



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Archaeological Watching Brief at Warbleton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex (Manege)

TQ 6403 1803

by
Keith Butler

December 2008

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the groundworks associated with the construction of a Manege at Warbleton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex. This involved the levelling of the area where the Manege was to be constructed and also involved a slight grading of the ground level in the area to the west between the Manege and the existing stable block.

No archaeological features were discovered during this watching brief and only a small number of Post Medieval artefacts were recovered.

Chris Butler MIFA

Archaeological Services

Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reלטub.fsbusiness.co.uk

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Historical & Archaeological Background
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology
- 4.0 Results
- 5.0 Finds
- 6.0 Discussion
- 7.0 Acknowledgements

Figures:

- Fig. 1 Location map showing Archaeological Sensitive Area
- Fig. 2 Site Plan
- Fig. 3 Photograph of site prior to excavation
- Fig. 4 Photograph of site after excavation

Cover: Photograph looking north from the manege to the Priory

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Everill to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the construction of a manege at Warbleton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex (TQ 6403 1803).
- 1.2** Warbleton Priory is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and has been designated an Archaeologically Sensitive Area. The manege is situated within the Archaeologically Sensitive Area, but outside the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (Fig. 1).
- 1.3** As a result of the site's location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority put a condition on the planning consent for the development (WD/2008/0353), requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.4** A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared for a watching brief to be undertaken during the groundworks¹, and was agreed with the County Archaeologist.
- 1.5** The site is situated in a paddock, 50m south of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Warbleton Priory, on gently sloping ground facing south which descends to a small stream. On the opposite side of the stream is a narrow band of woodland, in which there are possible earthworks associated with quarrying and the nearby ironworking site.
- 1.6** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319, is Ashdown Beds, a fine grained Sandstone.
- 1.7** The watching brief took place on the 8th, 9th and 11th September 2008. The fieldwork was carried out by the author, and the project was managed by Chris Butler MIFA.

2. Historical & Archaeological Background

- 2.1** The Augustinian Priory was founded at the site in 1413, and was dissolved in 1536. Elements of the priory buildings remain as part of The Priory, and remains of the Church wall footings have been exposed as a garden feature. The Priory church was a cruciform structure 130 feet long, and all that remains are the south, east and part of the north walls of the chancel. The Priory may have originated from the gatehouse range with lodging chambers of the Medieval Priory²

¹ Butler, C. 2008. *Written Scheme of Investigation for a watching brief at Warburton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex (Phase 1: Manege)* CBAS.

² Rape of Hastings Architectural Survey (Report No 0004, revised 1976)

- 2.2** An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment undertaken in connection with the planning application for the manege³ has shown that there are currently 21 archaeological sites (including the Priory remains) recorded on the East Sussex HER within a 2km radius of the site. The sites include find spots for Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork, Roman and Early Medieval bloomery sites and Medieval and Post Medieval buildings. Details of all of these sites can be found in the Desk Based Assessment.
- 2.3** In addition to the presence of some Roman bloomery sites in the area, the Warbleton Priory Furnace is recorded as being in operation in 1574⁴. This is located at TQ644174, to the south of the manege, and comprises a pond bay, water systems and remains of a working area.
- 2.4** There has not been any recorded recent archaeological work undertaken on the Priory remains, and the extant buildings are the result of additions and alterations that have taken place during the Post Medieval period. Although they may have earlier origins, the arm buildings to the north of the Priory appear to be predominantly of 18th and 19th century date.
- 2.5** A watching brief has recently been carried out on groundworks connected with a new driveway and associated works on the Cartlodge immediately to the north of the Priory remains⁵. This located a number of lime kilns, possibly associated with Post Medieval building work at the Priory.
- 3. Archaeological Methodology.**
- 3.1** On the first visits to the site on the 8th and 9th September, an area of 20m x 40m for the manege was marked out by the contractor. A watching brief was maintained while this area was levelled using a JCB with a toothless bucket to a depth of approximately 600mm at the east side, decreasing across the site to a depth of about 400mm on the west side. The spoil from this process was banked up on both sides of the excavation and was metal detected. Most of the spoil was then redeposited on the south side of the site and graded to level the site.
- 3.2** A sondage measuring 1m x 500mm was excavated by hand some three metres from the north end of the levelled area to a depth of 800mm, to confirm the depth of the natural, and to ensure that there was no further potential for archaeological deposits to be disturbed

³ Youngson, E. 2008. *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. Walbeton Priory. Rushlake Green. Parker Dann.*

⁴ Cleere, H and Crossley, D.1995. *The Iron Industry of the Weald, Cardiff*, Merton Priory Press.

⁵ Butler, C. 2008 *An Archaeological Watching brief at Warbleton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex (Cart Lodge)*, CBAS.

- 3.3** On the 11th September the watching brief continued while a trench running along side the north-eastern edge of the levelled area was excavated to provide drainage for the manege. This involved excavating a steeply angled trench, measuring 3m in width at the northern end reducing to 2.5m at the southern end.
- 3.4** A watching brief was also maintained while the area between the stable block and the manege was graded to allow for easier access to the manege. This involved the graduation of topsoil and of the gravel drive. None of the spoil from this operation was removed from this area and was used to make a surface level.
- 3.5** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart. A TBM was established at the southern corner of the stable block.
- 3.6** A 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 and, after any further analysis, will be offered to a suitable local museum. A site reference of WAR08 has been allocated, and context numbers commencing at 100 used.

4. Results.

- 4.1** Three layers were revealed during the excavations of the manege. Context **100** was a loose layer of dark brown, silty clay loam topsoil, with a depth of 280mm. This layer contained small pieces of both sandstone (<1%) and ironstone (<1%). The artefacts recovered from this layer were made up of mainly building material with a small amount of pottery, all of Post Medieval date.
- 4.2** Below Context **100** was Context **101**, a layer between 200mm and 300mm deep of mid brown orange silty clay of a firm consistency with coarse components of sandstone (<1%) and ironstone (<1%). The artefacts from this layer were similar to those in Context **100**.
- 4.3** Context **102** was a layer of firm, sandy clay of an orange colour, with small lens' of buff. This layer was below Context **101**, **and** appeared to be the natural as confirmed by the excavated sondage (see 3.2 above). No artefacts were recovered from this layer.

4.4 The area levelled between the manège and the stable block was given the Context **103**, and was made up of a mixture of topsoil Context **100** and gravel from the drive. The artefacts recovered from this layer were made up of building material with a small amount of pottery, all of Post Medieval date.

4.5 No archaeological features or deposits were discovered during this watching brief.

5. Finds

The watching brief recovered a small assemblage of artefacts, which are quantified in Table 1.

Table 1 The Finds

Context	Pottery (gms)	CBM* (gms)	Others (gms)
100	5 (70g)	11 (760g)	1 flint flake (7g) 1 glass (19g) 2 slag (86g)
101	9 (80g)	11 (390g)	
103	4 (122g)	10 (430g)	1 flint core (9g) 2 glass (45g)

*=Ceramic Building Material

5.1 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.1.1 The pottery from the site consists of small to medium sized sherds (i.e to 30mm across) most of which show some signs of slight abrasion suggesting some reworking of the material (Table 2). The earliest sherds consists of three residual pieces of sparse fine sand tempered hard-fired reduced earthenware of probable mid 15th to mid 16th century date (Contexts **100** and **103**). In addition there is a single sherd from a German stoneware (Frehen) bottle from Context **100** which likely to be of mid 16th to mid 17th century date.

Table 2 The Pottery

Context	Mid C15th-17th pot	C18th pot	C19th pot
100	2 20g	-	3 50g
101	-	7 70g	2 10g
103	1 50g	3 72g	-

- 5.1.2** The majority of the assemblage dates from the 18th century (Contexts **100** and **103**). This period is represented by glazed earthenwares, including a possible costrel top from Context **103**, unglazed sandy earthenware (one sherd from **101**). In addition four sherds of Staffordshire white salt-glaze stoneware were recovered including two moulded dinner plate rims from Context **101**.
- 5.1.3** The latest pottery from the site is from the 19th century and includes transfer-printed pearlware, plain china and china with blue sponged decoration.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1** A moderate quantity of fragmentary brick and tile was recovered from the site. The pieces of peg tile from Context **100** are all quite well formed and medium/well fired with thicknesses varying between 11 and 14mm. Tempering consists of sparse/medium fine sand with moderate iron oxide inclusions to 1mm. It is probable the majority is of 17th to 18th century date though one hard-fired example, with finer sand tempering is of the later 18th to 19th centuries. At least two of the earlier type appear to be 'seconds' as they show signs of warping and slight vitrification.

Table 3 Ceramic Building Material

Context	Brick	Roof Tile	Deposition Date
100		11 760g	C19th
101	1 70g	10 320g	C19th
103	1 20g	9 410g	C18th

- 5.2.2** The peg tile from Context **101** is primarily composed of similar material to that in Context **100**. An exception consists of a single piece of 12mm thick crudely formed medium fired peg tile, tempered with sparse fine sand and sparse/moderate iron oxide and white clay pellets to 1mm, which may be of 16th to early 17th century date. This deposit also produced a medium fired brick fragment tempered with sparse fine sand and moderate iron oxides to 2mm and white clay streaks. A 17th to 18th century date range is probable.
- 5.2.3** Context **103** contained an assemblage of ceramic building material dominated by 17th to 18th century peg tiles similar to those noted in Contexts **100** and **101**. However, this deposit also produced a low-fired brick fragment tempered with abundant fine sand, of probable 16th to early 18th century date and a single unglazed floor tile. The latter, measuring 21mm thick, is well formed with slightly bevelled edges and is tempered with fine sand. Close dating is difficult but it is almost certainly of mid/late 16th to early/mid 18th century date.

5.3. Other Finds by Chris Butler

- 5.3.1** Two pieces of worked flint were recovered from the site, from Context **100** a white patinated flake (possibly soft hammer struck) most likely from the South Downs. The second piece, from Context 103 is a possible core fragment.
- 5.3.2** Context **100** produced one worn glass bottle fragment, probably dating to the 18th or 19th century, with two fragments of green bottle glass coming from Context **103**. These latter fragments most likely date to the 19th century.
- 5.3.3** Two fragments of Post Medieval blast furnace slag weighing 86g were recovered from Context **100**.

6. Discussion

- 6.1** Considering the close proximity to the ruins of the Priory, the watching brief produced a surprisingly small number of artefacts and a complete lack of any features or deposits. This possibly suggests that this area has been used as pasture throughout the life of the Priory and during subsequent periods.
- 6.2** The pottery and ceramic building material suggest some activity in the area from the end of the Medieval period to the present day. This activity is predominantly represented by pottery, though some of the ceramic building material may be of the later 16th century. Certainly activity appears to have increased by the 18th century with low-level disposal of domestic waste and sporadic tile wastage from a 17th to mid 18th century tiled roof. Only low levels of 19th century activity are represented by both the pottery and ceramic building material. All of this material is likely to have arrived in this field due to manuring.

7. Acknowledgements

- 7.1** I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Everill for commissioning the watching brief and their interest and support throughout the project. I would also thank the building contractors, Maple Arenas, for their co-operation during the watching brief. Greg Chuter, Assistant Archaeologist at East Sussex County Council provided the HER data and, with Casper Johnson, monitored the project for ESCC. Luke Barber reported on the pottery and CBM, and Chris Butler reported on the other finds, and provided guidance and advice on this project.

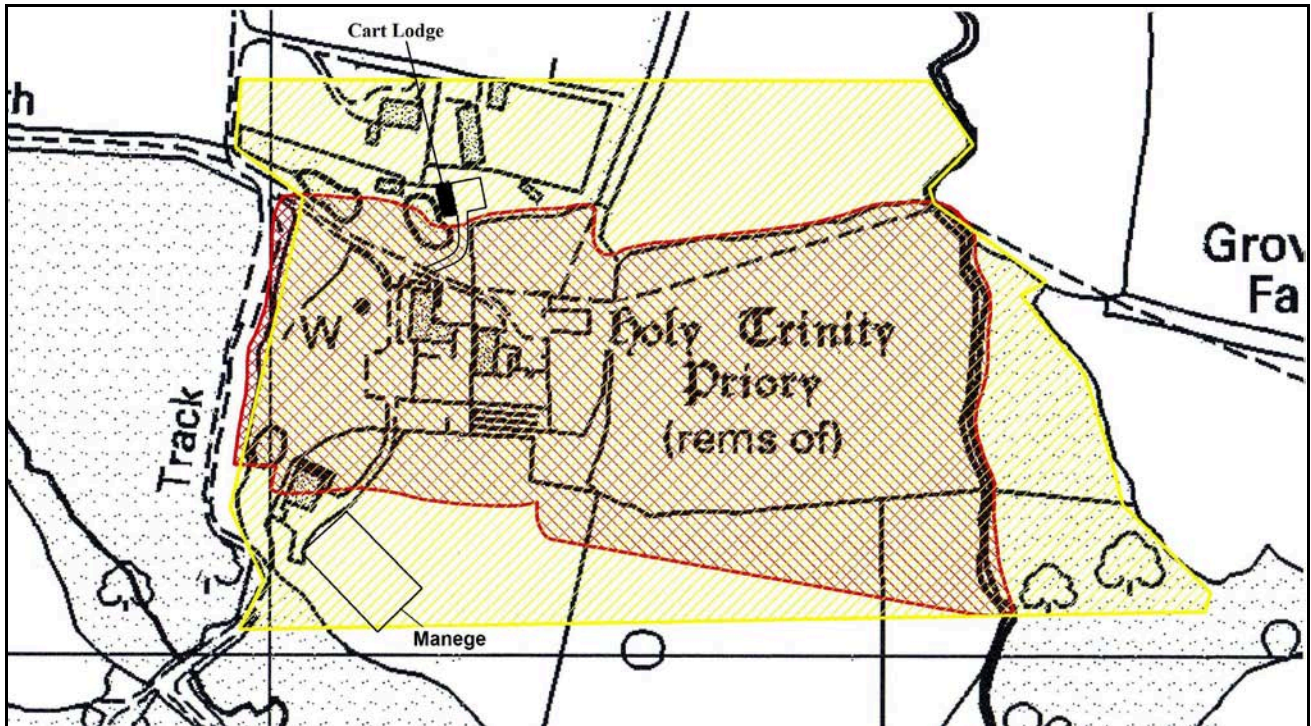


Fig. 1: Warbleton Priory Manege: Location map showing the area of the Scheduled Monument (red) and Archaeologically Sensitive Area (yellow).

Adapted from map provided by ESCC
Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100037471

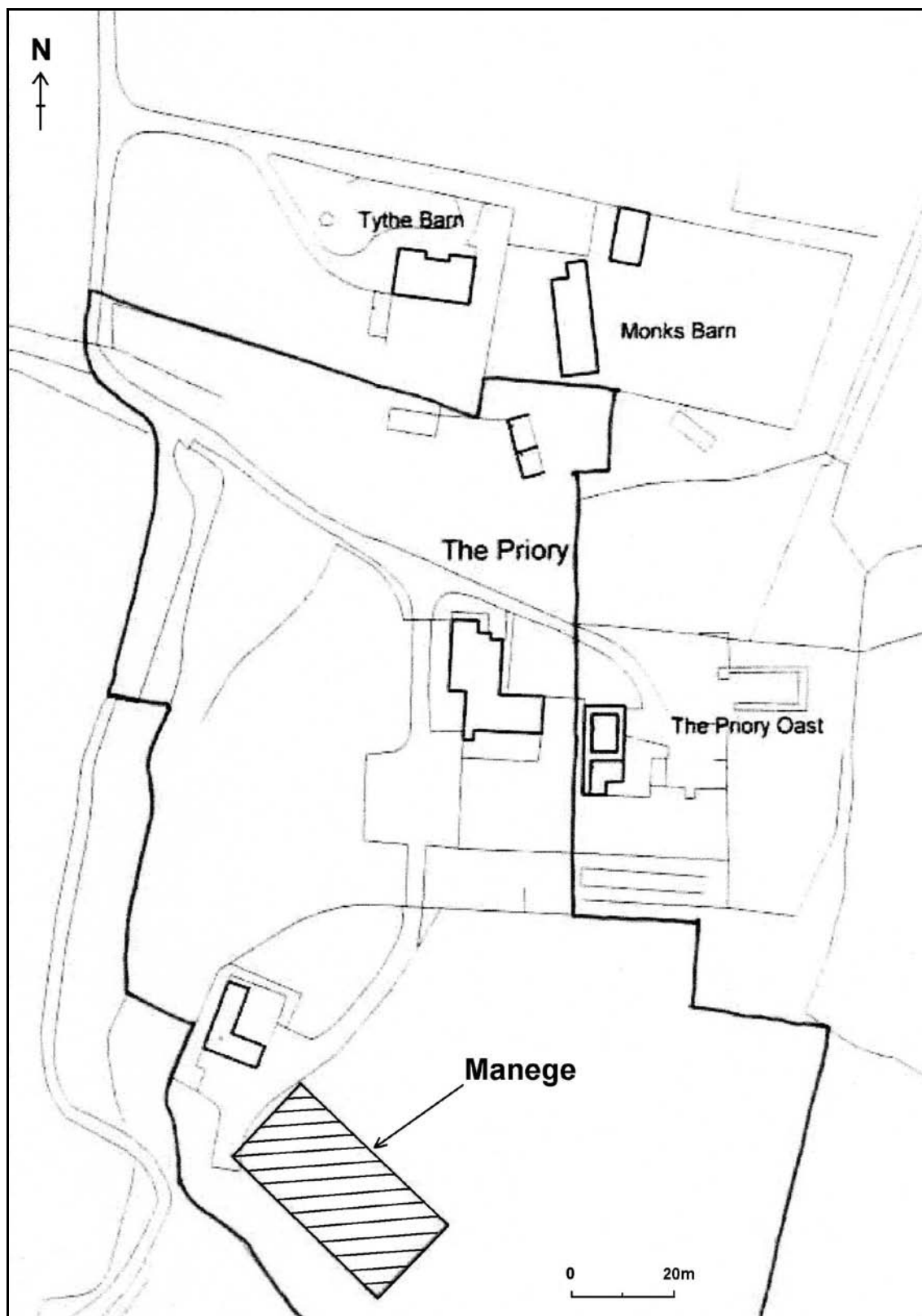


Fig. 1: Warbleton Priory Manege: Site Plan

Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright.
All rights reserved. Licence number 100037471



Fig. 3: Warbleton Priory: Photograph of the manege site prior to excavation, looking west towards the stables



Fig. 4: Warbleton Priory: Manege site after completion of the excavation, looking east.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	WAR08					
Identification Name and Address	Warbleton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 6403 1803					
Geology	Ashdown Beds					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field X	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 8/9/08- 11/9/08	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr & Mrs Everill					
Project Manager	Chris Butler					
Project Supervisor	Keith Butler					
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 carried out during the groundworks associated with the construction of a Manege at Warbleton Priory, Rushlake Green, East Sussex. This involved the levelling of the area where the Manege was to be constructed and also involved a slight grading of the ground level in the area to the west between the Manege and the existing stable block.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological features were discovered during this watching brief and only a small number of Post Medieval artefacts were recovered.</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. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

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.

Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services

Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reлтub.fsbusiness.co.uk