

# Shorne Woods Archaeology Group



Annual General Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Venue Rose & Crown, Shorne

Glasses were raised in memory of two group members who died this year:

Roger (2), whose specialist knowledge of trains, light railways and always ready with a story of his time in the Royal Engineers.

Dennis' Who started with the group digging at the Manor site and when he felt he couldn't do that anymore, he would prepare welcoming coffee in the cabin and conduct tours of the Manor Site.

By a show of hands, it was agreed that the AGM should be a short one and as such the current committee will continue in their current positions for another year.

Pauline Rolland – Chairperson

John Townsend – Treasurer

Donald Blackburn – Secretary

John Beaumont – Special Operations Executive

## **SWAG 2023 Activities**

### ***Shorne Finds Team:***

And from my perspective: the finds team have played a critical role in the cataloguing and processing of assemblages from both Randall Manor and Cobham village this year. Their input has been key to advancing post excavation tasks on these sites. They are all recognised on other projects (with KAS) for their skills!

*Andrew.*

### ***Shorne Lithics Team:***

And Frank and Stan's work on what were lost lithic assemblages are showing the real benefits in returning to older collections and learning new things! It's not all about digging new sites (there's a paper in that!)...

*Andrew.*

### ***Shorne Archaeology (Dig/Events) Team:***

Plateau, Medieval(?) Barn(?) – Throughout 2023

Digging continued in 2023 with more walls found. These walls were on a slightly different alignment to those uncovered last year and were much more substantial, being made of flint and not chalk.

Unfortunately finds continue to be elusive but there is always hope....

It is planned to continue our exploration in 2024 when condition on site permit.

# Shorne Woods Archaeology Group

## **Holloway Hunt & AA Battery – January**

The year started with a medical mystery hunt for the numerous Holloways the pass-through Shorn Woods Country Park.

This was followed by an inspection visit to the Cobham WWII Heavy Antiaircraft Battery.

Great exercise and fun.

## **Lower Fishpond (mosquito infested swamp) - March**

Following a walkover survey of the Fishponds, adjacent to the Manor site. It was decided to dig several test pits to look for datable finds and discover more about their construction.

Plenty of insect repellent was required during the excavations.

Rain stopped further work as the site quickly filled with water.

## **Manor Park. West Malling - March**

A walk over survey of the park found several interesting possible dig sites related to possible WWI and/or WWII military camp buildings.

In WWI, the area was used as a prisoner of war camp and in WWII the Manor was used by RAF West Malling.

No follow up activity was conducted.

## **Plateau to the South of the Manor – May**

Several test pits we excavated to determine if there were remains of buildings etc. associated with the manor.

No evidence found.

## **Leas Court (mud bath) – May/June**

Several SWAG members took part in excavating the site originally dug in ????? and in opening up new trenches in the car park field.

Although torrential tried it's best to scupper the dig, the shape and extent of the earthworks established.

KAS Report to follow.

## **Trosley Country Park – February/June**

SWAG was invited to conduct a Family Archaeological event at TCP.

Following a walkover survey of area used during WWII as an Officer Training Camp in February.

The Trosley Family Fun Day took place in June. It was a massive success with families coming back for another go and some staying for most of the day.

## **Shorne Open Day – August**

This year SWAG setup a marque with a sand pit full of finds for the children (and adults) to find using trowels. In addition, the children could make clay tiles decorated with flowers, leaves, or anything else that came to hand.

The day was an enormous success, with some parents and children attending after their experience at Trosley.

## **Trosley Roman Villa**

KAS dig attended by SWAG group members.

Pauline and JT were, true to form working in the midden.

# Shorne Woods Archaeology Group

## **Greenwich: May/June**

'It's been an action-packed year of archaeology at Greenwich, from digging in the Wilderness at the start of the year, to sunny weeks spent on our quest to locate the air raid shelter and on to the hunt for buried terraces on the Grand Ascent.

SWAG continue to provide crucial support to all community archaeology activities at Greenwich. Their knowledge, humour and experience have provided a backbone to the excavations at the Air Raid Shelter from May to July and the Grand Ascent works from September to November.'

*Andrew*

## **White Horse Wood – November**

A geophysical survey of the area where an Iron Age Enclosure was undertaken to assist the KCC Heritage team establish what remains under the topsoil.

A number of anomalies were found worth further investigation.

## **Southfleet Church – St Nicholas - December**

Recording and Geolocating of graves for Mike, so that the Church Grave Records can be generated.

## **New Years Walk - December**

A group of hardy volunteers walked from Trosley Country Park to the Coldrum Long Barrow and St Peter & St Paul – Church at Trottscliffe.

A muddy walk with a rain shower while eating our lunch in the Church's Graveyard.

The climb back up the North Downs to Trosley was a challenge, ably met by all the group.

## **Shorne Volunteers Garden**

Although not officially one of SWAG's archaeological rolls, some of the members have taken on the upkeep of Shorne Wood's, Volunteers (Sensory) Garden. The garden used to be maintained by Dennis before he became too frail to look after it and so it seemed only natural that some of the archaeological team should take it on.

## **Accounts:**

A big thankyou to KCC for their funding and to Tim and his team at Shorne and Trosley for their support. Not forgetting Andrew, whose continued efforts, above and beyond, helps the group in so many ways.

Special thanks to John Beaumont for putting together our successful bid for KCC funding. And to JT and John for helping spend it on much needed new equipment that has made a significant difference to our archaeological capabilities.

Thanks also the Andrew for donating monies donated, from his various evening talks, and to JT and Pauline for donating monies to group funds from their numerous geophysical surveys for other Archaeological Groups in Kent.

Don Blackburn – Secretary

January 2024