



Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team

NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

For those that have not paid yet, subscriptions were due on 1st April. To continue your membership, please send your cheque for £8 payable to MSFAT as soon as possible.

It has continued to be a busy year, with the excavation at Barcombe, and watching briefs at Hurstpierpoint and Ditchling. The Barcombe season will finish this year on Saturday 14th August, although there may be a few more days at the end of August and early September to finish things off.

We have some soil samples from a number of sites that we have recently worked on to process whilst we are at Barcombe where there are facilities for flotation. If anyone would like to help with these over the next few weekends, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Please visit the MSFAT website at www.msfat.com where you will find regular updates of the Barcombe excavations with colour pictures of recent discoveries.

Finally, enclosed with this newsletter is a complimentary leaflet that has been produced on the Barcombe Villa excavation by CCE students. This summarises the excavations over the last three years and also illustrates many of the finds we have recovered. As a result of this enclosure, and the lack of time due to our current projects, this newsletter is shorter than normal. A full newsletter will be circulated in November.

Chris Butler

Keymer Burial Ground

We returned to the proposed Keymer burial ground on the 15th April for Phase 2 of the archaeological work (For Phase 1 see Newsletter 52). This comprised a watching brief during the construction of an entranceway into the site from the road. Adjacent to the road we recorded a flint-metalled surface approximately 2 x 3m in size, on which was found a few sherds of Medieval pottery and numerous oyster shells. Further south, we found what appears to have been the southern edge of the house platform where a dump of Medieval pottery was recovered. No other features were found. A full report on this work will be published in due course.

A Roman site at North Chailey

In May I received a phone call telling me that a pot had been found during the construction of a new bungalow at North Chailey. Jack Ellis (who was an avid fan of Time Team) and brother of the owner had noted the features and dug into one of them finding the near complete pot! Over the following few weeks a small number of MSFAT members helped with the excavation of a number of features that had emerged during the building work.

During the visits we excavated and recorded a total of six postholes, four in one alignment and another two parallel to it. These were all packed with pieces of iron slag and post-pipes were visible in some. A large oval pit (from which the pot was recovered) produced large quantities of iron slag and a large piece of amphora together with other Roman pottery, whilst another smaller pit produced some more pottery.

A shallow gully was located running east-west across the site, through which we excavated a number of slots. These showed it had a fairly charcoal rich fill with numerous pieces of slag and some burnt clay. A number of pieces of pottery were found in these slots. Jack later excavated the remainder of the gully fill and found large pieces of two more pots, including an indented beaker.

Two further features were encountered during later building work, and were quickly excavated and recorded. One of these features produced sherds of East Sussex Ware, a large piece of worked stone and two pieces of worked flint.

This site seems to be part of a small iron-working site located on the ridge top, possibly adjacent to a possible Roman road or trackway (now the A272). The postholes may represent two buildings, with a drainage gully running between them. The SMR has a brief record of a possible iron-working site located further downslope, but no detail. Jeremy Hodgkinson of WIRG probed between this new site and the one mentioned on the SMR, and found quantities of iron slag between them, which suggests that they are one and the same site, which possibly extends for around 100m downslope. A full report will be prepared in due course.

Chris Butler