Worthing Archaeological Society

Newsletter June & July 2025

WAS Field Unit





Malthouse/Whitehouse

Next Friday sessions, June 13th, 20th, 27th. 9.30. at the gate.

We found a well.....

Contact Connie if you want to join in **connieshirley1@aol.com**

Burpham Forge Field

Two very successful weekends in a lovely spot. Tremendous hard work by many folk led to a possible new theory about the ditches – watch this space!



Highdown

The Worthing Archaeological Society Field Unit, will, in conjunction with the National Trust and Worthing Museum, be undertaking a two-week excavation on Highdown Hill commencing on Friday 19th July.

The excavation will focus on a series of trenches and test pits, strategically placed to uncover further material culture, structural remains, and environmental data from all periods at Highdown.

This will include the Bronze Age enclosure and the part of the early Medieval cemetery. In addition, the lynchet field systems that cover much of the hill will also be looked at; as well as investigating the extent of the Roman Bath House to the west of the enclosure.

WAS Field Unit members will be undertaking the excavation as well as processing finds on-site. No previous experience is required.

There will be a site visit on Wednesday June 4th. Meet in the car park for a 10am start.

Whilst a list of volunteers has started to be compiled, please let me know if you wish to take part in this project by informing me via email – **keithbolton14@gmail.com**

Climping

Will be visited when the tide is right… Parking is very difficult.

Finds Processing

Our next Finds meetings will be held at the Slindon Shed on Thursdays 5th and 19th June and Thursdays 3rd and 17th July from 9.30 a.m. to about 12.30 p.m. Please remember to bring your own refreshments and come prepared to work outside by bringing extra clothing.

Contact Gill if you would like to be there: **ggmturner@aol.com**

Field Unit Forum

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 8th July, 7.30 – 9pm in St Botolph's Church rooms, in Heene. BN11 4LY. On the North side of the Church, entrance from Manor Road.

WAS Autumn Social

Come and enjoy an evening of quizzing and skittling in Skittle Alley

The Black Horse, High Street, Findon, BN14 0SX

Friday 7th November, from 6.30 pm - 10.00 pm

If you are interested, please contact Donna. **donna.wiltshire@sky.com**

Culver Dig

Due to the crowds that came to last year's open day Culver has decided to offer local archaeological interest groups a chance of booking group parties for a guided site tour and display of artefacts on Friday July 11th. The cost would be £5 per person.



WAS Walk



On Sunday 6th April James led a walk in Memory of Alan King and Chris Lane, around Clapham Woods.

It was a glorious day, bluebells just starting and wood anemones in full bloom.

A goodly crowd were there. Many thanks to James for a really interesting walk.

Walking into History with Alex Vincent

- Jun 2. Edburton. Ancient Church and lost village. M.
- Jun 9. King's Barn, Steyning. Royal residence. L.
- Jun 16. Buckingham, Shoreham. Old manor house. S.
- Jun 23. Angmering. Site of St Nicholas Church. M.
- Jun 30. Botolphs. Ancient church and lost village. L.
- July 7. East Ferring. Manor, farm and hovel. M
- July 14. Lychpole, Sompting. Possible Neolithic Flint Mines L
- July 21. South Lancing. Hamlet and fishing history. M
- July 28. Goring and Ferring. Bronze Age burnt mounds, hoards and settlement
- Aug 4. Warwick Street, Worthing. Old street, ponds and cottages.

As this is the last walk, if it is raining, we will go to a pub for a final gathering

S = short walk, M = medium walk and L = long walk.

We meet temporarily this year at the Waitrose Car Park in the High Street, Worthing, on Monday evenings at 6.45 for 7 PM. Route maps on how to get there will be given on the day. A fee of £2 or £3 for petrol money to the drivers from the passengers is recommended. Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear. All are welcome. After the walks, we go to a pub for refreshment.

On June 21 we celebrate the Summer Solstice at Highdown Hill. We meet st the Spotted Cow in Angmering to join the Sompting Morris Dancers at 7pm. Or you could go straight to Highdown and meet us there at 8pm. Sunset is at 21.19.

We have a social get together on the first Monday in September. This will be Sept 1 at the Hare & Hounds pub, Worthing, at 8pm.

Any enquires my mobile number is 07753282714 or Email me **alexeclipsing@gmail.com via** Worthing Library.



DR JUDIE ENGLISH (1948-2025)



It is with great sadness that we report the death on Friday May 9th, of Dr Judie English following long-term health problems. Judie was an active field archaeologist in both Sussex and Surrey and published extensively on her findings, most recently on a project to investigate Cross-Ridge Dykes on the South Downs. Judie was also a popular adult education tutor and taught various archaeology courses for the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Sussex, for the Sussex School of Archaeology and History, for the Rottingdean Whiteway Centre, and many other centres. She was a long-standing Trustee of the Council for British Archaeology South-East and was for many years the editor of its newsletters. Judie was also a Vice-President of the Surrey Archaeological Society. In the absence of any close relatives, our thoughts are with Judie's good friends Jenny Newell and Rose Hooker who visited her regularly during her long stay in hospital. Judie will be much missed.

From David Rudling

Betty Attersall

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Betty Attersall on May 20th 2025. She has been a member of WAS for many years, going on archaeological holidays, outings, excavations, walks, exhibitions and classes led by Con Ainsworth. On one of Con's walks to Cissbury, Betty found a sherd of Neolithic pottery.

Betty was also a member of the Worthing Society helping to preserve Worthing's old and interesting buildings and sites. She also came on my archaeological walks and attended any social event such as the summer and winter solstices and the annual autumn meal. She was a lovely lady who will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

An obituary by Alex Vincent



Betty (right) on Con Ainsworth's walk to Angmering





2025 Lectures & Day Schools

- **Tuesday October 14th from 19:30 to 21:00**
  - Worthing Library Auditorium
  - David Rudling presents “Threats to our Archaeological Heritage”
- **Tuesday November 11th from 19:30 to 21:00**
  - Worthing Library Auditorium
  - Simon Stevens presents “Excavation at the site of a WW1 Training Camp: Cooden”
- **Tuesday December 9th from 19:30 to 21:00**
  - Worthing Library Auditorium
  - Connie Shirley and John Mills present “Sompting Malthouse Fields: the White House”
- **Saturday 15th November 20 from 10:00 to 16:00**
  - Worthing College
  - Sarah Green - Director of the Sussex School of Archaeology presents “Understanding & Identifying Animal Bones”

Bursary *– WAS has a Bursary which is set up to help Members attend events which they might find difficult to pay for. Please ask a Committee Member about this if it would help you.*

Theresa has produced our Lecture Programme in full – look for it at Lectures and on our website.



2025 Other Societies Events

Sussex School of Archaeology and History

CONFERENCE - 7TH JUNE
Shining a Light on Roman Roadside Settlements in SE England and Beyond

Kings Church, Brooks Road, Lewes, BN7 2BY

Saturday 7 June, 10am-5pm -…In-person or Online options

This conference, presented by the Surrey Archaeological Society's Roman Studies Group in association with Sussex Archaeology and History, will examine some Roman roadside settlements in south-east England and beyond. Speakers include Professor Tony King (keynote speaker) ‘On the road in the Western Roman Empire: ancient motels, caravanserai and emphoria’, Mike Luke on Alfoldean, Chris Butler on Hassocks, Matt Sparkes on Croydon, David Staveley on Icklesham, Blake Galloway on Bridge Farm, Wellingham, and David Calow on Four coin-rich sites in Surrey (Dorking, Flexford, Godstone and West Clandon).

Early bird tickets (available until 30 May) cost £18 for in-person attendance, or £12 online, thereafter £20 and £15 respectively.

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1308492308719

Secrets of a West Sussex village uncovered as unknown chapter in its history is revealed (An article featured in Sussex World)

A team from Worthing Museum has returned to Burpham with volunteers from Worthing Archaeological Society, following last summer's successful Big Dig.

Burpham Camp is a scheduled monument, an Iron Age promontory fort that became a Saxon burh and gave the settlement its name. The Anglo-Saxons used the natural defensive qualities of the land to build a fortification with ramparts and ditches.

Last August, a Saxon defensive ditch was uncovered for the first time, during the two-week Burpham Big Dig. Now, the team has discovered a much larger, and later, ditch – possibly associated with The Anarchy of King Stephen's reign.



Project leader James Sainsbury, Worthing Museum's archaeology curator, said: "This is archaeology in action – a whole chapter in the fort's history that was unknown until now."

The excavation in August gave a glimpse of this nationally-important feature and the intention of the follow-up dig this spring was to reveal its full profile, working over two weekends on private land. The hope was to find dating evidence to throw light on the nature of the defences of the Alfredian fort.

James said: "We've had a fantastic time with Worthing Archaeological Society, with some great finds and superb archaeology. It seems likely that rather than just finding the ditch of the Saxon burh (fort) we've actually uncovered a much larger, and later ditch – possibly associated with The Anarchy of King Stephen's reign.

"More work will be done by the brilliant Worthing Archaeological Society finds team, processing artefacts and drawing the features that were uncovered in the coming weeks. Finds from this excavation will be on show at the Burpham Big Dig exhibition at the museum next year."



Work started in Forge Field on April 25, where huge progress was made in the attempt to locate the full profile of the nationally-important defensive ditch. Two trenches were opened, with a view to seeing the ditch in two parallel trenches. Finds of note included a pipe clay wig curler and a pipkin ceramic from the 1500s.



The team was hoping to find the internal and external slope of the ditch and on day two, revealed the beginnings of the chalk slope relating to the inner ditch. It looked like it potentially dropped off almost vertically. Finds included a beautiful fragment of worked bone, possibly Medieval, and a worn coin or token.



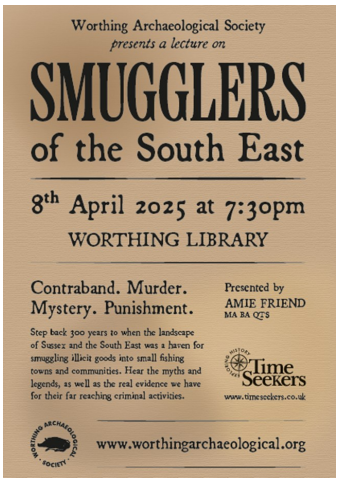
On day three, a fragment of Bronze Age palstave axe was found in the spoil heap from one of the trenches. This dated to roughly 1250 BC but James said it almost certainly ended up in the top of the ditch in relatively more modern times.

As the dig continued, the finds were coming thick and fast, including larger pieces of Medieval pottery from the 13th century and hundreds of sherds from the 14th century, some still with a beautiful green glaze.



Metal finds included a zoomorphic copper-alloy dress mount, probably 15th century, a thimble dating to around 1350 AD and a buckle from the same period.

On May 3, day six of the dig, the team finally revealed the profile of the defensive ditch at Burpham across both trenches. Its irregular form suggested the ditch was excavated without 'military precision' but nevertheless, there was no doubt it enhanced the impressive rampart behind it and presented a serious obstacle to any erstwhile attacker.



Smugglers of the South East — Presented by Amie Friend



The material for this lecture came from Amie's work introducing Primary School children to archaeology through her education company Time Seekers. After organising a visit to the Sompting Malthouse excavation she noted topics and activities that particularly peaked their interests, and 'smugglers' certainly fit that profile. So the talk covered both the explicit topic together with reflections on presenting history and archaeology to primary age children.

Primarily smuggling is a response to taxation, and taxation has been a fact of life since Roman times. Often the proceeds of taxation were used to fund wars. King Richard I is an example of this where taxes were used to fund his Crusades.

The main period addressed by the talk covered the 17th and 18th centuries, when contraband initially consisted of salt, leather and soap. England was at war with France for 75 of the years between 1689 and 1850. This meant that French products were officially unobtainable, so getting them as contraband was the only option, at an inflated price. This made smuggling a more profitable occupation than fishing or agriculture for coastal communities. What started out as a cottage industry became more organised during the 18th century. This despite the penalties for smuggling, including transportation and execution.

Goods were traded both ways across the Chanel, with the quality of English wool being prized by the French for the manufacture of military uniforms. So the holds would be filled with wool going south and returning with tea, gin, brandy,silk, spices, lace and tobacco. The quantities were large, with three thousand gallons of spirit being transported in one run.

The Government was very aware of the illegal trade. The Georgian prime minister, William Pitt estimated the trade in tea, which attracted a 70% tax, as worth £13 million, only £5.5 million of which was legal. Of gin it was estimated that each person consumed 2.2 gallons per year.

The South coast shipping fleet consisting of small shallow draft vessels that could cope with isolated coves and beaches was suited to this activity. The local population was organised to transport the goods to London. Spirits came in four gallon tubs weighing up to 45 lbs to be transported by 'tub-men'. Women were also involved, a notable couple of ladies smuggled tea in to London by hiding it in their skirts.



Despite the value of the trade, the government was not very effective in controlling it. Customs men were not well supported and often incompetent. Organised criminal gangs developed in a big way with large elements of the coastal population involved. One notable group was the Hawkhurst Gang (from 1735 until 1749), named after their base in Kent. Amongst other ill deeds they actually raided the Custom House in Poole. They governed the area with extreme violence, culminating in the excessively cruel murder of an informant and an elderly revenue officer. This proved their downfall as it turned public opinion against them. There was vigilante action against them before their eventual arrest and execution. At least 75 members of the gang were hanged or transported in the mid seventeen hundreds.

Inevitably when this story was presented to primary children the more gory details were missed, but without obscuring the fact that this was organised criminal activity. Amie has devised a number of activities to engage children with the topic, perhaps the most intriguing, inspired by her time working at the Mary Rose museum, was to do facial reconstructions of the smugglers. Using realistic plastic skulls and play-dough children build up faces based on descriptions of the smugglers in legal papers.

Whilst this talk was more historical than archaeological, it provided an interesting background on the cultural heritage of the south coast that may inform the context of our digs, for example the Sompting Whitehouse inn. Acknowledging that in addition to excavating and researching, actually engaging the population with the results is important, so Amie's sowing the seeds of future generations of archaeologists must be applauded.

Richard Griffiths



Other Societies / Groups

Friends of the South Downs

Based in Pulborough, the Society has a variety of walks and talks which might well be interesting.
Email: **enquiries@southdownssociety.org.uk**

Chichester District Archaeology Society (CDAS) have made their talks available free on their YouTube channel see: **www.CDAS.info**

Liss Archaeology – East Hampshire Community Archaeology

www.lissarchaeology.uk

Or email **lissarchaeology@gmail.com**

Worthing Heritage Alliance of which 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

Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society has a variety of events
see landscape-events@hantsfieldclub.org.uk

young archaeologists' club

Brighton Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) is open to everyone aged 8-16 years. We get involved in all sorts of activities, including visiting and investigating archaeological sites and historic places, trying out traditional crafts, taking part in excavations, experimental archaeology and lots more. Brighton YAC is based at Brighton Museum , where we have access to the wonderful Elaine Evans Archaeology Gallery. Occasionally our sessions may be held at other venues depending on planned activities. The club usually meets once, a month on the last Saturday, from 10.30 am-12.30 pm.

If you'd like to get involved please get in touch with the team: contact: Odile Rouard

email: **brightonyac@gmail.com**

BUTSER ANCIENT FARM

Butser Ancient Farm has launched ButserPlus: a way to enter the world of ButserAncient Farm online with professional video content. Details here:
www.butserancientfarm.co.uk/butser-plus

Horsham and District Archaeology Group

horshamarch@hotmail.co.uk or 01903 872309

SUSSEX PAST

Sussex Archaeological Society

https://sussexpast.co.uk

WEALDEN BUILDINGS STUDY GROUP

Wealden Buildings Study Group

www.wealdenbuildings.org.uk

BHAS Founded 1906

Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society **http:/www.brightonarch.org.uk**

Back in the Unitarian Church New Road, Brighton- Start time 7-30 pm. The BHAS lectures will be **live** and not on Zoom.

The University of Sussex Archaeological Society

USAS



Hosting a number of events throughout the year

www.sussexarchaeology.org

Email – admin@sussexarchaeology.co.uk

Directors: Dr David Rudling and Sarah Green



Worthing Archaeological Society



Please can you refresh your memories by reviewing this document, which can be found on the Society's website under Documents / Policy / Privacy Notice.

If any of your contact details have changed since you completed your WAS Membership Application Form, please advise the Membership Secretary, Liz Lane.

Many thanks Donna

If you are already on Facebook and would like to join our closed WAS Facebook group, just ask to join on the Worthing Archaeological Society page

Easy Fundraising

If you shop online, do consider using Easyfundraising to make donations to WAS. Retailers give part of every amount spent to WAS, if you nominate us as your charity **https://new.easyfundraising.org.uk**

Photo Archive

WAS is developing an archive of photos, accessible via the website. Past digs are already well covered, but if you have photos you can share, please send them to Theresa and Richard on **theresa_in_brighton@yahoo.co.uk**
If they are not recent ones, could give us names of people and sites included. There are some on our website which we haven't been able to identify – if you know when and where they were taken, please let us know.

WAS Archive

Connie is currently Curator of our Archive. We have a good collection of Sussex Archaeological Collections, starting from

And finally a reminder

Subs for 2025 are due on January 1st - £30 for ordinary members, £10 for full-time students.
Feel free to pay by standing order or BACs (details on request).

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**

Please note that at the 2024 AGM it was agreed to increase subs to £30 from January 1st 2025. Please update your standing orders / direct debits if you pay that way.

The Worthing Archaeological Society is a registered Charity (291431)
Please note: our email address is: **worthingarchaeological@gmail.com**

Items for next News sheet please to
Liz, as above, or
liz.13lane@gmail.com