ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE OUSE VALLEY, SUSSEX, TO AD 1500

A TRIBUTE TO DUDLEY MOORE AND ARCHAEOLOGY AT SUSSEX UNIVERSITY CCE

Edited by
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Dedicated to:

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(22 April 1952 – 28 January 2016)
University of Sussex alumnus, co-founder and chairman of the
Sussex University Archaeological Society

and

Archaeology at the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Sussex
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10. The Upper Ouse in the Medieval period (AD 1066 to 1499)

David H. Millum

This chapter aims to provide a balanced review of the main archaeological investigations carried out within the Upper Ouse area where significant data has been gained from the medieval period. The sites and information have been used selectively and it is not intended as a total synthesis of every medieval find from the area.

For much of its length the River Ouse forms the boundary between two of the five medieval administrative divisions of Sussex with the Rape of Lewes to the west bank and that of Pevensey to the east. In the Upper Ouse area the west bank falls within the Hundred of Berecompe (Barcombe), which was mainly held by lay tenants, whilst to the east Lokesfield, formerly Mellinges (Malling), was retained by the Archbishop of Canterbury and included the suburban settlement of Cliffe. To the north the Hundred of Riston, also known as Rushmonden (Morris 1976), was held in multiple lordship (Adams 1999; Gardiner and Warne 1999).

Lewes – the urban centre of the Upper Ouse

Lewes was established as the burh of the Ouse valley during the late Saxon period and William de Warrenne confirmed its local dominance after the conquest by building his double motte castle within the town and subsequently founding the great Cluniac Priory of St. Pancras at Southover by 1082. The town was the trading and judicial centre for the area as well as being the main port for sea-going ships before the coastal port of Seaford took over and subsequently grew into a significant trading centre (Adams 1999; Gardiner and Warne 1999).

The medieval town wall survives in only fragmentary form with sections east of Westgate Street, Keere Street, and Southover Road but with little medieval evidence remaining exposed. The lower section of the West Gate’s northern bastion and adjacent wall which survive within the Freemason’s Hall at 148 High Street are probably of thirteenth century date (Harris 2005, 37).

As Lewes dominated the Upper Ouse, so it does the medieval archaeology listed for the area in the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER) and Sussex Archaeological Collections (SAC) with Grey Friars, St. Nicholas Hospital and the town walls, as well as many domestic sites, in addition to the Priory and Castle (Figure 10.1).

Harris (2005, 38) suggests that the absence of a systematic survey of the townhouses of Lewes has led to a considerable underestimating of medieval building survival. However the ten pre-1500 survivals recorded are significant with four in the High Street area (nos. 66, 70-72, 73 and the Town Hall) including examples of thirteenth to fourteenth century undercrofts. 74-5 High Street is probably the earliest example of a more intact townhouse, dating from probably the fourteenth century, with jettying to two adjacent elevations with in situ dragon beam. Fifteenth century structure is found within 67, 92 (Bull House) and 99/100, High Street as well as the cellar beneath the later hall of Anne of Cleves House in Southover (Harris 2005, 38-39).

Lewes has six extant churches that have evidence of medieval origin (Table 10.1) and a further seven that are no longer standing but for which there is historical evidence (see Brent 2004, 30). One of these, St. John-sub-Castro, was probably of minster status suggesting the existence to the east of a much greater precinct than the present churchyard (Harris 2005, 32).

The Battle of Lewes in 1264 also provides a major focus for this period with mass grave sites having been discovered in three pits to the west of the prison crossroads in 1810 and a ‘mass of bones crammed’ into a 6m by 3m pit adjacent to the cemetery at St. Pancras Priory that was unearthed by railway workers in 1845. The bones from the pit were reputedly removed in 13 wagons to underpin the railway embankment at Southerham Corner (Brent 2004, 66).

Archaeological investigations of major sites in Lewes

Until quite recently most archaeological investigations in the town were undertaken by volunteers or academics as either rescue or training projects with varying degrees of success. Most had strong connections with the Sussex Archaeological Society, whose publications and archive are an invaluable resource, with the Institute of Archaeology also making substantial contributions. The ancient centre of Lewes is now an area where virtually all development requires a mandatory archaeological investigation and report. This has resulted in recent investigations, including several in the heart of the town, being developer funded and conducted by commercial units to a very high standard.
The Castle

The Norman double motte and bailey castle dominates the town with its remaining shell keep on the south western motte above areas of surviving curtain wall and the main gate with protruding fourteenth century barbican (Figure 10.2). It is possible, though unproven, that the eastern motte, Brack Mount, represents the earliest Norman military defences. The castle was falling into disrepair by 1382 beginning its decline into a picturesque ruin.

Table 10.1: List of extant churches in Lewes with evidence of medieval origin (Nairn and Pevsner 1965; Brent 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Comments on origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Saints</td>
<td>Friars Walk</td>
<td>C15th tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne formerly St Mary</td>
<td>St Anne’s Hill</td>
<td>C12th tower, nave, part chancel and south chapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John Sub Castro</td>
<td>St John’s Hill</td>
<td>Demolished in 1839 but late Saxon doorway survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John the Baptist</td>
<td>Southover</td>
<td>Former hospitium of St Pancras Priory until 1264. C12th arcade, C14th walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southover</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Michael</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>C13th round tower and west wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Thomas Becket</td>
<td>Cliffe High Street</td>
<td>Norman chancel, C13th-15th nave &amp; tower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Walter Godfrey had excavated a series of slit trenches on the north western edge of the motte in 1930 and in 1962 a limited excavation had taken place on Brack Mount. The excavations on the top of the south-western motte of the castle (TQ 413 101) directed by Peter Drewett, for the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), in 1985-88 are the most extensive to date (Figure 10.3). They revealed two major phases of domestic building including the footings of the Norman kitchen and thirteenth century hall, both possibly tied...
10. The Upper Ouse in the Medieval period (AD 1066 to 1499)

The excavations at the priory (TQ 412 094) directed by Richard Lewis between 1969 and 1982 did a great deal to establish its extent as well as indicating its once fine quality (Figure 10.4). It revealed evidence for Saxon occupation of the site including a small church or shrine beneath the remains of the Cluniac infirmary chapel, possibly built as the first monastic church. Considerable evidence was gained about the internal layout of the eleventh and twelfth century reredorters with much environmental and artefactual evidence collected from the successive sewers. The Priory assemblage goes through to the post–medieval but has some key eleventh to twelfth century ceramic groups (Lyne 1997). In 2007 a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was undertaken by Arrow Geophysics enabling an extended interpretation of the ground plan of the priory and the set of superb reconstructive visualisations by Andy Gammon (Mayhew 2008).

Grey Friars

The Franciscan friary (TQ 419 102) was excavated in 1985-6 and 1988-9 by the Field Archaeology Unit of the Institute of Archaeology, UCL and Lewes Archaeological Group prior to redevelopment of the area (Figure 10.5). Eight periods of activity were revealed from a hard for beaching ships covered by twelfth century rubbish to several phases of the friary, founded in 1241 and constructed on the built-up floodplain. The function of many of the friary buildings was determined from the foundations uncovered, the buildings having been demolished following its dissolution in 1538. Notable amongst the wide range of artefacts was the bone assemblage from 55 medieval burials, the majority of which were the complete skeletons of adult males. The pathological analysis, while not representative of the medieval population of Lewes as a whole, adds to the data accumulating for the monastic houses of Britain (Gardiner et al. 1996).

St. Nicholas Hospital

Part of the St. Nicholas hospital site was investigated in 1994 by Archaeology South East (ASE). Little structural evidence was found but three quarries were excavated,
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all containing medieval refuse, plus part of the cemetery comprising 103 graves dating from twelfth to early sixteenth centuries revealing valuable data on the use of the hospital (Barber and Sibun 2010). The remains suggest that St. Nicholas’ was a non-leper hospital for most of its existence and, although the site is close to the accepted location of the de Montfort/Henry III battlefield, only four bodies showed wounds consistent with violent death suggesting that, despite recent speculation, the cemetery was not used to bury the dead from the battle (Browne 2010, 106).

Baxter’s Printworks, Lewes House Library and Residential sites

Possibly of greatest significance to the medieval domestic life of the town is the awaited combined monograph (Swift forthcoming) on the recent, large-scale excavations by Archaeology South East (ASE) of the Baxter’s Printworks site in St. Nicholas Lane (TQ 4162 1006) (MES19819) and those at Lewes House, between Broomans Lane and Church Twitten (TQ 4171 1005) (MES19818) for the new Lewes Library and a residential development. Importantly these recent projects offer a greater emphasis on the environmental evidence than was possible in some earlier excavations and examine a substantial area of the town not previously accessible.

Lewes Library

An excavation carried out in advance of the construction in 2004 revealed extensive evidence of medieval activity, predominantly in the form of numerous intercutting rubbish pits, cesspits and wells, largely dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. There is a dramatic decline in evidence after the fourteenth century suggesting that the site was largely abandoned at that time probably marking the impact of the Black Death on Lewes (Griffin 2012).

Baxter’s Printworks

At the Baxter’s site in 2006 most of the features found consisted of groups of Saxo-Norman and later medieval pits containing a variety of domestic material as well as
significant, closely-dated, pottery assemblages. Most notably, a massive north-south aligned ditch was recorded adjacent to the western side of St. Nicholas Lane which was interpreted as marking the eastern limits of the Alfredian burh. There were clear indications of buildings, fronting onto St. Nicholas Lane by the twelfth century, with a variety of pits and cess-pits to the rear and some less obvious signs of building plots along Walwers Lane. It appears that the burh ditch was deliberately backfilled in the early post-conquest period, supporting the view that the medieval town expanded beyond the confines of the Saxon burh at the beginning of the Norman period. In the later medieval period the site clearly continued to be occupied and used for the disposal of domestic refuse in pits, and for some industrial processes, with ovens, kilns and hearths located on both sides of St. Nicholas Lane. There continued to be occupation into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represented by at least one household on the western side of the land, stone-lined cesspits on the western side of the lane and a thin scatter of pits in the eastern part of the site (Stevens 2009; Dan Swift pers. comm.).

**Lewes House Residential site**

The excavation for the Lewes House Residential and Walwers Lane sites in 2008 revealed late Saxon activity and possibly occupation as well as evidence of a significant increase in activity at the site during the eleventh century; predominantly coming from quarrying and refuse disposal. There was also some evidence of structures, and a huge quantity of finds and environmental evidence including animal bone, pottery and ceramic building material, offering insights into the socio-economic status of the area. This activity continues throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the lost twitten of Pinwell Street visible in the archaeological record for the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when there is evidence for at least two buildings on the site and a continuation of the extensive quarrying is also seen (Swift 2010).

**Other Archaeological investigations in Lewes**

The majority of smaller excavations within the town have been investigations of domestic occupation or
the search for the town’s defences and/or boundaries. This has mostly resulted in the excavation of a great number of pits together with evidence of a rich material culture reflecting the trade and industry of the period but regrettably with very few, if any, structures. David Freke, who undertook excavations to the north east of the town centre during 1974-5, concluded that the medieval town did not extend as far north as Lancaster Street and that in the twelfth century the area around St. John’s-Castro was a separate fortification outside of the main town’s defences. He speculates whether this could be taken as an indication of opposing factions occurring during the ‘Anarchy of Stephen’ (Freke 1975; 1976). David Rudling provides information on the research undertaken by the Sussex Archaeological Field Unit (SAFU) during the 1970s and early 1980s (Rudling 1983) including reports on ‘trial’ excavations in Brooman’s Lane and Barbican House in 1979, and Grey Friars in 1981, as well as a discussion of the possible medieval origin of Lewes Priory Mount by Fiona Marsden. Another 1970s investigation was of the Clothkits Warehouse site in Brooman’s Lane (TQ 417 101) in 1978 by C. E. (Jock) Knight-Farr (Locke 2001) which shows consistency with the later nearby ASE findings. Rudling’s excavations to the north of St. Thomas à Becket Church in Cliffe (Rudling 1991) indicates the built-up nature of this area with compacted chalk deposits from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. The suburb of Cliffe was largely built on a chalk causeway laid across the Ouse floodplain involving vast amounts of chalk being quarried from the nearby Downs escarpment and compacted into a firm base on which to raise buildings above the alluvium (Mark Gardiner pers. comm.).

**The general Upper Ouse area**

The rest of the study area has a more dispersed pattern of medieval activity in a mainly rural environment, excepting the market town of Uckfield to the northeast which lying on the River Uck falls outside the area of this report. The survey area ends at the Sheffield Bridge (TQ 406 237) although the Ouse carries on for some distance northwest passing to the north of the village of Lindfield with its High Street rich in medieval vernacular houses.

Following the river northwards out of Lewes the site of the Archbishop’s Palace and Dean’s College, the hub of the South Malling manor (Brent 2004, 105-7), is located to the east of the river at Old Malling Farm (Table 10.2). Evidence of settlement and a possible deserted village lies on the west bank adjacent to the Church at Hamsey. To the north of Old Malling, Wellingham (TQ 430 134) is an area of great potential as one of the four Saxon settlements that predated the village of Ringmer. The area directly around Barcombe’s twelfth century church may also be a shrunken medieval settlement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Grid Reference</th>
<th>Comments on origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fletching</td>
<td>TQ 429234</td>
<td>Norman tower, C13th arcade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newick</td>
<td>TQ 422208</td>
<td>Norman nave plus C13th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isfield</td>
<td>TQ 444182</td>
<td>Norman tower plus C13th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcombe</td>
<td>TQ 419143</td>
<td>C13th much now C19th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringmer</td>
<td>TQ 447128</td>
<td>C13th poss Norman fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamsey</td>
<td>TQ 415121</td>
<td>Norman nave &amp; chancel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Malling (palace/college)</td>
<td>TQ 409114</td>
<td>Poss C12th-13th fragments in garden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10.2: List of rural churches with evidence for medieval origin in the Upper Ouse area (Nairn and Pevsner 1965)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grid Square</th>
<th>Reference/parkland features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield Park</td>
<td>TQ 4123</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Wood</td>
<td>TQ 4522</td>
<td>Park, woodland with curvilinear boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newick Park</td>
<td>TQ 4019</td>
<td>Park, woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodge Wood</td>
<td>TQ 4419</td>
<td>Park, woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Park Wood</td>
<td>TQ 4118</td>
<td>Park, woodland with curvilinear boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moat Park</td>
<td>TQ 4616</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper’s Hatch</td>
<td>TQ 4715</td>
<td>Hatch i.e. park gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plashetts Park Farm</td>
<td>TQ 4514</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Lodge, Broyle</td>
<td>TQ 4814</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Mead, Ringmer</td>
<td>TQ 4312</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Lodge, Broyle</td>
<td>TQ 4612</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10.3: List of possible references to medieval deer parks from the modern 1:25000 OS map.**
The northern reaches of the Upper Ouse offer an area of dispersed medieval farmsteads set amidst the remnants of the once vast hunting parks evident in place names and distinctive curvilinear boundaries, such as Old Park Wood at Town Littleworth and Park Wood at Piltdown. Many can be identified even in a cursory inspection of a modern OS map (Table 10.3) but they merit a deeper desk-based assessment subsequently verified by fieldwork. This important aspect of the medieval landscape can be demonstrated by Ringmer where four parks, Broyle, Plashett, Ryngmer, and More, dominated the parish (Figure 10.6). An interesting field study into the evidence available from boundaries undertaken at Ryngmer Park revealed distinct differences between the generally curvilinear park boundaries coinciding with roads, copse edges, and banks with mature trees, to the straight, hawthorn-rich, south-western boundary, interpreted as an eighteenth century realignment (Maloney and Howard 1982).

Further possible deserted and shrunken settlements are listed at Buckham Hill (TQ 451 206), Sharpsbridge (TQ 440 208), Barkham Manor (TQ 439217), around the early church and motte and bailey at Isfield (TQ 442 180) and the eleventh century church at Newick (TQ 421 208). Dredging beside the earthworks at Isfield produced pottery, tile and leatherwork. Spoil sampling suggested it had accumulated in the ditch around the medieval manor house with finds of a twelfth to thirteenth century date range (Gardiner 1992). The motte at Clay Hill (TQ 449 143) is now thought to be associated to the hunting practices of Plashett Park rather than defence (Richard Jones pers. comm.) and a late twelfth to early thirteenth century pottery site was excavated just to the west.

There is a surprising scarcity within the study area of recorded medieval iron making sites that might be expected towards the north of the area even though the height of this Wealden industry followed the introduction of the blast furnace at the very end of the fifteenth century with its epicentre located further to the north and east (Cleere and Crossley 1995). Despite the potential of extant building remains it is pottery that figures largely in the archaeological record together with an increasing amount of metal objects including coins and equestrian fittings. The rural area has seen very little archaeological excavation with the parish of Ringmer revealing by far the greatest number of monument records and archaeological investigations outside Lewes, mainly based on its extensive pottery industry (Table 10.4).

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the increasing number of rural pottery kiln sites show no significant technological or functional differences to their urban counterparts. Their location seems largely dictated by convenient access to the bulky raw materials combined with short and easy routes to convey their fragile and cheap product to a sustainable market (Streeten 1981, 327-342). Ringmer epitomises these requirements with ready supplies of clay and sand for pot production plus the timber and furze for firing the kilns, all within a short cart or pack-horse journey from the established market centre of Lewes.

Whilst the data collected to date regarding the trade of medieval Ringmer-ware is scarce and often reliant on a ‘spot’ visual recognition of the fabric (Figure 10.7, Table 10.5), this is not the case at Battle Abbey, where a sample was identified by thin-section analysis. As the Ringmer-ware pottery has been reported in excavations at several religious houses a factor in the development and longevity
of this industry may have been its location within the manor of the Archbishop. Manorial encouragement may be implied as, amid a general tendency elsewhere for rising clay rents, the nine penny per head payment in Ringmer remained static for over 200 years (Le Patourel 1968, 115). It should however be born in mind that there was a tendency in the area for rents to stay ‘fixed by custom’ with payments such as some quit rents in the Weald being identical in the nineteenth century to sums paid in the thirteenth (Mark Gardiner pers. comm.).

Many thousands of sherds of medieval pottery have been recovered from the various sites in Ringmer with each project developing their own method of describing the fabrics and forms. It is therefore perhaps understandable, if regrettable, that no one has yet undertaken the task of comparing the descriptions from the various assemblages to compile a comprehensive dated series for Ringmer-made wares, such as that for London (Pearce et al. 1985), however the recent paper on the Norlington site (Gregory 2014) does illustrate many of the main forms.

The product range included roof tiles, decorated floor tiles, chimney pots, jars, jugs, skillets, bowls, lids, including possible curfew lid fragments, aquamanile (Figure 10.8) and green-glazed anthropomorphic jug fragments. The pottery from the later phase of the Norlington Lane kiln appeared to fall into a late thirteenth century typology (Gregory 1994) although the 95% confidence archaeomagnetic date for the last kiln firing at AD 1200-1270 (D. Gregory pers. comm.) could imply a slightly earlier date. Much more glazed ware was encountered at Norlington than on other Ringmer sites and the later wares were made of a finer fabric, from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site location</th>
<th>Grid Reference</th>
<th>Excavator / source</th>
<th>Date of exc.</th>
<th>Period of feature</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potter’s Field</td>
<td>TQ44921288</td>
<td>Martin 1902</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Late/Post Medieval</td>
<td>Kiln</td>
<td>2 brick-built parallel flue, up-draught kilns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiln Field</td>
<td>TQ45081287</td>
<td>Hadfield 1981</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>Kiln</td>
<td>Mutsy type 2a kiln C14-dated to c. 1193 with adjacent waster heap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delves Field</td>
<td>TQ44601280</td>
<td>O’Shea 1973</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>Kiln</td>
<td>Huge waster heap probably close to kiln site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norlington Lane</td>
<td>TQ44721320</td>
<td>Gregory 1995</td>
<td>1993-4</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>Kiln</td>
<td>2 Mutsy type 2a kilns in series with archaeomagnetic date of 1200-1270 plus 3 waster heaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes Road</td>
<td>TQ45331267</td>
<td>Gregory 2008</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>Waster Heap</td>
<td>Waster heap of early 13th C pottery suggesting adjacent kiln</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10.4: List of Excavated Medieval Kiln Sites in Ringmer (Millum 2011)**

![Figure 10.7: A map of central Sussex showing the locations of Ringmer-type pottery as described in Table 10.5 (Millum 2011)](image-url)
both orange and creamy clays. These local wares had previously only been linked to Binstead or Rye which makes future petrological analysis of both production and consumer site wares a high priority (Millum 2011).

**Discussion and future work**

The outlines of the medieval landscape of the Upper Ouse were shaped by the demands of very conflicting lifestyles; the peasants laboriously creating farmland from former woodland whilst the leisured hunting pursuits of the nobility necessitated the maintenance of vast parkland areas. The latter was however increasingly challenged through the period by need for agricultural land due to changes in population. The river, while still of obvious importance, slowly gives way to terrestrial means of communication and the increased use of pack animals facilitating access to the High Weald hinterland; as demonstrated by the transport of 600 bushels of wheat to the port of Shoreham from Stoneham on the Ouse in 1319 by packhorse rather than by boat (Brent 2004, 126).

Whilst the predominance of monument records in Lewes reflects the town’s importance to medieval trade and administration, in the rest of the area the record may be more an indication of where archaeological investigation has taken place rather than a true picture of medieval activity. This is made apparent when looking at the finds

### Table 10.5: List of places where Ringmer-type pottery or tile has been discovered (Millum 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>St Pancras’ Priory</td>
<td>Ringmer-type pottery from late 11th to 14th century contexts</td>
<td>Lyne 1997, 81-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringmer</td>
<td>Lewes Road</td>
<td>Locally produced wares from 10th to 14th centuries</td>
<td>Barber 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle</td>
<td>Battle Abbey</td>
<td>Ringmer-type pottery from 12th century context</td>
<td>Streeter 1984, 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glynde</td>
<td>Caburn</td>
<td>Ringmer-type 12th century rim sherd</td>
<td>Streeter 1984, 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selmeston</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ringmer-type ware</td>
<td>Bleach 1982, 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangleton</td>
<td>Deserted village</td>
<td>Ringmer-type pottery and tiles</td>
<td>Holden 1963, 132 &amp; 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Dicker</td>
<td>Michelham Priory</td>
<td>Ringmer-type ware</td>
<td>Bleach 1982, 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polesgate</td>
<td>A27 bypass</td>
<td>Ringmer-type ware</td>
<td>Barber 2007, 126-130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>Brooman’s Lane</td>
<td>Ringmer-type ware</td>
<td>Locke 2001, 229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pevensey</td>
<td>Old Farmhouse</td>
<td>Ringmer-type ware</td>
<td>Barber 1999, 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>Lewes Friary</td>
<td>Ringmer-type ware</td>
<td>Gardiner et al. 1996, 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyecombe</td>
<td>Pyecombe Church</td>
<td>Ringmer-type tiles</td>
<td>Butler 1996, 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southerham</td>
<td>Grey Pit</td>
<td>Ringmer-type pottery</td>
<td>Allen 1995, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurstpierpoint</td>
<td>Muddleswood</td>
<td>Ringmer-type fabric</td>
<td>Butler 1994, 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>Friars Walk</td>
<td>Late 13th/14th century Ringmer type pottery in pits</td>
<td>Russell 1990, 144-151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nr Lewes</td>
<td>Ashcombe Bottom</td>
<td>Medieval pottery from Ringmer</td>
<td>Allen 2005, 21-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaford</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pottery from Ringmer</td>
<td>Kay 2000, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newhaven</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pottery from Ringmer</td>
<td>Kay 2000, 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Figure 10.8: A drawing of the aquamanile spout by Jane Russell (Gregory 2014, fig. 19, no. 80) (reproduced with permission of the Sussex Archaeological Society)]
records which reflect either isolated chance discoveries or patches of systematic field walking and intensive metal detecting. This anomaly can be seen in Ashcombe and Houndean, just west of Lewes (TQ 3809-3909), where clearly a very thorough metal detecting campaign was undertaken. Out of the 205 finds extracted from the ESHER using a broad medieval filter, only 67 could be confidently dated to the post-conquest to pre-Tudor period. Of these 30 were coins (Figure 10.9) and showed a gradual increase in number from the beginning of the twelfth century, peaking in the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries, and decreasing again over the next 150 years. This snapshot of the local economy, based on archaeological fieldwork, reflects the rapid increase in coinage minted during the thirteenth century, estimated as increasing from nine million pennies in circulation in 1086 to 216 million in 1300, a 24 times increase funded substantially by the export of wool (Carpenter 2003, 40).

Ashcombe was the Lewes base for the fiefdom of Poyning and the site of a twelfth century chapel, whilst Houndean Bottom was the meeting point of several drove roads. Both are possible shrunken medieval settlements reduced by either the catastrophic effects of the Black Death in 1348-49 and/or the change to larger scale sheep and corn husbandry (Brent 2004, 42).

It is in the medieval period that historical evidence begins to become an increasingly important factor in research, starting with Domesday Book and continuing with manorial custumal and rental documents such as those for the manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Redwood and Wilson 1958) and the subsidy rolls for 1296, 1327 and 1332 (Hudson 1910). However if all we had was the written record our knowledge would be sparse; whilst great events may be documented, everyday life would remain a mystery.

What is known about daily life is due largely to archaeology, which far from merely excavation involves exhaustive collation and interpretation of the findings to provide credible explanations of past activity. There is no merit in uncovering past features and artefacts if the knowledge contained therein is not made readily available for subsequent analysis. Fortunately the Upper Ouse valley has not only seen some enthusiastic gathering of data but also some responsible processing of the results to provide valuable insights into this period. In particular the information available for the medieval pottery industry from both archaeological and historical research lays the foundation for a deeper level of analysis to be undertaken in the production of a fabric and form series, to include petrological analysis of both production and consumer site wares; a high priority future project of potentially regional importance.

The archaeological record however imparts another important lesson in that the extent of the data available can often say more about the range of investigation undertaken than of the distribution of finds and past activity particularly in rural areas. The location of many future investigations will depend on the siting of development-led commercial projects, as has occurred recently in Lewes. However, as seen at Baxter’s Printworks and Lewes House, this can result in valuable data being gained in previously under-investigated areas. The proposed, large-scale, redevelopment of the Phoenix Quarter to the northeast of central Lewes could also

Figure 10.9: A penny, possibly of Edward II, AD 1307 to AD 1327 found at Ashcombe (© Portable Antiquities Scheme; record SUR-90EE31)
provide much valuable data for many periods, although
the work of Freke (1976) and others suggests that this
area is outside the established medieval core of the
town. Putting aside the ecclesiastical and baronial sites
very few, if any, more domestic structures have been
discovered; the later forming a notable gap in the current
archaeological record (Luke Barber pers. comm.).

Possible future works for volunteer projects

In Lewes it is difficult to see what actual fieldwork might
be undertaken specifically for a volunteer project. Work
of a synthetic nature might have to rely on the close
monitoring of commercial projects and the resulting
‘grey’ literature; especially the results of the increasing
emphasis on environmental sampling and water-logged
deposits which offer insights into the more transient
aspects of the archaeological record. Hopefully further
environmental evidence will be sourced by The Priory
Trust as they continue to investigate the site with a
forthcoming project by ASE to excavate the Priory’s
drains. It is also apparent that the results of some historic
excavations within the area have not been published
even though their archives have been deposited with
local museums and an investigation into which sites
still need a written report and what their archive could
reveal would be of significance for not only this but all
other periods.

In the rural areas there would appear to be greater
scope for volunteer-based projects in preparing
detailed desktop syntheses of the archaeological
record of specific areas or parishes, as undertaken for
Ringmer (Millum 2011). This would facilitate greater
understanding of the study area and assist in defining
appropriate areas and methods of research. However
there is no doubt that the use of general landscape
archaeology techniques, such as used in the Barcombe
and Hamsey project (see www.bandhpast.co.uk),
could greatly increase our general knowledge of an
area and bring the currently dispersed medieval sites
into greater context. A methodical approach should
include systematic field-walking and metal detecting
followed by geophysical surveys and trial trenching or
test pitting in selected locations, including any possible
shrunk or deserted settlements. Another area for
volunteer activity is to advance the research started by
the late Peter Brandon (Brandon and Short 1990, 73) in
identifying the medieval deer parks of the area, many
of which can be deduced by inspection of the first series
OS and local tithe maps before subsequent verification
by boundary and earthwork surveys in the field.

The established cooperation between the commercial
sector and the local volunteer groups is a great asset
which with a greater emphasis on bringing together
current and future data could facilitate the production
of a more comprehensive picture of this vibrant period.

Acknowledgements

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