



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Archaeological Watching Brief at 5, Bull Lane, Lewes, East Sussex.

LW/09/0847

Project Number CBAS0102

by
Keith Butler PIFA
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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the groundworks associated with the building of an area of raised hardstanding above the courtyard on the north side of 5, Bull Lane, Lewes, East Sussex. The groundworks made little impact on the underlying archaeology as they were only excavated to a depth of 160mm into made ground. No archaeological features were noted, and only a small assemblage of artefacts being recovered, all dating to the 19th century.

Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services

Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

**Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB**

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reftub.fsbusiness.co.uk

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr Chris Bevington (The Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with building work at 5, Bull Lane, Lewes, East Sussex (TQ 4132 0998).
- 1.2** As a result of the sites location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority have put a condition on the planning consent for the development (LW/09/0847), requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.3** The site lies within the historic core of the Medieval and Post-Medieval town of Lewes, on the south side of the High Street, in close proximity to Lewes Castle which is opposite (Fig. 1). The site is in an Archaeological Sensitive Area, and is also within the Lewes Conservation Area.
- 1.4** The site of the groundworks is located to the north of the house in a small courtyard, which is enclosed on the north side by a brick wall, and on the south by the side of the house (Fig. 2). The entrance to the site is from Bull Lane to the west. The courtyard is made up of seven red brick built steps and one half step running the width of the site. These come down to a small courtyard which is laid with red brick pavers. Access to the garden from the courtyard is to the east, through a metal gate.
- 1.5** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319, is Upper and Middle Chalk.
- 1.6** The archaeological evaluation excavation took place on the 27th November 2009. The fieldwork was carried out by the author, with the project being managed by Chris Butler MIFA.

2.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 There is no evidence for a settlement at Lewes during either prehistoric or Roman times, although stray finds from both of these periods have been made¹. These include small groups of prehistoric flintwork, and some Roman coins and pottery. A Roman road, the London to Lewes Way², has been traced as far south as Hamsey and is presumed to continue to Lewes, although its exact course is unknown close to the town.
- 2.2 Although archaeological evidence for a Saxon settlement is limited, Lewes is one of the four Saxon burghs in Sussex mentioned in the 10th century Burghal Hidage, and was one of the six administrative units (Rape's) in Sussex, having a mint and a port³. The regularity of the town's layout, especially the section to the south of the High Street that includes Bull Lane, has suggested that there was an element of deliberate town planning in the Saxon period⁴.
- 2.3 After the Norman Conquest, Lewes was granted to William de Warenne⁵. He built a castle at the highest point in the town with two mottes, one of which was crowned by a Keep. Very little is known of the Norman town, although it is likely to have followed the plan of the earlier burgh. Recent archaeological work elsewhere in the town is beginning to find traces of settlement from this period.
- 2.4 The Cluniac Priory of St Pancras was founded by William de Warenne between 1078 and 1082, and may have been located on the site of an earlier Saxon monastic complex⁶. The Priory featured prominently in the Battle of Lewes 1264 as the Kings army was encamped there before the battle⁷. The Priory subsequently became one of the largest monastic centres in southern England by the time of the Dissolution.
- 2.5 The Medieval town was walled in the 13th century, and traces of this remain to be seen on the west side of the town. An excavation in the lower garden at the rear of 11, Keere Street, immediately to the west of the site, revealed a defensive ditch filled with debris (MES1756). It is thought that this debris comes from the Town Walls repairs or demolition⁸. Substantial evidence for the Medieval town has been found during excavations throughout the town.

¹ Rudling, D. 1987. 'Archaeological Survey of Lewes'. *Aspects of Archaeology in the Lewes Area*, Lewes Archaeological Group.

² Margary, I.V. 1948. *Roman Ways in the Weald*, London, Phoenix House.

³ Gardiner, M. 1999. 'Late Saxon Sussex c.650-1066', *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.

⁴ Houghton, J. 1987. 'The Urban Landscape of Lewes', *Aspects of Archaeology in the Lewes Area*. Lewes Archaeological Group.

⁵ Salzman, L.F. *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex Vol. 7*, London, Dawsons.

⁶ Lewis, R.A. et al. 1987 'The Priory of St. Pancras, Southover', *Aspects of Archaeology in the Lewes Area*, Lewes Archaeological Group.

⁷ Fleming, B. 1999 *The Battle of Lewes 1264*, J&KH Publishing, Hailsham.

⁸ *Sussex Archaeological Society Newsletter* 8, December 1972. 30

- 2.6** The town has grown substantially throughout the Post Medieval period, although James Edwards' map of Lewes dated 1799 shows the main settlement to be located along the High Street, School Hill and down to Cliff High Street. Bull Lane appears to have a number of properties, one of which is situated on the site of 5, Bull Lane.
- 2.7** Ordnance Survey maps for 1878, 1899, 1911 and 1938 were consulted. The map regression exercise showed that there was little change in the immediate area of the site over this period of time. All of the maps show the site to be occupied by what appears to be the same building, and a small outbuilding may have been located over the site of the proposed hard standing during the later 19th century.
- 2.8** The Historic Environment Records (HER) were consulted and produced a large number of sites within a 1km radius of the centre of Lewes. Some 90 sites were recorded on the HER within this area, together with 76 archaeological events; which include excavations and watching briefs undertaken in Lewes town.

3.0 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** On arrival at the site on the 27th November 2009, a watching brief was maintained throughout the groundworks associated with the building of a raised area of hard standing, to the northern side of the house.
- 3.2** The groundwork consisted of two different processes. The first was to remove a portion of the brickwork in the corner of every alternative step. Each of the areas removed measured 300mm by 350mm. The brickwork was first cut with a circular saw, and then removed with an electric drill. During this phase of the work there was no impact on soil at ground level.
- 3.3** The second process was to excavate two shallow trenches along the northern boundary wall and the side of the house for the laying of beams to support the raised hardstanding. Both trenches measured 1.8m in length with a width of 450mm; the total depth when excavated was 160mm. The trenches were excavated using hand tools.
- 3.5** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart
- 3.6** A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services. A site reference of BLL 09 has been allocated.

4.0 Results

- 4.1** In both trenches there was an upper layer of brick pavers (Context 1). Each brick paver measured 240mm in length by 120mm in width, and had a depth of 50mm. The pavers were made of a hard-fired dark red clay and were laid without the use of any bonding agent.
- 4.2** Below Context 1 was Context 2. This was a very dark brown layer of silty clay loam with a firm consistence. Also present in this layer were areas of yellow sand (5%), which had been used to level the ground when laying the pavers. The coarse components in Context 2 comprised ceramic building material (5%), small pebbles up to 20mm (3%) and minimal plant rooting.
- 4.3** There were no archaeological features noted during the work, and the artefacts recovered from Context 2 were ceramic building material, clay pipe stems, pottery and bone.

5.0 The Finds

- 5.0.1** The archaeological work recovered a small sized assemblage of finds from the site, all of which were recovered from Context 2. These are summarized in Table 1.
- 5.0.2** The assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis. This is due to the assemblage's small size and lack of good sealed context groups. The assemblage does not warrant retention in a museum.

Table 1 The Finds

Context	Pottery	Clay Pipe	Bone
2	9/200g	2/6g	3/40g

Quantification of finds (no./weight in grams).

5.1. The Pottery

5.1.1 Nine pottery sherds weighing 200g were recovered from Context **2**. Three of these sherds were a thick white-glazed earthenware, possibly all from the same jar. On one sherd the upper part of three letters were visible, possibly 'HOM'. Another large sherd was from an English stoneware jar.

5.1.2 Other sherds comprise, one small sherd of blue and white transfer printed china from a small plate or saucer, a sherd from a white china plate, with part of an unreadable makers mark on its base, a sherd of brown glazed earthenware and two sherds of plain hard-fired earthenware, one of which was a base. All of the pottery recovered from the excavation would suggest a date range of the 19th to early 20th century.

5.2 Clay Tobacco Pipe

5.2.1 Two small pieces of clay tobacco pipe stem weighing 6g were recovered from Context **2**. One fragment has part of a name panel on the stem, although it is very worn and it is not possible to read the name. Both of these fragments are most likely of a 19th century date.

5.3 The Animal Bones

5.3.1 Three pieces of animal bone weighing 40g were recovered from Context **2**. One was a chopped fragment of sheep ulna, the second was a fragment of sheep pelvis, and the third was a small unidentified fragment.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Most of the groundwork did not have any impact on the underlying archaeology, as most of this work was on the brick built steps at the western side of the site. However, in the two trenches that were excavated along the northern and southern sides of the courtyard a single layer of made ground was encountered.

6.2 There were no archaeological features noted during the groundworks, probably due to the shallow nature of the excavation. The presence of the made-ground suggests that there may be preserved archaeology at lower levels. A small number of artefacts dating to the 19th century were recovered during the watching brief.

7.0 Acknowledgements

7.1 I would like to thank Mr Chris Bevington for commissioning this archaeological watching brief. The project was managed for the CBAS by Chris Butler and monitored for ESCC by Greg Chuter.

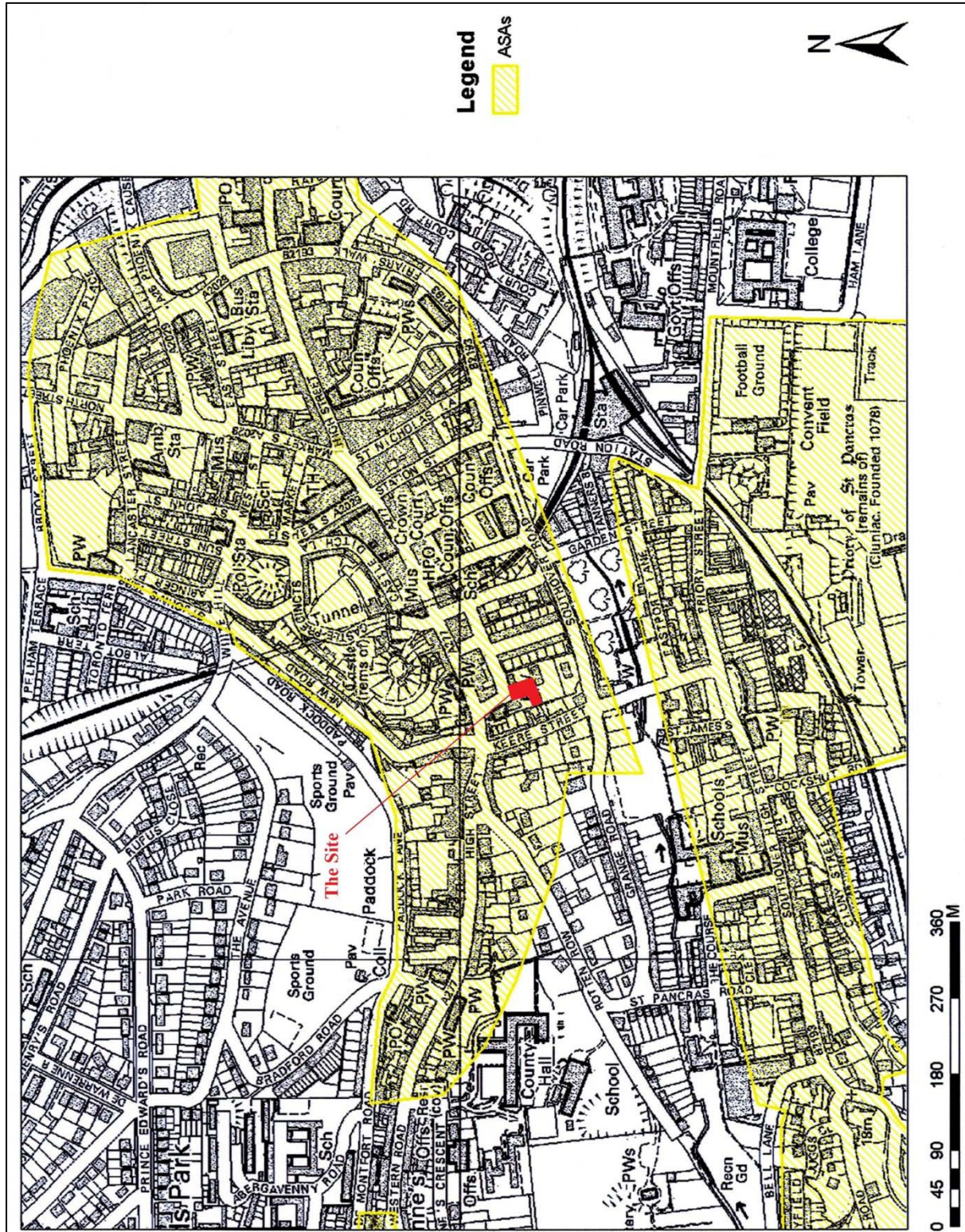


Fig. 1: 5 Bull Lane, Lewes: Location of site and Archaeologically Sensitive Area
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)
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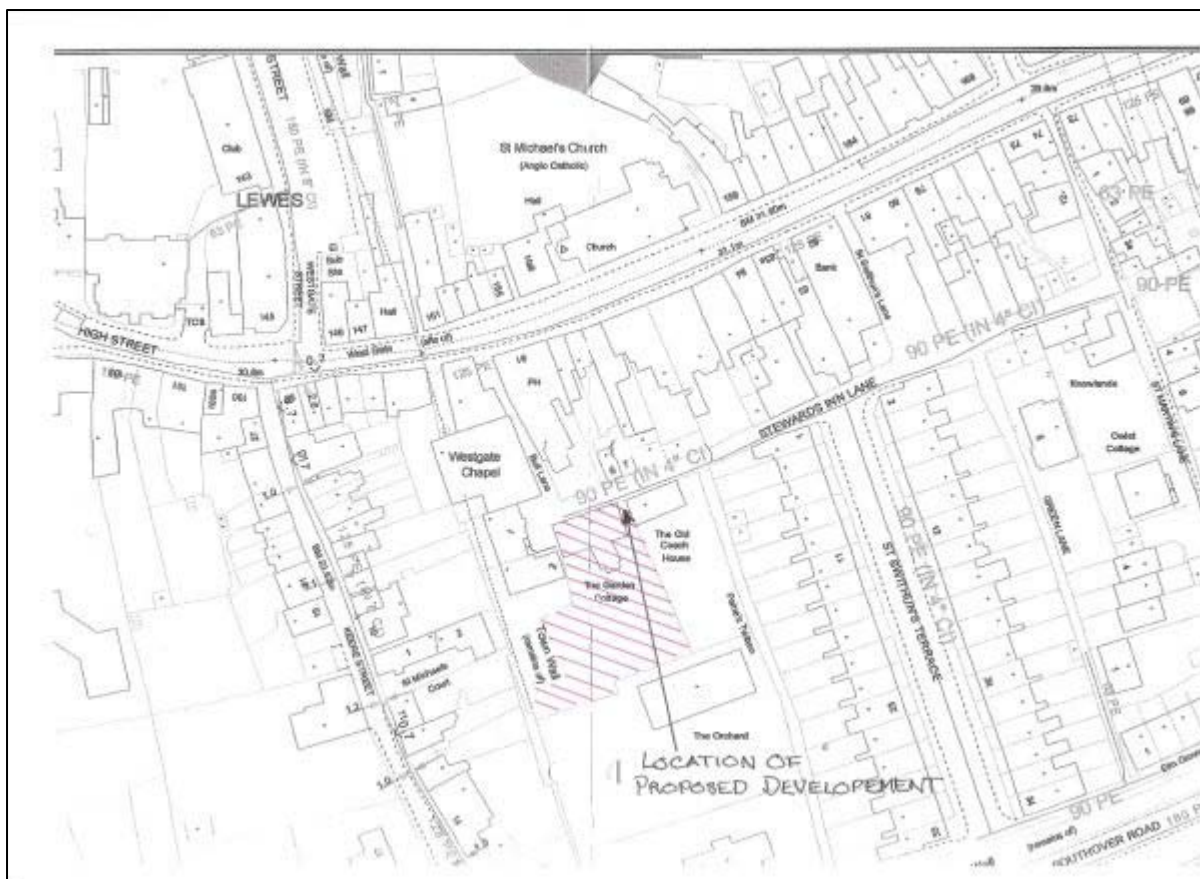


Fig. 2: 5 Bull Lane, Lewes: Location of development
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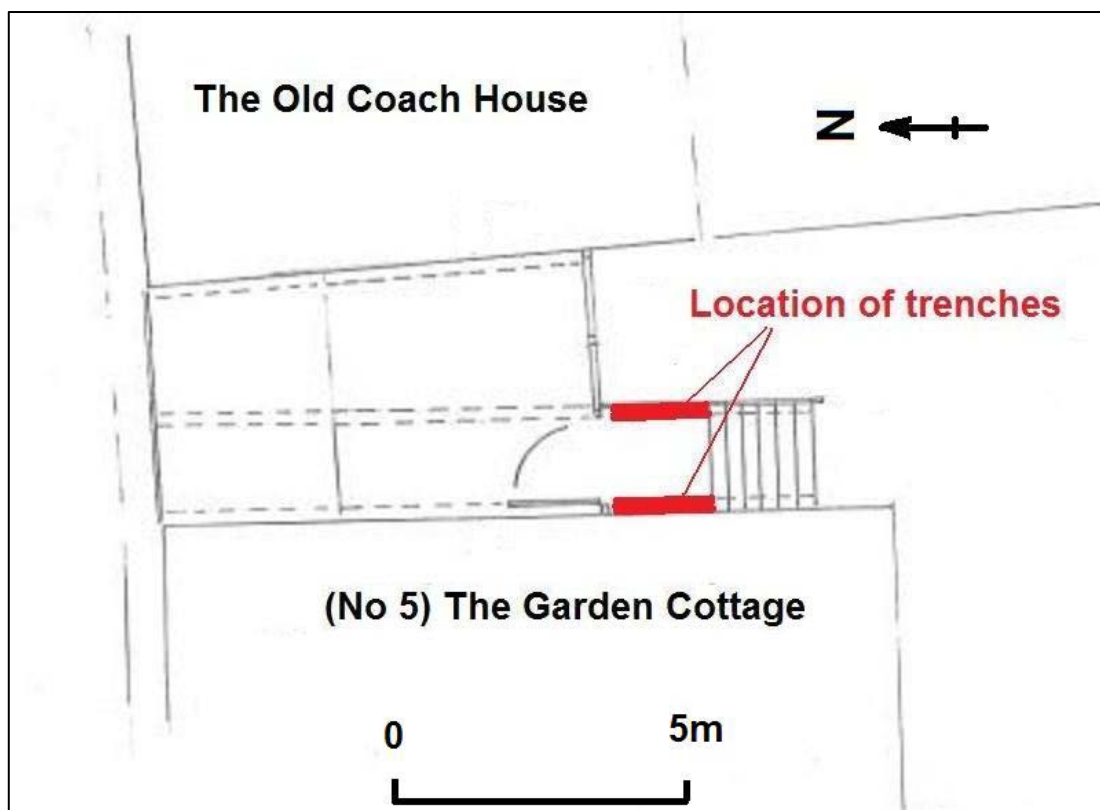


Fig. 3: 5 Bull Lane, Lewes: Location of the trenches
Adapted from architects drawing



Fig. 4: 5 Bull Lane, Lewes: Section of trench

HER Summary Form

Site Code	BLL 09					
Identification Name and Address	5, Bull Lane, Lewes, East Sussex.					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 4132 0998					
Geology	Upper and Middle Chalk					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban X	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	27-11-09	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr Chris Bevington.					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MIFA					
Project Supervisor	Keith Butler PIFA					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM X	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the groundworks associated with the building of an area of raised hardstanding above the courtyard on the north side of 5, Bull Lane, Lewes, East Sussex. The groundworks made little impact on the underlying archaeology as they were only excavated to a depth of 160mm into made ground. No archaeological features were noted, and only a small assemblage of artefacts being recovered, all dating to the 19th century.</i></p>						

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk