



**Chris Butler MfA  
Archaeological Services Ltd**



**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
at land adjacent to High Banks,  
School Lane, Pyecombe,  
West Sussex.**

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## ***Summary***

*An Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained during the ground-works associated with the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to High Banks, School Lane, Pyecombe, West Sussex. Ground reduction was carried out using an 8 tonne machine with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. A single sherd of medieval pottery dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the colluvium, Context 2. The only other pottery comprised two 19<sup>th</sup> century sherds from the topsoil. A small assemblage of worked flint debitage was also recovered along with a small assemblage of bone, together with a single piece of worked bone, perhaps associated with weaving. A negative lynchet was recorded during the excavation along with two slit trenches dating from WW2. An undated ephemeral linear approximately 3m long cut into the colluvium was also noted.*

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd had been commissioned by Albany Homes Southern Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief at High Bank, School Lane, Pyecombe, West Sussex (Fig. 1) during the groundworks associated with the erection of a detached two-storey 4-bed house with detached double bay garage and formation of a new access off School Lane.
- 1.2** A planning application had been submitted (12/00685/FUL) for the development, and 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, requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.3** Pyecombe is located to the north of Brighton, and is situated within a dry valley (or coombe) formed by the river Wellesbourne running through the South Downs, and adjacent to the modern London-Brighton road (A23). The river is now a winterbourne and runs underground for most of its length. The site is situated just outside the Pyecombe Conservation Area, but is within the former medieval village centre of Pyecombe, that was centred around the church and the former main street along Church Lane and School Lane (Fig. 2). There are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the vicinity of the site, and it is situated within the South Downs National Park.
- 1.4** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey Sheet 318/333 is Upper and Middle Chalk, with Head Deposit in the spur of the dry valley on the east side of the site. An outcrop of Lower Chalk exists to the west of the site, and there are Clay-with-Flint deposits on the top of the Downs to the north-east and west of the site.
- 1.5** The appropriate programme of archaeological work comprised of an archaeological watching brief in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. The written scheme of investigation covered the watching brief and was prepared in accordance with a brief provided by the West Sussex County Archaeologist, and was duly submitted and approved by the local planning authority.
- 1.6** The watching brief was required to monitor all of the construction works (Fig. 6), including the excavation of foundation trenches, service trenches and any associated landscaping, to ensure the appropriate investigation and recording of archaeological Heritage Assets on the site.

1.7 The field work was undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012 by Lisa Fisher, and then on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012 by the author.

## 2.0 Archaeological & Historical background (Fig. 3)

2.1 There is no evidence for either Palaeolithic or Mesolithic activity at the site; however there is a significant amount of evidence for Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups exploiting the resources of the South Downs nearby, either for hunting and gathering or to obtain flint with which to make their tools, especially during the Later Mesolithic.

2.2 The majority of the evidence for Mesolithic activity on the South Downs is found on outcrops of Clay-with-Flints, which tend to be found capping some of the highest point of the South Downs to the north of Brighton and Hove. Sites on the East and West Hills (MWS3998) produced large quantities of Mesolithic flintwork including microliths and tranchet adzes hinting at extensive use of the Clay-with-Flint outcrops during this period<sup>1</sup>.

2.3 A number of changes occur during the Neolithic, some of which may have had an impact on the local area. Some of the woodland was being cleared and small scale agricultural activities are likely to have started. Large quantities of Neolithic flintwork have been recovered on East and West Hills at Pyecombe (MWS3998), including evidence for axe production<sup>2</sup>. Neolithic axes have been found in some numbers in the surrounding landscape including eight found on Clayton Hill (MWS836), a polished axe and another fragment at Pangdean (MWS4639), and one on Pyecombe Hill (MWS609), and may provide evidence for the clearance of the woodland from the local Downland at this time. Neolithic flintwork was found on Wolstonbury Hill (MWS831).

2.4 Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age flintwork has also been found in a number of locations nearby, including on East and West Hills (MWS4170 & MWS3998), at Mill Lane (MWS5493), and to the east of Pyecombe Golf course (MWS4025). This may coincide with the start of more intensive agriculture on the South Downs during the Early Bronze Age, although there is little evidence for settlements of this period, which may have been located in valley bottoms<sup>3</sup>. Cross Dykes on Woldstonbury Hill (MWS5183) and Newtimber Hill (MWS6476) may have been a form of territorial boundary marker.

2.5 There is a substantial increase in activity during the Bronze Age with a number of bowl barrows (burial mounds) found on the higher ground. A Beaker bowl barrow on West Hill was excavated in 1988, and produced a male inhumation with accompanying beaker pot, wristguard and copper knife<sup>4</sup>. Other barrows are situated on Wolstonbury Hill (MWS 909, MWS911, MWS5182, MWS5779 & MWS6474) and on Clayton Hill (MWS759).

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, C. 2001 'A Mesolithic and Later Prehistoric flintworking site at East and West Hills, Pecombe, West Sussex'. *Sussex Arch Colls.* **139**

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Butler, C. 1991 'The excavation of a Beaker Bowl barrow at Pyecombe, West Sussex', *Sussex Arch*

- 2.6** During the Middle to Late Bronze Age settlement sites become more common on The South Downs, and although none are known from the immediate area, there are numerous examples known from the Downs to the north of Brighton, including Coldean Lane (MES7153) and Varley Halls (MES467). The enclosure on Wolstonbury Hill may have originated in the Neolithic period, but its main period of use appears to have been in the Bronze Age (MWS4517), however its function remains conjectural.
- 2.7** Bronze Age finds from the more immediate area include a Middle Bronze Age palstave from Wolstonbury Hill (MWS597) and another from Clayton Hill (MWS600), stone maceheads on East Hill (MWS623) and Wolstonbury Hill (MWS1248), and a spearhead (MWS5451) at Pyecombe, whilst metalworking debris was found near Clayton (MWS40209). Late Bronze Age ‘Sussex Loops’ were found at Pyecombe in 1849 (MWS607).
- 2.8** During the Early Iron Age it seems likely that the pattern of settlement and agriculture seen in the Later Bronze Age continues, although house structures dating to this period are rare. The field systems continued in use throughout the Iron Age, and there are a number of field systems noted in the vicinity of the site; e.g. at Pangdean Farm (MWS610) and on Pyecombe Golf Course (MWS748). Iron Age finds include brooches from West Hill (MWS608) and New Barn Farm (MWS5492), and pottery from East Hill (MWS3630).
- 2.9** One of the major features of the Iron Age is the hillforts. Many of these also appear to have originated in the Later Bronze Age, but become important centres of control and redistribution in the Middle and Later Iron Age. Devils Dyke hillfort is located to the west of Pyecombe, Ditchling Beacon to the east, and Hollingbury hillfort is situated to the south-east of the site. These sites were almost certainly central places and would have dominated the local area from their prominent hilltop locations<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.10** The earlier field systems at Pangdean Farm and Pyecombe Golf Course, together with another on the east side of Wolstonbury Hill (MWS834) continued in use throughout the Roman period, the latter associated with a small settlement site (MWS5781). Discoveries of Roman pottery at Haresdean (MWS602) and on East Hill (MWS3631) may also indicate the presence of small farmsteads.
- 2.11** At Clayton a Roman building was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then covered over again (MWS5792). Subsequent fieldwork relocated the building, and confirmed that it was possibly a bathhouse (MWS7332)<sup>6</sup>. A watching brief found further evidence of Roman activity (MWS7291), and other Roman finds in the area including coins (MWS933), coin and ligula (MWS4022) and pottery (MWS4051), together with the presence of re-used

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*Colls.* **129**

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton, S. et al. 1997 ‘Prominent Enclosures in 1st millennium BC Sussex’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **135**, 93-112.

<sup>6</sup> Butler, C. 2002. *An Archaeological Excavation at Clayton Manor, West Sussex*. MSFAT.

Roman tiles in Clayton Church (MWS5450) all confirm the presence of a Roman settlement here.

- 2.12** The Roman road the London-Brighton Way (MWS4200) runs south from the Roman settlement at Hassocks over the Downs (MWS3986), and then follows a prominent terrace earthwork (MWS4201) into Pyecombe where it crosses School Lane and follows Church Lane south. Its further course may be south to Brighton, or turning west to head over the Downs to Portslade.
- 2.13** There is some evidence for Saxon activity in the vicinity of the Pyecombe, including coins from Pyecombe (MWS616) and Clayton (MWS4021), and Saxon burials found on Wolstonbury Hill (MWS917) and on Clayton Hill (MWS972). Pyecombe itself does not appear in the Domesday book, and may have been part of the Manor of Pangdean<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.14** The Medieval settlement is thought to have been originally situated around the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century Parish Church of the Transfiguration (MWS5783). The church of 'Pingedon' (Pangdean) was granted to the Priory of St. Pancras at Lewes by Adam de Poynings and his wife Beatrice, and this grant was confirmed by successive Earls Warenne in about 1095 and 1140. Another Adam de Poynings in 1180 renounced to the same priory all his rights in the church of Pyecombe, and in 1272–3 Luke de Poynings made a similar renunciation. It would appear that all these grants refer to the same church, which continued in the hands of the priory until, as the church of Pyecombe, it was surrendered to the king in 1537<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.15** At some stage in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the settlement was deserted (MWS593), and may have moved a little distance further north-west to Pyecombe Street. A few isolated medieval finds have been made in the area (e.g. MWS 5457). The site of a late / post medieval farm was located by fieldwalking at Rockrose, which revealed pottery, and an area of flint, brick and tile concentrated in one spot at the end of the trackway now only visible as a soil mark, with some flint walling nearby within a small copse of trees (MWS4002).
- 2.16** There seems to have been little further growth in the settlement at Pyecombe until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map of 1875 shows the church, school, a congregational chapel and a few houses to the north of the church, and the Plough Inn a little further south (Fig. 4). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS map (1899) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS map (1910) show little change. It is only by the 1951 OS map that further development along Church Lane and School Lane has taken place (Fig. 5). The area of the site is shown on all of the OS maps as being open ground, although on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS map the plot is shown as allotment gardens.

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<sup>7</sup> *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 7: The rape of Lewes* (1940), pp. 212-214. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56951&strquery=pyecombe>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.0 Method Statement

3.1 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with WSCC's *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation* dated February 2007 (the Recommended Conditions).

3.2 Initial ground reduction began with reduction of the slope along the western edge of the footprint of the house using a 8 tonne machine with a 1.5m ditching bucket and covered the area of the new build. Excavation went down into the underlying chalk deposit to a maximum depth of 2m (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Ground Reduction

3.3 The ground reduction then continued towards the north, still well into the natural chalk. The drainage run at the eastern boundary was then excavated, to the top of the chalk natural, and was 12m in length by 2m wide to a depth of 1.55m. This was then followed by the excavation down to the top of the natural chalk for the driveway.

3.4 The spoil from the excavation was deposited towards the southern boundary of the site and was inspected at regular intervals to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. A Garrett ACE150 metal detector was also used to scan the spoil derived from the excavations.

3.5 All deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.

3.6 The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd. A site reference of HBP12 has been allocated, and the archive will be offered to Lewes Museum or similar repository as agreed with the County Archaeologist.



## 4.0 Results (Figs 6 & 7)

- 4.1** Context **1** was a soft, very dark grey-brown, loamy silt topsoil deposit. It was a fairly sterile deposit with its inclusions comprising well sorted sub-rounded chalk <30cm in size at 30%, ceramic building material (CBM) in the form of peg tile at <1%, charcoal flecks at 5%, and contained two sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and three rib bone fragments showing signs of butchery marks. The deposit was up to 400mm at its maximum depth.
- 4.2** Context **2** was a stiff, but friable, colluvium deposit that sat above Context **3** and directly above the natural chalk, Context **8**, where Context **3** was not present along the length of the negative lynchet, Context **9**. It was light brown in colour and was of a clayey silt composition with a strong clay component. Its inclusions were poorly sorted chalk pieces <40mm in size at 40% and rare angular flints <140mm in size at <1%. This deposit also contained one sherd of unabraded medieval pottery. At its maximum depth this context was 1.25m deep.
- 4.3** Context **3** was the typical Downland natural weathered chalk lens between the underlying chalk and colluvium. It only appeared towards the south-west of the main excavation, where the lynchet appeared to start. It was a compact and weathered deposit, containing 80% of poorly sorted chalk pieces or gravel up to 80mm in size in a buff-brown coloured silty-clay matrix and approximately 100mm in depth.
- 4.4** Context **4** was a cut for what was initially thought to be a rectangular feature orientated north-east – southwest, but after cleaning back and excavation proved to be a L-shaped cut that had a diffuse edge with Context **1** and clearly cut Context **3** and the natural chalk, Context **8**. It was 800-900mm in width narrowing to 700mm at the base and 1.45m N/E by S/W and 2.4m N/W by S/E in length and was approximately 1m deep (Plate 2). The feature continued outside the excavation area towards the north-west for approximately 900mm and was interpreted as a WW2 slit trench, probably *c.*1940.



Plate 2: WW2 Slit Trench (Cut **4**)

- 4.5** Context **5** was a loose, red sand that had been used to backfill Context **4** and contained corrugated iron sheets, a 7 strand steel wire along with several loose 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century un-mortared bricks, that had been reused. These bricks were interpreted as being in-situ as part of a rough floor for the trench and were part of the original construction and use of Context **4**.
- 4.6** Context **6** was a modern made ground deposit associated with the new build and was much in evidence towards the bottom of the slope towards the east of the site, above the drainage run. It was a soft/loose, clayey-silt, dark grey-black in colour and 250mm thick and sat above the topsoil, Context **1**.
- 4.7** Context **7** was a soft, subsoil deposit that had formed above the colluvium (Context **2**) and had a diffuse edge with the topsoil (Context **1**). It was only present in the excavation for the drainage run and was not found elsewhere on site. It was mid brown in colour and was of a clayey silt composition with a strong clay component. Its inclusions were sorted chalk pieces <20mm in size at 3% and charcoal at 2%. Context **8** was the underlying natural chalk and was up to 200mm to LOE in the drainage run, where it sat below Context **2**, but elsewhere on site its maximum depth reached 1.2m to the L.O.E.
- 4.8** Context **9** was a combined cut/fill of the negative lynchet cut into the natural chalk (Plate 3). It was orientated approximately south-west to north-east. The lynchet was approximately 1.1m wide at the south-western end, becoming wider at the north-eastern end of the excavation where it was approximately 2.8m wide. The fill was essentially the same deposit as Context **2**, but with a slightly more greyish hue and was light greyish-brown in colour and approximately 200mm in depth and best represents an initial primary fill of material of fine material washing in and derived from Context **2** before a slower infilling as Context **2** gradually moved downslope towards the valley bottom. Inclusions in the fill amounted to very occasional chalk fleck and pieces at <10mm at 1%. No finds came from this deposit with the bulk of material coming from the interface between Context **2** and **9**.



Plate 3: Lynchet Feature

- 4.9** Context **10** was the combined cut and fill number of another WW2 slit trench (Plate 4) that sat to the north of the other WW2 trench, Context **4**. It was approximately 1.2m wide and 1.1m deep and filled with same red and orange sand as Context **4**. It had vertical sides with a flat base and there was also the remains of an in-situ vertical wooden stake against the northern side of the trench.



Plate 4: WW2 Slit Trench (Cut **10**)

- 4.10** Context **11** was an ephemeral linear feature running approximately north-east to the south-west underneath the excavations for the driveway. It was 650mm wide, 130mm in depth and 3.2m in length where it appeared to disappear. This feature cut Context **13** and apart from two residual worked flint pieces, contained no dating evidence. Context **12** was the fill of Context **11**, the linear feature. It was very similar to the deposit that it cut into and most probably derived from, Context **13**.
- 4.11** Context **13** was a firm, colluvium deposit that sat above Context **8** in the driveway excavations and had a diffuse edge with the topsoil, Context **1**. It was mid grey-brown in colour and was of a clayey silt composition with a strong clay component. Its inclusions were sorted chalk pieces <40mm in size at 3% and represents the same deposit as Context **2**, but was much shallower, been only approximately 130-140mm in depth and sat immediately above the natural chalk.

## 5.0 Finds

**5.0.1** A moderately sized assemblage of artefacts was recovered during the watching brief, and is summarised in Tables 1 and 2 below.

**5.0.2** The assemblage from the site is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and is recommended for discard, apart from the worked bone.

**Table 1:** Finds quantification (Number/weight)

Context	Pottery	Ceramic Building Material	Flintwork	Other	Comments
1	2/56g	Peg tile 2/206g	-	Glass 1/134g Metal 5/46g	c. 1800-1900
2	1/8g	-	5/70g	-	c. 1175-1250/75
2/9	-	Peg tile 2/184g	1/32g	-	Mid C16th – mid 18th
4	-	Brick 4/3588g	-	Metal 1/64g	C18th – 19 <sup>th</sup>
5	-	-	-	Glass 1/550g Stone 1/109g Mortar 1/118g Metal 3/93g	C19th
12	-	-	1/1g 1FF flint/2g	-	Unknown

### 5.1 The Pottery by Luke Barber

**5.1.1** Only three sherds of pottery were recovered from the site during the archaeological work. By far the earliest was recovered from Context **2**. This consists of part of an unabraded base from an oxidised cooking pot tempered with moderate medium sand and common fine flint grits to 1mm. The vessel is well formed and can best be placed between 1175 and 1250/75.

**5.1.2** The other two sherds are of 19<sup>th</sup> century date and were recovered from Context **1**. They consist of a 13g sherd from a Midlands slipware bowl and a base sherd from a large glazed red earthenware vessel. Both have not been subjected to extensive reworking.

## **5.2.0 The Ceramic Building Material** by Luke Barber

**5.2.1** Brick was only recovered from Context **5**. Of the pieces recovered only one had any complete dimensions: a well formed and medium fired example some 110mm wide by 65mm tall. This, like the other associated pieces, is tempered with sparse fine sand with sparse coal inclusions to 2mm. One piece is still set into a grey sandy mortar. Although the general finish and firing of these bricks would suggest a 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century date, the tempering and dimensions are more in keeping with an 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

**5.2.2** Four pieces of peg tile ware recovered from the site. The earliest of these were recovered from Context **2/9**. This deposit produced quite crudely finished, though medium fired, fragments measuring up to 16mm thick. The tiles, tempered with moderate iron pellets to 3mm and common marl pellets/streaks, can only be broadly placed between the mid-16<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The peg tiles from Context **1** are less ambiguous of date; both are well formed and hard fired types typical of the later 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **5.3 Prehistoric Flintwork** by Chris Butler

**5.3.1** A surprisingly small assemblage of flintwork was found during the watching brief. All of the pieces had a light blue-white patination, typical of Chalk Downland flint.

**5.3.2** The flintwork comprised four hard hammer-struck flakes and three flake fragments, mostly from Context **2**. These are all typical of later prehistoric flintwork, perhaps dating to the Bronze Age. A single fragment of fire fractured flint came from Context **12**.

## **5.4 Animal Bone** by Hayley Forsyth

**5.4.1** A moderate assemblage of animal bones were recovered from four contexts during the excavation and comprised of 161 fragments weighing 1,506g (Table 2). The bone was identified using Schmid<sup>9</sup>, recorded age using Silver<sup>10</sup>, measured using Von den Driesch<sup>11</sup> and calculated withers height using Von den Driesch and Boessneck<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Schmid, E. (1972) *Atlas of Animal Bones for Prehistorians, Archaeologists, and Quaternary Geologists*. London, Elsevier Publishing.

<sup>10</sup> Silver, I. A (1969) The ageing of domestic animals. In D. Brothwell & E. Higgs (eds.) *Science in Archaeology*. 283-302.

<sup>11</sup> Von den Driesch, A. (1976) *A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites*. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.

<sup>12</sup> Von den Driesch, A and Boessneck, J. (1974) Sonderdruck aus, *Säugetierkundliche Mitteilungen* BLV-Verlagsgesellschaft München 40,22 jhg. Heft 4, Seite 325-348.

Table 2: Animal Bone (number/weight)

Context	Animal Bone
1	3/66g
2	119/178g
2/9 Interface	38/1,246g
Spoil heap	1/16g

**5.4.2** The assemblage comprised a number of species, predominately sheep/goat, horse, large unidentifiable mammal and small unidentifiable mammal. The bones showed little evidence of erosion or weathering and little evidence of butchery. Context 1 contained 3 rib bone fragments from a large unidentifiable mammal. Multiple saw cuts and chops were present on these remains suggesting processing possibly for food consumption.

**5.4.3** Context 2 produced 119 bone fragments from sheep/goat and large unidentifiable mammal(s). The sheep/goat remains were semi-articulated and the presence of three left femurs indicates that there are three sheep/goats within this context. The elements present; femurs, tibias, vertebrae, pelvis and phalanges are all juvenile remains as the epiphyses are unfused. The lack of fusion in the pelvis suggests that the sheep/goat remains were less than 10 months old at death. Also present was a juvenile sheep/goat metatarsal that showed evidence of being worked for use as a tool (see below).

**5.4.4** Context 2/9 Interface produced 38 bone fragments from horse, sheep/goat, large and small unidentifiable mammals. The horse bones comprised of right and left metatarsals, an incomplete left tibia, calcaneus, astragalus and 1<sup>st</sup> phalange. Measurement of the complete horse metatarsal gave a withers height estimate of 173.07cm. The sheep/goat remains included a right and left unfused femur, less than 2 ½ - 3 years at death, likely to be from the same individual and a left tibia fragment. The large unidentifiable mammal bones were represented by 25 long bone fragments and the small unidentifiable mammal bones by 1.

## **5.5 Glass by Chris Butler**

**5.5.1** Two complete bottles were found, both of which date to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first was a 2oz brown marmite jar, with FGC/3 embossed on the base, from Context 1.

**5.5.2** The second bottle was a clear glass machine made bottle 216mm tall, 79mm diameter body and a broad neck/lip with an internal diameter of 36mm, from Context 5. Engraved on the side, and in-filled in red is: WYATT & SONS / 59 & 60 JUBILEE STREET / BRIGHTON / PHONE:- 3836.

## 5.6 Other Material by Luke Barber and Chris Butler

**5.6.1** Context **5** produced a single piece of 19<sup>th</sup> century Welsh roofing slate and a fragment of render. The latter has two layers, one in a buff sandy mortar, covered by a later skim in a light grey sandy mortar. Both mortars would not be out of place in the 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

**5.6.2** A few iron pieces were found, including a 4” nail from Context **1**, a length of 7-strand wire from Context **4** and a small tent peg with loop and two fragments of a possible bicycle rim from Context **5**.

## 5.7 Environmental Report by Mike Allen

**5.7.1** Two sample elements were provided The two sample elements (flots and snails recovered from 4mm residues) were from the base of the negative lynchet (Context **9**), and the colluvial fill of the negative lynchet (Context **2**).

**5.7.2** The residue from Context **9**, was examined to determine if this was waterlogged. It comprised fine chalk pieces and no organic matter so was re-processed and dried. The residue was re-floated, by bucket wash-over flotation in the AEA lab. The flot was retained on 0.5mm mesh sieves, and residues fractionated into 4mm, 2mm, 1mm and 0.5mm elements, and dried. The coarse residue fraction (>4mm) were dried, sorted for artefacts and ecofacts, weighed and discarded (Table 3).

Table 3. Post processing actions.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Residue and flot description</i>	<i>Waterlogged ✓ / ✗</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>&gt;4mm</i>	<i>&gt;4mm wt (g)</i>
9	Calcareous fine residue	✗	flot & residue dried	chalk pieces	499
2	Shells	✗	washed to recover small shells from interstices		

**5.5.3** The flot and any environmental remains recovered from the >4mm residue, was scanned under a ×10 - ×45 stereo-binocular microscope and the nature of charred plant and charcoal remains recorded in Table 4. The volume of flot is the charred remains plus modern rooty material.



Table 4: Flot and residue content

<i>Context</i>	<i>Sample vol (L)</i>	<i>Flot vol (ml) charred/roots</i>	<i>grain</i>	<i>Weed seeds/c haff</i>	<i>Flot charcoal &gt; 4mm</i>	<i>notes</i>	<i>analysis</i>
2	not given	-	- / -	-	-	land snails see Table 3	
9	not given	2 / 28	- / -	-	-	land snails see Table 3	

KEY: A = &gt;10, S = 5-9; C = &lt;5; + = PRESENT. ANALYSIS: P = CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; C = CHARCOAL

**5.7.4** No charred plant remains or charcoal were present in the flot from Context **9** nor from washing the recovered large snails from Context **2**. The flot (Context **9**) and shells (Context **2**) were scanned under a  $\times 10$  -  $\times 45$  stereo-binocular microscope and the taxa and species are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Assessment of the land snails

	<i>flot</i>	<i>recovered shells</i>
<i>Context</i>	base of lynchet	lynchet colluvium
<i>Context</i>	9	2
<i>Open country species</i>		
<i>Vertigo</i>	✓	-
<i>Vallonia</i>	✓	-
<i>Helicella itala</i>	✓	2
Introduced Helicellids	✓	-
<i>Catholic species</i>		
<i>Trochulus hispidus</i>	✓	3
<i>Cochlicopa</i>	✓	1
<i>Punctum pygmaeum</i>	✓	-
<i>Cepaea</i>		1
<i>Cornu aspersum</i>		1
<i>Shade-loving species</i>		
<i>Carychium</i>	✓	-
<i>Oxychilus</i>	✓	-
<i>Aegopinella</i>	✓	-
<i>Trochulus striolatus</i>		1
<i>Burrowing (?recent) species</i>		
<i>Cecilioides acilcula</i>	✓	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	c. 60	10

**5.7.5** The flot (context 9) contained a number of shells, and scanning of the residues showed shell fragments including apexes present. Overall numbers of shells are likely to exceed 100 and make the assemblage statically viable for palaeo-environmental analysis and interpretation. The flot assemblage includes a range of species (10 taxa) of mixed palaeo-habitats preferences (Table 3). Open country species were numerically and taxonomically mostly numerous, but the presence of shade-loving species and the catholic species (especially *Punctum pygmaeum*) suggest the presence of more mesic local habitats. The presence of *Cornu aspersum* indicates a Romano-British or later date and the presence of *Candidula* (Introduced Helicellids) suggest a medieval or later date for this assemblage.



**5.7.6** The recovered shells (Context **2**) contain typically the larger and more robust species, and are not representative of the full assemblage. The presence of *Cornu aspersum* indicates a Romano-British or later date (unless this was a vacuous rubble fill into which this species had entered to hibernate).

**5.7.7** The flot assemblage (Context **9**) is large enough to analyse (and more sample is available to process). The assemblage indicates a generally open environment, but analysis may be able to define the presence of scrub land, or rough pasture or ungrazed grassland or short grazed trampled grassland, or pasture or arable environments. Analysis may be able to determine if this lynchet (field boundary) existed as an open grassy boundary, one with long grass or even a hedged boundary.

**5.7.8** Most of the shells from Context **2** are catholic, and this together with the unrepresentative nature of this assemblage make defining potential difficult.

**5.7.9** The land snails have the potential to define the nature of the lynched field boundary and possibly to determine if this was a hedged or more open land division. Depending on the content, date and significance of Context **9**, this assemblage is worth analysing, and the full residues exist for sorting and extraction to provide a full and total assemblage.

## **5.8 Worked bone implement** by Chris Butler

**5.8.1** A juvenile sheep/goat metatarsal was found in Context 2, and appears to have been modified at one end for working (Plate 5). The bone is 115mm in length, and has eight pyramidal teeth cut into one end, presumably to form a tool, perhaps used in weaving or spinning. Similar tools have been found in Iron Age contexts, although these generally have longer teeth.

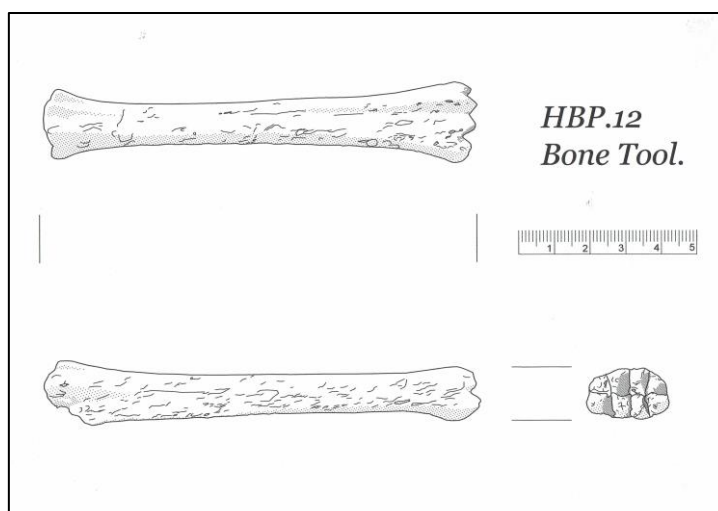


Plate 5: Worked Bone

## 6.0 Discussion

- 6.1** The stratigraphy of the site was fairly straightforward, with a small assemblage of datable material and a moderate collection of animal bone. The amount of colluvium recorded during the watching brief and the presence of a negative lynchet of some considerable size, is also excellent evidence for early arable farming.
- 6.2** The dating evidence from the excavation was slim and to obtain a fuller picture for the date of formation for the colluvium, more evidence would be needed, perhaps a C14 date of the bone from just above the lynchet (Context **2/9**), along with sedimentological and molluscan evidence to help illuminate any formation processes and to establish if there were there periods of fallow or pasture interspersed between main arable phases and the nature of the lynchet itself after formation?
- 6.3** However, it is generally accepted that widespread clearance for farming began in the Early Bronze Age and gained momentum throughout the pre-historic period into the Romano-British period. The depth of the colluvium on-site would certainly suggest that there was intensive arable agriculture further up slope, spreading down towards the valley bottom, developing over a considerable period of time.
- 6.4** Evidence for this early farming was recently discovered further south along School Lane on Land adjacent to Fairlight/Saddlestones<sup>13</sup>. The same colluvium deposit was present as well, suggesting the same intensive cultivation was spread out over the surrounding landscape.
- 6.5** The dating evidence from the interface between the primary fill of the negative lynchet and the colluvium, Context **2/9**, suggests that the lynchet had formed before the mid-16<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the colluvium infilling of the feature dates to this period and this appears to be supported by the environmental evidence. How long the lynchet remained open prior to the infilling of colluvium is open to debate. The presence of the sherd of medieval pot would suggest the colluvium was certainly forming during the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 6.6** The L-shaped feature on site containing modern metal-work is consistent with a WW2 slit trench, giving an excellent field of fire down into the valley containing the A273 road, which was the original route of the London-Brighton road at the time of the Second World War. Slightly further to the north of this feature was another slit trench. The presence of two slit trenches suggests that there was a defensive position situated at this site, possibly during 1940. However the surrounding South Downs was used as a training area later in the Second World War, so the trenches could also be related to this later activity.

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<sup>13</sup> Atkin, D. 2013 *Watching Brief at land adjacent to Fairlight/Staddlestones, School Lane, Pyecombe, West Sussex*. CBAS0323

**6.7** The methodology adopted for this watching brief proved to be satisfactory, and the confidence rating should be considered to be very reliable.

## **7.0 Acknowledgements**

**7.1** We would like to thank Albany Homes for appointing us to undertake this project and their contractors for their co-operation throughout.

**7.2** The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler, who also produced the WSI. Hayley Forsyth reported on the bone assemblage and Luke Barber and Chris Butler reported on the remaining finds. Dr Mike Allen reported on the environmental evidence. Andrew Bradshaw digitised the drawings. The project was monitored for WSCC by John Mills.

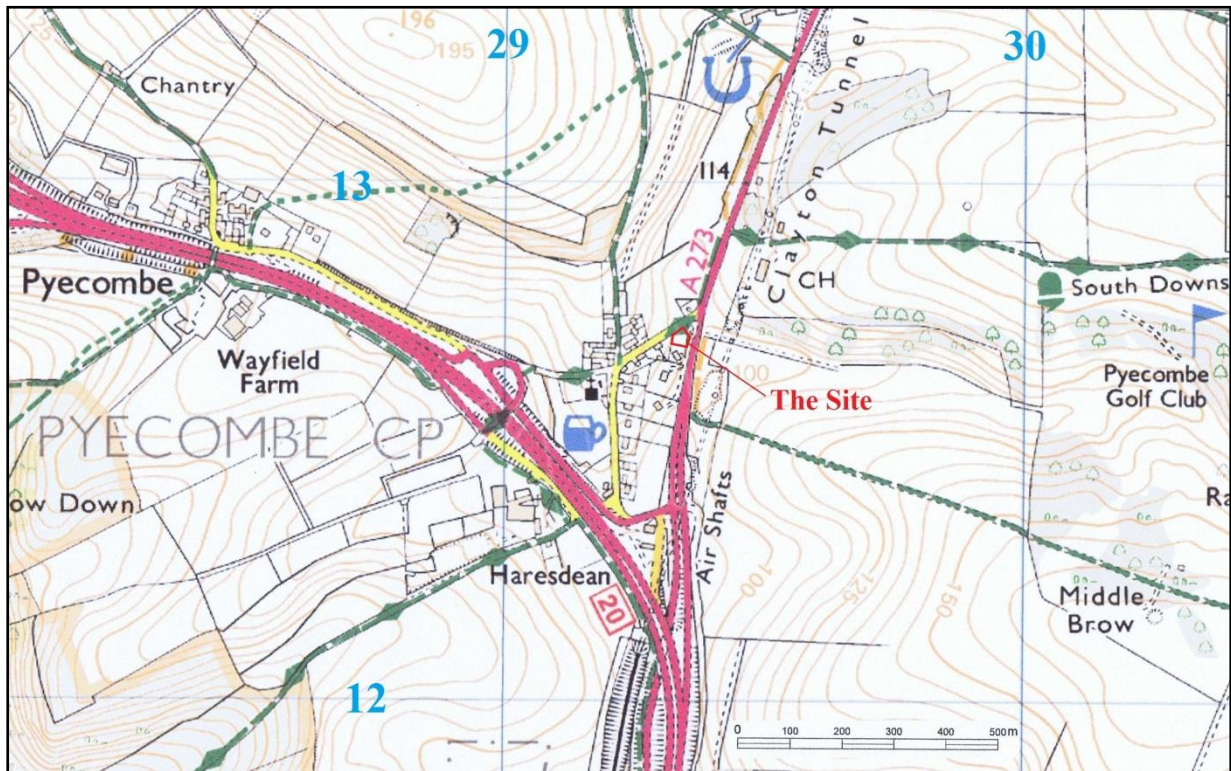


Fig. 1: High Bank, Pyecombe: Site location map  
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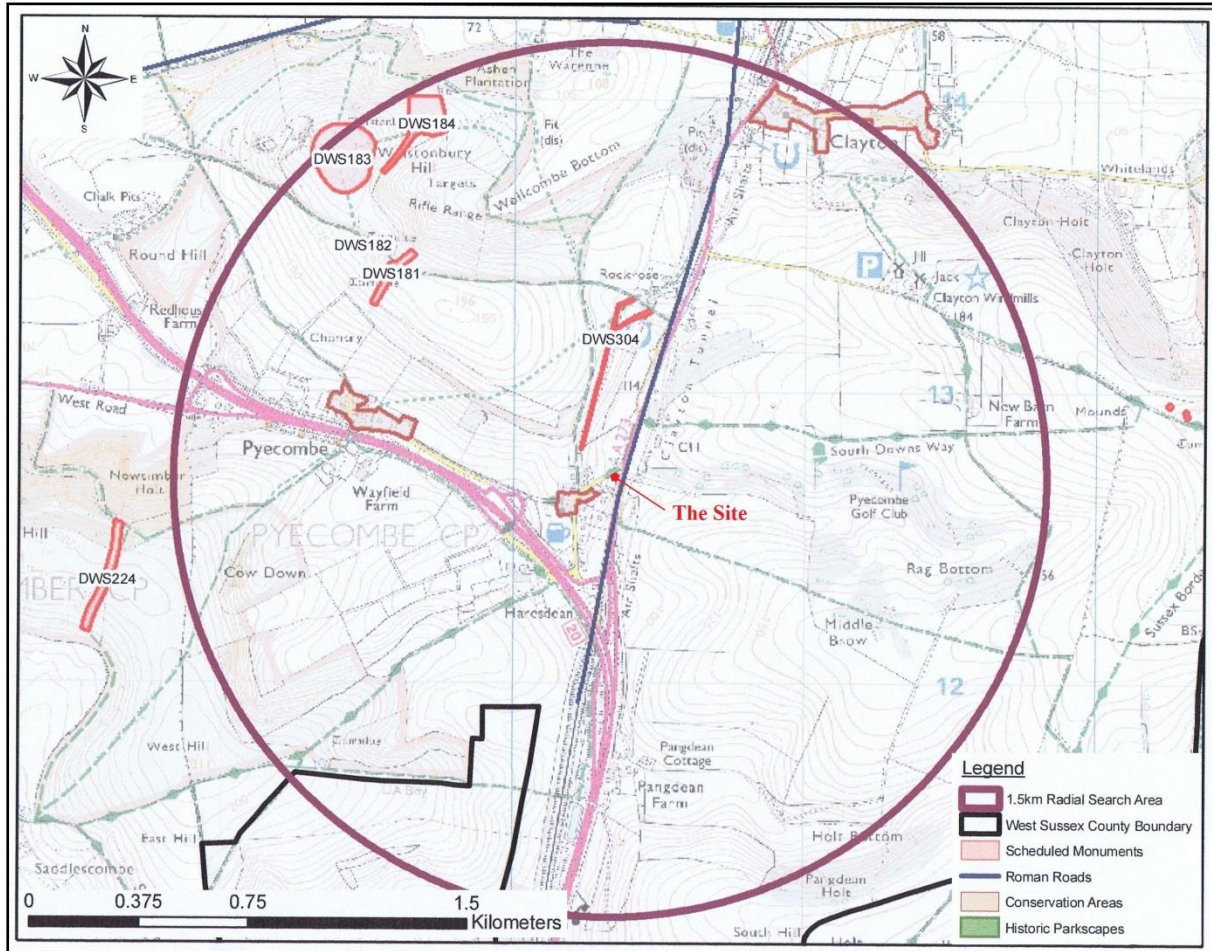
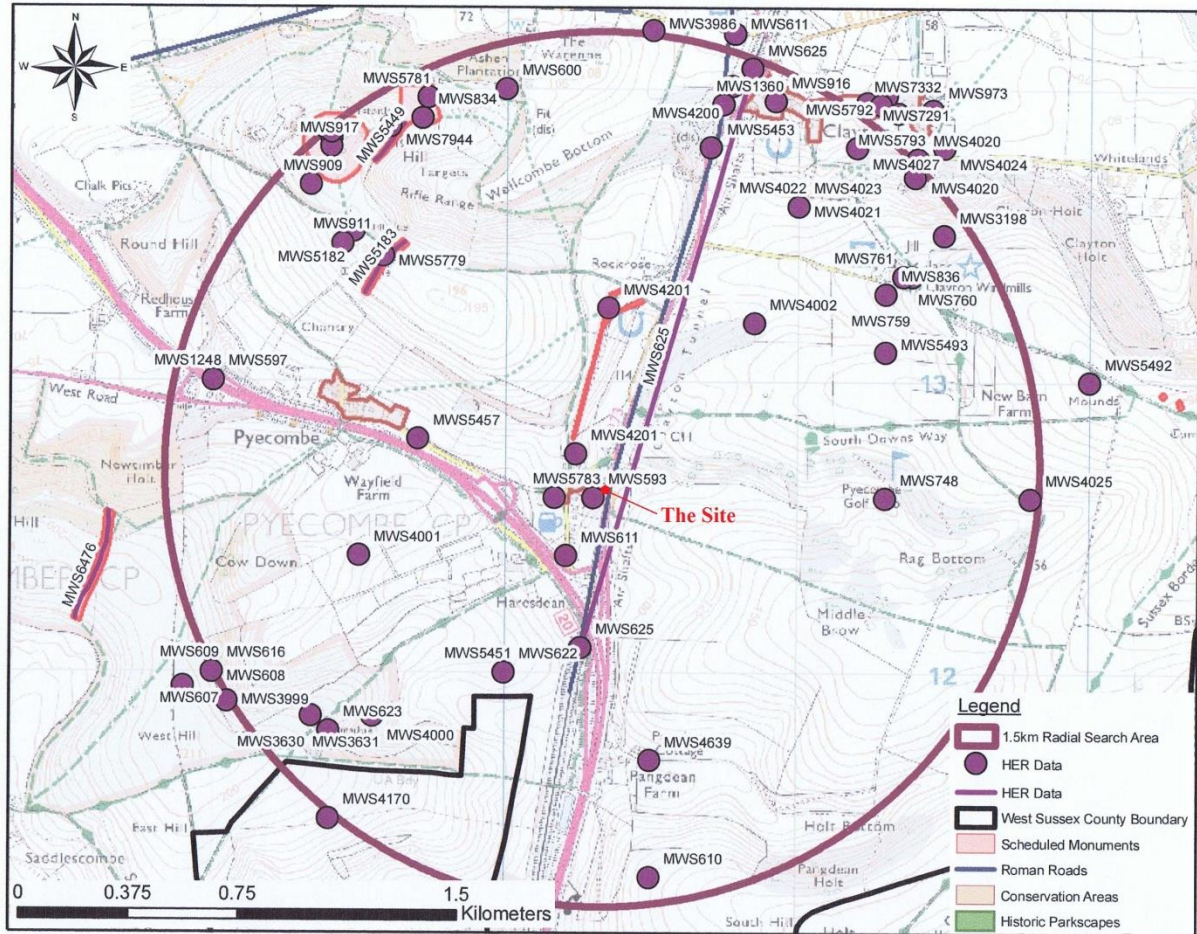


Fig. 2: High Bank, Pyecombe: Map of Scheduled Monuments, Conservation areas etc  
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**Fig. 3: High Bank, Pyecombe: HER map**  
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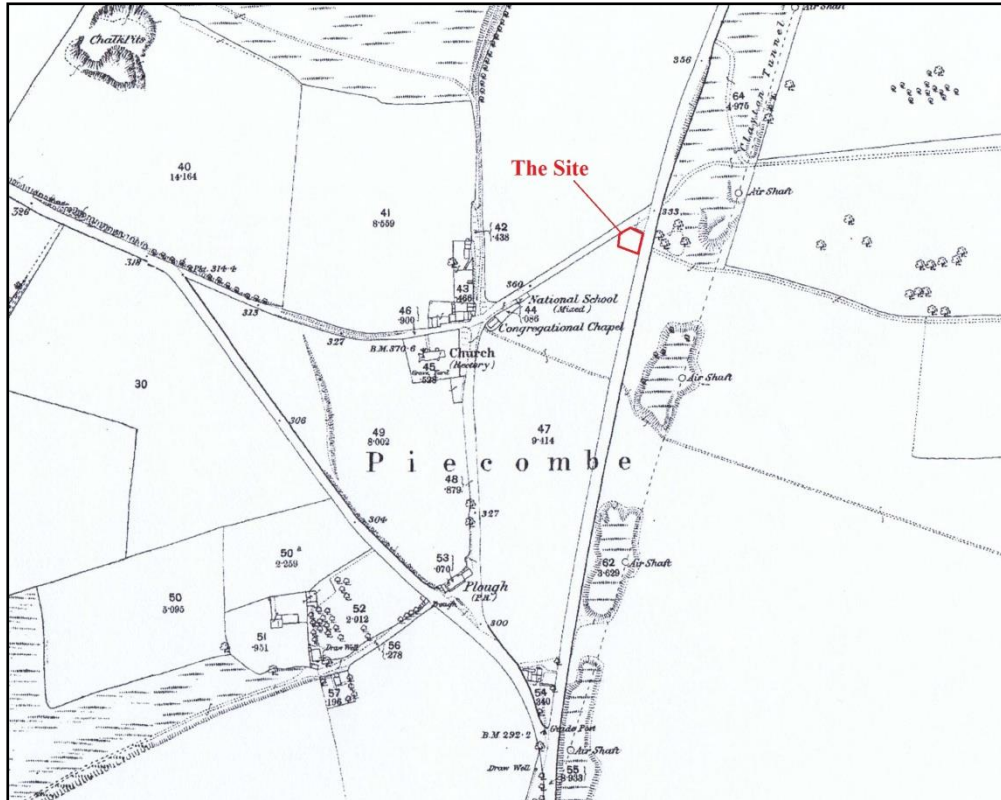


Fig. 4: High Bank, Pyecombe: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map 1875

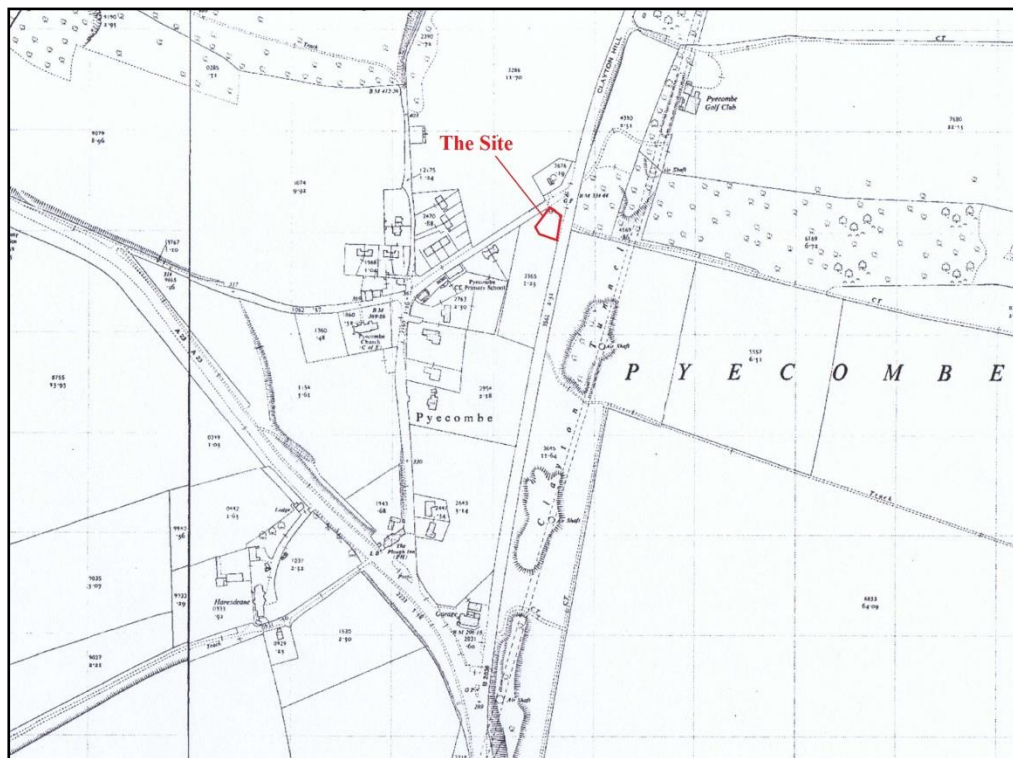


Fig. 5: High Bank, Pyecombe: 1951 OS map  
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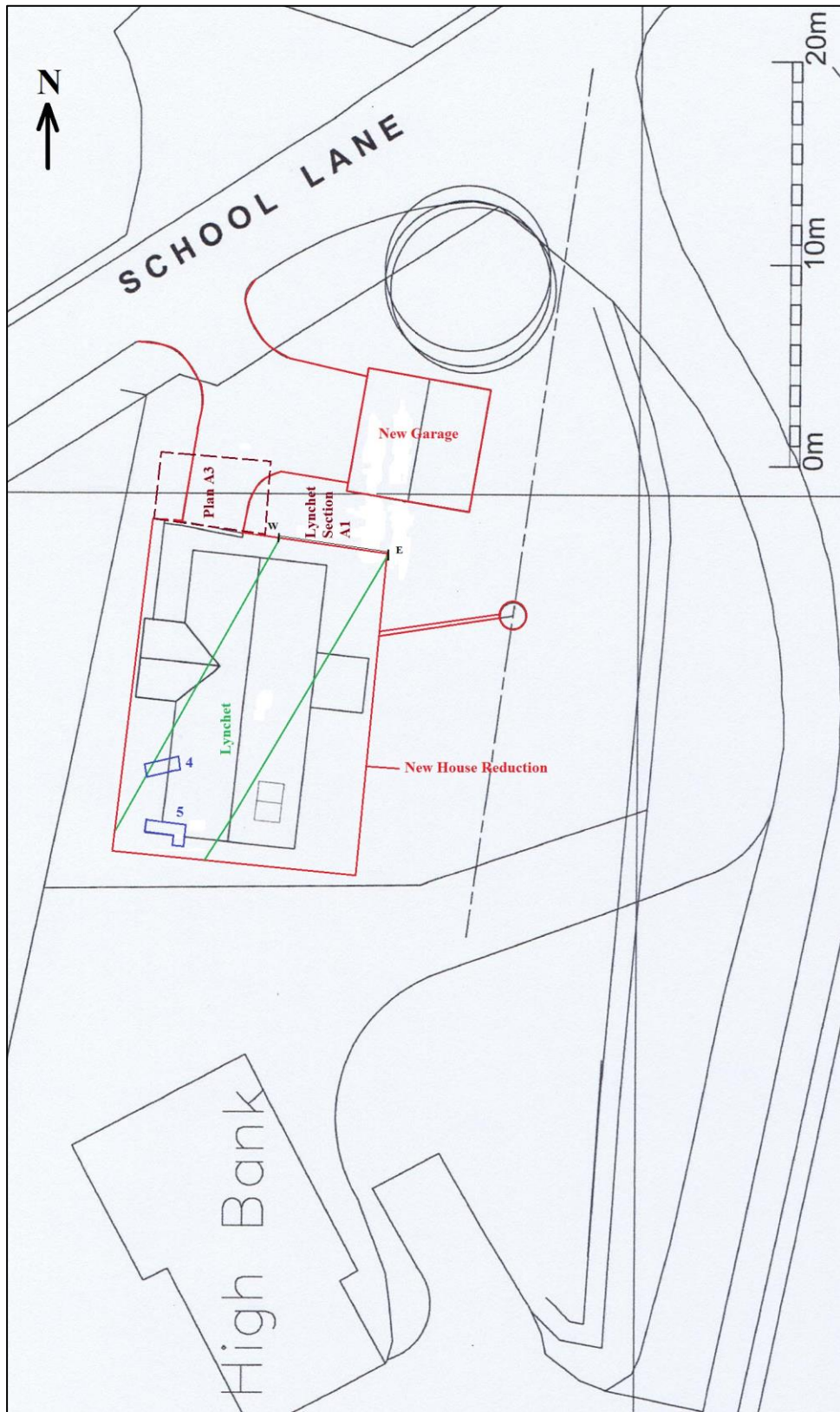


Fig. 6: High Bank, Pyecombe: Site Plan showing area monitored and features found (adapted from GWP Architects drawing)



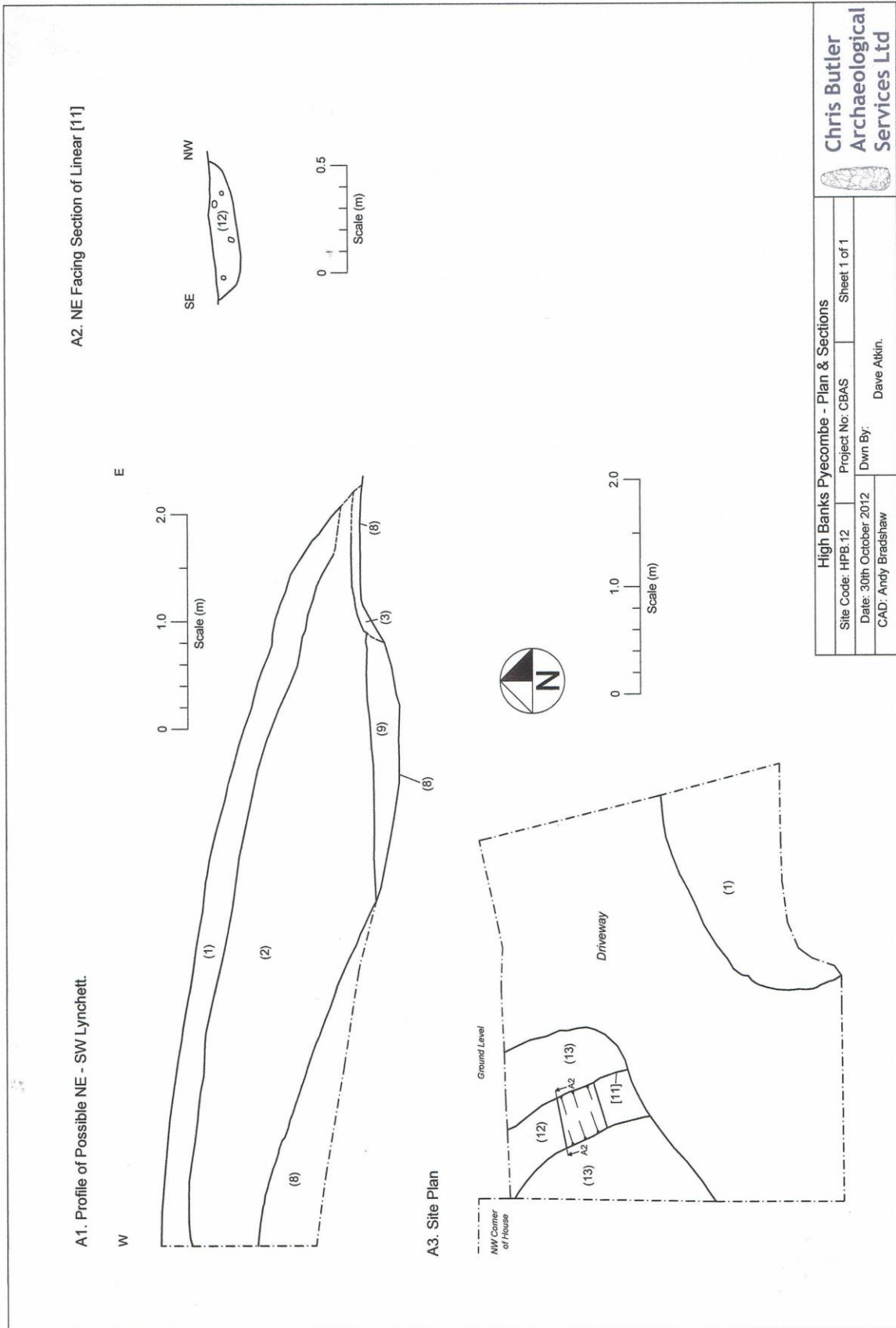


Fig. 7: High Bank, Pyecombe: Plan and sections

## Appendix 1: Levels

<b>Location</b>	<b>Height</b>
West end of lynchet (top)	103.6m OD
East end of lynchet (top)	101.75m OD
Top of slit trench 4	103.03m OD
Top of slit trench 5	103.71m OD

## Appendix 2: HER Summary Form

Site Code	HBP12					
Identification Name and Address	High Banks, Pyecombe, West Sussex.					
County, District &/or Borough	Mid Sussex District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 2931 1254					
Geology	Upper and Middle Chalk.					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief <b>X</b>	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field <b>X</b>	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 16/10/12-02/11/12	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Albany Homes					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MfA					
Project Supervisor	David Atkin					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED <b>X</b>	PM <b>X</b>	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained during the ground-works associated with the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to High Banks, School Lane, Pyecombe, West Sussex. Ground reduction was carried out using an 8 tonne machine with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. A single sherd of medieval pottery dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the colluvium, Context 2. The only other pottery comprised two 19<sup>th</sup> century sherds from the topsoil. A small assemblage of worked flint debitage was also recovered along with a small assemblage of bone, together with a single piece of worked bone, perhaps associated with weaving. A negative lynchet was recorded during the excavation along with two slit trenches dating from WW2. An undated ephemeral linear approximately 3m long cut into the colluvium was also noted.</i></p>						

## **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

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 for Archaeologists, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society. He was a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex, and until recently taught A-Level Archaeology at Bexhill 6<sup>th</sup> Form College having qualified (Cert. Ed.) as a teacher in 2006. 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 recently undertaken large landscape surveys of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren and is Co-Director of the Barcombe Roman Villa excavation project.

His publications include *Prehistoric Flintwork*, *East Sussex Under Attack* and *West Sussex Under Attack*, all of which are published by Tempus Publishing Ltd.

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

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