

Liss Archaeology AGM

Thursday 23 March 2023

Attendees: 23 members – in person

1. **Introduction** to the meeting by Keith Baker - Chairman.

2. **Apologies for absence:**

Jane Godden, Davy Bale, Chris Talbot, Soo Harris, Chris Wilkins, Colin Brash, Geoff Reeve, Simon White, Andy Coombs, Sue Upton and Caroline Johnstone.

3. **Approval of Minutes of 2022 AGM.**

The draft Minutes have been on the website since 9 March 2023. No comments or corrections received. So Minutes approved. Proposed by Juliet Smith and seconded by Peter Price.

4. **Matters Arising.**

The new committee members were proposed and approved. The proposal regarding the change to clause 20, the wording relating to the auditor, was approved. No comments were made in relation to Matters Arising.

5. **Chairman's Report.**

Ludshott Common

We are continuing to survey Ludshott Common for the National Trust. From the period after Colemore we have been out on a regular basis recording more finds, particularly Bramshott Chase, 250 + features mainly World War 1. We are now up to 1028. A massive achievement. There will be a two day event in July in co-ordination with the Haslemere Museum. It will be during the festival of Archaeology run by the British Council of Archaeology.

Colemore - May

4 trenches:

Trench MM - iron age – ditches.

The trench was placed on the junction of the ladder and the rung. Both ditches were v shaped deep trenches indicating their iron age origin. The upper filling had Romano British pottery sherds embedded in it. Towards the bottom the pottery was older and possibly late Iron Age. There was evidence of water movement at the junction indicated by collapsing sides. There were also two sets of post holes on the west side.

Trench RR – mixed ages – ditches.

Trench RR was located in the Southwest corner of the enclosure. The contents proved to be enigmatic in that there were many different colourings, but few finds to help us understand the archaeology. There was Romano British CBM in the upper layers and earlier pottery in the lower layers. Two linear ditches were found

plus a stone pad and large pit - the use of which was unclear. A darker fill was revealed in the Southern of the two ditches with a flint layer.

Trench SS – Romano British – flint pavement.

Trench SS had a flint pavement on the Eastern side on the opposite side there was evidence of building materials. In one corner there was a deep layer of red orange coloured sand. Adjacent to this was a layer of light grey material which we thought was imported lime. The positioning of the materials made us consider that the area had been used to manufacture mortar for building construction. Evidence of the materials used in the villa construction supports this.

Trench near ladder - enclosure v shaped – for water management.

The trench was located in the Northeast corner of the enclosure. The geophysics indicated a round and a dark feature. The round feature had soft silty material with pebbles and gravel. It was based on a clay lining and could have been a water retaining feature. The silt and pebbles configuration have been seen elsewhere on the site. The dark feature was a v shaped ditch.

Petersfield Farm Dig – July

There were two dig sites:

Existing north trench - continuing excavation.

The square structure is what we assume may have been a brick or tile kiln with collapsed supporting arches. Our structure has marked similarities to local Roman tile kilns with their kiln arches to support tiles being fired. They are similar to structures found at Arundel and Dockenfield.

We worked within our previous excavation, going deeper and we dug around the perimeter to the north of the kiln to justify its extent. We found the source of heating to the north side of the sewage pipeline - the connection to the kiln having been destroyed when the pipeline was installed. We also excavated the central area of the kiln and its external features. There were a few other locations of interest that we exposed to the left of the kiln and the possibility of some round bases.

New trench at Top of Copse field.

We started a new trench at the Top of Copse field which is approximately half a mile to the south of the existing kiln site. We had surveyed the area in 2019 and found an interesting feature that we wanted to dig. With assistance from the farmer who partially excavated the trench for us we made a good start. The weather and covid were not kind – temperatures over 30 C and two members caught covid.

We were surprised to find that the feature was very close to the surface and was similar in construction to the other kiln. It had a surround of stonework to its perimeter, with tiles dotted around it. In the survey, the scan had shown an oblong perimeter line around the main area of interest. We located the line at either end of our trench and excavated, discovering that they were both ditches. The ditch to the west was very narrow and was filled with vertical tiles, some

were mis-formed. The ditch to the east was much deeper, well formed, and had pottery as well as tiles in it. At the very base, at about 1.5 metres down, was a small old clay drainage pipe. It was difficult to fathom how it had been installed because there was hardly any sign of a trench for its installation.

We are not sure what the outlying ditch was for but as the field slopes it may have been for excluding rainwater from the kiln area. The structure had linear lines of overlapping stones running through it that had been mortared together. It appeared to be collapsed but would need further excavation to analyse it. It had an external stone surrounding wall and there were remains of broken tiles around its edge. There was a further stone structure to the east of it. It could be a subsidiary kiln. Towards the end of the dig we noticed that there was a small collapsed area of clay within the plough lines. We excavated and found a fold of a different type of clay lying underneath. It appears it was a mound of clay used to make the tiles.

Towards the end of the excavations we had three visitors to look at the structures. They were David Hopkins our County Archaeologist, Mike Fulford a professor from Reading University and Tony King a professor from the University of Winchester. They all agreed that they were kiln structures. We had always considered this but whereas the Top of Copse kiln did appear to be solely a kiln we have a view that the northern kiln, our first major excavation at the farm, may have been altered or adjusted for another use. Placing them in the context of the Romano British villa is difficult. If we had access to the villa building materials, it was dug in the early 1900s, we could compare it with the tiles found around the kiln(s). Based on the North kiln location i.e. immediately next to the villa, one could contemplate that they were contemporary. The Top of Copse kiln is more remote and may be a later industrial site. We have not researched the whole of the field but there are signs, on LIDAR, of other constructions.

Colemore - September

In September we dug three trenches:

We dug a new trench VV – it was larger than our normal size and centred on a Geophysics feature - parallel lines running through and a possible structure but it did not relate to the Geophysics. There were very few finds.

The second trench was initially interesting. Very close to the surface we found the layout of what appeared to be the base of a tiled area - it was distinguished by faint greyish lines which showed the junction of the tiles but as no coverings were present it was open to conjecture. If it was a tiled area, it may have been internal or external. We found little else of interest.

The third trench initially seemed to be a layer of large flints, maybe a paving or possibly part of a building but as we went deeper it exposed two trenches filled with flints. It had some pottery finds in the ditches - we came across a Decorated piece of pottery which was not our usual grey colour - but buff with a zig-zag design.

Oakhanger - November

We had been asked by some residents, Martin and Mark, to look at a particular field at the west end of the Village. It was small and uneven, and its point of interest is that it sat by the Roman road that runs between Neatham and Silchester. Martin lived opposite in a 17 century thatched house. We had looked at the path of the roman road in the past and found little evidence of it. We decided to do a resistivity survey. The survey was small - almost one grid but did not show a great deal. There were a pair of square profiles in the corner which we thought may be some small building foundations.

We decided it would be useful to do a metal detecting survey to see if it could give us some clues of the period. In December we detected through the survey area and found several items, including blank 303 ammunition which reinforced the existence of a military presence at some time. We knew that it was a military training area and certainly used by Canadians during World War 2 and possibly the army in World War 1.

Station Road, Liss – Bomb Shelter

We were asked by a resident to investigate his back garden. During World War 2 his house had been used as a convalescent home for the RAF. The house had previously belonged to an old member of Liss Archaeology, Ray Stevens, and in the back garden there was a bomb shelter. It had stairs down to it, so it was not a typical Anderson Shelter. Ray had filled the entrance in as his children were young and he did not want them falling in. The current owners were not aware of its location and asked if we could find it.

We did a small resistivity survey and it showed up on the scan, near to the back of the house. It appeared to be a substantial construction.

Hinton Ampner, National Trust - January 2023

One of our members, Geoff, runs a group of volunteers for the National Trust on the Hinton Ampner estate. The trust wanted to add some forestry to the estate and James, one of our contacts at the National Trust, has the responsibility of checking in advance the areas that the tree planting was required. Geoff asked us if we could survey the areas in question. We agreed to help and eventually undertook a sizeable magnetometer survey in one of the fields. The survey took 5 days and covered a considerable area. Our new Bartington magnetometer meant that within our 20 x 20m grid we only needed to traverse 5 times. This gave us a good opportunity to test the equipment and produced some interesting results.

We started on a second field, but bad weather curtailed the survey. We have now completed this survey. The survey area consists of over 120 20 x 20m grids.

The Liss Archaeology Group Membership

Membership for last year - ending March 2023 – 161 members.

New members this year – 48.

Daily dig fee – increase from £6 to £8 per day.

Programme for this year:

Archaeology Day at the Allen gallery in Alton – Saturday 1st April - Joint project with Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Colemore Dig starting on Saturday 29th April and ending on Sunday 28th May.

Ludshott Archaeology Days – Wednesday 19th & 26th July- part of The Festival of Archaeology - joint project with Haselmere Museum.

The Petersfield “Big Dig” – last two weeks in July – also part of The Festival of Archaeology - joint project with the Petersfield area Historical and Archaeology group, Town Council and Museum

Potentially the farm near Petersfield – August /September – dependant on farming requirements.

In advance of the digs we will be doing geophysics at:

A farm in Meon Valley, Petersfield town and the adjacent farm.

Fundraising:

We had a very successful year fundraising and managed to achieve enough money to buy our Bartington magnetometer which was purchased during the year. It works well and quickens our survey pace considerably.

We thank everyone for their help in raising funds and personally supporting the group with donations. We also thank everyone who has donated items for our raffle prizes and does so on a regular basis.

All sources of funding help to keep the group finances stable and allows us to buy those larger pieces of equipment that are a great benefit to our digs.

6. Treasurers report

Accounts to end December 2022

Keith presented a summary of the notes which have been provided by our treasurer, Jane Godden:

There was a substantial deficit of £ 7,571.95 due to magnetometer purchase from funds raised throughout 2021. There was the use of the crowdfunding account to raise funds for other items of larger equipment. Insurance was transferred to a different company charging a lower rate. Administrative expenses include £360 for the store rent and £218 for webhosting expenditure. The fundraising income

of £443 and expenditure relates to sale of t-shirts and fleeces. Fieldwork income was exceeded by expenditure, and we ran the digs at a small loss.

The accounts have been audited yet and a copy of them will be placed on the members page.

David Quick thanked the Armitages for help obtaining a grant from East Hants District Council.

There were no questions, and the accounts approval was proposed by David Quick and seconded by David Pink.

7. Election of the committee officers

Our current committee officers are:

Chairman – Keith Baker
Archaeology director – Juliet Smith
Vice chairman – Peter Price
Treasurer – Jane Godden
Secretary – Jane Walker
Membership secretary – Carol Hartzenberg
Educational officer – Ann Brookes

All officers had agreed to continue in post and were proposed by Carl Raven and seconded by Dave Scadden.

8. Any other business

None.