



NEWSLETTER 45 SPRING 2007

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

It is with great regret that Dot Meades has had to relinquish her role as Newsletter Editor after eleven and a half years. We are hugely in her debt for the splendid work she has done. Jeremy Hodgkinson has taken over as Acting Editor for this issue.

HON TREASURER

Ashley Brown will be stepping down as Hon Treasurer at the AGM in July. The Committee would be delighted to hear from any member who would be willing to take on this position. The Group's finances are not complicated. Responsibilities include maintaining Income and Expenditure accounts, presenting the accounts for annual independent examination, dealing with members' queries, and attending committee meetings (four a year). Please contact a member of the committee if you are able to help (see list on page 9).

WEALDEN IRON BULLETIN 27

Articles for inclusion in this year's Bulletin should be submitted to the Editor, David Crossley, by 31 March (see page 9 for contact information).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Excavations at Little Furnace Wood

Excavations will conclude this Spring. The last two weekends will be 21-22 April and 5-6 May 2007. Details from Jeremy Hodgkinson.

Ifield Mill Iron Day

25th March 2007 (see page 9 for details)

Evening Classes

'The Iron Industry of the Weald'; tutor: Jeremy Hodgkinson; Thomas Bennett Community College, Crawley; Thursday evenings; 7-9pm; 10 weeks starting September 2007; details from 01293 523811.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

In recognition of his many years as Secretary to the Field Group, the Committee has voted unanimously to grant Honorary Membership to Hugh Sawyer. Since moving from the Weald, Hugh has lived in Basingstoke, but despite this and being too far away to be able to take part in the activities of the Field Group, he carried out the task of notifying members of the details of forays with great diligence.

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Last year's Annual Report should have been included with Newsletter 44. We apologise for its omission and it is reproduced here:.

The Group has been represented on the Ashdown Forest Training Area Conservation Committee, by Dot Meades, and on the Sussex Archaeology Forum, by Jeremy Hodgkinson.

The 2005 AGM was held on Saturday 23rd July at Westham Village Hall, Sussex where members heard Jonathan Coad give an illustrated talk on the Architecture of Royal Dockyards and Ordnance Yards. The afternoon visit was to Pevensey Castle ably led by Dot Meades who has had a long association with the Castle. The Winter meeting took place on 28th January 2006 in Nutley and members were treated to an illustrated talk by Jeremy Hodgkinson and Tim Smith on the Group's recent visit to explore sites relating to the iron industry in the Walloon region of Belgium.

Excavations have continued on the 2nd century ironworking site at Little Furnace Wood, Mayfield, for two pairs of weekends in the Autumn and the Spring. Work has concentrated on the uncovering of a further ore-roasting area, adjoining the one already excavated. A radiocarbon date on charcoal found in the first roasting area gave a broad date of 2nd century AD, similar to the date for the smelting furnace. A series of test pits have given indications of sub-surface features, and these have been followed up with a number of test trenches, none of which has yielded anything of significance. Environmental samples have been taken. To the west of the smelting furnace a deep feature is being explored; a man-made cleft in the sandstone bed rock was filled with furnace debris, but its original purpose is not yet clear. It may have been the result of sandstone extraction. At one end of this feature, remains suggesting a possible second furnace have been uncovered and await further investigation in the Autumn, when work resumes.

The Field Group met in early September and planned a full programme of forays. As October was occupied with continuing excavations at Little Furnace Wood the first foray took place in November to Hendall Wood – three small excavations took place on two bloomery sites which yielded a base rim sherd of East Sussex ware together with another small sherd – both of which have been dated to around the 1st to 3rd century AD. The December foray to Queenstock Furnace, Buxted, proved inconclusive. Snow nearly caused the cancellation of the January visit to