

Summer 2018

# The Friends of Butser Ancient Farm

## Chairman's Report

Dear Friends,

Summer at the Farm has been very busy with the Tuesday open days themed around Science and Sorcery particularly well supported. I have been contributing to these as a volunteer and my activity of assembling a model timber-framed building seems to have gone down well with the children.

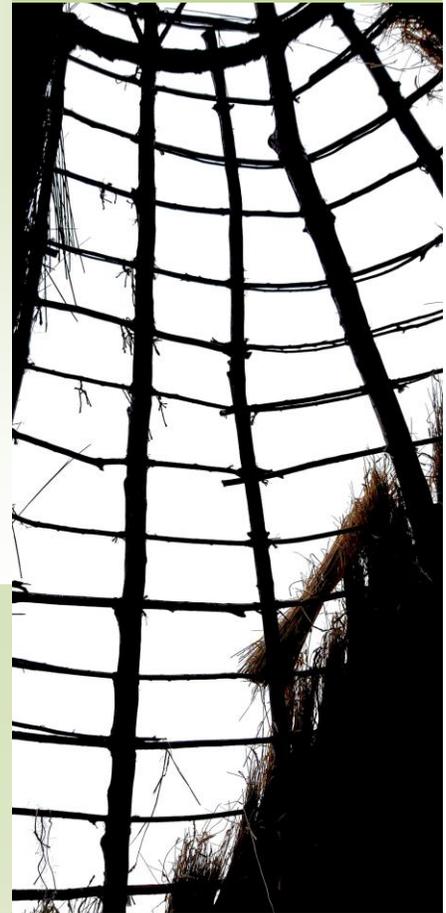
The summer activities closed on the August bank holiday with a well-attended day themed around Beer, Bread and Bees. The Friends were represented by Dave Butcher and Karen Hill in Iron-Age dress and Kit and Margaret Mitchell and Ruth and myself running the Friends' stall, and assisting children to paint pebbles to represent bees – an activity which was unexpectedly popular.

In 2019, as part of a joint initiative with the Farm, the Friends will be offering two bursaries of £250 each; the John Bushrod Bursary and the Alan and Marilyn Tatlow Bursary.

These bursaries are offered to provide financial support to two students of archaeology or a closely related discipline, at any stage of their academic career, including independent scholars engaged in research leading to publication. The funds may be used to contribute towards, travel expenses, equipment, materials, specific project work, or some other area of research to be conducted at Butser Ancient Farm.

Successful applicants will be expected to deliver a brief presentation to the Friends at the AGM to explain how the bursary contributed to their research.

Nick Langford  
Chairman



## Contents

Chairman's Report	1
New Saxon House	2
Rethatching the Little	
Woodbury Roundhouse	2
Renovation of the Roman	
Villa	3
Calendar	3
Payments to the Project	4

## New Saxon House

The third Saxon construct on the site has been begun by the tree-wright (*treow-wyrhta*) Darren Hammerton.

This will be based on the building identified as A1 in the original excavation report. According to the report, this—

“was a large rectangular bipartite house, 37 ¼ by 20 ½ ft., measured from centre-lines of the walls, with opposed doorways set in the middle of the long sides, and a door in the middle of the W. end. The walls were defined by trenches some 2 ¾ ft. wide, varying in depth from 4 to 20 in. The trenches had extremely variable contents, in the main medium brown soil with some chalk and flints. There were, however, occasional concentrations of flints, or of chalk, or both, suggesting packing around timber elements formerly present in the trench... There was no clear indication of a hearth, though a worn hollow in the NE. corner of the main room may indicate its position.”

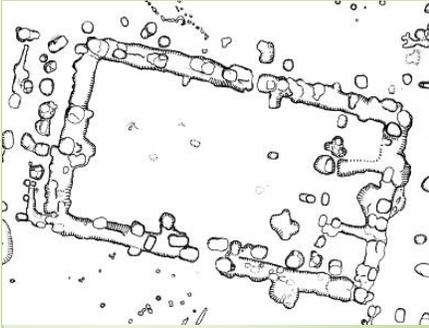
“Sea-weary, they set down their broad shields,  
Wondrous hard rims, against the wall of the hall.” *Beowulf*



The construction and appearance of the house will differ from the first, to reflect different ways of interpreting the archaeology. The wall-plate will be slightly lower – about 5’ compared with the 6’7” of the earlier house – and tie beams will be positioned only on the end walls, creating a more open space inside.

## Rethatching Little Woodbury Roundhouse

The thatch on the Little Woodbury Roundhouse had become very rotten, particularly on the northern side and over the entrance, so work has been undertaken to rethatch the whole roof and to remodel the entrance into the “porch” design familiar from the Longbridge Deverel Cowdown and Pimperne constructs. This also makes better sense of the archaeological evidence. The roof should be ready in time (or very shortly thereafter) for the influx of school parties in September. The Friends have contributed to the cost.



## Renovation of the Roman Villa

The renovation work on the Roman Villa begun in 2017 has continued throughout 2018.

One of the most ambitious projects has been the recreation of the Sparsholt mosaic (currently in the Winchester City Museum) in the central room of the Villa.



As can be seen from the photographs, the work is progressing extremely well, under the direction of Trevor Creighton, Projects Co-ordinator, with volunteers from Liss Archaeology and Bignor Roman Villa, as well as from the Farm.



### Calendar

**Haustmánaður** – Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September

The final open weekend of the year; a celebration of autumn and harvest with traditional skills, crafts and activities. The name is Old Norse for “Autumn Month”.

**Samhain Festival** – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October

Celebrate Samhain in the magical surroundings of the Great Roundhouse. Between 7-10pm enjoy live music, professional storytelling by Jonathon Huet and a bar with local ales.

**Spooky Storytelling** – Wednesday October 24<sup>th</sup>

An afternoon of storytelling with Fayeables! What will Fairy Bigtoe get up to this time?

**Museums at Night: ‘After Dark’ Tour** – Friday October 26<sup>th</sup>

Step back in time for an atmospheric after-dark journey exploring the hidden stories and spaces of Butser Ancient Farm. Be led by lantern light through the enchanting spaces around the farm on a sensory journey from the Neolithic to Saxons, hearing stories and tales from the past.

**Jack in the Blood: The Book of Ancestors** – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November  
A story for adults and young adults in the roundhouse. Inspired by testing on Jason’s ancestral DNA the story starts with a young Greek boy, growing up in Roman Italy and follows his descendants as they migrate across borders through Western and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia to the present day. The stories are all original pieces, using the mythologies of the ages and regions.

**Tales of Winter Magic** – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December

Join us in the great roundhouse at Butser Ancient Farm for a festive early evening of Winter Solstice storytelling with Red Phoenix.

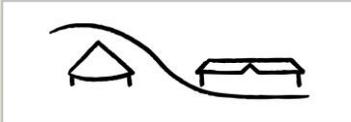
## The Friends of Butser Ancient Farm

*Ruth Langford,  
Honorary Secretary*

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Registered Charity  
No. 1039961

*The Charity's object is to support the educational and research work of "The Butser Ancient Farm".*



The tesserae are hand-cut marble cubes rather than the local stone and terracotta of the original, but the mortar is an authentic lime mortar. It is estimated that around 86,000 tesserae will be required for the central design and 30,000 larger cubes for the surrounding border.

As you can see, the interior of the Villa has also been painted in authentic Roman style and looks tremendous.

You can follow progress on the Butser blog.



The Farm's resident archaeologist, Claire Walton, will be speaking at our AGM this year on **"Domestic Space in Roman Britain: How can experiments at Butser Ancient Farm contribute to current academic debate?"** Claire says,

*"Experimental approaches have been slow in coming in the world of classical archaeology, and I believe that our Sparsholt villa has provided opportunity to contribute to two academic debates in particular. Firstly, our hypocaust, and secondly our roman latrine. It may just look like fun for the public, but I have made a very interesting discovery regarding the toilet which I don't believe ANYONE has ever discussed in academic circles, and which may change our understanding of how toilets and latrines were used, and by whom."*

Come to the AGM to find out what Claire's discovery is!

## Payments to the Project

After the large payment to the Farm last summer for the renovation of the Roman Vila, the contributions made by the Friends this year have been more modest:

**£478.00** for a large oak donations box for the visitors' centre.

**£452.00** for two four-channel temperature data-loggers to support the research on the hypocaust.

**£69.99** for a professional touch-screen automated weather centre, also to support the hypocaust research.

**£6,000.00** for new thatch for the Little Woodbury round house.