

**Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site
Archaeological and Historical Research Group
Draft Notes of Meeting 20th May, 2016**

Present: Martyn Barber (Chair), Ros Cleal, Katy Whitaker, Heather Sebire, Clare King, Vince Gaffney, Mike Parker Pearson, Beth Thomas, Dan Miles, Rachel Foster, Julie Scott Jackson, Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger, Sarah Simmonds, Kate Fielden, Brian Edwards, Josh Pollard, Colin Shell, Gill Swanton, Amanda Chadburn, Steve Marshall, Nick Baxter, Kerry Donaldson, Sian Williams, Matt Leivers, Emily Banfield, David Roberts, Phil McMahon, Tim Darvill, Jude Currivan, Olaf Bayer, Jonathan Last, Ian Barnes, Nick Snashall, Bob Clarke, Mark Bowden, Susan Greaney, Jim Leary, David Field, Matt Leivers, Jim Gunter

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies: Andrew David, David Dawson, Richard Osgood

Review of Membership: SS to circulate a request for those who no longer wish to remain part of ASAHRG to let her know.

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1 Minutes

The minutes were approved with minor amendments.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Action 5.1: BE reported that he had received a lot of responses. He is inviting bibliographic contributions on the smaller names as most of the big ones are already covered. PC will provide technical advice on the website. All authors will be credited. There is at present no deadline for contributions

2.2.2 Action 5.2: SS invited further suggestions for the 30 objects. The deadline is not until the end of May. Courtney Burmaster gave a brief update on the project which she is managing. A Google Cultural Institute format will be used for presenting the objects once permission is given. The criteria for the choice of objects are that they should represent a wide survey of the key features and moments as well as the attributes of OUV.

2.2.3 8.1 The RAML 2nd stage funding bid to HLF was unsuccessful but work on the project continues.

2.2.4 Action 9: The possible Ashmolean trip has been postponed.

2.2.5 Action 10.4: All with relevant information to contact AC regarding the legacy of the Countryside Stewardship Special Project.

2.2.6 Action 10.5 SS and JC are assisting PhD student from Reading with research into the historic environment and well-being.

3. Monitoring of the Resource Agenda

3.1 Update on WHS Research Framework

ML provided a brief progress update on SARF.

The draft full text is with Historic England and the Project Board. The Research Framework will be launched at the 30th Anniversary Conference on 19th November. The next step is to get the funding for publication in place. If the review stages go to plan the agenda and strategy will be printed by the end of September. Illustrations will also need to be chosen. There will be one per double page. The Chief Executive of Historic England Duncan Wilson has provided the foreword. BE asked if the final draft would be circulated to ASAHRG. ML explained that comments had been received and responded to from ASAHRG at an earlier stage. The final draft is near completion and timescales are now too tight to allow for a wider circulation.

4. Current archaeological & historical research

4.1 Ground-truthing geophysical anomalies at Durrington Walls - Vince Gaffney and Mike Parker Pearson

VG presented the results of geophysical survey at Durrington Walls where at least 120 large, previously unknown, targets were located by the SHLP underlying the bank at Durrington Walls and suggest that the development of the monument be more complex than previously realised. Some of these, at least, provided signals that suggested the presence of buried stone structures and a collaborative project was proposed, along with the SRP to ascertain their nature. As part of the project MPP provided details of the location of the proposed trench to be excavated in early August (for which SMC has now been granted) as well as the locations of two 1x1m ploughsoil test pits to record lithics and other finds in the topsoil. He also showed the trench's position in relation to two GPR anomalies that fall within its limits. Finally, he discussed possibilities that the anomalies might have been produced not by sarsen stones but by heaps of burnt flint tipped into backfilled postholes.

ACTION: SS to organise a site visit for ASAHRG and Committee members to the Durrington dig in August

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

5.1 Stonehenge and Avebury 30th Anniversary Conference

Tickets will be going on sale early in the summer. Amongst other topics, the conference will look back at the last 30 years and consider the potential for developments in understanding in the future. Members of ASAHRG are invited to submit poster presentations for the conference and should send an outline of their proposal by the end of July.

There will be elective field trips on Sunday 20th as part of the conference. These will be to Avebury, Stonehenge, Wiltshire and Salisbury Museums.

ACTION: All interested to send in poster proposals for consideration for the conference by the end July 2016.

SS to circulate date of release of tickets.

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

6.1 County Archaeology update

6.1.1 Army Rebasing: Larkhill and Bulford

CK reported that there had been a good deal of activity in the area which included some WWI archaeology. At Larkhill a henge/ring ditch and postholes have been identified by Wessex Archaeology. At Bulford 170 Saxon burials have been found. In addition two sets of hengiform ditches have been identified as well as “ungrooved” grooved ware the charcoal from which is currently being carbon dated. The site has been put forward for scheduling. One small intervention has been put in. There is a second ditch which is likely to be Bronze Age. Other different ditches are present. Work is ongoing. At Bulford there are in addition around twenty pits with deposits. Finds includes polished axes. Post excavation is under discussion. A report will be available.

Similarly there have been important developments at Tidworth including Neolithic pits with place deposits. At Bishops Down, where Wessex Archaeology is still working, features have been revealed that also have significant potential to inform our understanding of the area and the context of the WHS.

JP requested a presentation from Wessex Archaeology and Richard Osgood on the significant archaeology being uncovered on MoD land. It was suggested that this could be held in Tidworth Auditorium. ML should be involved. ASAHRG should be invited. A presentation to ASAHRG could also be given at the first meeting of 2017 when reports will be ready.

ACTION: SS to coordinate with RO, ML and CK regarding a presentation in early 2017.

6.1.2 Avebury

There have not been any significant development-related research opportunities during this period.

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

7.1 Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan

SS reported that most WHS partners have now endorsed the Management Plan. We are awaiting notification from the MoD.

Progress has been made on a number of actions related to including promoting creative PhDs (155) through work on the Arts Symposium in March and links with Bath Spa University. There is an opportunity to reflect on the need for a specific policy on archaeological restoration and reconstruction in the WHS (33/151) through the Historic England consultation on reconstruction of heritage assets. Comments are invited on any aspect of the draft advice note. The consultation closes on 22 June 2016. ICOMOS is also currently reviewing the reconstruction debate in the context of recent destruction in the Middle East. ASHRG continues to encourage completion and dissemination of unpublished past research (154).

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

8.1 Reports from WHS Partnership Panel/Steering Committees

- CS reported that the WHSPP are interested in pursuing the concept of trust to raise money for protection and enhancement of the WHS. It would allow the WHS more flexibility and independence while making it eligible for a greater number of funding streams. This is in the early stages of consideration by the WHSPP.
- The WHSPP will be going on a WHS exchange day to Bath in July.
- Stonehenge SC is concerned about litter in the WHS and the lack of resources to address this and its impacts on the presentation of the Site. Much of this is dropped on the A303 or dumped on byways. A letter was sent to Wiltshire Council regarding the issue.
- The UNSCO/ICOMOS report on the A303 was helpful in pointing out the need to incorporate robust heritage assessment. It included strong reference to archaeology and the need for resources.

8.2 Report to the WHS Steering Committees/Partnership Panel

- Vibrancy and active research group.
- Outline of presentation on Durrington Walls project.

9. Opportunities for site/exhibition/archive visits in 2016

- Marden in July
- Durrington Walls excavation in August

ACTION: SS to coordinate visits

10. AOB

10.1 Open Farm Sunday Manor Farm, Avebury Trusloe

GS reported that this will take place on 5th June. The WHS will be represented with a focus on its 30th Anniversary. A film on the building of the Overton Down experimental earthwork from 1960 will be shown.

10.2 Beth Thomas leaving

SS reported that BT will be moving on and would be missed. The group expressed its thanks to her for all her hard work.

10.3 Archaeology Walks in the Landscape

MPK reported that two walks were planned for the Festival of Archaeology. 17th July: Romans in Swindon and 31st July: Wansdyke and Medieval Shaw Village.

10.4 Archaeology Weekend Salisbury Museum

SS reported that the WHS would have a stand at the Festival on 23rd and 24th July.

10.5 Stonehenge Forced Entry and Gardeners' Question Time

HS reported that there had been a forced entry with burning torches earlier in the week but no damage had been done. Gardeners' Question Time will take place at Stonehenge on 25th May. Mike Allen will be taking part.

10.6 Updating 2001 National Mapping Survey

MB reported that new analysis is underway that will allow an update to take place. An analytical report will be produced. 20 new ring ditches have already been identified. A case study will also be produced on how to use airborne evidence.

11. Date and venue of next meeting

10.30 AM on Friday, 30th September in the Education Room, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham