

# Worthing Archaeological Society

## News sheet

### Coronavirus

Due to the current COVID-19 situation we are being advised to avoid unnecessary social contact. Therefore, as a Society we have made the difficult decision to suspend our Lectures and other face to face activities including Finds Processing and Meetings until further notice.

### WAS Lectures

Our 2020 series of Lectures has had to be postponed until 2021. Regrettably, there will be no further Lectures this year.

### Study Day

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November – Dr Ben Jarvis

This has been postponed until 2021.

### Finds Processing

We won't return to the shed until next year, as there is no means of us staying 2m apart.....

### Field Unit

#### Slindon Stableyard

We are hoping to continue the work of clearing, but, so far, it isn't possible. Watch this space.....

### MALTHOUSE

Our August 'dig' is not happening – impossible to manage in the current situation. But there may be some Surveyors' Fridays on site, possibly starting late August. We will let you know.

### EPIC Project, July 3<sup>rd</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>

There is an excellent daily blog of this project on our WAS Facebook, and on our website. It was an excellent 'dig', ably Supervised first by Keith, and then by James Sainsbury. WAS is very grateful to them both, and to Connie for all her work setting the project up, and lending us her garden for Finds Processing.

A few action shots, suitably distanced...

## August – September 2020



Connie and Gill.



The Flint Crew



Finds in action



Augers well



James explaining the project

### [Fieldwork Health and Safety Form](#)

In the light of the current situation, the form has been revamped. It is our best attempt at a way forward at present. A copy is on our website under Documents/Policy. Many thanks to Patricia for her work on this.

### [GDPR](#)

If any of your details e.g. address, post code, telephone number(s), email address or Gift Aid option - have changed since you last completed your WAS Membership Application Form, please let me know.

All members have the right at any time to withdraw consent for WAS using personal data for communication purposes, please contact the Membership Secretary to do so.

Please refer to our updated Privacy Notice on the Society's website

[www.worthingarchaeological.org](http://www.worthingarchaeological.org)

Many thanks. Patricia

### [Worthing Museum and Art Gallery](#)

Is re-opening on Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup>, and for all following Saturdays. Please pre-book your visit as there will be limited numbers.

[boxoffice@wtam.uk](mailto:boxoffice@wtam.uk) or

<tel:01903206206>

or

<https://wtam.uk/your-visit>

### [Major 'Doc' Roper. The Extraordinary life of a Dreamer, Archaeologist and Soldier](#)

By Judith Hubbard

Judith's book, about her Uncle, Arthur Roper, was partly researched at Worthing Museum, which has a large collection of the Ropers' donations.

Major Roper joined Worthing Archaeological Society in the 1930s, and both he, and his wife Frances, served as Presidents of the Society, and as Committee Members, and were both made Honorary Life Presidents.

Arthur's life started in Tasmania, he travelled to school in Sussex aged 9, saw action in both World Wars, and became very involved with the Archaeology of the South Downs and Worthing.

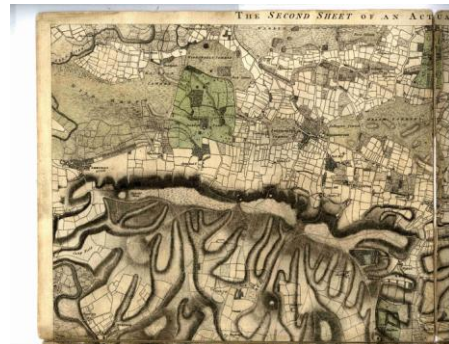
Judith's book is an absorbing account of a life well lived.

**ISBN-13:** 978-1513663326 Available from Amazon, UK

### [BURPHAM AND THE LEAD COFFIN.](#)

The history of Burpham, West Sussex, stretches back a long way. The area was settled in Neolithic and Iron Age times and remains have been found to this effect. When the Romans came here in AD43, the area was occupied by a Belgic tribe, the Atrabates. After the Romans left in AD 410 the area was filled by a group known as South Saxons (from which the name Sussex is derived). These people had arrived in England during the 6th Century and they in turn were subsumed by neighbouring West Saxons who, under Alfred the Great, became the dominant people of the South.

The first real acknowledgment of the village came around the 8th Century when the then King of Wessex, Alfred the Great, commissioned a series of fortified villages on the perimeter of his Kingdom and approximately thirty-three of these Forts or Burhs came into existence. Burpham's name is a construction between two Saxon words, Burh (Fort) and Ham (village) hence Burpham.



Yeakell and Gardner's Sussex Map dated 1778-1783, 2 inch to 1 mile. Burpham lower left corner.



Yeakell and Gardner's Sussex Map dated 1778-1783, 2 inch to 1 mile. Burpham top right corner.

So, further to the item in the WAS newsletter dated June/July 2020 regarding the retired county roadman who grew up in Burpham, who mentioned that his tractor partially sank into a hole in the field to the north of the parish church. When he looked into the hole, after the tractor was extracted, there was what looked like a lead coffin therein and they backfilled and covered it up. This information was provided some twenty five years plus ago and the date of this discovery was way before that.

There was only a very general description of its location and it is suspected that it would have been at the normal burial depth, so locating it would require a specialist metal detector of some depth range, although the amount of lead involved would be considerable. This area is not now consecrated ground but as there was a squint window provided in the church for the leper colony, perhaps they had a separate subsequently forgotten burial plot for lepers.

In the late Anglo-Saxon period in nearby Francia, Charlemagne's ordinances of parish rights – issued in 786 and 810/3 – prohibited the continuing use of earlier, non-Christian cemeteries, emphasising the need for churchyard burial. This formal ruling may have confirmed attitudes that were already held by the Anglo-Saxon Church.

After 900AD, a churchyard consecration rite was developed. The burial of an individual in the parish to which they belonged was considered mandatory. The only individuals excluded from burial in the churchyard were unrepentant perjurers and those who had committed suicide yet were not deemed mad. The enclosure of churchyards was a development of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Clergy increasingly

developed a financial interest in having individuals buried within their churchyard, because they would receive a fee for both the burial and masses to be performed for the dead.

Christian teaching held as a basic tenet, the belief that after bodily death the human soul would be judged according to their behaviour in life. Those who had been baptised, kept faith, performed good deeds, and had intercessory prayer could be permitted to heaven, while those who did not do such things would go on an afterlife of torment in hell. Texts from this period show that there was a division of opinion about the clergy as to whether judgement followed immediately on from death or whether all deceased souls awaited judgement day before being sent to either Heaven or Hell. The concept of purgatory, an intermediate zone between Heaven and Hell, had yet to be developed.

By the eighth century, burial in clothing had largely disappeared, with the exception of clerics. Instead, the majority were buried in a white shroud that was wrapped around the body, in this manner emulating the description of the burial of Jesus Christ.

The use of coffins was practical when a body had to be transported some distance prior to its burial. Mostly made of wood, and in a number of excavated cases, included metal fittings and locks. These wooden coffins rarely survive in the archaeological record. In a minority of cases, coffins were made not of wood but of lead or stone, the latter being used in particular for important clerics.



St Mary's Church – Burpham.

It is almost certain that a Roman basilica/Temple/Villa may have been at this location as Roman paving stones have been found in the churchyard. A Saxon Church stood on this site prior to the Norman Church we see today.

Recent research by Exeter University indicated that a religious building may have been created even earlier than the Alfred The Great (871-899) Burh. It appears that King Oswald of the South Saxons bought land at *Piperinges* from his follower, Erra, and granted it to a woman named Tidburh in order to establish a Christian religious community. *Piperinges* is interesting in that it survives to the modern day as Peppering Farm, located on the outskirts of Burpham.

In the chancel on the right as you enter the church, is a “low-side window” which dates from about AD1330, and which has earned the name of “the leper’s window” by the villagers. According to local tradition there was a colony of lepers at Coombe Lodge, two miles east of Burpham. An old route known locally as the Leper’s Way or Leper’s Path was a medieval track that linked St Mary’s church, with the old leper colony based around Lee Farm. The part of this track from its junction with The Street is currently known as Coombe Lane. The “Leper’s Way” is still clearly defined across Perry Hill, the path in all probability being used by them for their journeys to and from their hospital at Arundel, access to which being likely by a track by way of Offham Brooks and a ford across the original course of the River Arun opposite Burpham forge. From here the track used to continue northward through a field to the four cross-roads at the east end of the village’ thus passing behind the vicarage and into the churchyard to a point below the “low-side window”. Moreover, it seems quite probable that the lepers may have used the one available opening to gaze through at the interior of the church they were forbidden to enter. There was a chapel at Arundel in 1189, dedicated to St. James ad Lepross, together with the hospital. The site probably being marked by the fields which were known as the Upper and Lower Hermitage, before they were incorporated in Arundel park in the early years of the last century.



The leper’s window at St Mary’s Church.

Hugh Toller in 1977 recorded just 243 Roman Lead Coffins that have been found in Britain. There is very little evidence that lead coffins were used in connection with infectious diseases. The cost would have been prohibitive as shown in the costs of burials in St Paul’s Church in 1578 which was £5 4s 9d for a lead coffin and 15s for an elm shell.

As mentioned, lead coffins are comparatively rare. Maybe the nearest lead coffin to be found nearby is now in the British Museum. In fact it is just a lid, made of lead. It is divided into lozenge compartments by raised lines enclosing rosettes and other designs, with a cross in the centre. It is broken and decayed and probably late 12<sup>th</sup> century. This was found at Tarlington Priory, Arundel and donated to the Museum by the Duke of Norfolk.

If one was to travel along Spitalfield Lane, one might expect to come across a hospital, as the word Spitel, in Old English, means ‘lands with a hospital’. This is the hospital of St James and Mary Magdalene. At the junction of Spitalfield Lane and St Pancras there is a cottage in a modern housing development, which has a commemorative plaque on the wall with the following words. “These are the sacred remains of St James’s Hospital which was founded in the reign of Henry the First for the reception of persons afflicted with the leprosy.” Part of the cottage dates back to 1118 when the leper hospital, ‘leprosarium’ or ‘lazaretto’ was founded. Queen Matilda, the wife of King Henry I, is credited with establishing the hospital. (Queen Matilda first arrived in Arundel on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1139AD). Originally founded as a leprosarium for men but, as leprosy diminished,

it became an alms-house for the sick poor. The hospital was positioned for greeting pilgrims travelling from London to the shrine of St. Richard at Chichester Cathedral and relieving them of alms before reaching the suburbs.

Leprosy, or Hansen's Disease, was a significant problem between the 11th-14th centuries, after which it declined. In the 13th century there were two hundred leper hospitals in the United Kingdom with an average of ten beds each. When the hospital was founded, leprosy was seen as a punishment for sins which might improve the sufferers' subsequent chance of going straight to heaven. In around 850BC, a Syrian General called Naaman was said to be cured of leprosy by bathing seven times in the River Jordan (2 Kings 5). The sighting of the hospital of St James and Mary Magdalene next to the River Lavant allowed the patients to try this form of treatment.

The hospital cemetery was rediscovered in 1947 during construction of houses in Swanfield Drive. The skeletal remains were removed for further examination, which failed to reveal signs of leprosy. The skeletons were reburied in the Litten Gardens on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1947, and are marked with a memorial. In 1986, further burials were unearthed during archaeological monitoring of building works.



More burials were discovered in 1993. Three hundred and eighty-four Medieval burial sites were excavated, including 319 (83 per cent) male and 51 (13.3 per cent) female, reflecting the early policy of the original foundation to admit only males. The original cemetery would have been twice as big and there may be another cemetery on the site where staff were buried separately from the chronically ill. Leprosy being a chronic infection which commonly leads to bone changes can be identified from skeletal remains. On this basis, at least 75 (19.5 per cent) had signs of leprosy.

To summarise the finding of the lead coffin, by the tractor in the WAS article. Lead coffins were normally used for a high ranked person or the clergy. The only individuals excluded from burial in the churchyard were unrepentant perjurers and those who had committed suicide yet were not deemed mad. Perhaps the deceased was one of the above then. Of course the lead coffin may have been sold for scrap. So the mystery remains as does the location.

Alan King (Second part in next Newsletter)

#### Sussex Arch Soc

If you are interested in helping Sussex Archaeological Society to digitise Sussex Archaeological Collections, then follow this link: [library@sussexpast.co.uk](mailto:library@sussexpast.co.uk)

#### Current/World Archaeology

WAS has been given 2 boxes of these magazines – from about 2012 to date. If anyone would like to have some/any/all of these, please contact Liz.

### **WALKING INTO HISTORY.**

Archaeology walks for 2020.

Alex Vincent.

Aug 10. Upper Beeding. Remains of salterns. S.

Aug 17. Hill Barn and Halewick, Sompting Farm and site of Bronze Age hoard. M.

Aug 24. Highdown. Site of Medieval windmills. M.

Sept 7. Worthing, a fishing history

As this is the last walk, if it is raining, we will go to a pub for a final gathering.

S = short walk, M = medium walk and L = long walk.

We meet at the Resource Centre (Davison House) Car Park, North Street, Worthing, BN11 1ER on Monday evenings at 6.45 for 7 PM. Route maps on how to get there will be given on the day.

If there are no cars available, a local walk will be substituted. After the walks, we go to a pub for refreshment.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY WALK MEAL.

Planned for October 26<sup>th</sup> at the Toby, Goring Road. We also hope to celebrate the Winter Solstice at the Grand Victorian Hotel opposite Worthing station on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

Any enquires my telephone number is 07753282714 after 2 30 PM on weekdays

### [WAS Archive.](#)

Connie is currently Curator of our Archive. Thanks to Roy Plummer and Jackie Phippard (widow of Norman), we have a good collection of Sussex Archaeological Collections, starting from the very first.

### [Archaeological Roundup](#)

If you are interested in what has been happening in Archaeology in all of Sussex, there is a Round-up on the SAS website. Follow this link:  
<https://sussexpast.co.uk/research/sussex-archaeology>

### [Annual Journal](#)

Feel free to use your current free time to consider writing an article for the Journal. Cheryl, our Editor, would be delighted to hear from you, by the end of October, if possible. [hutchincheryl@hotmail.com](mailto:hutchincheryl@hotmail.com)

### [Worthing Heritage Alliance](#)

WAS is part of this group which has a very useful Calendar of all events in the area of an Historic nature.

[www.worthingheritagealliance.org.uk](http://www.worthingheritagealliance.org.uk)

### [Easy Fundraising](#)

If you shop online, do consider using Easyfundraising to make donations to WAS.

<https://new.easyfundraising.org.uk>

Retailers give part of every amount spent to WAS, if you nominate us as your charity.

### [Photo Archive](#)

WAS is hoping to develop an archive of photos, accessible via the website. Some of our past digs are already well covered, but if you have photos you are willing to share, please would you send them to Theresa and Richard on [theresa\\_in\\_brighton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:theresa_in_brighton@yahoo.co.uk)

If they are not recent ones, we would be grateful if you could give us names of people and sites included.

There are some on our website which we haven't been able to identify – if you know when and where they were taken, please let us know.

### [And finally a reminder](#)

Subs for 2020 were due on January 1<sup>st</sup> - £25 for ordinary members, £10 for full-time students. Many thanks to those who have paid already,

especially those who have paid by standing order, or by Bacs.

Please send to: Liz Lane,  
Membership Secretary.

5 Smugglers' Walk

Goring-by-Sea,

West Sussex.

BN12 4DP

Membership forms can also be downloaded from the WAS website:

[www.worthingarchaeological.org](http://www.worthingarchaeological.org)

Items for next News sheet please to

Liz, as above,

or [liz.13lane@gmail.com](mailto:liz.13lane@gmail.com)

The Worthing Archaeological Society is a registered Charity (291431)

