

Sussex Archaeology Forum

Meeting 14th May 2024, Lewes

Minutes

1. Apologies received from Liz Lane, Daryl Holter, James Brown (NT), David Rudling, Chris Greatorex, Martin Bell, Matt Pope, Rob Simmons, Stewart Angel, Natalie Coen.
2. Minutes from previous meeting were raised and accepted.
3. Events Highlights (See Roundup for additional information)
 - **Archaeology South East:** Soundscapes and exhibition as part of Brighton Festival, working with the community in Whitehawk through the Lighthouse arts charity. Jon Sygrove gave a guided walk 14/05/2024, free at the festival. [Neolithic Cannibals | Brighton Festival 2024 | Brighton Festival](#)
 - **Horsham District Archaeology Group:** Four talks and day schools with Simon Stevens on archaeological techniques. Judy English will be giving a talk in September. A Summer Evening Walk will be taking place at Buchan Country Park. Encouraging participation in the Changing Chalk project.
 - **Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society:** Six archaeological events upcoming, including 3 talks. A number of summer walks are planned including to Hollingbury Hillfort, as well as outings to Portchester and Fishbourne.
 - **Worthing Museum:** Unveiling of the blue plaque to John Henry Pell is planned, with Miles Russell to speak at the unveiling. A walk is also planned at Cissbury Ring.
 - **Sussex Finds Liaison Officer (PAS):** A talk is planned at Horsham, as well as several finds days including at Bexhill and Chichester amongst others.
 - **Culver Archaeological Project:** Exhibition at Worthing Museum coming up between 21st Sept – 18th Jan. Two talks took place last winter (for Worthing Archaeological Group and Lewes Arch Group) Presentation to take place at Worthing (31st Oct).
4. **Fieldwork Highlights**
 - **East Sussex Historic Environment Record:** Is currently migrating to a new database, with completion expected over the course of the summer. Results from the Changing Chalk (Downs from Above Project) to be incorporated into the HER before migration.
 - **Archaeology South-East:** Excavations at Tangmere are just beginning and should be expanding in September, watch this space for more news.
 - **Horsham District Archaeology Group:** There is a backlog of finds to process and funding is being sought for this. Fieldwork beginning in early June in Field C, supervised by Giles Dawkes from ASE.
 - **Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society:** At Rocky Clump, finds from last season have been washed and marked. The new season started 27th April, with excavations moved 8m further north. Concentrations of pottery, bone hairpins, soil variations have been found, with several sondages sunk. Andrew Fanning now site director. 3 YAC visits are planned during the summer.

- **John Mills (Worthing Archaeological Society):** Work carrying on with post-excavation work at Sompting, (the 17thC alehouse). Further excavation is planned for this year. At Sullington Warren (NT), rectilinear parchmarks were found to belong to a 17th century barn and barnyard. Stone foundations have been uncovered but few finds – this finished 2 weeks ago.
- **Worthing Museum:** In January a project began with Worthing Archaeological Society members reviewing every flint tool in the collection. This is expected to take 1 – 2 years to complete, and will provide much more detailed information on the collection. Funding was secured for the preservation of a Roman cart Axle by the Mary Rose Trust. At Burpham a project funded by the South Downs National Park will entail 30 test pits between 10th and the 21st of August, with an open day, and community engagement. Next Year, funding has been secured from the Hedley Trust for an exhibition on Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries. There is also funding for a new excavation at Highdown Hill, lead by Dr Sue Harrington. This will take place during the Festival of Archaeology next year with UCL students.
- **Sussex Finds Liaison Officer:** There is currently no backlog of treasure cases. There is an upcoming project with Daryl Halter (Heritage Crime Officer) including a talk at Bexhill Museum talk on recording. New detectorists are invited, with talks on Portable Antiquities Scheme and responsible detecting. Finds Liaison Assistant is leaving and it is hoped that instead a job share for two Finds Liaison Officers will be set up from July.
- **Culver Archaeological Project:** See Roundup for details on work. Further evals have taken place at Bridge Farm, now handled by Chris Butler Archaeological Services, less has been encountered than expected given the Geophysics results. Funds have been received from Roman Research Trust/Council for British Archaeology SE. to part fund post-excavation work on Trench 6 (2015 – 17), to be published next winter. Trench 7 to be finished, possibly this year, depending on depth of features. Fieldwork begins on 27th May for 6 weeks. Canterbury Christchurch University students + Volunteers. There is an Open day scheduled for July 13th.
- **County Archaeologist East Sussex:** Voiced concerns to Brighton & Hove City Council on illegal metal detecting. There is currently a no detecting policy on council land except as part of an Arch Investigation: There is no problem with detecting as part of an investigation if sanctioned by the County Archaeologist. Be aware that some places have individual policies, e.g. South Downs National Park. Meanwhile, at Bridge Farm, where Chris Butler Archaeological Services have taken over commercial work, a large number of pits and a ditch have been exposed, the ditch likely a recutting of an earlier one, both Roman. **Jon Baczkowski.** Suggested there are Neolithic features based on Flintwork. More work to come here. CBAS are also working at Rattle Road – at the lowest lying point of site, Late Iron Age Saltworkings, water management and briquetage has been found. This is a complex site with complex geology on the edge of the levels. One of the largest assemblages of Saxon pottery in Sussex has been found on this site, together with possible Saxon Buildings. And near to The known Saxon cemetery nearby makes this very interesting. Meanwhile, Thames Valley Archaeological Services have finished Evaluations at Bishops Lane, Ringmer, with many features relating to Medieval pottery production, including a previously excavated Kiln. An interesting point is that the pottery is all used, not waste relating to pot production. Fieldwork here has been impacted by the weather – challenging for many units. At Station Road, Hailsham, a mid Bronze Age enclosure, with possible Structural remains has been found.

5. AOB

- **Luke Barber:** Martin Bell has reported that the Anglo Saxon cemetery publication project is proceeding well, funded by the Council for British Archaeology South East. A leaflet is about to be produced on the archaeology of the South Downs, a collaborative project between the South Downs National Park Authority (+Others). Luke has also circulated the list of site codes to the forum – these are to be checked with the museum. All finds from Malcolm Lyne’s archive are with Wessex Archaeology, all in store in Salisbury. The contact there is Kevin Trott. Malcolm’s library is likely to be split as no space.
- **Questions for Sussex Archaeological Society:** Will cuts in Sussex Archaeological Collections editor hours still allow the journal production? Emma O’Connor Answered: Yes: this is a temporary measure for the current economic situation, SAC 161 going to press soon, by the summer. Work is progressing on the following issue as enough articles have been received. SAC remains a priority for the Society. Changes with colleagues means the newsletter may not be out yet.
- **Horsham District Archaeological Group:** Noted that the group has been going for 13 years. The group is still very small and rising costs are challenging, particularly for insurance for small groups – calls for ideas to assist with this. Voluntary groups are under pressure, (not just in Archaeology).
- **Council for British Archaeology South East:** A Conference is due in Surrey this year on November 16th, to celebrate the life of Malcolm Lyne. Problems with venues mean this is to be joined with the Sussex School of Archaeology and History. Reminder that CBA SE have a newsletter – call for contributions – if interested in contributing, please contact David Rudling.
- **Sussex Finds Liaison Officer:** An individual has been collecting material over 20 years at Chanctonbury Ring, and at Kimmeridge, Dorset - including ceramics, an Iron Age brooch and much more – these have been taken in for recording, but it is suggested that it be transferred to a repository (perhaps Worthing Museum?). Clarification is sought on what to do in this sort of case with well-meaning individuals – education/outreach is necessary.
- **Is there any obligation to provide a Roundup?** These form part of outreach in the Sussex Standards (which are currently undergoing review). Roundups are deemed useful if comprehensive. These should be going on the SAS website but are not currently being put on due to staff shortages. Send roundups to Emma O’Connor and she will discuss to ensure they are added.
- **It was suggested that a Sussex Archaeological Forum page on the Sussex Archaeological Society website would be nice:** to say who we are and what we do, including narrative of purpose of forum, the roundup, and meeting minutes. It was discussed how many minutes or roundups should be kept on the website, and determined that 2 years worth would be a good compromise, with a possible paper copy to be held in the library. The nature of the page and whether it should include less interesting (blank) sites was discussed, and determined that the website should hold: the highlights with a concise narrative, 2 roundups roundups, one retrospective fieldwork (what has happened and what was found) and one regarding future projects (purely to advertise outreach/volunteering opportunities). with direction to the roundup itself for more detail. The minutes are also to be included.

6. Next meeting TBC – October(ish), Virtual (through Teams, not Zoom).