



Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site Archaeological and Historical Research Group Draft Notes of Meeting 25th September, 2015

Present: Martyn Barber, Brian Edwards, Sarah Simmonds, Colin Shell, Dan Miles, David Sabin, Kerry Donaldson, Nick Baxter, Heather Sebire, Nikki Cook, Rachel Foster, Steve Marshall, Kate Fielden, Bob Clarke, Sian Williams, Gill Swanton (Chair), Emily Banfield, Bruce Eagles, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Josh Pollard, Richard Osgood, Katy Whitaker, Ros Cleal, Mark Bowden, Michele Drisse, susan Greaney,

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies: Nicola Hembrey, Ian Barnes, Andrew David, Nick Snashall, Phil McMahon, Abby George, Tim Darvill, Amanda Chadburn, David Dawson, Julie Scott-Jackson, Jim Leary, David Field, Matt Leivers, Jim Gunter, Jude Currihan, Olaf Bayer, Jonathan Last

Guests: David Jacques, Tom Lyons, Mike Clarke

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1 Minutes

The minutes were approved with minor amendments.

2.2 Matters Arising

5.6 WAM

DD sent his apologies but reported that a small group have volunteered to assist the Editor with a 'light-weight' peer review of papers submitted to WANHM.

6.3 Ogbourne St. Andrew History Group

Study undertake and an interesting talk given

10.2 Open Farm Sunday

The event was a great success with the WHS represented by GS.

3. Monitoring of the Resource Agenda

3.1 Update on WHS Research Framework

ML sent his apologies by emailed the following up date.

The Project Board met to discuss the comments received from peer review and ASAHRG consultation. In the light of these comments, the Board decided the following:

i) the existing single-volume structure required revision, as the imbalance between the Avebury and Stonehenge parts of the WHS was too great. Consequently, the Framework has been split into three parts, each to be published separately:

- the Avebury Resource Assessment, in hard copy and on the web;
- the Stonehenge Update, on the web only; and
- the combined Research Agenda and Strategy, in hard copy and on the web.

This division into three parts has been done. New front matter for the individual volumes has been written, including an explanation of the decisions driving the need for revision and its ultimate form.

ii) the Resource Assessment chapter on Built Heritage required revision. This is being undertaken by Ros Cleal.

iii) the Framework required a Foreword, from the new Chair of Historic England. This has been agreed in principle, and is being produced.

Additionally, drafts of the figures have been produced. It is hoped to have the text and figures completed by the end of October.

Many thanks are due to Kate Fielden for editing the whole document.

Action: SS to ask ML the predicted date for publication

4. Current archaeological & historical research

4.1 Between the Monuments, Avebury: Season 3 – Josh Pollard

The interim report from JP is attached.

4.2 A longue durée Mesolithic ‘persistent place’ discovered at Blick Mead, nr. Stonehenge – David Jacques

DJ gave a comprehensive presentation on the work of the University of Buckingham at Blick Mead. The report on the work undertaken and the project design for work planned for October 2015 is attached.

MPK asked where the archive would be deposited. The finds are currently in the cellar at Amesbury Abbey. Salisbury would be the receiving museum that should be approached. DJ reported that only experienced core team members from Wessex Archaeology and Durham would be working on trench 24. RF raised concerns around the instability of a site affected by a nearby spring.

5. Review of Current Opportunities for Dissemination of Research including recent/forthcoming publications

5.1 Stonehenge and Avebury Biographical Dictionary – Brian Edwards

BE requested that members of the group consider who they would be interested in writing short entries about to include in Biographical Dictionary for the WHS. The group expressed interest in the idea. BE will ask members to discuss the idea in more detail at the next meeting.

Action: All to consider figures they might be willing to research in advance of the next ASAHRG meeting. SS to put the Biographical Dictionary on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. Other research opportunities (i.e. development-led archaeology, utilities)

6.1 County Archaeology update

6.1.1 Countryside Stewardship

Advice is being offered to Natural England on applications for the new Countryside Stewardship schemes.

6.1.2 Larkhill Roundabout

Advice is being provided on the new roundabout necessary to provide access to the proposed family accommodation. Designs need to take into account solstitial alignments and light pollution. The Design Principles from the Avebury WHS Transport Strategy might assist in information decisions.

6.1.3 Officers Mess and other buildings

Setting studies are underway.

6.1.4 RAM

The Royal Artillery Museum is still at the scoping stage and no decision on location has yet been made.

6.1.5 Stonehenge Coach Park Extension

A watching brief has shown that the thin scrape required does not indicate any cause for concern.

6.2 West Kennet Long Barrow

HS reported on planned works at WKLB. Plans drew on an excellent archive study by Julian Richard. It reflects the poor state of the monument as encountered by Piggott and Atkinson in the 1950's. The archives indicate the large amount of intervention and reconstruction already undertaken on the monument. The television programme Hidden Treasures illustrates this very clearly.

The project is designed to repair roof lights and stop the water ingress. There will be some minor excavation of the floor. Work will be undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in early November.

7. Review of monitoring (e.g. need for condition surveys, Management Plan actions)

7.1 Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan complete

SS reported that the Management Plan had been launched in May following its sign off by DCMS. She thanked the members of ASAHRG for their invaluable advice on and participation in drafting the Plan. SS ran through the actions on which ASAHRG is the lead which will be taken forward by the group over the next six years. The relevant actions are attached. The majority are ongoing but will require specific discussions around the need or otherwise for a policy on restoration of megaliths in the WHS and an approach to recording the public benefit of research. The group will also be key advisors a number of actions including the WHS Setting Study which is a priority action that will, among other things, inform the boundary review for the Stonehenge part of the WHS.

7.2 30th Anniversary of Inscription

SS reported on the plan to hold a conference in November 2016 reflecting the WHS's attributes of OUV. Other Sites inscribed in 1986 include: Giant's Causeway, St. Kilda, Durham Castle and Cathedral, Castles and Town Walls of King Edward, Ironbridge Gorge, Fountains Abbey. Partners are requested to badge relevant events with the WHS 30th anniversary logo to help celebrate the event.

8. Representative's report and review of content of report to WHS Steering Committees and Partnership Panel

8.1 Reports from WHS Steering Committees/Partnership Panel

- CS reported on the visit to the Jurassic Coast WHS by the WHSPP. The visit had been useful for ideas on WHS branding and funding.
- Possibilities of looking at opportunities for an off-site museum store as part of the RAM project.

8.2 Report to the WHS Steering Committees/Partnership Panel

- Progress on SARF

9. Opportunities for site/exhibition/archive visits in 2015

- BE suggested a possible visit to Hartland Abbey Stukeley exhibit for interested members.

10. AOB

10.1 Amesbury Neighbourhood Plan

NC updated the group on work on the Neighbourhood Plan. She and BT have attended meetings to help encourage consideration of the historic environment. Work on the Amesbury History Centre is proceeding without public consultation on the plans despite encouragement to adopt a participatory approach which would be required to meet best practice in museum design. It debatable whether the current approach would meet planning conditions and the requirements for CIL funding. The Council will need to review this.

11. Date and venue of next meeting

10.30 AM on Friday, 22nd January, 2016. Venue tbc.