



CDAS – Chairman's Monthly Letter – April 2020

Corona Virus (Covid-19)

Following the latest Government guidelines on Social Interaction we have decided to postpone all activities, talks and fieldwork scheduled between now and the end of June. With the situation changing by the day it has been a busy time for the General and Fieldwork Committees.

We hope that we will be able to restart our talks programme in September and that activities scheduled for August onwards (e.g. Guided Walks in Petworth) will be able to run.

If the restrictions on Social Interaction are relaxed it may be possible to reschedule the Priory Park excavation to sometime in the autumn or more likely in May 2021.

Fieldwork

We did manage to complete some fieldwork in March.

Condition Assessment – Thorney Island

The annual Condition Assessment of the WW2 sites on Thorney Island was completed on 10th March. Some good work has been done by Steve and his SSE team on clearing vegetation from CHX06 the bomb shelter just to the west of the barracks. CHX03 the bomb shelter in the sailing club's dinghy park is very overgrown and will need to be cleared at some point.

Eartham WW2 Auxiliary Unit Hideout

We managed to complete the survey work on the Eartham Hideout and its associated Observation Post. The hideout resembles a 20 foot Container made out of reinforced concrete buried in the ground. It has by far the sturdiest construction amongst the four hideouts in our area and maybe unique among the thousand or so hideouts located across the UK.

The Observation Post, a small rectangular pit measuring about 2.8 m by 1.7 m wide proved a bit of a surprise. Described by Stewart Angell in his book Secret Sussex Resistance as a "6 foot by 4 foot trench with a camouflaged top" it is shown in its current state in the left-hand photo below.

We decided to make a partial excavation of the OP to see if we could find remains that would confirm its construction and how it was used. The OP was filled with loose soil and leaf mould and we anticipated that we could remove this easily and locate the bottom of the original pit cut into the chalk.

After reaching a depth of 1.8 metres (see right-hand photo below) we decided to stop for safety reasons. Probing with a lamp iron suggested that the pit extended to a depth of around 2.1 metres. We found evidence of timber and corrugated iron pointing to a substantial structure, perhaps resembling a buried corrugated iron shed with tin roof and an entrance shaft.

As an added bonus we recovered a couple of Iron Age pottery sherds from the fill.



Membership Renewal

Our Membership year ends on 31st March and we normally start the Membership Renewal process around this time.

Conscious of the special circumstances this year where we face several months without anything for our members to take part in we have been discussing what we should do. We did consider postponing the renewal process until things get back to normal. However, there are some fixed costs that need to be covered even when we are doing nothing, for example insurance, storage and affiliations.

After discussion by the Committee we have decided to:-

- Ask Members to Renew their membership for the year starting 1st April 2020 in the full amount of £20 for adults, £5 for students
- At the end of the 2020 make an allowance/adjustment to reflect the time lost. We would submit the proposed allowance/adjustment for the membership year 2020/21 and the proposed Subscription for 2021/22 to the AGM in December 2020 for approval.

I hope that you will support this plan. Our constitution requires us to approve our membership subscription at the AGM and it seems reasonable to the Committee to adopt this approach under these circumstances.

Talks

We hope to be able to restart our programme of talks in September. As we need to reschedule the talks we postponed from March & April it is not possible for us to publish our programme at this point.

Future Activities

Based on being able to restart our programme in August we have the following activities planned. We are still taking bookings for these.

We will try and reschedule the trip to Bignor Villa, the tour of Southampton Old Town & Tudor House and the study day on the Archaeology of Death and Commemoration.

Member-led walks: Around Petworth in summer, led by Henry Wakeford

Dates: Wednesday 12 August 2020 and Sunday 16 August 2020. The same walk will take place on 2 different days. Henry has kindly offered to do the walk twice to give more people the opportunity to participate

When you book, please indicate which day you will be coming.

Start Time: 13:30

Meeting point: Main Petworth town car park, GU28 0AP. There is a charge for parking on weekdays. There are public toilets in the car park.

Cost: Members £2, non-members £7. Please pay Pauline in cash on the day. The correct change would be appreciated.

Leader: Henry Wakeford

Outline: The walk will be leaving the confines of Petworth to visit a couple of nearby hamlets to look at some of their historical details.

PLEASE NOTE: You will need to be reasonably fit to take part in this activity. The walk is about six miles long and involves some steep hill walking. It will take between two and three hours. Wear stout footwear, preferably walking boots.

Practical Study Day: Make your own Iron Age Pot, led by Bill Crumbleholme

Date: Friday 18 September 2020

Time: 10:00 – 16:00

Location: Butser Ancient Farm, Chalton Lane, Waterlooville, PO8 0BG. There is plenty of parking.

Cost: Members £65, non-members £70 if places are available. Payment is due by 8 August 2020. Details of how to pay will be sent when your place is confirmed. Places are limited so book early.

Outline: This hands-on study day offers CDAS members the opportunity to learn about Iron Age pottery technology and have a go at making an 'Iron Age' pot. The day will include digging clay, preparing it and hand building pots. Then we will watch a simple bonfire firing. No experience is needed but wear old clothes!

Study Day: Chichester's Maritime Past, led by writer and historian Ian Friel.

Date: Saturday 28 November 2020

Time: 10:00 – 16:00

Location: Fishbourne Roman Palace (Rudkin Room), Roman Way, Fishbourne, Chichester PO19 3QR. There is plenty of parking.

Cost: Members £25, non-members £30. Payment is due by 30 October 2020. Details of how to pay will be sent when your place is confirmed.

Outline: Covering the area from Pagham Harbour to Chichester Harbour, and the period from prehistory onwards, this study day will explore Chichester's maritime history through both

archaeological and historical sources, drawing on Ian's own research. The maritime history of this area is much richer than sometimes realised. It includes, for instance, an Elizabethan sailor from Chichester who vanished in the Indian Ocean, the Harbour's role as a grain-exporting haven in the 18th century, its surprising history in constructing Georgian warships, the local oyster fishery, and the development of yachting and leisure boating in the 20th century.

To reserve your place at any of the activities, please contact Pauline Blagden at activities@cdas.info

Activities Co-ordinator

Pauline our current activities co-ordinator has to step down from the Committee at the end of this year following the four year rule. I am sure that you will all agree that she has arranged a very interesting range of activities during her tenure. Based on what she has already arranged we have a programme extending well into next year.

If you would be interested in taking over from Pauline could you please let me or Pauline know.

If you want to keep up with our latest news please click on the Facebook or Twitter links at the end of this letter.

Mike Kallaway

CDAS Chairman

26th March 2020

