

HADS DAY OUT TO WEST SUSSEX SUNDAY 10TH APRIL 2011

Fourteen members met at Fishbourne Roman Palace at the start of a fantastic day exploring parts of the West Sussex countryside. The weather was absolutely brilliant which helped make the day so successful.

After coffee at Fishbourne we moved to The Trundle, an Iron Age hill-fort overlooking the city of Chichester. The views from here are stunning with a 360 degree view over the Sussex Downs and Goodwood racecourse.



THE TRUNDLE.

The Trundle, or St Roche's Hill, is a multi-phased site consisting of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, discovered by OGS Crawford in 1925. With this phase of occupation, several flint mine shafts were dug on the summit. These may have become "ritual pits" after the flint seams were extracted. These pits were located using dowsing techniques by one of our teams. Further circular enclosure ditches were constructed during the Bronze Age (clearly seen on the aerial photograph above). These too were located on our visit.

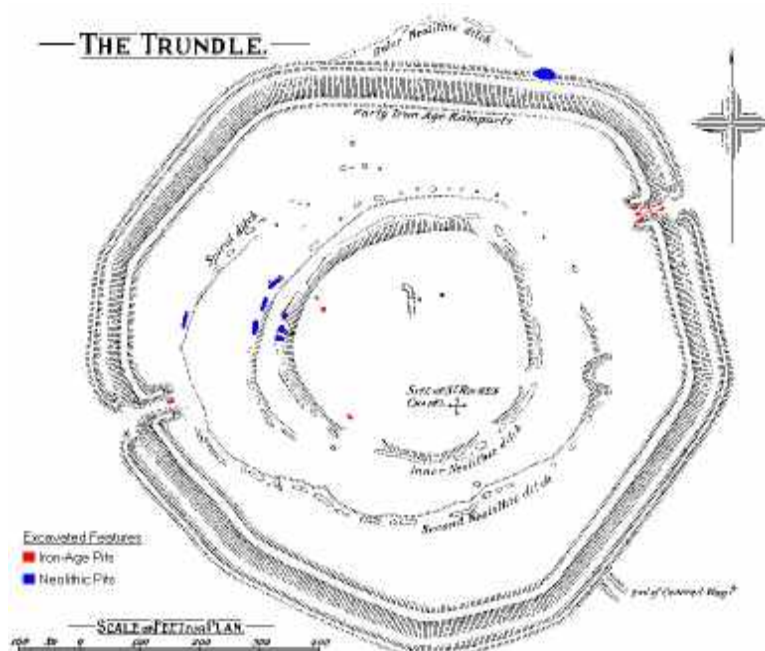
Upon the summit of the hill, a medieval chapel, dedicated to a French Saint, St. Roche, was constructed. This chapel was already a ruin by 1570 and was demolished shortly after it was drawn in 1723.

The outline of this chapel was defined by another one of our teams on led by Laurie Booth. We are fortunate to have Laurie as one of our members as he is a very good instructor in dowsing techniques.



Laurie and his team locating the site of St Roche's chapel
(The statue is of a famous horse called Artemis)

For further details see: - <http://www.sussexarch.org.uk/saaf/trundle.html>



Plan of the excavation trenches on The Trundle

According to local folklore, a statue of a Golden Calf lies buried beneath the hill but every time people dig down to find it the devil moves it to somewhere else!

I'm not too sure about the devil, but the moles have been busy digging up the hill and we found sherds of Bronze Age pottery and a few fragments of Roman tile in the molehills.

Before lunch we visited Earham Wood to view an excellent example of Stane Street, the Roman road which runs from Chichester to London, the two side ditches and the “agger” can be clearly seen for a distance of two miles running through the wood.



Stane Street passing through Earham Wood

Lunch was taken at The Winterton Arms at Crockerhill, the old A27: a ghost of its former self running in front of the pub.

After lunch we moved to Slindon Woods to view the famous “raised beach” of pebblestones, the remains of a prehistoric beach and riverbank. The beach area is very substantial in size, with pebbles very similar to those found at Chesil beach in Dorset. On a previous visit Don had found a “Boxgrove ovate flake” that had been produced by an individual nearly 500,000 years ago!



Members of HADS on the “raised beach” looking for flint flakes.

After Slindon we travelled on to Bignor Roman Villa to have a guided tour of the complex. Bignor was discovered by George Tupper in 1811 when he hit Roman stonework with his plough. George had hit a fountain in what was revealed to be the centre of the summer dining room. Bignor had brightly plastered walls and exquisite mosaics including such wonders as Venus and the Cherub Gladiators, Ganymede being carried off by the Eagle and the Four Seasons.



Our guided tour at Bignor Roman Villa

After a cream tea our, by now weary, team headed home after a truly brilliant day in the sunshine exploring West Sussex.