



Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 49

March 2003

Editorial

So here we are, another year, and already small projects are rushing to fill up our weekends between now and when Barcombe restarts. The forthcoming resistivity and fieldwalking projects at Arlington and Hamsey, together with a survey-training day, are all detailed below. The Barcombe churchyard survey continues under the guidance of Jo, Bruce and Roy. A small group of us gathered at Hamsey over two weekends in February to investigate the find spot of some metal detected finds, where a local metal detectorist had found two Anglo-Saxon spearheads and a brooch a couple of years ago. We excavated four small test pits, which found a few features but no graves, and carried out a quick fieldwalking exercise which produced prehistoric flintwork through to Medieval pottery. A resistivity survey was also undertaken and we await the results of this. Whilst accompanying us the metal detectorist found a further small Anglo-Saxon disc brooch. Jane Russell is currently drawing all of these finds, and I will produce a small report on this project in due course.

Please remember that with Barcombe coming up, we will be operating the same system of booking places as during the last two years. Please complete and return the enclosed form to me, together with your subscription, and then you can start booking places from the 1st May.

Surveying Training Day – 5th April

We are holding a Surveying training day on Saturday 5th April. This will teach the skills required to lay out survey grids, set up site grids, take levels and undertake contour surveys. We will use both dumpy levels and total stations. The day will start at 10am and will initially be based at the Malthouse at Cooksbridge where we will spend a few hours on theory. After lunch we will then split into smaller groups and undertake some surveying in the field at Hamsey and Barcombe.

We will aim to finish between 3 and 4pm. Please bring appropriate clothes, together with any food and drink you require. The fee for the day's training will be £10.

To book a place, please contact Chris Butler as soon as possible.

Roman Pottery & Glass workshops

Many members attended two excellent day schools organised by the Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society recently. The first was with Malcolm Lyne and covered Roman pottery, whilst the second was on Roman glass with John Shepherd of the Museum of London. Malcolm gave us an overview of all of the different types of pottery we could possibly come across on Sussex sites, including imports and locally produced wares. He also talked about production methods, distribution and trade. There was plenty of opportunity to handle the various types of pottery being discussed.

John Shepherd also brought along many examples of Roman and later glass for us to handle. He explained how glass was made and how to identify Roman glass from later types. He also explained why glass is such a rare find on Roman archaeological sites. This is due to the broken glass vessels being recycled into new vessels by glass workers who were located all over the country (15 glass working sites have been identified in the City of London alone in recent years), and therefore all we tend to find on our sites are those fragments that were missed or lost and therefore not recycled. Glass workers should not be confused with glass makers who made the original vessels from raw materials. Almost certainly there were no glass makers located in Britain during the Roman period.

Barcombe Roman Villa 2003

This year we have moved the area under excavation to the east, and will be investigating the other buildings in the villa complex, including the building with the in-situ tessellated floor, and the possible post built aisled barn.

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). Students on these courses, or participants of courses in previous years, may also volunteer to dig for a week between the period 15th July and 16th 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, to excavate at the weekend you must be a member of MSFAT.

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 to book a place during the week leading up to that weekend. You can also book a place for the following weekend when you attend the excavation. 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 help organise 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.

MSFAT Web Site

Please remember we have a web site, which can be found at www.msfat.com. Please visit it and have a look. If you have any suggestions or ideas for its content or format, then please contact either Barry Burfield or Chris Butler.

Forthcoming Fieldwork

Hamsey

We will be fieldwalking a large field near Hamsey church in conjunction with Sue Rowland's Hamsey parish group. Sue is organising this and has a list of all those who have volunteered. She will be contacting you with details as this takes place, probably the weekend 22nd/23rd March. If you want to take part please contact Sue directly on 01273 477346.

Arlington

The resistivity survey at Arlington may also take place on the 22nd/23rd March subject to the state of the field and the weather. The site could turn out to be another Roman villa, or small farmstead. We will also be carrying out a metal detecting survey with a local group, and will need some people to record the location of finds as they are made. We may also do some fieldwalking if the opportunity arises. Please contact me if you want to assist.

Litlington

One of our members (Peter Bidmead) has recently become interested in a site at Litlington near Alfriston. On a spur in the Cuckmere valley there are some earthworks, including the remains of a possible flint built barn. The site is on National Trust land and is scheduled, but the National Trust is keen to find out more about the site. We are currently applying to English Heritage for Scheduled Monument consent to carry out a resistivity survey on the site. Please keep a look out on the website for more details once we receive the go ahead.

Barcombe

The site of the possible bathhouse has been subjected to a further ground penetrating radar survey, and the initial results look promising. We intend to follow this up with a small resistivity and magnetometer survey using the same grid, so that we can then compare the results of all three surveys. This survey will take place in April. Please contact me if you want to assist.

To keep up to date with what is going on, please keep an eye on the website. With well over 120 members it is impossible to phone around everyone to see who wants to participate. Therefore, regular fieldworkers will be contacted, and we will post a note in advance of any fieldwork on the web site with contact details.

Wilmington Long Man

A short report on the above excavation will appear in our next newsletter, and the television programme in the series "Mysteries in the Landscape" with Aubrey Manning, featuring the work we did at the Long Man, will be screened on BBC2 in the autumn.

Barcombe Churchyard Survey

As some of you may know we have now started the survey of the Churchyard of St. Mary the Virgin, Barcombe. (For those that have not been to the Roman Villa Site, the church/churchyard are situated to the East of the villa, one field away). The churchyard itself will be surveyed by Roy using his Total Station, and all the graves will need to be recorded and photographed. This as you can imagine is a huge task and will probably take us some time to complete.

We are looking for volunteers who can spare a few hours now and again to record the gravestones. This involves completing a Sheet, (i.e. recording all information written on the gravestones, and noting the size, type, condition etc.). The recorder will need to bring pencils/pens, sharpener, rubber, ruler, tape measure, clipboard, and kneeler. With older graves, a spray bottle, flour and a torch could be useful to help decipher the writing. Those members who are on e-mail will be notified of dates, but if you do not have an e-mail address will you please let Jo Miller know (Tel: 01273 812840) if you are interested and she will telephone you with dates.

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

Name:

Address:

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Tel. No.: Email:

- I enclose a cheque for my subscription renewal of £8 for 2003/4 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*

Signature Date

