

**Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site
Archaeological and Historical Research Group
Draft Notes of Meeting 8th May, 2015**

Present: Martyn Barber, Brian Edwards, Sarah Simmonds, Colin Shell, Dan Miles, David Sabin, Kerry Donaldson, Jim Gunter, Paul Cripps, Nick Baxter, Heather Sebire (Chair), Nikki Cook, Matt Leivers, Rachel Foster, Jude Currivan, Amanda Clarke, Julie Scott-Jackson, Jim Leary, David Field, Gill Swanton, Steve Marshall, Kate Fielden, Bob Clarke, Sian Williams

1. Apologies and Introductions

Nicola Hembrey, Ian Barnes, Andrew David, Emily Banfield, Bruce Eagles, Nick Snashall, Ros Cleal, Phil McMahon, Abby George, Tim Darvill, Amanda Chadburn, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, David Dawson, Josh Pollard

The group welcomed two new members, Amanda Clarke and Bob Clarke to their first meeting of ASHRG. Amanda Clarke is the Director of Reading University Archaeology Field School students of which will be working on the Vale of Pewsey project at Marden this summer.

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1 Minutes

The minutes were approved with minor amendments.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Amanda Chadburn forwarded an update on item 4.1 on January's agenda: Managing the Astronomical Importance of the Stonehenge WHS; Clive Ruggles is doing the final edits on the volume containing the extended case study on the astronomical importance of the Stonehenge part of the WHS. AC and CR have had a paper accepted for the EAA in Glasgow later this year on the same subject. The work undertaken on astronomical importance has fed into the new Management Plan policies.

3. Monitoring of the Resource Agenda

3.1 Update on WHS Research Framework

3.1.1 Matt Leivers reported that several comments had been received on the Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework that was circulated to ASHRG for review prior to the meeting. Comments have varied in tone from supportive of the quality to concern about the structure and certain areas of the contents. The project

board will review the comments and decide on the appropriate response. Figures produced will be circulated to the group for comment once complete.

3.1.2 It is planned to produce three hundred hard copies. Print on demand will also be available. The document will be widely available electronically.

3.1.3 JC commented that the production had largely been participative so it should at this stage be acceptable to those involved. SS pointed out that it had been acknowledged from the outset that the document would be uneven as different approaches had been taken to the preparation of the original agenda/framework at Avebury and Stonehenge. A decision was taken early on in the project to maintain these different approaches to the update in this first joint Stonehenge and Avebury Framework. ASHRG will discuss the approach to future updates at the next meeting. KF praised the focus on OUV in the Framework. She will forward a note to ML on the use of related terminology. BE added that the team at Wessex deserved congratulations on bringing together the two very different documents and a range of diverse contributions.

Action: All to submit comments on SARF to ML by 18th May

ML to circulate figures for comment to individual authors

SS to add agenda item for the next meeting to discuss approach to future updates of SARF

4. Current archaeological & historical research

4.1 The Vale of Pewsey project: the bit in-between – Jim Leary and Amanda Clarke

4.1.1 The Vale of Pewsey project is collaboration between the University of Reading, Historic England (formerly English Heritage) and Wiltshire Museum, Devizes. The project is partly funded by an AHRC research grant and will support the University of Reading's Archaeology Field School. It aims to understand the role of the Vale of Pewsey landscape throughout time (from prehistory to the post-medieval period), and go some way to linking the Stonehenge landscape to the south with the Avebury landscape to the north.

4.1.2 During the course of the excavations the project will investigate a Neolithic building surface previously exposed during earlier excavations in 2010. A suite of palaeoenvironmental investigations along the River Avon will also provide important information on past hydrology and the environment of the area. The Vale of Pewsey represents a gap in our knowledge and this project will retrieve substantial and highly significant data, firmly placing this landscape within its surrounding WHS context. At the same time, the project will counterbalance the traditional chalk based 'Wessex models' for prehistory by looking at the low-lying sandy valley landscape in-between. Fieldwork in the Vale will be undertaken during June and July this year.

4.2 Digging Warhorse - Richard Osgood

4.2.1 This was a community project within the Stonehenge portion of the WHS, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund with a grant from the Wiltshire Area Board fund. The project drew together schoolchildren, local volunteers, young gunners, and military personnel in an attempt to locate the site of the 1914 Horse Isolation Hospital. Following Geophysical Survey by Wessex Archaeology, test pitting led by Julian Richards found extensive evidence for the later First World War hospital for humans but the horse hospital was more elusive, probably being quite ephemeral. Many horse shoes were however recovered alongside buttons and badges of military units of the Great War – gunners and Anzacs to the fore and provided a tangible focus for Centenary Commemorative events locally.

4.3 Understanding the Beckhampton Range Proof and Experimental Establishment - and its Impact on the World Heritage Site and its Environs- Dan Miles

4.3.1 A Ministry of Supply Proof and Experimental Establishment Site was established at Beckhampton from the early 1940s and in use up until the early 1960s. The range covered a total area of 2,461 acres and was located just to the south of West Kennett Barrow, stretching southwards to the Wansdyke. The range was for the vertical firing and recovery of projectiles to test the affect on fuses and other components that were recovered from the soft chalk on impact. Although the main impact areas are to the south near the Wansdyke, a recent geophysical survey in East Kennett by Archaeological Surveys Ltd has suggested that there may have been an impact within the current WHS area.

4.3.2 This project run by Dan Miles, and Dave Sabin and Kerry Donaldson of Archaeological Surveys Ltd has three main aims: to understand more about the Proof & Experimental site at Beckhampton, to identify and assess potential damage on the archaeological resource and to identify the archaeological footprint of these impact holes to inform future archaeological investigation of the area/remote sensing investigation of the area.

4.4 Linked Geospatial Data for Archaeological Research - Paul Cripps

4.4.1 In his research investigating application of Geosemantic Technologies for Archaeological Research (GSTAR), PC has created a Linked Data resource using large amounts of data from the Wiltshire HER, Wiltshire Museums and the archives of Wessex Archaeology. This resource covers information from fieldwork (including excavated features, finds and field surface collections), plus inventory level records from the HER (monuments, events and sources) and most of the data from the museum collection records (covering artefacts, their classifications, etc). The broad geographic study area is an arbitrary box considerably larger than the Stonehenge half of the World Heritage Site.

4.4.2 PC needs to test the usefulness of the resource and the tools and techniques for working with it to formulate some interesting archaeological research questions which he can work with using the technological framework. Rarely is this amount of

data brought together in an interoperable way, so there is good potential for meaningful archaeological investigation.

4.4.3 PC is interested in any topics the group would like to explore in order to help test and shape his approach. This could be anything from looking for associations between particular types of objects and types of monuments, or perhaps the distribution of archaeological features containing certain deposits or patterns of flint scatters relative to any of the above. It could also include anything else that might involve museum collections, fieldwork archives and/or the HER inventories, potentially even details from Ordnance Surveys digital products (e.g. watercourses, environmental characteristics such as topography, etc.) or other available resources such as Ancient Woodland Inventories.

4.4.4 Through this research, and aligned with research being conducted elsewhere, PC hopes to demonstrate that publishing and sharing information using these tools and technologies can be really useful, facilitating archaeological and broader historic environment research processes and workflows. It should also demonstrate that it can enable more data driven approaches to publication and re-use of information from sources such as Research Frameworks and Management Plans as well as thematic research projects and more generally fieldwork projects from archaeological contractors and consultants.

4.4.5 PC asked members of the group to send him ideas on data sets they have always wanted to collate but have been prevented by limited time or funding. All contributions will be gratefully received and acknowledged in PC's thesis which should be published next year.

Action: All to send ideas to PC (paul.cripps@southwales.ac.uk). Comments are welcome on the blog post to start a more public discussion: <http://www.archaeogeomancy.net/2015/05/gstar-asahrg/>

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

5.1 The Stonehenge Landscape; Analysing the Stonehenge World Heritage Site

MB reported that the volume was due for publication in June. The monograph is due for publication in July.

5.2 Proceedings of the Prehistory Society

DF reported that the part 1 of the survey work at Stonehenge appears in the latest volume. Part 2 will be included in the next volume.

5.3 Ridgeway Report

Gill Swanton informed the group that an interim report on the Ridgeway survey undertaken by Peter Fowler, Colin Shell and GS had been produced and presented

to a scoping meeting of Ridgeway partners in the spring. A full report will be available in the near future.

5.4 Megalith WHS Newsletter

BT requested that members send short articles of c.200 words for publication in the WHS newsletter on matters related to research. The next edition will include a 20% discount on The Stonehenge Landscape.

5.5 Ritual in Early Bronze Age Grave Goods

CS reported that the Oxbow Books volume by John Hunter and Ann Woodward has now been published.

5.6 WAM

Susan Greaney raised a question regarding the policy on peer review of the journal. It appears that recent articles notably those related to solstitial alignment and to Blick Mead did not undergo this process.

Action: SS to ask DD to clarify the policy on peer review for WAM and report back to the group

5.7 Silbury

BE reported that 3 book on Silbury had recently been published; none of them academic publications.

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

6.1 County Archaeology update

Rachel Foster reported that a watching brief had been requested for the coach park extension at Stonehenge following the evaluation. The Larkhill Army Rebasing reports are awaited. Wessex Archaeology is undertaking work on this and can report back to the group. RO reported that some interesting things have been found at Bulford. The project plans include the possibility of finding schedulable archaeology on the Risk Register. The impact on setting of monuments is being carefully considered and will be included in forthcoming reports.

6.2 Royal Artillery Museum

RO reported that an announcement is still awaited. The initial first-round bid is with the HLF. An assessment of the options for the possible location is underway.

6.3 Ogbourne St. Andrew History Group

Nick Baxter reported that there was some geophysics and excavation planned around the church looking for remains of a Manor. Cranfield University are

involved in the work. Anyone interested should visit the website osahg.org.uk. GS added that Bridge Barrow is in St. Andrews churchyard.

6.4 Extending Histories: from Medieval Mottes to Prehistoric Round Mounds

JL reported that funding had been secured from the Leverhulme Trust following work on the Marlborough Mound. This will fund the coring and dating of further mounds. Currently 950 candidates are being whittled down by research assistants to a shortlist of 20 for examination.

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

7.1 Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan complete

SS reported that the Management Plan was currently at the printers and would be launched in the week beginning 18th May at events at Avebury, Trowbirdge and Stonehenge. SS thanked the group for their hard work on helping to shape the Plan and in particular the research elements of the document.

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

- Both Steering Committees agreed the small changes that came out of the public consultation and signed off the Management Plan.
- An interim review of the function of the WHS Partnership Panel is underway. The decision making role sits with the Steering Committees.
- At Stonehenge Highways England spoke about the A303. Work on site would be unlikely to begin before 2021.
- £400,000 is available for the Amesbury History Centre once they have met the conditions related to Section 106 funding.

8.2 Report to the WHS Steering Committees/Partnership Panel

- BE proposed that a deputy should be indentified from ASHRG to attend meetings when the representative is unavailable.

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

- Visit to Between the Monuments
- Visit to Marden

BE suggested a social after the next ASHRG meeting. The group was enthusiastic. Suggestions included a venue with transport to a local railway station. Details will follow.

Action: SS to send details of arrangements for the site visits to the group

10. AOB

10.1 License for geophysics

Kerry Donaldson queried whether a Section 42 Licence had been granted for recent geophysics on a scheduled monument at Overton Down.

10.2 Open Farm Sunday

GS reported that the Marlborough Downs NIA was holding an Open Farm Sunday on 1st June which she will be attending on behalf of the WHS. SS and GS have attended two previous events which have been very successful in raising awareness.

10.3 Palaeolithic

Julie Scott-Jackson asked for all those researching in the WHS to be attentive for Palaeolithic evidence. Please contact her with any relevant observations.

10.4 Stonehenge Boundary Review

GS reported that the delay in finalising the boundary extension was being cited as the reason the Rollestone grain store was given permission in a letter to farming partners. BT confirmed that permission was not related to the timing of the boundary review. Decisions on the boundary review will be taken once the setting study is complete.

10.5 West Amesbury House

Nikki Cooke reported that consent has been given for a development at West Amesbury House. SMC will be needed for a soak away within the Avenue.

10.6 Forthcoming Talks

KF announced three talks:

- Steve Marshall, Sarsen 12 June 7.30 Avebury Social Centre
- Steve Marshall, Avebury Waterscape 10 September Alton Barnes Coronation Hall
- Jim Leary, Marden, 22 October
- David Collison, Chronicle Series Out takes/Directors Cut 12 November

10.7 Festival of Archaeology: Salisbury Museum

BT reported that there will be a two-day event at Salisbury Museum on 18/19 July. There will be a marquee with talks in the Close. BT and SS will be there to represent the WHS.

10.8 Europa Nostra

SG reported that the Stonehenge Project has won a Europa Nostra prize. She and HS will be going to Oslo to collect.

11. Date and venue of next meeting

2 PM on Friday, 25th September, 2015. Venue Stonehenge Education Room