

SAS Lecture 14th January 2020: 'Investigating the Hessian Militia and Hampshire's Camps at Barton Farm, Winchester: kitchens and sleepy hollows'

January's lecture was given by Paul McCulloch, Regional Manager for Pre-Construct Archaeology in Winchester who has experience on many sites in Europe, the Middle East and in the British Isles. In recent times he has been excavating Barton Farm ahead of a very large housing development between the Andover (Roman) Road and the old London road, just north of Winchester's built up area. As expected on a multi-hectare site, periods from the Neolithic to the post mediaeval are represented, in particular a Neolithic henge monument (rare in Hampshire), Bronze Age funerary monuments, a Roman aqueduct and a Roman settlement.



This time, however, Paul chose to concentrate on two 18th century army camps which occupied this area. The first was for 8000 Hessian mercenaries camped here from 1756 - '57. This camp was formed in a straight line across the site and beyond its edge, the most visible feature in the archaeology being their rectangular field kitchens, and a variety of dug-outs created for shelter during the winter months. Later, in 1761, the

same area was used by the Hampshire militia regiment, who formed a similar linear camp on another alignment, but with circular field kitchens (as illustrated). Given the military connection, Operation Nightingale excavators joined the team at this stage. There were very few finds (and only one latrine discovered!), showing that a strict clearance regime had been adhered to when the camps disbanded.

It was also possible to compare the archaeology with written records and maps from the time, which included a diary mention of his presence with the Hampshire militia from none other than Edward Gibbon, historian of the late Roman Empire!

Martyn Dowell