

LANDSCAPE SURVEY GROUP

News bulletin

February 2017

Slightly late this quarter as I was asked to hold off for a few things.

I rely on members passing items of interest to me, so if you spot any news items or events of interest please pass them on to me (magnus.alexander@historicengland.org.uk) at any time. Thanks in advance.

News

LSG 2016 conference: Active Landscapes - recording change by archaeological survey

16-17th September 2016 in Exeter and Dartmoor National Park

September saw the LSG's annual September conference travel to Exeter and Dartmoor National Park in the South West of England. Friday was kicked off by Frances Griffith, presenting an introduction to Devon. There was then a full day of extremely engaging presentations on a wide range of topics looking at the theme of Active Landscapes from a number of different stand points, followed by informative and thoroughly enjoyable walking tour of Historic Exeter guided by John Allan, and an evening social down by the waterfront.

On Saturday we took a coach out onto Dartmoor to visit a number of sites under the knowledgeable leadership of Phil Newman. First stop was Lydford where we investigated the burg defences, the 11th-century earthwork castle, 12-13th century castle and Stannary Gaol. Next we moved on to visit the Iron Age defended site on Brentor, with interior earthworks and a (much altered) 12th-century hilltop church. We refuelled on pasties and ice creams in Tavistock, taking the opportunity to look around the fragmentary remains of the abbey precinct. Finally we took a scenic drive across the middle of Dartmoor, with a stop to explore the extensive earthwork remains of Merrivale which combine a 3rd/2nd millennium BC ritual landscape of stone rows, circle, cist, cairns and a fine 2nd millennium settlement of 30-40 stone round houses (*a personal highlight! – Becca*).

A big thank you to everyone who contributed and attended, with special mention to Phil Newman and Nathalie Barrett for organising such a successful event! If you weren't able to join us but would like to know more about the papers presented on the Friday then the full conference programme can be viewed under the Event tab on the LSG website: http://landscapesurvey.org/?page_id=514

Our 2017 conference will be held in the Brecon Beacons in September – more information below - we hope to see many of you there!



A few photos of the LSG 2016 conference from Becca Pullen: 1) The packed room for the Friday presentations; 2) viewing the medieval remains of the Exe Bridge; 3) starting the climb up Brentor; 4) Exploring the extensive earthworks at Merrivale.

Members of the LSG attended the RAI conference in Carlisle in October. In his closing remarks, Professor Richard Bradley identified the need to maintain specialist skills and training in landscape survey, so on the back of his comments Angela Gannon spoke about the LSG and introduced the aims of the group to attendees.

The University of York's Department of Archaeology has begun a 5-year programme of investigations into the major Roman base at Malton, North Yorkshire, which will serve as the Department's main project for training undergraduates and post-grads. Excavations will focus on the plough-levelled fringes of the vicus, while the main part of the site will only be subject to non-invasive techniques. Remarkably, the complex, which was converted from Roman fort to Norman castle and eventually to the gardens of a Jacobean great house, has never yet been subject to either detailed earthwork survey or extensive electrical resistance survey. Most of the more profound insights into the transition stem from Stewart Ainsworth's rapid analysis, made during a *Time Team* episode in the summer of 1997, when much of the area was heavily overgrown.

The Current Archaeology Awards have several relevant projects short listed in the 'Archaeological Innovation of the Last 50 Years' category, some of which feature LSG members. Although the deadline for voting has passed it should be worth keeping an eye on the results due out on the 24th February. Also nominated was Historic Environment Scotland's publication *St Kilda: The Last and Outmost Isle*. It's the third time it's been shortlisted for an award (BAA, Saltire Literary Award and now Current Archaeology) and the authors, Angela Gannon and George Geddes, are both LSG members, so fingers crossed it's third time lucky.

The Secrets of the High Woods is a project supported by the HLF which over the course of several years, and thanks to an extensive network of volunteers and the use of LiDAR, has provided a

fascinating and detailed insight into the archaeology of the wooded chalk downs between Arundel and Petersfield. Highlights include the discovery of extensive prehistoric field systems and a lost Roman road. The findings are published in *Secrets of the High Woods: Revealing Hidden Landscapes*, edited by John Manley available for £10 (+ p&p where applicable) from a range of sources including the South Downs Centre in Midhurst, Fishbourne Roman Palace and Lewes Castle's Barbican House Museum (castlebooks@sussexpast.co.uk) as well as independent bookshops like Wheelers (Midhurst), Petworth Bookshop, One Tree Bookshop (Petersfield) and Kim's Bookshop (Chichester).

Another publication of potential interest to members is *Archaeology and Landscape at the Land's End, Cornwall: The West Penwith Surveys 1980 – 2010* which again features several LSG members. It is described as 'the result of over 270 pioneering archaeological surveys and conservation projects carried out over the past 35 years. It seeks deeper understanding of this amazing historic landscape and is a celebration of its unique qualities. It lays down a sound foundation for increased understanding and protection and hopefully will prove an inspiration and a source of information for all who love and care for this special place.' It can be ordered online (search 'Cornwall Archaeological Unit Publications') for £29 including p&p.

Apparently there are moves afoot to close Canterbury's museum. A petition against this is available here: <https://cantlibdem.org.uk/en/petition/petition-against-proposed-closure-of-the-heritage-museum>.

The LSG now has a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/LandscapeSurveyGroup> and it's probably worth reminding you of our twitter handle(?) too @LandscapeSurvey.

Nathalie Barrett (Nathalie.Barrett@winchester.ac.uk) would like any copyright-free photographs that could be used to promote the LSG on banners, flyers etc. Images of members engaged in survey activities and landscape views would be welcome. Please email her or send a file-share link if you are able to contribute.

Events

The 2017 LSG Spring Meeting is being hosted by LSG committee member Lawrence Shaw (Lawrence.Shaw@newforestnpa.gov.uk) and the New Forest National Park Authority on 24th/25th March. The AGM will be at the Lyndhurst Community Centre at 13.00 on the 24th (preceded by lunch and an optional morning session). If you have any Agenda items to suggest then please let Nathalie (see above) know. Following the AGM there will be talks on the New Forest followed by the opportunity for short papers by members (if you would like to present a 10-15-minute paper, please contact Nathalie ASAP. The fieldtrip on Saturday will be on foot from Lyndhurst; please contact Nathalie or Lawrence with any queries. An optional session on the morning of the AGM to discuss potential training initiatives that could be instigated by the group is being planned. If you have any views on whether the group should be doing this or what type of initiatives these might be and what audiences should be targeted, then please let Nathalie know. If you are unable to attend the meeting and are currently or have previously participated in such projects and would be interested in sharing your experiences or have suggestions for training material, then again please let her know so she can compile some information for the meeting.

The 2017 LSG conference will be on 15th/16th September. Details and the call for papers will follow shortly.

For sale

Two nice military brass alidades, both have parallel action, one with case, one without. £40 each. If you are interested please contact Mark Bowden (mark.bowden@historicengland.org.uk) who will put you in touch with the vendor.

Finally...

Apologies for any glaring omissions and thanks to all contributors. Once again, any items for inclusion in the next newsletter to me (magnus.alexander@HistoricEngland.org.uk) please.