

Worthing Archaeological Society

News sheet

December 2018 – January 2019

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

New Year's Walk, Sunday January 6th

This year we will be exploring historic West Tarring, guided by the Heritage Walks leaflet. Meet near St Andrew's Church at 10.30. There is usually space for on-street parking nearby. It may be possible to end our walk at one of Tarring's several hostelrys.

WAS Field Unit

We will be returning to the Malthouse Field, Sompting, in June 2019.

Finds Processing

Throughout the year Finds are processed at 9.30am, twice-monthly, at our Slindon base, led by Gill Turner.



As we will be at Worthing Museum on the Binsted Pottery Project on the 4th & 5th December, the meeting on the 6th December at the Slindon Shed is now cancelled.

All are welcome to our Xmas 'Get-together' which will be held this year at the Downs Barn, Sompting on Thursday 13th December from 9.30 a.m. to lunchtime. As usual there will be festive fare to enjoy with coffee and also some tantalising quizzes!

We will be back at the Slindon Shed in the New Year on Thursday 3rd January 2019, meeting at 9.30 a.m. This will be a chance to sort and move the finds boxes before we start to reorganise and move the shelving on Saturday 5th January.

The following meetings at the Shed will be on Thursday, 17th January, then 7th and 21st February 2019.

Slindon 'new' shed

The former garage has been re-clad and re-roofed – thanks to Chris, Richards Storey and Griffiths, and Nigel.

A crack team did the removals.



The tools have been moved in, and very smart it looks too.



Surveying

The focus of Friday activities is on keeping our skills going and enjoying being out in the open air.

During November we went out and did some resistivity on the very large earthwork in Binsted Woods.



If you would like to take part, email Connie on connieshirley1@aol.com

Lecture Programme

All Lectures are held in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre at 7.30pm.

December 11th

Jane Russell 'The Prehistoric Archaeology of Orkney'.

January 8th

Edwin Wood The Roman Army in Sussex.

February 12th 2019

John Skelton 'BHAS investigations of medieval remains in Hog Croft, Ovingdean'

John Pull Lecture

WAS Study Days in 2019

4th May 'Roman Pottery', Gordon Hayden, in the Museum Education Room.

8th June Judie English 'Food and Feasting' Day School in the Barn.

23rd November Simon Stevens 'The Archaeology of Death and Commemoration' – Museum Education Room.

The Con Ainsworth Memorial Lecture 2018:

Saved by the Sea - Amie Friend

Amie's lecture in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre on October 9th was attended by over fifty audience members. She did not disappoint; the substantial content of the talk was well structured and delivered, accompanied by elegantly designed projected slides.



Much of the material archaeological record is confined to rigid mineral, ceramic, metal and bone - what is left when cloth, wood, leather, flesh and other organic materials have decayed. Unfortunately the loss of organic material means a concomitant loss in the information preserved, particularly details of possession and utilisation; who actually used an artefact (for work, ritual, entertainment, etc.), and in what way. That occasionally lucky circumstances of nature cause these softer elements to be preserved, allows a much deeper insight into the day to day lives in antiquity.

The talk concerned two wonderful example of extensive organic preservation: The Mary Rose, and

Must Farm.

Having worked for The Mary Rose Trust, Amie has particular insight into the information preserved in the wood, leather and cloth that particular chemistry of Solent mud preserved. The wealth of elm longbows (many more than previously found) retrieved alongside the bones of the Tudor men who used them revealed just how significant their physiology had adapted to their skill. Drawing these bows needed both enormous strength and particular techniques that must be developed from childhood. Muscles in the back and shoulders exercised early in life left their traces in unusual skeletal development. Attitudes of the Tudors towards personal presentations could also be seen by linking organic finds to their possessors; the ship's carpenter liked to keep his fingernails clean with a bone manicure set. A sailor took great trouble to repair rips in his jerkin using exquisite needlecraft.



Must Farm was Amie's second example of a disaster captured by fortunate mud chemistry. This site is at least 2,300 years older, a Bronze Age settlement that suffered a calamitous fire, causing its immediate abandonment. Elements of wooden structures have been preserved along with numerous artefacts embedded in their domestic context. It has been described as 'Britain's Pompeii', though fortunately for the occupants (if not for archaeology) no human remains are found. Prized organic artefacts retrieved include very finely woven cloth.

We wish Amie every success in her new venture of bringing archaeology to school children with her educational company, Time Seekers.

Richard Griffiths

Sunday 28th October 'Brenda' Memorial Walk

For this year's 'Brenda' walk, WAS members met in Steyning's Tanyard Car Park where local historian Justin Russell welcomed us before leading us along Mouse Lane to The Steyning Rifle Range . It is tucked into a dry valley in the north side of the South Downs and part of the Steyning Downland Scheme. Justin , whose knowledge and passion for the Rifle Range was fantastic , started near where the original building had stood and gradually

took us nearer to the targets over 800 yards away.



Jennie Williamson
Photos from Richard Griffiths

The first Steyning range started in 1860 when there was a need to train more men and is one of the best preserved in the whole of Sussex, although most of today's features are from the Second World War.

As we walked towards the target area Justine showed us evidence of past and existing earthworks as firing positions and poles that had displayed danger flags. From a distance it looked a nice walk towards a grassy bank but at the target end a small gate led to a whole different scene behind the bank.



Here we saw some of the mechanics of how targets were raised and lowered, evidence of stores and latrines and what kept the markers safe. This area had gradually been hidden by trees and undergrowth but has now been cleared by The Rifle Range Volunteers, a group who came together last year to clean up and preserve the Target area. It was a fascinating story and despite the bitterly cold day everyone found it interesting. For more information it is well worth visiting Justin's record of the site at <http://steyningdownland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Steyning-Rifle-Range-website-04-04-2017-Justin-Russell.pdf>.

On the walk back we climbed the valley side for a better view and drank a toast to Brenda and WAS members no longer with us before heading back to warm up.

November Lecture

Jon Sygrave of ASE gave us a thought-provoking lecture on the early Neolithic in Sussex, from the earliest evidence. He used changing monument styles and put forward hypotheses about the reasons for the lack of some evidence in Sussex found elsewhere in the UK.

Jon started with an exploration of who the Neolithic people were, from their origins in Anatolia, then spreading through the Near East to the Mediterranean and into the Central European plain around 6,000 BC. The LinearBandKeramik (LBK) culture in this region developed long barrows and enclosure monuments. These same monument types are found in the UK in the early Neolithic 1,500 years later.

With the Neolithic culture came the spread of domesticated plants and animals. The current evidence suggests that these peoples brought already-domesticated plants and animals with them when they moved into new areas, rather than domesticating native flora and fauna. It is generally accepted that the Neolithic in the UK started around 4,000 BC, in multiple locations. Early Neolithic evidence has been found in Orkney, Scotland, Ireland, the South West and the South East, with different and distinct types of monuments found in different locations i.e. the megalithic tombs such as Kit's Coty House in the Medway in Kent and the flint mines in Sussex.

During the Early Neolithic in Sussex there is an absence of some evidence found elsewhere in the UK, such as houses and field systems. This

may be due to the fact that the evidence would leave only faint signatures. This would make them susceptible to destruction from human activity over the last 5,000 years. Despite the absence of some types of Neolithic culture, Sussex does have important monuments from the Early Neolithic.

The flint mines in Sussex are some of the earliest Neolithic monuments in the country. There are different interpretations given to them, from making a clear ideological shift from the hunter-gatherer life where surface flints were collected, through to the development of a quasi-industrial process due to larger population requirements. The scale of such requirements has been demonstrated at the Ri Ronni flint mine site in France where over 5,000 mine shafts have been detected and experiments suggest that during its lifespan it produced 1.5m to 2m axes, about 5,000 per year. The continental flint mines have similar C14 dates to the Sussex mines. However, with the exception of Harrow Hill, most Sussex dates have been taken from a single sample, albeit from secure contexts.

Although the construction of flint mines pre-dates causewayed enclosures, it is likely that mines were still active when the enclosures were constructed. The first enclosures are dated to 3,700 BC and dating evidence suggests the mines went out of use about 3,500 BC.

The 'Gathering Time' study indicates that enclosures were in use for a relatively short period of time, may be for 100 years at Whitehawk before it went out of use. This may have coincided with a period of crop failure or population decline.

The recent Whitehawk Camp Community Project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and involved the Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society and Brighton & Hove Museums. Unusually for an early Neolithic monument there is a large body of evidence from the Whitehawk enclosure. The pottery from Curwen's excavations suggest about 50,000 vessels and there are substantial quantities of animal bones, in particular cattle.

About 3,200 BC enclosures go out of use. Henges then started to be constructed. Again in Sussex there has been no evidence of these types of monument until very recently with several tantalising discoveries in the Chichester area dating to about 3,000 BC.

Perhaps, as with other monument types that do not appear in Sussex from this period we just have not found them yet, they may have been destroyed due to human activity over the last 5,000 years, or there were a series of population decreases in this area. Today all of these questions remain unanswered.

Brendan Wyatt

[Annual Social. Friday 23rd November.](#)



With quiz subjects varying from the 2018 10p coins, challenging Ordnance Survey map questions and Christmas carols to decipher, it was a busy evening. As usual there was a very generous buffet supper. Many thanks to the Gardeners' Arms.

[South Downs Cross-Ridge-Dyke Project](#)

Judie English, David Lea and Richard Tapper have been involved in this huge project for some time. They have sent the section between the Arun and Adur to us, and it's on our website. Makes very good reading.

[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](#)

Is currently in production. Thanks to Cheryl, our Editor.

[Archaeology South East](#) have some volunteer opportunities which WAS members may be interested in over the winter months. Please contact ASE on the email below for more information.
Nicola Elphick n.bettley@ucl.ac.uk

[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

[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

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

[Beedings and Bramber LHS](#)

Meetings are held at 7.45pm in Beeding & Bramber Village Hall, High Street, Upper Beeding, BN44 3WN and visitors are always welcome, entry for them £2.

Wed. 9 Jan. Alan Barwick: Potter's Museum, Bramber

Wed. 6 Feb. Geoffrey Mead: The Adur from Source to Sea

[Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society](#)

Lecture programme: held at the Unitarian Church, New Road, Brighton at 7.30. Free entry for members, £3 to non-members.

Friday 7th December.

The BHAS AGM will start at 7-00 pm followed by 'Rocky Clump - The Return' (or something similar) Speaker Pete Tolhurst.

Friday 11th January 2019

How many??? Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman Buildings at Chalkers Lane, Hurstpierpoint

Talk by Simon Stevens (ASE) about an archaeological investigation of a Wealden site.

Friday Feb 8th 2019

Dr. Matt Pope - A Persistent Place: Excavating Ice Age archaeology on the Channel Island of Jersey.

Details from: www.brightonarch.org.uk

BHAS Day schools 2019

January 26th 2019 - Tony Corrigan: What

geologists know that might be useful

February 9th 2019 – Lisa Fisher: Prehistoric Pottery

Cost of each school is £25 for BHAS members: £30 for non-members. Please state which school/s you wish to attend and send cheques to: Margaret Carey, 27 Quebec Street, Brighton, BN2 9UZ. Please ensure you also enclose your name and contact details.

Sunday 9th December – A Dr Geoffrey Mead Walk – Wilmington: scarpfoot and mud – A short winter mud walk to Folkington and back - Meet Wilmington Priory car park (TQ544042) at 10-00am

[U.S.A.S.](#)

At the Fulton Building, University of Sussex, 7pm

Thursday 17 January

The Secret Sussex Resistance

Speaker: Stewart Angell

Thursday 21 February

Palaeolithic cannibalism: calories or culture?

Speaker: Dr James Cole (University of Brighton)

USAS Members and US Staff: £3

Non-Members: £4

[Horsham and District Archaeology Group](#)

horshamarch@hotmail.co.uk

[Sussex Archaeological Society](#)

<https://sussexpast.co.uk>

[Liss Archaeology](#)

www.lissarchaeology.uk

Or email lissarchaeology@gmail.com

[CBA Southeast](#) runs lots of Archaeological events, workshops, etc.

www.cbасouth-east.org

[Chichester District Archaeology Society](#)

Lectures, in the New Park Cinema Centre, start at 7.30 pm and usually finish about 9 pm. An entry fee of £5 is payable by non-members at the door.

27th January How many??? Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman Buildings at Chalkers Lane, Hurstpierpoint
Talk by Simon Stevens (ASE)
27th February ASE Finds from the Chichester Sewer Expansion Scheme.
www.cdas.info

Lewes Archaeological Group

All talks take place at 7.30pm in the Lecture Room, Lewes Town Hall (Fisher St. entrance) Entrance (including tea/coffee) for members is £3 (£2 for concessions) Non-Members welcome at £4/£3.

Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society

Has a variety of events
See landscape-events@hantsfieldclub.org.uk

Wealden Buildings Study Group

Sunday 20th January, 11.00am-2.30pm

Wivelsfield Church Hall

This 'talk' will provide a summary of the buildings visited in 2018.

Joe Thompson – “The dismantling, conservation and recent rearing up of May Day Farm Barn at the Weald and Downland Museum.”

Sunday 17th February, 11.00am-2.30pm

Wivelsfield Church Hall

Peter Varlow - "In an Old House".

Dr Janet Pennington - "Witches, Warlocks and Wellingtons - the ritual protection of the home".

www.wealdenbuildings.org.uk

South Downs Society

Based in Pulborough, the Society has a variety of walks and talks which might well be interesting.

Email them:

enquiries@southdownssociety.org.uk

And finally a reminder

Subs for 2019 will be due on January 1st - £25 for ordinary members, £10 for full-time students.

See Liz at Lectures or:
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

Items for next News sheet please to Liz, as above,

or liz.13lane@gmail.com

The Worthing Archaeological Society is a registered Charity (291431)

