



**Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site  
Archaeological and Historical Research Group  
Notes of Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017  
Wiltshire Museum, Devizes**

**Present:** Martyn Barber (Chair), Sarah Simmonds, Liam Wiseman (notes), Rachel Foster, Dan Miles, Katy Whitaker, Gill Swanton, Colin Shell, Bruce Eagles, Matt Leivers, Olaf Boyer, Mark Bowden, Damien Campbell-Bell, Kate Fielden, Brian Edwards, Ian Barnes, Richard Osgood, Heather Sebire, Briony Clifton, Ros Cleal, Dave Field, Steve Marshall, Kerry Donaldson, David Sabin, Nick Baxter, Timothy Darvill, Paul Garwood

**1. Apologies and Introductions**

**Apologies:** David Roberts, Susan Greaney, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Martin Papworth, Nick Snashall, Josh Pollard, Phil McMahon, Sian Williams, Jim Leary, Julie Scott-Jackson, Jonathan Last

**Review of Membership:** SS reported that following the completion of the work on the Research Framework Andrew Powell he has stepped down.

MB informed the group that both Jeff Wainwright and Paul Robinson had passed away. The group expressed its sadness at the news and an appreciation of the important work of both individuals in their fields which represented a substantial contribution to the understanding and presentation of the WHS.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**2.1 Minutes**

KF asked for alterations to be made to some of the statements attributed to her in the previous notes:

Item 3.1, '2015/16 David Roberts', last paragraph, penultimate sentence:

KF asked whether the badger sett could have destroyed a burial.

Item 3.2, 'Preliminary Archaeological Investigations . . .', 4th paragraph: penultimate sentence: KF commented on the possibility of a further long barrow in Diamond Wood.

Item 8.1, 'A303 Project', 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence:

KF pointed to concerns raised in the discussion that the archaeological evaluation had not been undertaken as it should have been.

Alterations were accepted.

**2.2 Matters Arising**

2.2.1 BE queried who should be chairing ASAHRG meetings in the light of a potential conflict of interest with regard to the A303 project. He asked whether it was appropriate to have members of HMAG (Heritage Monitoring and Advisory Group) chairing the meeting when the A303 project was being discussed. BE felt that having those who had worked on the proposed scheme present made open discussion difficult.

BE proposed that anyone that had a conflict of interest should declare it, step aside as chair for that item and leave the room. CS suggested the solution to this would be simply that anyone chairing could declare if they had a conflict of interest so everyone was aware of this. Another member of the group could chair that particular item. MB suggested finalising this discussion under AOB.

### **3. Monitoring of the Research Framework**

**Action: DM agreed to pull together a short paper with proposed approach/es to updating the Research Framework including an outline of necessary integration with existing or new data sources. This will be circulated to the group for discussion at a future meeting.**

### **4. Current Archaeological and Historical Research**

#### **4.1 Are we seeing the right data? The influence of culture on the visual perception of spatial relationships in a landscape context - Damien Campbell-Bell**

This presentation looked at the first steps of data collection in landscape archaeology, perception of that data, and whether archaeologists see the same data as the past people that they study. Research into visual perception is unclear about the extent to which culture affects perception. A range of perceptual approaches were touched on, with externalist and realist approaches identified as those which are best supported by the evidence. There are however still questions; a paucity of real world cross-cultural experiments and a complete lack of them for spatial perception means that further work is required to fully understand the issue.

A landscape based perceptual experiment with people of many different cultures could go some way towards this understanding. For reasons of practicality this must take place in a location which already has a large volume of international visitors, making Stonehenge the perfect location. Theoretically this experiment is underpinned by the concept of Perceptual Uniformitarianism, the idea that the nature of cross-cultural variation within perception will remain constant throughout time. This allows findings in a modern context to be applied to understanding the relationship between past peoples' perception and archaeologists'. The experiment also contributes to a number of the aims identified in the Stonehenge research framework. Discussions are currently underway regarding carrying out this work.

#### **4.2 Human Henge - Professor Timothy Darvill**

Professor Darvill gave a short presentation on the work of the Human Henge Project that has been working in the Stonehenge sector of the WHS between October 2016 and May 2017. The project is about archaeology, mental health, and creativity and is led by the Restoration Trust in partnership with the Richmond Fellowship, Bournemouth University, English Heritage, the National Trust, the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, and Wiltshire County Council. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Two groups of participants have undertaken a programme of experience-led heritage therapy at sites and monuments in the Stonehenge landscape, both culminating in a celebration at Stonehenge itself. Formal monitoring of the impact of the programmes is currently underway. There will be sessions at TAG in December 2017 (in Cardiff) and a conference on mental health and well-being in Bournemouth in spring 2018.

Professor Darvill then gave a short presentation on geophysical surveys in the Avebury sector of the WHS between 2012 and 2016. The work is being carried out as a collaborative programme involving the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin, the National Trust, and Bournemouth University. The main survey programme involves using a vehicle-towed 16 sensor gradiometer to provide rapid high resolution coverage. About 16.5% of the available land within the Avebury WHS has been surveyed to the end of the 2016 season. The value of such surveys lies in linking up features across wide areas of the landscape and recognizing both the hotspots and the blank areas around and between the monuments. Further surveys are planned for September 2017.

#### **4.3 Paul Garwood-Geophysical Data at Stonehenge From Geophysical Data to Geoarchaeological Evidence: EMI survey and field evaluation in the Stonehenge landscape**

Paul Garwood (University of Birmingham), Philippe De Smedt (Ghent University), and Henry Chapman (University of Birmingham).

A University of Birmingham/Ghent University collaborative project is presently underway in the Stonehenge landscape to assess and characterise geophysical data sets generated by extensive Electro-Magnetic (EMI) Induction surveys undertaken by Philippe De Smedt (Ghent University) in 2010-16. The current project aims to transform these EMI data into geoarchaeological evidence that can be used not only to identify different kinds of anthropogenic features and to distinguish these from natural features, but also to understand the precise nature and magnetic and electrical resistance properties of feature morphologies, sediments and deposits revealed by EMI survey. This is the first systematic attempt to evaluate and calibrate geophysical survey data (of any kind) in the Stonehenge landscape through invasive investigation and intensive analysis of material evidence.

The programme of fieldwork is being undertaken in two phases:

Phase 1: Assessment and sampling of EMI-recorded features and deposits through a borehole survey, undertaken in November 2016. This comprised over 50 boreholes, of which over 30 targeted specific distinct features, while the remainder formed transects across colluvium-filled channel features.

Phase 2: Geoarchaeological and archaeological characterisation of features and deposits in late June-early July 2017. This will mainly comprise a programme of excavation consisting of 12 small-scale trenches investigating individual features

(mostly probable pits or similar), selected on the basis of geophysical data attributes representative of the range evident in the EMI data. In addition, there will be a programme of supplementary coring, in some cases involving removal of the topsoil to reveal features, but not their excavation.

In addition to the three project leaders, the fieldwork involves a large number of specialists based in both the UK and Belgium, whose diverse roles will include artefacts analysis, molluscan analysis, soil micromorphology, sedimentary mineralogy, palynology, analysis of charred plant remains and charcoal, radiocarbon dating and OSL dating. The results of the project this year will be reported to ASAHRG in 2018.

## **5. Review of current opportunities for dissemination of research including recent and forthcoming publications**

N/A

## **6. Other Research Opportunities**

### **6.1 County Archaeology Update**

#### **6.1.1 Larkhill**

RF stated that archaeological investigations are ongoing. RO added that they have not seen the results of the work yet but there is an article about the causewayed enclosure that has been discovered in the latest issue of *Current Archaeology*.

## **7. Review of Monitoring**

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

SS reported that work on the Setting Study begun with a scoping meeting last year would be progressing with a meeting to discuss a draft brief at the end of July. The Burrowing Animals Strategy had its first meeting last month and a further meeting is planned for August.

## **8. Representative's report from/to the WHS Committees and Partnership Panel**

CS discussed upcoming projects such as the scoping meeting for the Setting Study. The next Panel meeting will focus on beginning the process of setting up the WHS Trust. The Avebury Committee meeting discussed the provision of public toilets for visitors. Wiltshire Council are supporting the 12 month Ridgeway TRO. This is due in the main to damage to the archaeological remains identified in the survey of the Ridgeway. SS elaborated, stating that current considerations include how this will affect solstice, and how best to repair the damage already done. DS suggested that something should be done about Byway 12 as it had been damaged by off-road vehicles and hare-courers. RF added that damage and misuse of the byways should be reported via email the Council's RoW team. SS added that gathering evidence will be crucial for any applications to remove traffic from RoW in the WHS. BE suggested there may have been some damage caused by diggers doing investigative work for the A303 project. SS added that any suspected damage to

scheduled monuments needs to be reported to Historic England who would visit and assess. RF suggested that ASAHRG make some recommendations to take forward to Wiltshire Council. Farmers will still require access to their land via the Byways.

## **9. Opportunities for site/excavation/archive visits in 2017**

SS reported there was an invitation for ASAHRG to visit the Avebury dig in August. SS to circulate details.

PG invited the group to visit the excavation following geophysics work at Stonehenge. He will send possible dates to SS.

JL has kindly offered to host a group visit to Marden. SS will be in touch with details.

RF mentioned the Wiltshire Council Archaeology Team walks in July for the Festival of Archaeology. There is also one led by the WHSCU in the Avebury landscape.

## **10. Date of next meeting**

Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> October. Venue to be confirmed.

## **11. AOB**

### **11.1 Open Farm Sunday**

GS encouraged everyone to attend Open Farm Sunday at East Farm, Winterbourne Monkton on the 11<sup>th</sup> June.

### **11.2 Wiltshire Archaeology Conference 2018**

DM is organising the Wiltshire Archaeology Conference for 2018. He asked for suggestions for talks.

**Action:** All to contact DM

### **11.3 *The Making of Prehistoric Wiltshire***

DF introduced his new book, *The Making of Prehistoric Wiltshire* which places the World Heritage Site in the wider landscape context of Wiltshire. All profits go to the Wiltshire Archaeology Society.

### **11.4 Paper on Beaker phenomenon**

CS mentioned paper that had been published on the Beaker phenomenon in Europe researched using DNA taken from the Amesbury Down local area. It illustrates the change in population genetics. It is available free online but is currently pre-peer review.

### **11.5 ASAHRG Meeting Chairs**

BE resumed the earlier discussion regarding the protocol for where conflict of interest may exist. He proposed that KW could stand in as a replacement chair where this occurred. SS suggested that CS's proposal would be more appropriate response adding that a review of chairs is due after 3 years according to the ASAHRG terms of reference. This can be discussed at the next meeting.

KF suggested that ASAHRG should be discussing the A303 project. The group of 21 independent archaeologists sent a response to the tunnel scheme but ASAHRG did not present the same unified identity. She added that she believed ASAHRG should be providing archaeological advice to HMAG. SS added that the ToR for ASAHRG state that the group report on archaeology and history to support the Committees and Panel in making management decisions. It will be important to clarify how the knowledge of ASAHRG members can be fed into the A303 project.