

Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services Ltd



Archaeological Watching Brief at Winton Grange, Alfriston, East Sussex

SDNP/13/00236/FUL

Project No. CBAS0417

by David Atkin

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried during the ground reduction for a new driveway and stable building on land at Winton Grange, Winton Road, Alfriston, East Sussex. All excavations were carried out by a 13 tonne tracked excavator using a 1.8m toothless ditching bucket. No archaeological features were noted during the watching brief but a small assemblage of worked flint dating from the Mesolithic Period through to the Bronze Age was recovered along with two small Roman sherds dating to the 1^{st} – 2^{nd} centuries as well as some late post-medieval period artefacts.

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HER Summary Form

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd had been commissioned by Mr N Pybus to carry out an archaeological watching brief in connection with a planning application (SDNP/13/00236/FUL) for a new stables building and access track at Winton Grange, Winton Street, Alfriston, East Sussex, TQ 5210 0390 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The site is situated within an Archaeological Notification Area defining a Saxon cemetery and deserted medieval village at Winton Street DES8869 (Fig.2). There are other Archaeological Notification Area at Alfriston, Berwick Court Farm and Milton Court Farm. There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the vicinity of the site; The Rookery, Burlough Castle and Long Burgh, although none of these are affected by the development (Fig. 6). HER information has been derived from search ref 050/13.
- 1.3 Alfriston is first recorded in 1086, but may well have originated in the Late Saxon period. The origin of Winton Street is also Saxon, possibly having derived from *wigentone*, 'the farm or place of Wiga's people'. A Saxon cemetery was discovered at The Sanctuary, Winton, a short distance to the west of the site.
- **1.4** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319/443, is Chalk with Head to the north and east.
- 1.5 The South Downs National Park Authority have requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation and recording be carried out at the site, and a Written Scheme of Investigation² was prepared in accordance with a brief from the Archaeology Team at ESCC.
- **1.6** The watching brief was required to:
 - 1. Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains, including possible burials, within the proposed development area and construction of the drive.
 - 2. Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
 - 3. Establish the ecofactual/environmental potential of archaeological features.

Clarke, J. 2011 Alfriston: A Sussex Market Town and its Makers, Lewes, Rookery Books

² Butler, C. 2013 Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Winton Grange, Alfriston, East Sussex. CBAS

2.0 Historical & Archaeological Background (Fig. 3)

- A number of Palaeolithic handaxes have been found in the Cuckmere Valley, whilst others have come from north of Seaford (MES8 and MES58)³ and East Blatchington. It has been suggested that this material may have derived from the Clay-with-Flints outcrops which tend to cap some of the highest points of the South Downs⁴. Several small areas of Clay-with-Flints are present to the west of Alfriston.
- A Mesolithic flintworking site (MES2710) was identified in Alfriston sometime prior to 1977. The exact location of this site is unknown; the HER places it to the immediate north of North Road on Head deposit overlying chalk. The large assemblage from the site comprised 31 axes, 1 pick, 1 core and 200 blades and flakes. A single axe (MES2713) was discovered to the opposite side of the river, at 'Milton' (i.e. Milton Court Farm) in 1890.
- A Neolithic long barrow *Long Burgh* (MES2680) stands to the west of North Road in Alfriston, on high ground that overlooks the village and the Cuckmere valley; Neolithic flintwork has been collected from around the barrow⁵. Three Neolithic scrapers (MES2713) were found at 'Milton' in the late 19th century, whilst a polished 'flint chisel or celt' (MES576) was discovered near the same area in *c*.1846. A fourth scraper (MES7000) was found in 1978 at the east end of Winton Street; this road runs west-east to the north of Alfriston. Although undated, the scraper could be Neolithic in date. A flint tool (MES13287), dated broadly to between the Middle Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, was recovered whilst metal detecting land further to the west of this findspot, on land to the north of Winton Street.
- 2.4 The evidence suggests that the surrounding Downland landscape may have been quite densely populated by small farming settlements, surrounded by fields during the Middle and Later Bronze Age. Examples have been found on the Downs to the southwest of Alfriston, with an example fully excavated at Black Patch⁶. Bronze Age barrows (MES2674, 2681 & 2682) are sited close to the Neolithic long barrow, perhaps suggesting a degree of continuity in settlement pattern between the two periods.
- 2.5 The Iron Age is poorly represented in and around Alfriston. The only recorded sites are the findspots of a silver coin (MES18365), dated to the 1st century BC, which was recently found by a metal detector to the immediate west of the village, and pottery found to the north of Winton Street (MES12834).

Woodcock, A 1981 The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Periods in Sussex, Oxford, BAR 94.

⁴ Wymer, J. 1999 *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain*, Vol. **1**, Wessex Archaeology & English Heritage, p171.

⁵ Butler, C. 2001 'Horned scrapers and other prehistoric flintwork from Alfriston, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **139**, 215-223.

⁶ Drewett, P. 1982 'Later Bronze Age downland economy and excavations at Black Patch, East Sussex', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **48**, 321-400.

- 2.6 The Roman period around the site is only represented by three findspots; two were recovered by metal detector to the west side of Alfriston village. One findspot comprises a silver and copper alloy coin (MES11524), dated to the 3rd century AD, whilst the other is of a copper alloy spatula (MES9416). The final find spot of Roman pottery is to the north of the site (MES12833).
- 2.7 Place-name evidence can provide a date of origin for some settlements and in the case of Alfriston dates it to the Saxon period as the name derived from 'Alvricestone', which means 'the farmstead of Aelfric' in Old English⁷. However, there seems to have been an earlier Saxon settlement within the wider area of the site, which Alfriston may have replaced⁸. This was known as 'Wigentone', 'the farmstead of Wiga's people', which survives today as Winton Street.
- Although the Early Saxon settlement of Wigentone has not been found, its cemetery (MES2683) was discovered in 1912 whilst building a house, called 'Sanctuary', on Winton Street. Some 120 graves were exposed. At least 73 graves of the 99 excavated contained grave goods, mainly of personal ornamentation or weaponry. Further excavation in 1914 revealed an additional 32 graves, of which 29 contained grave goods. The cemetery appears to date to between 475 and 625AD. A copper alloy brooch (MES9417), dating to between the 5th and 7th centuries, was found by a metal detector on land to the immediate south of the cemetery. It may belong to an isolated burial.
- 2.9 The date of 625AD may be around the time when the settlement supposedly shifted southwards to the site of Alfriston⁹. Eight graves (MES2706) discovered to the west of the village in *c*.1896 are likely to belong to this later settlement¹⁰, as they probably date to between the late 7th and 8th centuries. The main cemetery site may, however, have been established further to the southwest of Alfriston¹¹.
- 2.10 The settlement of Winton or 'Wigentone' (MES2705) was recorded in the Domesday Book¹². It was held by Reinburt from Robert, the Count of Eu. The Manor of 'Alvricestone' (Alfriston) was held by Gilbert and Ranulf from William the Conqueror's half-brother Robert, the Count of Mortain¹³.
- 2.11 As Alfriston grew in size and importance during the medieval period, it is likely that Winton shrank to become a small hamlet centred around the Manorial farm. Winton common fields are recorded as being a holding of the Manor of Alfriston-Maffey¹⁴ in the later medieval period, perhaps reflecting a decline in the importance of Winton.

⁷ Harris, R.B. 2008 Alfriston: Historic Character Assessment Report, Sussex Extensive Urban Survey.

⁸ Clarke, J. 2011 Alfriston: A Sussex Market Town and its Makers, Lewes, Rookery Books.

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ ibid

¹² http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk

¹³ http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk

¹⁴ Clarke, J. 2011 Alfriston: A Sussex Market Town and its Makers, Lewes, Rookery Books.

- 2.12 Winton Barn (MES7024) dates from the 16th century, and is mentioned in the wills of various members of the Levett family in the 16th -17th centuries. A number of the buildings along Winton Street date to the 17th century, including Winton House (MES21646) which was refaced in the 18th century, and its associated dovecote (DES6297). Other 17th century buildings include Thatchover (DES5188) and Well Cottage (DES6310).
- 2.13 John Speed's map of Sussex, dated 1610 (not reproduced), simply plots the location of 'Winton' (DES2705), whilst John Deward's map of 'Alfriston', dated 1618 does not extend as far north as Winton, which by this time had reduced to half the size of its medieval predecessor. Yeakell & Gardiner (1778-83) shows Winton House and a number of other buildings along Winton Street. Interestingly at this time Alfriston Road is shown taking a westerly route from Berwick Court Farm to follow the course of the current track to Winton, before turning east down Winton Street before resuming its southerly route along the current Road (Fig. 4).
- **2.14** By the 1st Edition OS map (1876) the Alfriston road follows its current route. The buildings at Winton Farm and Winton House are shown, with the area of the site being a field crossed by a footpath from south-west to north-east (Fig. 5). Subsequent OS maps of 1899, 1909 and 1928 show no change in this layout. By the 1976 OS map the indoor sand school on the west side of the site has been built, together with another building on the east side of the proposed new building.

3.0 Method Statement

- **3.1** The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation in East Sussex* dated April 2008 (Recommended Standards).
- 3.2 The watching brief was carried out between the 14th and 16th August 2013 by the author, and by Andy Bradshaw and Keith Butler on the 19th and 21st August 2013 respectively. An initial CAT scan of the site was undertaken prior to the excavation of any ground reduction for the driveway and on the site of the new stable block.
- 3.3 A topsoil and subsoil strip for the driveway began at the eastern end of the drive before working steadily upslope towards the site for new stables. The ground reduction for the driveway was down to 300mm in depth whereas the area for the stable block was reduced by 1.2 to 1.6m (Plate 1). A topsoil strip was also carried out in the field to the north of stables so that surplus spoil could be spread out and recovered with the topsoil (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Ground reduction over stable block

- 3.4 All exposed sections and surfaces were cleaned and inspected for archaeological deposits, features, structures and finds. The spoil from the excavations was inspected on a regular basis to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. A Garrett Ace 150 metal detector was initially used to scan the route of the driveway. The metal detector was also used to scan the spoil heap during the evaluation.
- 3.5 All deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards and to the ESCC Recommended Conditions. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart. The site was surveyed in with a Total Station.

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 Ltd. A site reference of WGA13 has been allocated and after any further analysis, will be offered to Lewes Museum or such other suitable repository as agreed with the County Archaeologist.



Plate 2: Removal of topsoil in the field to the north of stables

4.0 Results (Fig. 7)

- 4.1 The topsoil (Context 1) along the route of the driveway was a firm/compact midgreyish brown silty-clay with some small flints up to <40mm in size at <1% throughout. It was 60mm in depth and contained some tarmac and hardcore at <1% the entrance at the eastern end of the driveway (Plate 3).
- 4.2 The subsoil (Context 2) sat underneath Context 1 and was a friable, mid orangey-brown, silty-clay deposit, that became slowly more brown in colour towards the west. The only inclusions were angular flints up to 50mm in size at <1%, charcoal at <1%, worked flint at <1% and was up to 240mm in depth. This deposit sat immediately above Context 3, the natural head deposit.
- **4.3** Below Context **2** (and below Context **1** in at the eastern end of the strip) lay Context **3**, the firm/compact natural head deposit. Where exposed below Context **2**, this was a mid to dark brown silty-clay, with inclusions of angular and sub-angular flints <70mm at 5%. It was up to 120mm in depth to the limit of excavation.



Plate 3: Working shot looking west, showing Contexts 1 to 6.

4.4 Context 4 was the compact natural white Chalk deposit that was occasionally exposed and appeared to be below Contexts 1 and 3 (most notably at the eastern end of the strip). It had no inclusions and was up to 120mm in depth to the limit of excavation.

- 4.5 Context 5 was an exposed outcrop of the compact natural chalk that appeared as a linear deposit at the eastern end of the strip (Plate 4). It was bounded by the head deposit to the east and by subsoil to the west. Investigation of this outcrop confirmed it was natural chalk that had sustained modern plough damage. It was between 1.6m to 1.8m wide and had a slight curve from the south-east round to the north-west.
- 4.6 Context 6 sat underneath Context 1 and was a chalk spread derived from and to the east of Context 5, the chalk linear. It was comprised of chalk flecks and fragments <30mm at 80% and rounded and angular flints <40mm at 10% and was 3.2m in width by the 4m width of the driveway. This deposit was interpreted as a chalk spread formed by modern ploughing.



Plate 4: Contexts 5 to 7 looking west.

- 4.7 Context 7 was an area of subsoil immediately to the west of the chalk linear (Context 5) and bounded by natural chalk, but was otherwise the same as Context 2 and was below Context 1.
- 4.8 Context 8 was the topsoil deposit over the footprint of the stables and was the same as Context 1. It was up to 250mm in depth.
- **4.9** Context **9**, which was below Context **8**, was a firm, mixed deposit of chalk and silty-clay at 10%. This was an off-white colour with patches of orange-brown silty-clay. It was up to 160mm in depth to the limit of excavation and had inclusions comprising of flint nodules up to 40mm at <1%.

4.10 Context **10** was a line of modern concrete blocks 300mm wide on a north-south alignment directly below Context **8** and was interpreted as the footings for a modern building, no longer extant (Plate 5).



Plate 5: concrete blocks (Context 10)

- 4.11 Context 11 was the topsoil deposit in the field to the north of stables that was removed to allow for the spoil from the stables excavation to be deposited here as a levelling exercise, which was then to be covered by this topsoil. It was the same as Context 1 and was up to 250mm in depth to the LOE.
- **4.12** Context **12** was a 1.6m square cut feature covered with a concrete slab or cap that was uncovered at the north end of Trench 1 in the evaluation and initially thought to be a well. Further investigation during the watching brief revealed that this feature was filled by large pieces of concrete and modern ceramic building material (CBM) and was interpreted as a modern soak-away.
- **4.13** No other archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

5.0 Finds

- **5.0.1** A small assemblage of artefacts was recovered during the watching brief, and are summarised in Table 1 below.
- **5.0.2** Due to the isolated and unstratified nature of the earlier finds and the industrialised nature of the later finds the assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis. The assemblage is recommended for discard.

Table 1: Quantification of finds (no./weight in grams)

Context	Pottery	Ceramic	Flintwork	Other	Deposit Date
	(by date group)	Building			
		Material			
1	1750-1900+:	Peg tile 2/81g	-	Asbestos 1/10g	C20th
	2/20g				
2	Roman: 2/3g	Brick 1/11g	31/315g	FF Flint 4/75g	C17th-19 th tile
		Peg tile 3/89g			(residual
					Roman pot)
7	-	Brick 2/26g	-	Slag 1/46g	$C16th - 18^{th}$
8	1750-1900+: 1/7g	-	-	-	Later C19th -
					mid 20 th
11	1750-1900+: 1/5g	-	3/163g	-	C19th – mid
					20 th

5.1 Pottery by Luke Barber

- **5.1.1** The earliest pottery from the site consists of two small worn sherds of Roman date, both residual in Context **2**. One is from a sparsely sand tempered buff ware with moderate iron oxides, the other a 1g chip of South Gaulish samian. Together they suggest some limited 1st to mid 2nd century activity in the area.
- **5.1.2** The remaining pottery is all of the late post-medieval period. The assemblage is characterised by small but relatively fresh sherds all of which could be placed between c.1850 and 1950. Context **1** produced a 7g sherd from an unglazed earthenware flowerpot and part of a refined white earthenware water closet. Context **8** produced a further sherd of refined white earthenware while Context **11** contained another of unglazed earthenware flower pot with flattened club rim.

5.2.0 Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- **5.2.1** Both brick and roof tile were recovered from the site. The assemblage is totally composed of post-medieval material. The brick fragments are too small to retain any of their original dimensions or indeed surface finish. That from Context **2** is tempered with sparse fine sand with marl patches (probably 18th to 19th century) while that from Context **7** is lower fired and notably more silty (possibly of Mid 16th to 18th century date).
- **5.2.2** The five pieces of peg tile were recovered from two different contexts. Three fabrics were noted:
 - T1 well-formed and fired 11mm thick tile tempered with sparse fine sand with sparse iron oxides and marl pellets to 0.5mm. 18th to 19th century.
 - T2 machine-made/moulded hard-fired (purple) 12mm thick tile with fine granular fabric. 20th century.
 - T3 Quite well formed and fired 12mm thick tiles tempered with sparse fine sand, rare iron oxides and moderate/abundant marl swirls. 18th to mid 19th century.

5.3 Prehistoric Flintwork by Chris Butler

5.3.1 The majority of the flintwork came from Context **2**, the subsoil removed during the stripping of the access track, with the remaining pieces coming from Context **11**, the topsoil over the stable block. The assemblage is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Prehistoric Flintwork

Type	Context 2	Context 11	Total
Hard hammer-struck flakes	11	1	12
Hard hammer-struck blades	3	1	3
Soft hammer-struck flakes	7	1	7
Soft hammer-struck blades	1	1	1
Fragments	7	1	8
Core fragment	1	1	1
Side scraper	1	-	1
Hammerstone	-	1	1
Total	31	3	34

5.3.2 A number of the pieces are likely to derive from the Mesolithic period, with five of the soft hammer-struck flakes and the soft hammer-struck blade all having platform preparation, and together with the core fragment are typical of flintwork from that period.

- **5.3.3** The remainder of the assemblage is probably Later Neolithic or Bronze Age in date, being predominantly hard hammer-struck and with no platform preparation, although some of the blades and longer flakes may be Early Neolithic in date.
- **5.3.4** The side scraper is manufactured on a hard hammer-struck flake, and has semi-abrupt retouch along one lateral edge, and is probably Neolithic or Early Bronze Age in date. The hammer stone is undateable, but probably later prehistoric.

5.4 Other Material by Luke Barber

5.4.1 Context **7** produced a very pale green piece of blast furnace slag of 16th- to 17th-century date. This has almost certainly travelled down the Cuckmere valley from the Weald, probably for use as hardcore. Context **1** produced a piece of 20th century asbestos cement sheet.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1 Unlike the evaluation which failed to recover any significant worked flint or artefacts of note, the watching brief did recover a small selection of material which hints at activity on-site from the Mesolithic through to the Roman period and reflects the wider archaeological landscape such as the early Neolithic activity to the north-west, where flintwork was recovered around the early Neolithic *Long Burgh* long barrow.
- 6.2 The flintwork assemblage ranges from the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic to the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age. The earliest material on-site, the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintwork, is less numerous with the majority of the flintwork dating to the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age period, which again reflects the wider landscape with the numerous Bronze Age sites known from the South Downs nearby.
- As the archaeological record for the Roman period is sparse around Alfriston, the Roman pottery found in this watching brief does add a something to the archaeological record for this period, suggesting that the site may have been fields under cultivation at this time.
- 6.4 The presence of this small assemblage probably reflects the fact that this site was used for agricultural purposes throughout prehistory and the early historic periods, but that any habitation or other activity was nearby but not on the site itself. There was no evidence for any activity during the Saxon or Medieval periods.
- **6.5** Evidence for Winton Grange's time as a farm, in the later post-medieval period as indicated by photographic evidence¹⁵, was suggested by the presence of the natural chalk outcrop, on the trackway (Context **6**) that had been created as modern ploughing had bitten into the underlying chalk, perhaps an old field boundary bank and ditch, and spread it downslope.
- 6.6 The watching brief undertaken at Winton Grange was successfully completed and largely achieved its objectives. The depth of deposits across the site was established, and evidence for limited activity across the site was recovered.

¹⁵ N. Pybus pers comm.

7.0 Acknowledgments

7.1 I would like to thank the client, Mr. Neale Pybus, for commissioning the watching brief. Luke Barber and Chris Butler reported on the finds. The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler, and monitored for ESCC by Greg Chuter.

Appendix 1 HER Summary Form

Site Code	WGA13					
Identification Name and Address	Winton Grange, Winton Street, Alfriston, East Sussex.					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 5210 0390					
Geology	Chalk overlain by Head deposit.					
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. 14 th - 21 st August 2013	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr. Neale Pybus.					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MIfA					
Project Supervisor	David Atkin					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso. X	Neo. X	BA X	IA	RB X
	AS	MED	PM X	Other		

100 Word Summary.

An archaeological watching brief was carried during the ground reduction for a new driveway and stable building on land at Winton Grange, Winton Road, Alfriston, East Sussex. All excavations were carried out by a 13 tonne tracked excavator using a 1.8m toothless ditching bucket. No archaeological features were noted during the watching brief but a small assemblage of worked flint dating from the Mesolithic Period through to the Bronze Age was recovered along with two small Roman sherds dating to the $1^{st} - 2^{nd}$ centuries as well as some late post-medieval period artefacts.

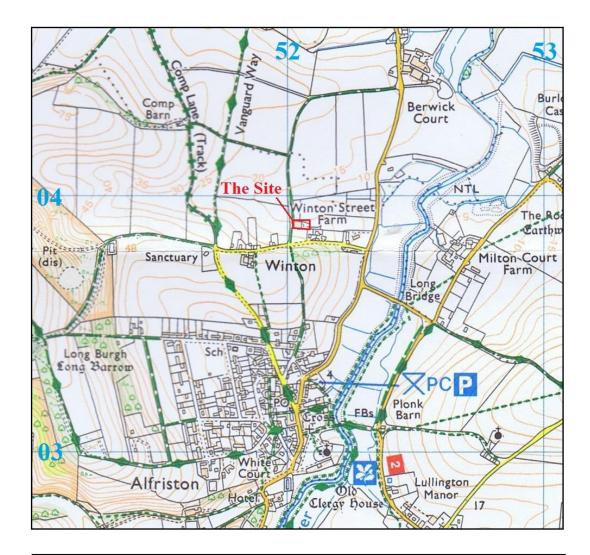


Fig. 1: Winton Grange, Alfriston: Location Map Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 1985 All rights reserved. Licence number 100037471

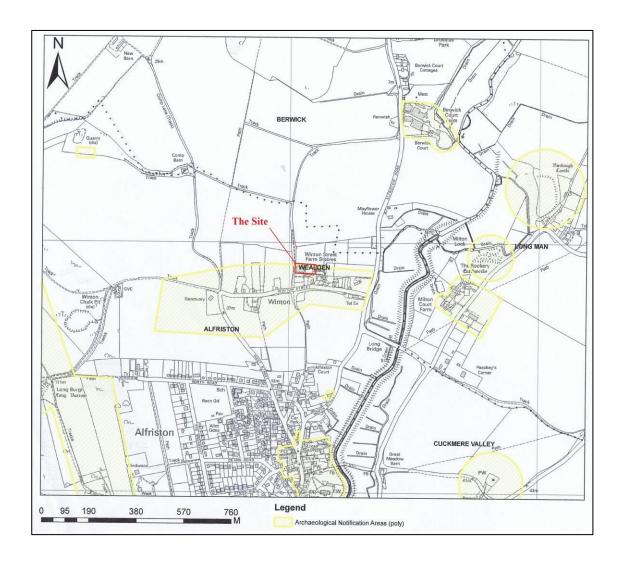


Fig. 2: Winton Grange, Alfriston: Map showing Archaeological Notification Areas Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100037471

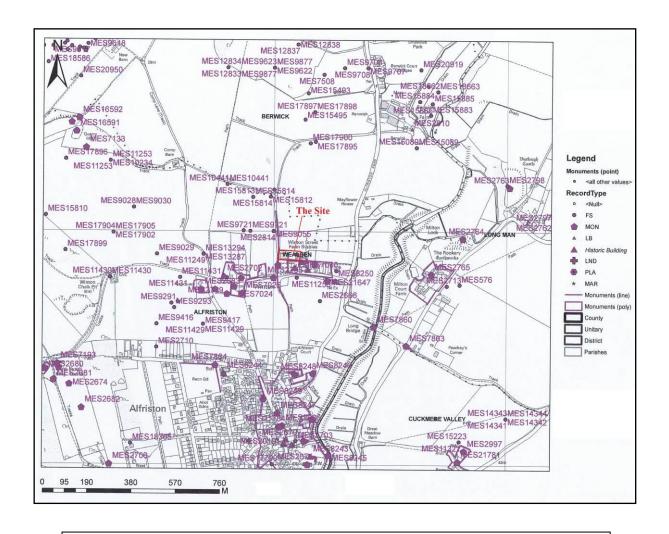


Fig. 3: Winton Grange, Alfriston: Map showing sites on the HER Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100037471

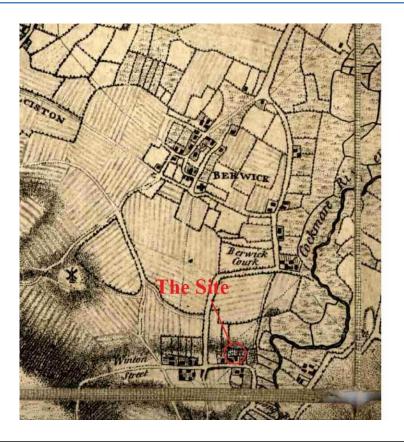


Fig. 4: Winton Grange, Alfriston: Yeakell & Gardiner Map 1778-83 http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell_36.htm

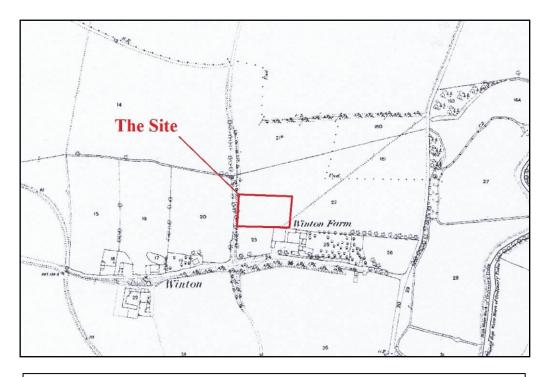


Fig. 5: Winton Grange, Alfriston: 1st Edition OS Map 1876

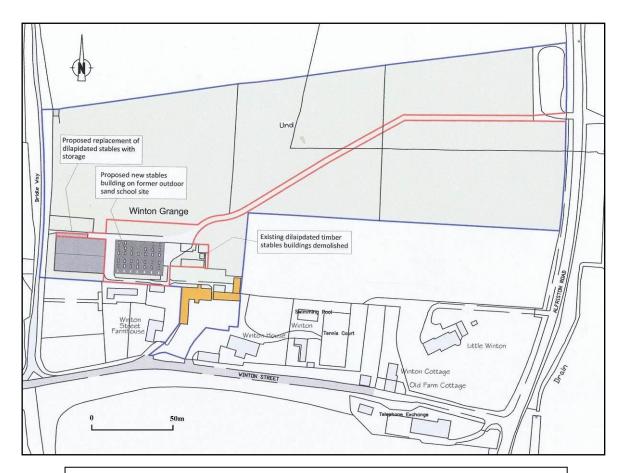


Fig. 6: Winton Grange, Alfriston: Site Development Plan

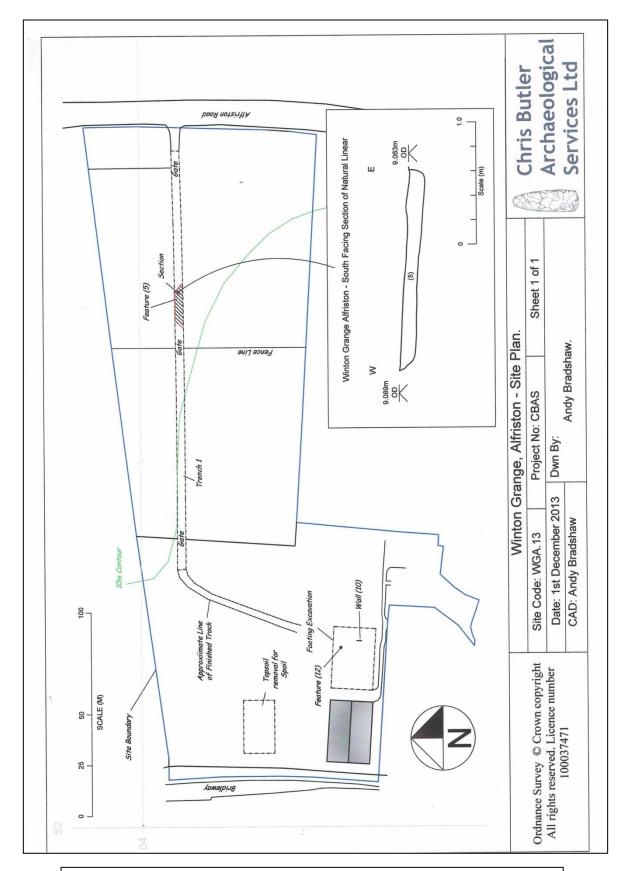


Fig. 7: Winton Grange, Alfriston: Site Plan showing the areas monitored and features found

(Adapted from architects drawing)

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 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 Ltd 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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