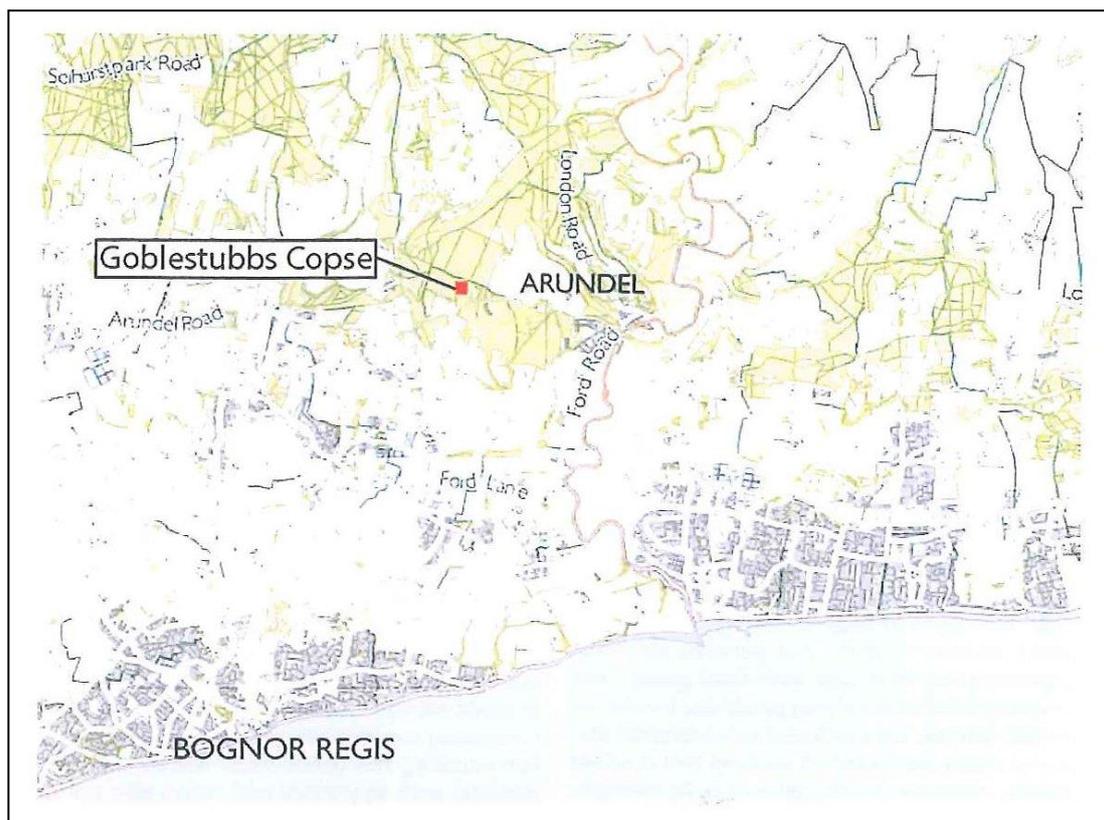


Figure 1: Location of the Goblestubbs Copse complex (after McOmish and Hayden 2015).

3 Archaeological Background

Goblestubbs Copse lies in dense woodland approximately 2km to the west of the town of Arundel. The nature of the woodland has, if the assumption is correct, been of such longevity that it has preserved archaeological features which would otherwise have been destroyed by agricultural practices. The woodland forms part of a larger wooded landscape which has been the subject of a number of surveys and excavations over the years. These are bounded by the large earthen ditch and rampart known as the War Dyke (Hadrian Allcroft 1922) to the west and the River Arun to the east. The War Dyke has been interpreted as the easternmost earthwork of the Chichester Entrenchments or possibly defining a separate Late Iron Age community to the Chichester enclave (Hamilton and Manley 1999). A number of important sites lie within this defined area including the so-called 'groups/villages' in Rewell Wood, the Dalesdown enclosure and the 'Circus' (Curwen and Curwen 1918; 1920; 1928; Hadrian Allcroft 1920; McOmish and Hayden 2015). To the east lies the site of Shepherd's Garden (Frazer Hearne 1936) which appears to crossover the AD 43 divide, and is contemporary with the latest phase of Goblestubbs Copse East (for a fuller discussion of the context of the immediate surrounding landscape see McOmish and Worthing Archaeological Society 2006; McOmish and Hayden 2015).

As far as can be ascertained excavations first took place at Goblestubbs Copse West under the direction of Con Ainsworth and H.B. Ratcliffe Densham in 1972

(originally thought to have been 1973 but illustrations appear labelled as 1972). A re-evaluation of the surviving finds would place the excavated features as being of early-mid Roman date *c.* AD 60-220 (McOmish and Hayden 2015). Excavation at Goblestubbs Copse East carried out by WAS in July 2006 (Figure 2) consisted of four trenches, two of which (Trench 1 and Trench 3) have established beyond reasonable doubt that the northern enclosure straddles the AD 43 divide (*c.* AD 20-60), but Trench 2 over the southern arm of the southern enclosure is suggestive of a 1st century BC date (*ibid*). Trench 4 was not finished due to a lack of available resources. The results of the 2006 excavation suggest that not all the elements of the enclosure complex are contemporary, hinting at the longevity of the site.

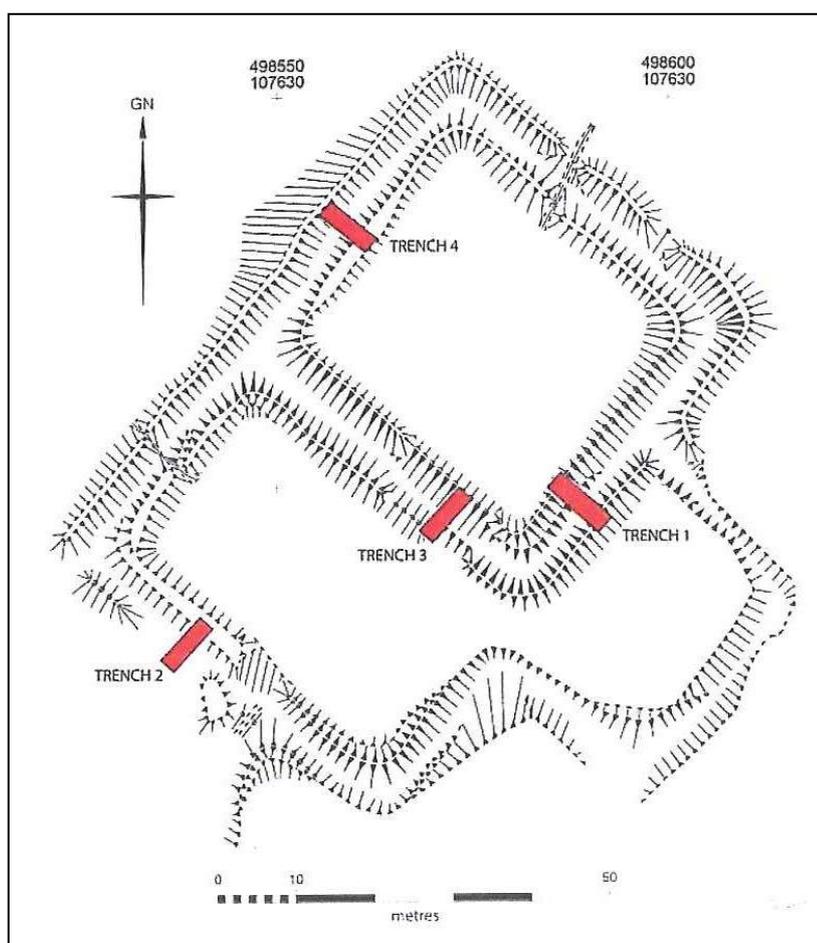


Figure 2: Plan of the Goblestubbs Copse East complex with 2006 trenches (after McOmish and Hayden 2015).

4 Field Methodology

4.1 Objectives

1. To investigate what the observed earthworks represent.

The walkovers and LiDAR survey of Goblestubbs Copse East clearly show an earthwork extending southwestwards from the south western corner of the southern enclosure. If this earthwork is ancient, then the scale and alignment would suggest that the two enclosures so far recorded may well sit within a larger enclosure system. Given that the southern arm of the southern enclosure has been dated to the 1st century BC, but the northern enclosure has been dated to the early-1st century AD, a critical point would be to understand whether the northern arm of the so-called 'annexe' extending southeastwards from the eastern arm of the northern enclosure, has been modified to accommodate the later enclosure. This would provide crucial detail on the constructional form of the enclosure boundaries. It would also be desirable to properly characterise the nature of the enclosures and linear earthwork complex, and to record their condition for future research and conservation.

2. To further establish a chronology for the development of the enclosures.

The linear earthworks clearly run into each other and, in some cases, appear to cut or abut each other. It is therefore desirable to try to establish their relative relationships in order to establish a chronology of occupation. To this end it is hoped the excavation will provide sufficient material to allow secure dating of the linear earthworks and enclosure boundaries. It would also be desirable to identify and collect suitable soil samples for future paleo-environmental research.

4.2 Excavation Approach

The investigation will consist of two phases.

1. To carry out a non-invasive survey to help record the un-surveyed features.

Over the weekend prior to the excavation the WASFU survey team will, along with one of the site supervisors, lay out the exact positioning of the excavation trenches by means of a total station (EDM). The LiDAR survey results provisionally negate the need for a geophysical survey of the site using magnetometry or resistivity. However if deemed necessary, it may be possible to undertake a more in-depth survey, using total station, tape and off-set, to make an accurate record of the linear earthworks that have been highlighted by the LiDAR results during the period of the excavation.

2. To carry out sufficient excavation to be able to answer the objectives.

At this stage of planning it is anticipated that two trenches will be required (Figure 3). One would look at the northern arm of the annexe. It would be orientated north-south across the ditch and bank of the northern arm. The second trench would be orientated east-west across the linear earthwork which extends southwestwards from the south western corner of the southern enclosure. These trenches will each measure no more than 7m in length and 1.5m in width, but are likely to reach sufficient depth to require stepped sides for access and consolidation purposes. Each trench will be assigned its own series of context numbers. However if time and resources allow it may be

possible to re-excavate Trench 4 (not completed in 2006) as this may also provide a clearer idea of sequence.

Excavation will be carried out using appropriate hand tools. If feasible every third wheelbarrow of spoil from the ditch fills will be sieved.

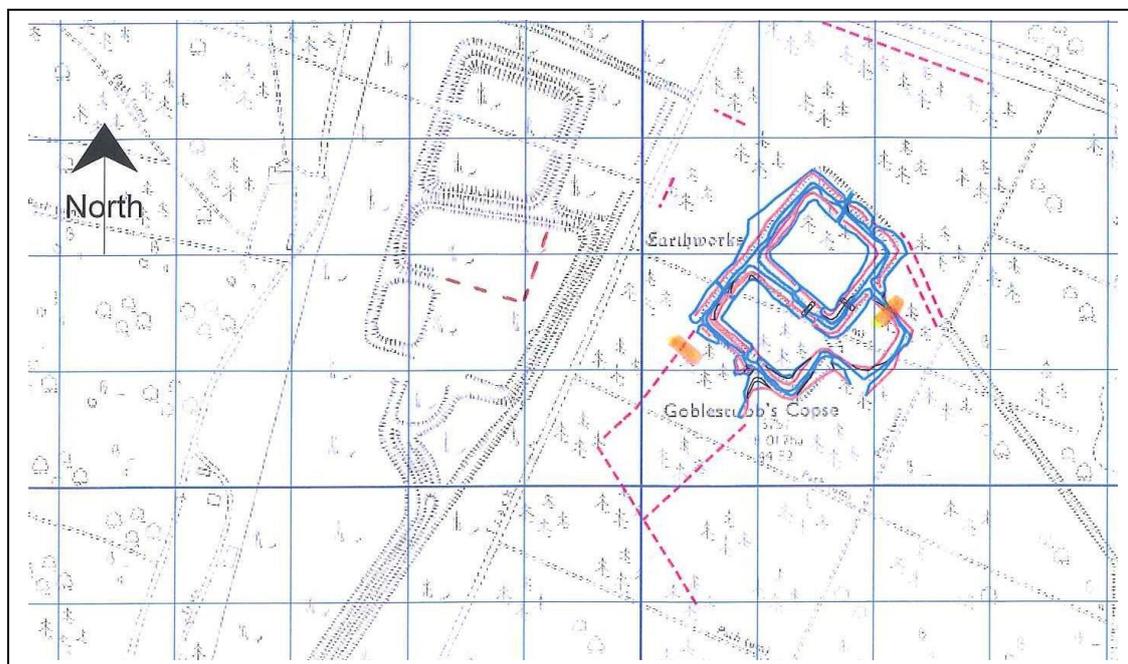


Figure 3: Proposed position of new trenches at Goblestubbs Copse East; note that the trenches (highlighted in orange) are not to scale, and the dashed lines (highlighted in red) represent earthworks identified but un-surveyed (redrawn from Allison 2009 with additions).

4.2.1 Site Records

- Details of the nature, extent and date (where it is possible to determine) of archaeological contexts will be recorded upon the standard WAS pro forma sheets.
- Measured drawings (plans at 1:20, sections at 1:10) will be made as appropriate, with particular emphasis on sections. All drawings to be accurately related to the OS National Grid.
- Levels will be taken where appropriate; ensuring that each context recorded can be related to Ordnance Datum. A TBM will be established on site and linked into the nearest OS BM.
- Photographs will be taken using a digital camera, using a suitable scale.
- Artefacts will be retained where considered appropriate in the light of their context and/or importance.
- All artefacts recovered during the excavation will be processed according to guidelines as set out in *First Aid for Finds*, 1998, and to the standards of Worthing Museum.
- All artefacts will be quantified by number and where appropriate weight.

- All artefacts will be bagged and boxed in containers approved by the museum and sympathetic to their condition. Specialist help will be sought where more detailed analysis and/or conservation is required.

4.2.2 Environmental Material

Environmental samples will be collected from all ditch contexts, and funding sought for their analysis if appropriate.

4.2.3 Metal Detecting

Metal detectors will be used to scan the various spoil heaps to locate finds missed by the diggers. Metal detectors will be used over the area of the trenches prior to hand excavation. Any 'hits' will be marked and left for recovery in the course of excavation.

5 Timetable

At this stage the provisional timetable is as follows.

- The excavation will take place between 28th March and 3rd April 2016, with 4th-6th April being a contingency if extra time is required to complete the works. The WASFU survey team will lay out the exact position of the trenches over the preceding weekend (26th-27th March).
- Post-excavation is TBA and dependant upon other WASFU commitments.

6 Post-Excavation Analysis

It is envisaged that where possible all artefacts will be identified and reported on by local specialists. If there are elements which cannot be undertaken by specialists who are members of WAS, funding will be sought for this work to be carried out externally.

7 Written Report

1. An interim report will be produced within three months of completion of the excavation. This report will be distributed to those mentioned below, and will be posted on the WAS website. It will also be published in the WAS newsletter/journal.
2. A final report will be prepared, which will include details of the excavation method, a description of the archaeological features, details of artefacts and an assessment of environmental evidence. The report will also include site location, trench details and feature plans tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and sections showing levels above Ordnance Datum.
3. The site will be recorded on the West Sussex County Council HER and OASIS within twelve months of completion of the project. A copy of the findings will also be provided for the *Secrets of the High Woods* project initiated by the South Downs National Park Authority.

8 Deposition of Archive and Finds

Artefacts remain in the ownership of the Norfolk Estate and will be stored, initially, at the Slindon office. Where relevant, some material will be kept off-site if conservation standards require it. Once processed, and with the approval of the landowner, the site archive will be deposited with the relevant museum (at the time of writing this is within Littlehampton Museum's catchment area).

9 Other

1. The trenches, when unattended, will be secured and clearly marked in a manner commensurate with Health & Safety regulations. 'Deep Excavation notices will be used if appropriate.
2. A Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to the archaeological excavation and all relevant Health and Safety regulations will be complied with during the excavation. All members of the excavation team will be briefed on its contents before commencing work at the site. A first aid kit will be available on site at all times. It is important to note that the undergrowth may increase the risk of trips and falls and a site visit will be undertaken prior to excavation to evaluate the necessity for cutting back.
3. WAS are fully insured through Towergate Insurance, specialists in archaeological fieldwork insurance.
4. The initial excavation will be funded by the Worthing Archaeological Society. If dating or other scientific analysis is required, Sussex Archaeological Society will be approached for a Margary Grant. Alternatively the CBA South East regional society will be approached for a grant.
5. Personnel. All personnel will be members of WAS with David McOmish possibly attending in a consultative capacity.

10 Estimate of Cost

It is predicted that there will be costs for WAS in terms of excavation consumables and possibly hire expenses, but no figures are available at the time of writing.

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