



**Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site  
Archaeological and Historical Research Group  
Notes of Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2015**

**Present:** Martyn Barber, Brian Edwards, Sarah Simmonds, Colin Shell, Dan Miles, David Sabin, Kerry Donaldson, Jim Gunter, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (Chair), Paul Cripps, Nick Baxter, Ros Cleal, Heather Sebire, David Dawson, Emily Banfield, Nikki Cook, Nicola Hembrey, Nick Snashall, Matt Leivers, Rachel Foster, Josh Pollard, Jude Currivan, Ian Barnes, Michele Drisse, Amanda Chadburn, Jonathan Parkhouse

**1. Apologies and Introductions**

Phil McMahon, Dave Field, Sian Williams, David Roberts, Gill Swanton, Beth Thomas, Steve Marshall, Bruce Eagles, Jonathan Last, Susan Greaney, Tim Darvill, Mark Bowden, Clive Ruddles

**2. Minutes and matters arising**

**2.1 Minutes**

The minutes were approved with minor corrections. At 4.2 remove Shell. 6.3 correct spelling of Rollestone and grain store. 10.3 should read axe head not polished axe.

**2.2 Matters Arising**

Action 2.2: JG and CS will send reports to MPK once projects are complete.  
10.3 There is no A303 scheme to discuss at present despite the Government's commitment to invest in solving the problems and agreement that any tunnel would need to be at least 2.9 km long. The EH application to extend parking at Stonehenge does not have a research element and is not therefore a focus for discussion at this meeting.

**3. Monitoring of the Resource Agenda**

**3.1 Update on WHS Research Framework**

3.1.1. ML reported that the draft text for all resource assessment, agenda and strategy were complete. 95% of the comments from the peer reviewer were editorial and easily addressed. There were one or two more substantive comments regarding the use of the concept of OUV as an organising theme.

3.1.2 The project design for the edit stage has been prepared. Once approved by the project board and English Heritage it will be implemented and complete by the end of March. The final draft will be circulated to ASHRG in April. Once agreed the

final text will be illustrated. All requested figures have been prepared. ML will approach members with targeted requests for photographs when it is clear what illustrations are required.

3.1.3 Once the typescript is agreed a new project design will be prepared for the typesetting and printing stage. Publication will follow 6 - 9 months later. 2- 300 hard copies will be produced. Digital copies will be available. The launch will take place at the end of the 2015.

3.1.4 The method and regularity of updates is still under discussion. Options include continue update. The East Midlands are using a Wiki format but this does raise issues around ensuring validity and accuracy of contribution. This and the role of the group should be discussed at the ASHRG meeting in the autumn. It may be appropriate to set up a sub-group of ASHRG to undertake updates of the framework.

**Action: SS to add update of Research Framework to the agenda in September.**

#### **4. Current archaeological & historical research**

##### **4.1 Managing the Astronomical Importance of the Stonehenge WHS - Amanda Chadburn and Clive Ruddles**

4.1.1 AC presented an outline of the work undertaken at Stonehenge with Clive Ruddles. This was originally begun as part of the International Year of Astronomy. The *5,000 Years of Astronomy at Stonehenge* leaflet was produced in 2009 and reprinted in 2012. In addition ICOMOS called for case studies reviewing sites of astronomical importance globally including a review of tentative list sites and some existing WHSs. This was aimed at helping to ensure more sites of astronomical importance were inscribed as WHSs. The thematic study *Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the Context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention* appeared in June 2010. (Chadburn, A. 2011. "Case Study 2.1 Stonehenge World Heritage Site, United Kingdom" in Ruggles, C. and Cotte, M. (eds) *Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention*. ICOMOS and IAU, Paris. Paperback edition, February 2011, 34-39). An extended version of the case study will be published in 2015.

4.1.2 There is a rigorous process for establishing the astronomical importance of a prehistoric site. This includes being able to demonstrate clear intention that is visible on the ground. It cannot be based on conjecture arrived at simply by joining up the dots. In addition it must have been possible for prehistoric peoples to see and understand any posited links.

4.1.3 One of the attributes of OUV at Stonehenge is the design of the Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to the skies and astronomy. The alignment on the Winter Solstice makes Stonehenge part of a tradition related to megalithic sites in NW Europe including the New Grange lightbox. Sites of demonstrable astronomical importance at Stonehenge include:

Stonehenge's Stone Settings (Including the Circle and its "entrance", Horseshoe Settings, Station Stones, Heel Stone and its companion); Stonehenge Avenue (part); Woodhenge (Rings C-F only, and Grave); Southern Circle and the Southern Circle Avenue.

4.1.4 One of the key management challenges related to this attribute is the need to protect sight lines of astronomical importance which relate to the OUV of the WHS. This should be considered when drawing up any buffer zone as this can extend well beyond the WHS.

4.1.5 JC suggested adding calendarisation, so important in other countries including South America, should be added to the work. AC will discuss this in more detail with JC. SS added that the alignments and related site lines will be part of the planned setting study for the WHS and related SPD or relevant planning guidance. PC suggested that previous modelling work done by Wessex Archaeology could assist with this work. JP asked if Durrington '68 timber structure was being considered in relation to the work. AC confirmed that CR is considering this and the northern circle. The alignment of the southern circle has been destroyed by the building of the huge embankment.

## **4.2 The Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes Project (2010 -2014) - Jonathan Parkhouse for David Roberts**

4.2.1 As part of National Heritage Protection Plan Activity 3A4, English Heritage teams undertook geophysical survey and excavation on Urchfont Hill, Urchfont, following up on National Mapping Programme and Portable Antiquities Scheme data. Geophysical survey demonstrated a poor magnetic response due to ground conditions and geology, but nonetheless added several features to those mapped by the NMP and HER mapping. Resistivity survey proved slightly more productive, confirming some of the weaker responses on magnetometry and revealing additional features.

4.2.2 Excavation focused on a large undated enclosure and a trackway running alongside it to the north-west. The enclosure had multiple ditches (most shallow) with intervals between them. One such interval included a post alignment of eight postholes in two parallel lines. All enclosure ditches and many other features were absolutely sterile despite extensive environmental sampling, suggesting an earlier prehistoric date. Little of the enclosure interior was excavated, but one interior pit demonstrated burnt flint, worked flint and pine charcoal which produced three C14 dates in the first half of the eighth millennium cal. BC. This pit was cut into another feature as yet undefined & undated. A Roman pit was also found nearby containing residual Neolithic pottery. The trackway running alongside the enclosure was proved to be a substantial roadway of pounded chalk, running straight and changing direction at an angle, rather than curving. The material from the trackway ditches dates to the early Roman period, and this was confirmed by C14 dating.

4.2.3 Given the presence of a barrow at the centre of the enclosure, and a very significant concentration of Iron Age and Roman metal-detected finds in the same area, this site demonstrates periodic use during the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods. Moorhead (2001) has previously posited that this site may have been of ritual significance in the Roman period on the basis of the coin assemblage.

4.2.4 This work is being written up and will be published in the near future. The geophysical survey report (29-2014) is available to download from <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/research-reports/>. This work has contributed notably to NHPP objectives around using combined non-invasive survey and archaeological intervention to understand the resource, but has raised a number of important methodological, regional and site-specific research questions. The team would like to record their thanks to Mr Rob Snook, Wiltshire Council and the M.O.D for their cooperation in this work, and to Planks Farm Shop for invaluable supplies at lunchtimes.

### **4.3 West Kennet Avenue Occupation site, 2014 season – Josh Pollard**

4.3.1 JP gave his presentation as circulated on the West Kennet Avenue occupation site 2014 season. Lithics found at the site include many different non-local flints including bullhead flint (Kent and South East). It appears to have arrived as used pieces not particularly suitable for exchange. This may give evidence of individual movement in the period; possible people come to take part in activities at the site. Flints from further east indicate possible travel from Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. There remains much to extract from artefact analysis.

4.3.2 KD asked if possible sarsen extraction pits identified could be the stones used in Avebury. JP referred to SM's work suggesting the stones could have been procured locally. The morphology is consistent with the dragging out of stones. If the Sarsen extraction pits identified this could provide a path to understanding the chronology of monument building.

4.3.3 A further season's work is being planned for 2015.

## **5. Review of Current Opportunities for Dissemination of Research including recent/forthcoming publications**

### **5.1 The Avebury Book by Steve Marshall**

JP mentioned that he had been sent of a draft of Steve Marshall's book on hydrology which looks very good. It still requires a publisher.

SS reported that SM had asked her to circulate his Sarsen Project proposal for comment by members of the group.

**Action: SS to circulate a copy of SM's Sarsen Project proposal. All invited to comment directly to SM.**

## **5.2 Final Reports Available**

MB informed the group that his final reports were available on *Restoring Stonehenge 1881 - 1939* (<http://research.english-heritage.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15238>) and *Stonehenge Aerodrome and the Stonehenge Landscape* (<http://research.english-heritage.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15239>). Currently on the EH website; print copies will be available in due course.

## **5.3 Art and Archaeology: Doris Emerson Chapman, painter and archaeologist**

The article Art and Archaeology: Doris Emerson Chapman, painter and archaeologist by Helen Wickstead is available online at: [http://www.thepcf.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/48/reference/915](http://www.thepcf.org.uk/what_we_do/48/reference/915).

## **5.4 Stonehenge Project monograph**

MB reported that the monograph will be available in April.

## **5.5 Stonehenge and Astronomy**

AC reported that her work with Clive Ruggles presented today will be published in the near future.

## **5.6 Roger Jacobi Archive**

ML reported that this archive is now available via ASA.

## **5.7 Events/Talks**

DD informed the group of forthcoming talks:

- The Stonehenge Landscape by Sharon Soutar 31<sup>st</sup> January
- Suffused with a Golden Glow: casting light on the Early Bronze Age gold of Wessex and Britain by Stuart Needham 11<sup>th</sup> April
- The third Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference is on 18<sup>th</sup> April

## **5.8 Blick Mead**

NC asked if there would be an opportunity to invite someone to talk about the work at Blick Mead. MPK replied that opportunities were under discussion.

## **6. Other research opportunities (i.e. development-led archaeology, utilities)**

### **6.1 Car Parking at Stonehenge Visitor Centre**

The proposal involves 2 elements: firstly to create a temporary coach car park for an additional 30 coach spaces and secondly to change the surface of the overflow car parking area where the surface has failed due to more use than anticipated. RF reported that an archaeological evaluation had already been undertaken.

## **6.2 Army Rebasing, Larkhill**

The individual planning applications are starting to come in.

## **6.3 West Amesbury House**

A proposal to convert a stable block will require SMC as it is on the line of the Stonehenge Avenue. Plans involve an access road and a soak away.

## **6.4 Eastern Infrastructure Project**

ML reported that Wessex Archaeology is undertaking evaluation trenching as part of the project.

## **7. Review of monitoring (e.g. need for condition surveys, Management Plan actions)**

### **7.1 Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan update**

SS reported that the Management Plan is currently out for public consultation. The closing date is 1<sup>st</sup> March. SS thanked all those members of the group who have provided valuable advice and expertise in the process of drafting the Plan.

The Coordination Unit is undertaking a comprehensive series of drop-in sessions for the general public throughout January. These are taking place in public libraries in Marlborough, Devizes, Swindon, Salisbury and Amesbury. There is a session in the Social Centre in Avebury High Street and one in County Hall, Trowbridge. SS will also be presenting at the Marlborough Area Board meeting.

Currently SS and BT are identifying images to illustrate the Plan and may be in touch with individuals with specific requests. NH will supply an image of work underway on the Silbury Hill Conservation Project.

Management Plan launches at County Hall, Avebury and Stonehenge are planned in May.

**Action: All who wish to comment to review the WHS Management Plan online on the Wiltshire Council website.**

## **8. Representative's report and review of content of report to WHS Steering Committees and Partnership Panel**

### **8.1 Reports from WHS Steering Committees/Partnership Panel**

- A joint meeting of the Stonehenge and Avebury Steering Committees in November signed off the consultation draft of the WHS Management Plan
- The Avebury WHS Transport Strategy was also signed with some small amendments by the Steering Committees

## **8.2 Report to the WHS Steering Committees/Partnership Panel**

- Progress on SARF

## **9. Opportunities for site/exhibition/archive visits in 2015**

- Visit to the English Heritage Archive in Swindon
- Visit to Between the Monuments
- Possible visit to Marden in the summer

## **10. AOB**

### **10.1 New Nominations for Membership of ASAHRG**

Adrian Green and Clive Ruggles were nominated and seconded.

**Action: SS to invite AG and CR to join ASAHRG**

### **10.2 Assessing airborne SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) for archaeological prospection and preservation in Avebury WHS**

JC asked if there were any results from the laser scanning project planned by Bournemouth in 2014 and presented to ASAHRG in February last year. The project did not take place due to funding challenges.

### **10.3 New Ridgeway Partnership**

JG reported that a new arrangement for managing the Ridgeway had been established. It is a partnership currently chaired by Ian Ritchie. SS confirmed that a representative will be invited to the forthcoming meeting on approaches to repair and maintenance within the WHS.

### **10.4 Unpublished Research**

JP commented that a list of unpublished research in the WHS should be available. It would form an important resource. This will be carried forward via its inclusion the strategy section in SARF. A research project is required. At Stonehenge the list of grey literature compiled by Darvill can act as a starting point.

### **10.5 Availability of Research Reports following the EH/HE division**

It will remain available and efforts will be made to increase public awareness. CS suggested improving the quality of images included in the online reports. MB explained the difficulty of making the documents very large and therefore more difficult to download. CS suggested providing higher dpi images as an appendix.

## **11. Date and venue of next meeting**

10.30 AM on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 in Swindon. There will be an opportunity to visit the archive in the afternoon. Details regarding access and parking will be circulated prior to the meeting.