

# Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team

## NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 46

April 2002

### Editorial

As many of you will be aware, I am moving house. My new contact details with effect from 18th April 2002 will be *Rosedale, Berwick, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6TB*  
Tel. No. **01323 871021** My email address remains : [chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk)

Things should be back to normal once I have settled in, but this newsletter was delayed until I was certain when and to where we were moving. As a result we have now entered a new year and subscriptions are due once again. This year we have increased the level of subscriptions for the first time in about 10 years. This has been to counter the increased costs of things like insurance, postage etc. Please note that the subscription this year is £8. It would be helpful if you could complete the enclosed form when sending your subscription, as this will help us to maintain the list of active digging volunteers. If you are now on email, please also include your email address, as we will use this for distributing the newsletter and to advise members of forthcoming events.

This year has already started well with projects at Clayton and Tilgate Lodge, there have also been workshops held in conjunction with the Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society. A successful Archaeological Symposium at the University of Sussex where MSFAT had a stall selling books and advertising membership followed these. We gained some eight new members, and had sales of around £110. Thanks to Liza, Anne and Jo who helped man the stall.

Our main activity this year will be the continuing excavations at Barcombe Roman Villa. These will be starting at weekends towards the middle of April, and will continue through to the end of August. There may then be further work at the end of the season to examine some features currently under the crop. The arrangements for MSFAT members are exactly the same as last year, and are detailed overleaf.

Chris Butler

## **Barcombe Roman Villa 2002**

The main excavation will start in mid May when the Field Archaeology Unit will be organising training courses for Institute of Archaeology students, and then from late June they will be running public training courses in Excavation Techniques, Surveying, Conservation and Drawing (Contact details for these courses: Tel: 01273 845497; email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)). Students on these courses, or participants of courses in previous years, may also volunteer to dig for a week between the period 15<sup>th</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August. Those doing so will be asked to contribute £50 towards costs per week.

MSFAT will be organising the weekend work throughout the whole excavation period, and as the number of weekend volunteers may be limited, MSFAT members have priority over other volunteers at weekends.

Like last year, a booking system will be in place. To volunteer for a particular day or weekend, you will need to contact me by telephone on 01323 871021 or by email on [chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk) to book a place during the week leading up to that weekend. Having been allocated a place on a day, you will be expected to attend for the whole day at the times given. If you do not attend when you have booked a place, it may prejudice any future applications for a place.

We again have a problem with parking, and I would ask that where possible you share cars when travelling to the site. Toilets and portacabins will be available at the site, but you should bring your own food, drink and appropriate clothing. You will need your own 4" pointing trowel and a kneeling mat, but other equipment is available on site. Please make sure that your tetanus is up to date.

If you do not want to excavate, there will be plenty of opportunity to process finds and to help with guided tours. We will also be looking for one or more persons, who can attend fairly regularly, to supervise the finds processing at weekends.

If you are not working on the site, but wish to visit (at weekends only), please do not just turn up. Because of the lack of parking, it is best to contact me to make the necessary arrangements.

This year's excavation should enable us to complete the excavation of the main villa building whilst also exploring the earlier phases of occupation, including the possible Bronze Age ring ditch.

Please complete the relevant section of the form enclosed with this newsletter, and return it with your subscription payment.

### **A late Bronze Age Socketed Axe in Ditchling Museum.**

This socketed axe (Fig. 1) was recently handed in to Ditchling Museum along with other material, which had been found during the clearance of an attic. There was no associated paperwork with the axe, and the donor did not know from where it had originated.

The axe is 126mm long, and is rectangular in section having dimensions of 38.5mm x 31.5mm at the socket end. At the cutting edge the blade is 31.5mm wide and 5mm thick. It weighs 271gms. The cutting edge has been damaged, with numerous small facets and a larger break at one edge. The end of the blade is very abraded, and it is presumed that all of this damage was as a result of its use and not through later damage as the patina on the facets is identical to the rest of the axe. It has a small loop near the socket end on its side, which is an integral part of the mould. Around the top of the socket end is a pronounced lip, which is quite irregular in places, presumably as a result of an incomplete casting. The lip has a maximum depth of 11mm, and some 4mm below the lip is a ridge 3mm wide, which runs around the axe, but does not meet at the same height at the mould join.

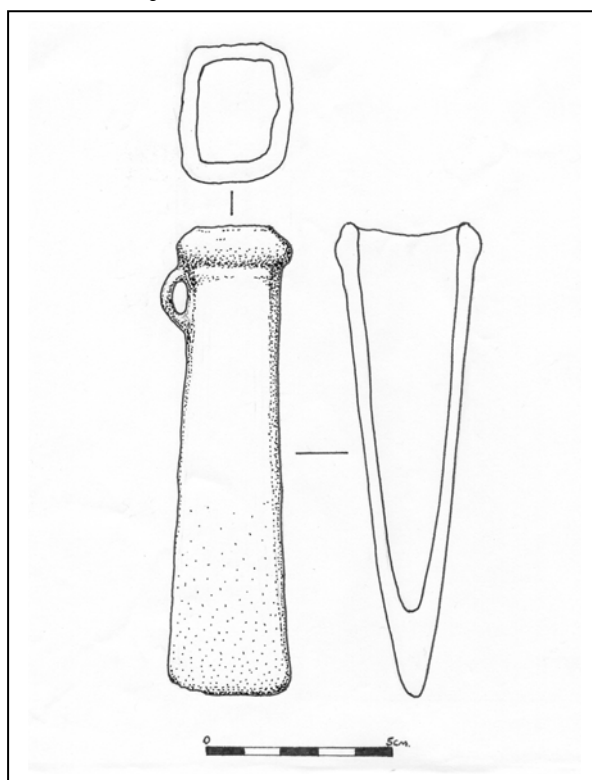


Fig. 1 (drawn by Claire Goodey)

The closest parallels for this type of axe date from the Late Bronze Age, although there are socketed axes from the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC. However, there is no reason why it has to have a British provenance, and may even have originated from a continental source.

Chris Butler

### *A Scraper from Wannock, East Sussex*

Sid Jeffrey found this unusual end scraper at Wannock, (TQ568038) near Polegate, East Sussex (Fig. 2), just off the north scarp slope of the South Downs. It has been manufactured from a large blade-like flake, which has been well worked, including the removal of the platform and bulb of percussion. It has been abruptly retouched at the distal end, with the retouch extending along both sides and around the proximal end. Abrasion at the distal end indicates its use as a scraper, and other abrasion suggests it may have been hafted. There is no later retouch or damage. The flint raw material is a striking heavily patinated red-brown colour with occasional white speckles, and is very unusual for this area where almost all the flintwork is made from the local chalk and clay-with-flint raw material. It is difficult to date such a piece, but it is likely to be no later than the early Neolithic. The scraper was drawn by Yvonne Corcoran.

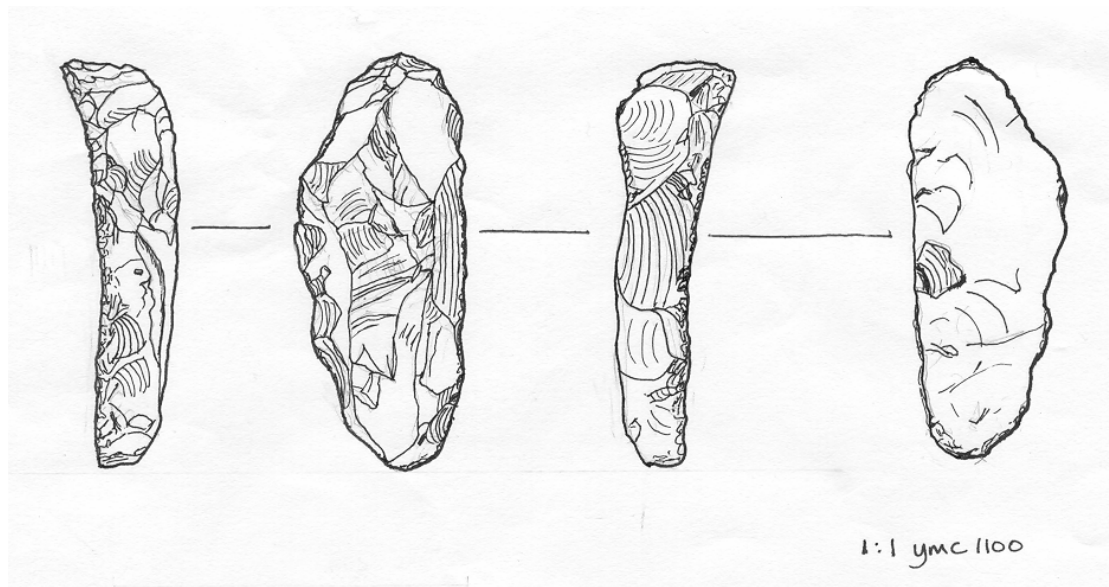


Fig. 2: The End Scraper from Wannock

### *Retouched flint blade*

A soft hammer-struck blade of probable Mesolithic date was found by Sue Welch at TQ367211, near Holford Manor, North Chailey. The blade has been partially retouched along one edge, and the opposing edge has some evidence of utilisation, as well as later damage. The platform preparation on the dorsal side of the butt end suggests a Mesolithic date.

## **A Survey at Tilgate Forest Lodge**

Over two weekends in February and March, we carried out a survey of some earthworks at Tilgate Forest Lodge, between Handcross and Pease Pottage. The earthworks had been discovered whilst clearing woodland, and comprised a series of earthen banks, which could be traced for some distance across the property. We initially carried out a survey of the visible earthworks, planning them onto a map and recording sections across them with a level. They comprised a set of three parallel banks up to a metre high with shallow flanking ditches, running south-west to north-east, which could be traced for about 150 metres through cleared woodland. At the southwest end they could be seen as parch marks on the ground and from an aerial photograph extending for a further 100m, although they did not exist as visible earthworks. Here they appeared to end on meeting an earthwork running east-west, marked as a track on the 1910 OS map. At the north-east end they disappeared in a ploughed field, to reappear in a further piece of woodland, where they were traced as a single bank and ditches for a further 100m. Other banks were recorded running north-west to south-east in this woodland, and could also be traced to the south-east running into another section of woodland.

The main set of banks then disappeared again under a grass field to reappear in more woodland. Here they could be traced, as a complete set of three banks and ditches, meeting another track boundary bank, and then running off to the north-east down slope into a stream valley. On the slope the flanking banks peter out, with the central bank continuing down to the stream where it meets other banks running parallel to the stream and appearing to enclose part of the streamside. Other possible earthworks could be seen in the stream valley. Overall the banks could be traced for about one kilometre.

A one metre wide section was excavated through one of the banks in an effort to date it and record its profile. It comprised a bank of sandy clay dumped onto the natural soil with shallow flanking ditches on either side. There was no remnant land surface below it. The only find was a single prehistoric flint flake from underneath the bank. The ploughed field mentioned above was fieldwalked during the first weekend. This produced a small quantity of pottery, mostly Medieval and Post Medieval, and some prehistoric flintwork. The flintwork can be dated from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age, and included a very rare polished barbed and tanged arrowhead. A local collector has picked up microliths, leaf shaped arrowheads and an ordinary barbed and tanged arrowhead, confirming prehistoric activity from the Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age.

These earthworks are not easy to date. Old maps dating from 1724 show the whole area to be woodland, which has been progressively cleared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The field boundary adjacent to the largest set of earthworks respects their alignment so must postdate them, whilst in other areas of now cleared woodland the banks have been removed so must predate the woodland. It therefore seems likely that they could be Medieval boundary ditches. Near the stream, it is possible that the earthworks are part of a water management system possibly associated with ironworking, although we could find no evidence of actual ironworking.

I would like to thank all those members who took part in the survey and excavation, and the owners of Tilgate Forest lodge, Mr & Mrs Mortimor. Mark Taylor, the County Archaeologist, initially suggested that we carry out the survey. A full report will be produced in due course.

Chris Butler

### ***B&HAS Visits***

Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society are arranging the following visits, and MSFAT members are invited to attend. If you are interested please contact Maria Gardiner on 01273 415725 directly.

- Saturday May 18th Richborough and Reculver Roman Fortress and Saxon church. cost £15
- Saturday September 7th Salisbury Plain (MOD Property) visits to Cow Down Bronze Age cemetery, Snaildon barrow cemetery, Chisenbury Midden Iron Age midden site and Sidbury Hill Iron Age hill-fort. Cost £10

### ***Training Courses & Workshops***

Over next autumn and winter we are considering running some joint workshops and courses, following on from the successful courses run with B&HAS this year. Some ideas are Fieldwalking, Surveying, different types of finds identification etc. There will probably be a small charge (around £10, but this will depend upon numbers) Please let me know whether you are interested, and if you have ideas for courses.

### ***Clayton Manor update***

In March a service trench was being dug across the garden of Clayton Manor to the new building (see Newsletter No. 45) when part of a tiled floor was uncovered. Luckily Michael Fairbrother was working on the trench and immediately called me out to record it. The narrow service trench revealed a wall approximately one metre wide on the east side, then three metres of tiled floor and then another area of mortar possibly incorporating a wall.

Over Easter the owners of Clayton Manor allowed us to excavate some trenches in their lawn and flower beds adjacent to the service trench, which revealed a room of the Roman bathhouse first discovered in 1810 and then lost for 192 years. There will be a full report in the next newsletter, covering not only the remains of the bathhouse, but also the items lost, discarded or deposited by visitors in 1810 when it was last exposed.

Chris Butler

***Please complete and return this form to Chris Butler  
at Rosedale, Berwick, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6TB***

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Tel. No.: ..... Email: .....

I enclose a cheque for my subscription renewal of £8 for 2002/3 made payable to MSFAT.

I am available for finds washing/marking

I would like to be added to the volunteer list for excavation/survey projects, and I am available at weekends/weekdays (please delete as relevant)

(details).....

I would like to volunteer for the Barcombe Villa excavations. I have read the guidelines in the newsletter and agree to abide by them. I also agree that I have no personal interest in any finds that I recover during my work at the site, and acknowledge that they belong to the owner of the site.

I would like to volunteer for:

❖ Excavation work .....

❖ Finds Processing .....

❖ Tour Guide .....

Current First Aid certificate      *Yes/No*

### **Workshops**

I am interested in the following training courses:

Fieldwalking       Surveying       Finds Identification

Other ideas: .....

Signature ..... Date .....