

Report On An Archaeological Watching Brief on land near Lyfords, Iping Road, Milland, West Sussex.

Background

The landowners, Mr & Mrs M. Pike, have obtained Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for the excavation of a shallow trench for a telephone cable, insertion and burying of a drainage pipe and the replacement of simple roadside fencing. This was necessary since the proposed works lay partially within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Mansio at Weston's Farm (SAM no: 29242). Condition (v) of the SMC required that the works had to be carried out under archaeological supervision. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. was appointed by the landowner to carry out this work, which took place on 26th May 2010. The results of this work are set out below. The project archive will be deposited with West Sussex Records Office.

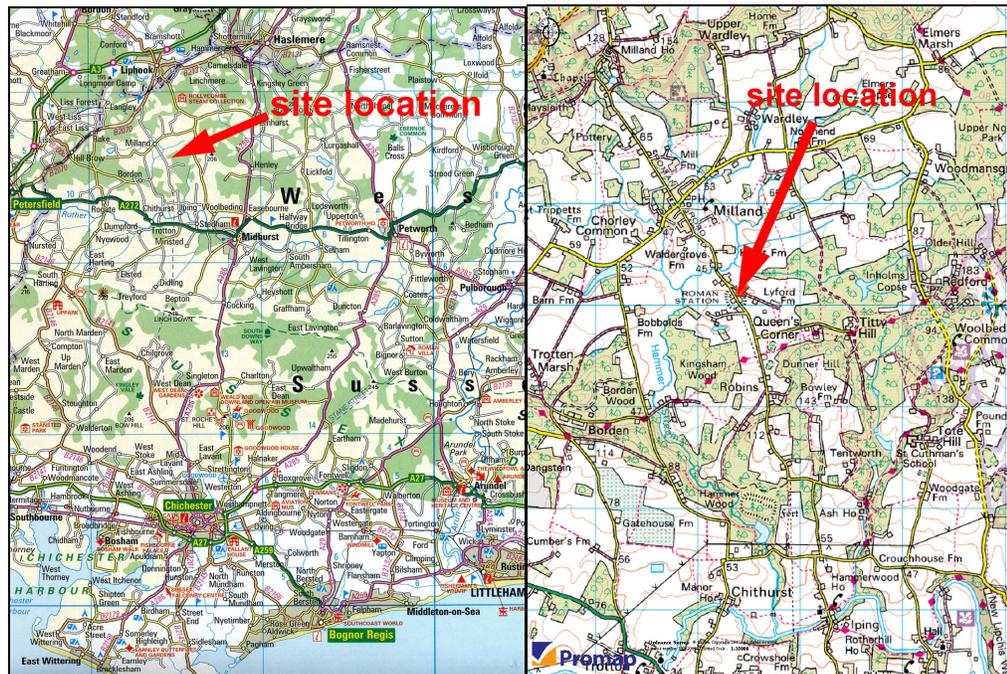
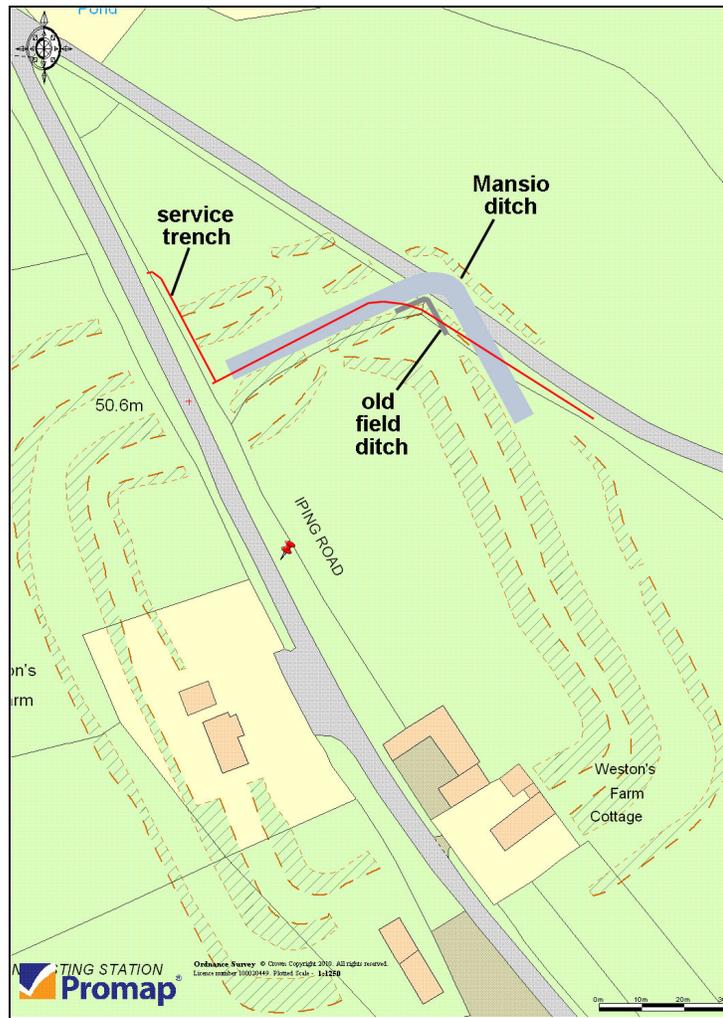


Figure 1 Maps showing the location of the Mansio. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.
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Results

The service trench consisted of two sections: the main section ran eastwards from a proposed new BT telephone pole, immediately to the north of the mansio, following the line of its backfilled northern ditch. At its north-east corner the trench turned southwards to run alongside the drive to Lyfords. The second section of trench connected the north-western end of the first trench with a water source c.30m to the north parallel to the Milland road. The first trench was 0.5m deep and 0.25m wide and the second 0.15m deep and 0.25m wide.

With the exception of a significant quantity of rubble dumped in and around the field gate next to the water source, nothing was noted in the second section of trench due to its shallow depth.



The first section of trench was deliberately positioned over the backfilled mansio north ditch in order to avoid encountering any archaeological remains associated with a possible cemetery to the north. The deposits encountered in this northern section of the service trench were uniformly the same: c.08m of topsoil overlying 0.13m of subsoil with the remainder, to the full depth of the trench, being the upper fill of the mansio ditch. This latter deposit was a grey clay sand with occasional burnt or decayed wood and frequent orange ironstone flecks. The inner edge of this ditch was encountered as the service trench rounded the corner of the mansio and began to run south. This ditch then re-crossed the service trench 17.25m to the south, where its full width of 9.2m was recorded; although this latter measurement was taken obliquely across it and therefore the true width of the ditch would be less. To the south of this point the base of the trench was composed of undisturbed orange sand clay the upper surface of which was 0.3m below the modern ground surface. No archaeological deposits were visible cut into it. Above the clay was a layer of disturbed topsoil and rubble.

Between the two inner edges of the mansio ditch as it crossed the service trench, a second smaller ditch was noted, following its same course, but positioned close up against the internal bank. Its fill was of a similar nature to the larger ditch, but of a much darker colour. It would seem probable that this was a medieval or post-medieval field ditch following the outline of the mansio bank, which has been backfilled on its eastern side when the boundaries shifted to follow the lane that now runs to Lyfords.