Worthing Archaeological Society

Newsletter February & March 2026

Happy New Year everyone, let's hope it's a good year for all of us

Membership Fees

Thanks to those who have paid, but for those of you haven't

Subs for 2026 are due now - £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**

WAS Field Unit

Highdown Big Dig
There will be a Report and, in June 2026, an Exhibition in the Museum. It is hoped to return there in 2027.

Malthouse/Whitehouse
A dig is planned for 11 th to 25 th July, to investigate the walls found at the West side of the site, the well as the pit found under the spoil heap!.

Connie and John reviewed the digs so far at our December Lecture.

Knepp
20th – 29th April. Richard Nevell and Chris Butler's Archaeological Services.

More details to follow.

Burpham Highfield
WAS has permission to investigate this site in August 2026,

probably starting 22 nd . There is a possible Iron Age enclosure. More details to follow.

Finds Processing
Our next Finds meetings will be held at the Slindon Shed on Thursdays 5th and 19th February and 5th March from 9.30 a.m. to about 12.30 p.m. Please remember to bring your own refreshments. There is no Finds Meeting on March 19th .

Our Christmas Get-together, held again this year at the shed, on Thursday, 18th December was great, a very good celebration of all we get up to. Thanks to Bob for the quizzing and to all for the refreshments.

Please contact Gill if you wish to attend **ggmturner@aol.com**

Flint Sessions in the Museum
Will, hopefully, resume in the Spring

Field Unit Forum
Our next meeting will be on June 16th, from 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 New Year Walk
Sarah organised a walk around Storrington on January 10th, despite the Storm.

See a write-up at the end of the Newsletter.



2026 Lectures & Day Schools

In the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre, 7.30 to 9pm.

- **Tuesday February 10th**
  - John Pull Lecture
    - James Sainsbury, Archaeologist and Archaeology Curator at Worthing Museum and Art Gallery
      - "Highdown Big Dig " an overview of the Big Dig and update on post ex work

- **Tuesday March 10th**
  - AGM
  - Bob Turner, "Vikings" their History, Social Interaction and Artifacts
    - ***Please note that the AGM starts at 7:00pm followed by the lecture at 7:30pm***

- **Tuesday April 14th**
  - Sue Harrington, "Fifth & Sixth century burial grounds along Sussex coast"

Reports on our December 2025 and January 2026 Lectures are at the end of the Newsletter

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.



2026 Other Societies Events 1

Sussex Archaeological Society

Book your place at the 2026 Long Man Lecture with Raksha Dave: 26th March 7:30-9:00

We are thrilled to announce that Raksha Dave will deliver the 2026 Long Man Lecture. We invite you to join us for an inspiring and thought-provoking evening with one of archaeology's most dynamic and engaging voices. The event, hosted by our President Mike Pitts, will take place in the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts (ACCA) at the University of Sussex near Brighton. It's an opportunity to hear Raksha share fresh insights, big ideas, and the stories that bring the past vividly to life. https://sussexpast.co.uk

Sussex Archaeology and History

- Wednesday 18th February 2026, 7.30pm
    - SAH Online Archaeology Lecture — The Biology of Books— Speaker: Dr Sean Doherty (University of Exeter)
- Wednesday 18th March 2026, 7.30pm
    - SAH Online Archaeology Lecture — 35 Years of World Heritage in the UK -Opportunities and Challenges — Speaker: Chris Blandford (President World Heritage, UK)

Sussex Archaeology Symposium

- Saturday 21st March 2026 at Kings Church, Lewes, and online
    - Join us for a day of all things related to all aspects of Sussex archaeological fieldwork and research
    - This year there will be a £100 prize for the best display or poster by a non-professional organisation. Those interested in giving a lecture or having a Poster display should contact **david.rudling@sussexarchaeology.co.uk**

BHAS Study Day

Event fees: £25 BHAS members; non-members: £30. A need to book a place (and pay on the day) by emailing Jane Russell at: **russco40@hotmail.com**

Venue: Patcham Community Centre (Room 2), Ladies' Mile Road, Brighton BN1 8TA

- Feb 21st – Lisa Fisher: The Archaeology of Buildings: garderobes, cellars and other pitfalls
- April 18th – Roman Wayside Settlements am – David Millum: The Culver Project at Bridge Farm pm - Tony King: Wayside settlements in Britain, Gaul and Italy
- May 16th – Megan Russell: What we can learn from the excavation of human skeletons
- June (date to be confirmed) Paul Garwood: The Neolithic of South-east Britain



2026 Other Societies Events 2

Rottingdean Whiteway Centre - Brighton & Hove's basement beneath the city

- Friday 6th February (19.30) - A talk by Dr Geoffrey Mead looking at the landscape that the city is built upon.
    - Venue: Rottingdean Whiteway Centre, Rottingdean
    - Fee: £10—Details and booking from https://www.rwc.org.uk/brighton__hoves_basement_beneath_the_city

Chichester District Archaeology Society

- Wednesday 25th February (19.30)
    - The Mary Rose Trust
        - A talk by David Pearson (Conservation Manager) on the conservation of wood.
            - Venue: New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester
            - Fee: non members £5
            - Details from: https://www.cdas.info/Lectures.html
            - Booking and details from: activities@cdas.info



WALKING INTO HISTORY

Archaeology walks for 2026. A celebration year

Alex Vincent

This year marks 40 years since I went on Con Ainsworth's walks in 1986 and 30 years since I have run my walks in 1996. This year also marks 40 years since I've been a member of the Worthing Archaeological Society joining it on 11th March 1986.

Jun 1. Park Brow, Sompting. Multi-period site. L. Con in 1986*.
Jun 8. Islesham, Climping. Site of lost church and village. L.

Jun 15. Applesham. Lost village, salterns and raised beach. M. Con in 1986*

Jun 22. Rest and be Thankful, Southwick. Standing stone. M.

Jun 29. Clapham. Church and shrunken medieval village. M.

Jul 6. Cissbury. Neolithic flint mines and Iron Age Hillfort. L. Alex in 1996*.

Jul 13. Highdown. Recent discoveries on the hill. M.

Jul 20. Steyning. Site of ancient watermills. M.

Jul 27. Mount Carvey, Cissbury. Neolithic village and possible long barrow. L.

Aug 3. Angmering. Roman villa and bath house. M. Alex in 1996*.

If it is raining, we will go to a pub for a final gathering.



Con leading a walk to Angmering Roman villa and bath house.

* = Celebration walks. S = short walk, M = medium walk and L = long walk.

We meet temporally 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.

SUMMER SOLSTICE. On June 21 we celebrate the Summer Solstice at Highdown Hill. We meet at the Spotted Cow Pub in Angmering to join the Sompting Village Morris Dancers at 7 PM. If one prefers, you could go straight to Highdown and meet us there at about 8PM. Sunset is at 21.19 (9.19 PM).

We have a social get together on the first Monday in September. This will be on Sep 7 at The Hare and Hounds Pub, Worthing for a social gathering at 8 PM.

ARCHAEOLOGY WALK MEAL. We have a yearly get together for a meal in the autumn. This will be at The George V Toby Carvery, Goring Road, Worthing on Monday October 26 at 6.30PM. We also celebrate the Winter Solstice at the Railway Hotel opposite Worthing station on December 21 at 8 PM.

Any enquires my mobile number is 07753282714 or Email me alexeclipsing@gmail.com



Chanctonbury Ring



Cissbury Ring



Highdown



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

The Sussex School of Archaeology and History

admin@sussexarchaeology.co.uk

Photo by DAVID ILIFF. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

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

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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

Worthing Archaeological Society

Registered Charity No. 291431

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at 7pm on

Tuesday 10 March 2026 in Worthing Library Lecture Theatre, Richmond Road, Worthing, BN11 1HD

A g e n d a

- Apologies for Absence
- Minutes of the last AGM
- Chairman's Annual Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Election of the Independent Examiner
- Field Unit Report
- GDPR
- Election of Officers and Committee listed below
- Any other business

The Officers and Committee members are standing for re-election.

President	John Mills
Chairman	Keith Bolton
Hon Secretary	Elizabeth Lane

Committee members:

Roy Plummer (Life Vice President), Connie Shirley (Life Vice President and Excavations), Gill Turner (Life Vice-President and Finds Officer), Cheryl Hutchins (Life Vice President and Journal Editor), Alan Beazley (Hon Treasurer, Charity Commission), Liz Lane (Hon Secretary, Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor), Theresa Griffiths (Lecture Organiser & Website Lead), Amie Friend (Schools Liaison), Vicky Lillywhite (Assistant Field Unit lead) and Jennie Williamson (Assistant Finds Officer), Donna Wiltshire (Study Days), Sarah Brewer

A full set of finance accounts and the minutes from last year's AGM will be submitted as a PDF to the membership. If you would like a printed copy, please let Mrs Lane know by email - liz.13lane@gmail.com

December 2025 Lecture

Sompting Excavations (Malthouse and Whitehouse) 2017-2025

The last lecture of 2025 was given by Connie Shirley and John Mills on the programme of excavations and research undertaken by WAS and directed by Connie.

The area in which the excavations took place is known as the Broadwater Innings and was tidal until the 16th century, with the site located on the lower Coastal Plain.

Interest in the site was based on the remains of a flint wall in the middle of Malthouse field and two maps, the first (dated 1627) showed evidence of a Malthouse with the second (John Croft Sompting Estate map, 1772) not recording any structures.

The post-medieval topography of the site was not "helped" by the 1936 South of England Show, which involved a degree of landscaping to create level surfaces.

Excavations at Malthouse revealed a possible steeping pit for soaking malt and a Well, the cut of which contained 13th and 14th century pottery.

Another map showed structures lining up with the excavated features.

A change in land usage gave WAS the opportunity to explore land in the SW area of the field, which was known to contain the remains of a Second World War air-raid shelter. A packed chalk surface was found which covered a pit containing medieval pottery and most importantly – no clay pipe!

As is the way the best was saved to last, with a possible Well cut being located on the last day of digging.

A further round of excavations revealed this to be a pit, with chalk blocks at the bottom of the pit. A Well was located and when revealed appeared to be like that found in the Malthouse (in terms of construction and size of chalk blocks).

Further wall features were located and a pit, possibly indicating earlier settlement and contained masonry from an ecclesiastical building.

Quern stones, and oyster shell spreads outside the chalk surface suggest occupation over time and the preparation of food. The bone assemblage included cattle, deer, dog, sheep and pig. The pottery from the excavation provided a timeline for this occupation, from the 13th/14th century through to the post-Medieval period. The glass and pipe bowls found dated from the 16th and 17th century.

John's section of the lecture focussed on the interpretation of this occupation site, was it a possible Alehouse? This involved the differences between an Ale House, an Inn and a Tavern and included the research into the Magistrates records for licences, covering the period 1605-1692 (research which took two years).

The map evidence showed the first mention of the Whitehouse in 1627, with the Malthouse Barn still showing on maps of the late 18th century but gone by the early 19th century.

2026 is scheduled to be the last set of excavations at the Whitehouse site. These will involve further investigations around the well.

This has proved to be a complex site involving different features spanning the Medieval to 20th century with each season of excavations raising new questions whilst answering previous ones. Well done Connie and the dedicated team!!! Keith



January Lecture

Land-Use History of the Southern Chalklands

Tearing up the text books and starting again

Changing views on the reconstructions of our Downland

Dr Michael J Allen

Mike Allen developed an interest in this subject while in Sussex as a schoolboy where he was influenced by Lewes Archaeological Society.

Landscapes were important to understand though science was needed to interpret their history and how they were formed. Chalk downland changed over time due to man's usage. Pollen and land snails were a good source for providing evidence of the prehistoric terrain and its use.

How do we look at the landscape especially Stonehenge – one needs to rip up the text books

About 10,000 years ago, as the last glacial period ended, the climate warmed and vegetation developed. While not strictly glacial here, it was very cold. It would have been open cold tundra with no real trees; scrub woodland (transitional stage); then eventually it would have been cleared for farming.

Mike questioned whether previous accepted theory was true or not? Was it open downland with thin soils? The last 10,000 years started from tundra, but then birch, juniper, pine, northern elder, and mixed hazel developed. In the Mesolithic period there were mixed forest species .By 1200 BC the forests were mainly cleared by humans for farming.

The changing landscape happened due to human usage of farming, using ploughing methods causing lynchets etc. Hillwash(soil and sediment washed down slopes by rainwater and gravity) accumulated at the bottom of valleys as Colluvium. Colluvium was poorly sorted particles and not very fertile. Alluvium (probably coming from the Weald) was transported in rivers and streams and located in flood plains and consisted of finer-grained particles and provided more fertile soil.

J. Evans. 1972, published a book 'Land Snails in Archaeology'. Where previously landscapes devoid of tree pollen yet rich in human activity, remained empty of ancient environmental information, the analysis of snails enabled the **study of chalkland vegetation**. He demonstrated evidence for prehistoric woodland, of clearings and opening for settlements and the first positive indications of tillage and farmers.

Mike Allen by using land snail analysis has shown how vegetation has changed (e.g. woodland clearance) particularly in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age in Southern England.

Mike showed slides of UK LandSnail types and their habitats.(over 100 types of snails)

Woodland snails	**Catholic - Roman**	**Open country**	**Rock and rubble**
That like moisture and shade	Large edible snailsbut now protected	That like grasslands - Long grass and short grass	That like to shelter under rocks, need less moisture

By identifying the mix of snails in different soil layers, past environments can be reconstructed. By taking samples in ditches during archaeological excavations, digging down in columns, the soil can be understood.

At the laboratory, samples of snails can be processed and analysed. Bags of soil taken from excavations can be assessed by adding water and sieving, leaving the snails to float off. More sieving and snail fragments are revealed. This is painstaking work andis usually a lengthy process.



January Lecture

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Archaeological sites

A Neolithic Long Barrow (3700 BC)built in cleared woodland in the Stonehenge Environs.Snail shells were used as environmental indicators, linking these monuments to wooded landscapes of early farming Britain.

Other Neolithic long barrows, like those at Avebury were massive earthern mounds with internal chambers for communal burials. Often used for generations, snail shells found in their ditches indicateddamp, wooded, or scrubby environs during their use.

Sussex has diverse woodlands and dry valleys.There are 15 sites in the Stonehenge environs. Stonehenge Bottom, a prominent dry river valley that the ceremonial Avenue crosses via an embankment, highlighting the builders'interaction with these features for alignments of the sun.

During excavations for the Stonehenge car park, Mesolithic post holes dating to C 8500-7000 BC (which would have held massive pine posts), pre-dated the main stone monument. These revealed significant human activity at the site, thousands of years before Stonehenge famous stones were built. Molluscs found there showed it had been open woodland in antiquity.

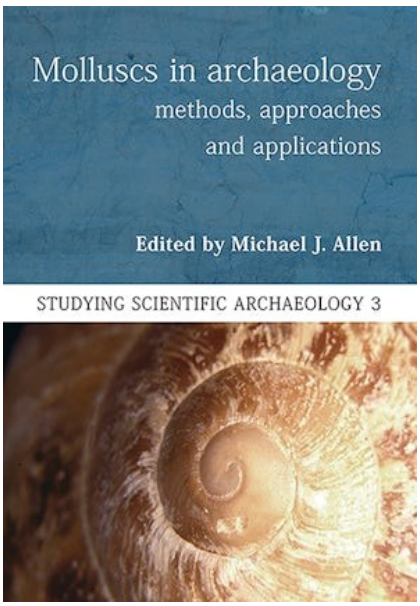
Recent Research on snails and pollen in antiquity on chalk downlands particularly in the south downland, has moved away from the traditional view of a fully forested post-glacial landscape, suggesting instead a **more open 'wood-pasture' environment** driven by early human and animal activity.

Key advancements include the integration of snail analysis from colluvium (hillwash) and the identification of discrepancies between pollen (regional vegetation) and snails (local environment)

Key findings in recent research 'The Wood-Pasture Theory' Mike Allen demonstrated that the Wessex Chalklands (Avebury, Stonehenge and Cranborne Chase) were not solely closed canopy woodlands, but rather an open mosaic landscape of grazing, scrub and open-grown trees from an early stage.Because pollen was often absent or poorly preserved on chalk soils, land snails were the primary way for local environment reconstruction.

Current research – Highdown Big Dig 2025 Bronze Age Barrow. Snail samples taken from the excavation arebeing analysed. The local environs consist of short grazed arable to longer grassland. The landscape continues to change.

Patricia Leming





WAS New Year walk around Storrington



Despite storm Goretti the morning of the walk was cold but dry. After an introduction to Storrington's location and surrounding downland with its ancient history we set off, crossing the river Stor to the remains of Bine Mill and millpond. The millennium plaque there describes the history of the village before it was developed in the 1970s. A short walk towards the high street brought us to Place Villerest and the village sign depicting 2 storks. Storrington derives its name from Estorchestone or Storca-tun place of the Storks and it is apt that Knepp,,just a few miles North, has successfully reintroduced Storks into Sussex.

Along the High Street we learnt about the stay of Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president, the pioneering use of gas street lighting and a little of the life and times of Maude Petre at Mulberry House. Brewers Yard, its Malthouse and the three pubs in close proximity were also noted. The composer Sir Arnold Bax lived in the White Horse between 1946 and 1953. He was master of the King's Music and wrote one of the marches for the coronation of Elizabeth II .

Turning into Church street, the Old Forge, built before 1600 and several houses built in the1700s were admired. Cicely Mary Barker , author and illustrator of the Flower Fairies books and Paul Hardy, artist and illustrator, were known to live here. Further along Church Street is a reproduction of the Burmese door, an ornately carved wooden door originally installed in 1911.

St Mary's Church dates back to before 1066, but only a little of the original building remains. It was recorded as Norman in 1089 and has a 13th century Nave . The tower, topped with a modern weather vane of a galleon in full sail was replaced in1732 and again in1754 due to poor workmanship! Much of the church was re-modelled in the Victorian era. The Church overlooks the heart of the mediaeval village, proposed by the layout of the land plots with several older properties in Greyfriars Lane. The Old School house which was a free school founded in 1764 is now the site of Storrington Museum.

We then passed through the well maintained and extensive churchyard towards the former monastery and Catholic church. A group of Monks expelled from France founded the monastery in 1880 given land by the Duke of Norfolk. In Monastery Lane we passed "Lady Place". This house was built in the 1600s and had a Malthouse in its grounds. After the First World War it became the home of Max Plowman a pacifist writer.

Crossing the main road and up the twitten past the stables of the old dairy, dated around 1710, we came to North Road where a local harness maker had his rope wheel for producing hemp rope in the late 1880s. Then we passed a row of Victorian agricultural workers cottages and hence back to our starting point.

Thanks to the members of the society who braved the weather and to the producers of the Horsham Heritage trails whose leaflet was used as the basis for this walk.

https://horshammuseum.org/learn/heritage-trails/trails/storrington-heritage-trail Sarah Brewer