

Fieldwork Plans: Bodiam & Scotney 2012



There are places for up to six University of Southampton students to take part in archaeological fieldwork at Bodiam and Scotney castles, south-eastern England, 4th-23rd August 2012. The fieldwork will be in collaboration with staff and students from Northwestern University, USA. Hostel/camping accommodation and food will be provided.

2012 Staff

Northwestern: Matthew Johnson.

Southampton: Timothy Sly, Kris Strutt, Dom Barker: topographical and geophysical survey. Penny Copeland: standing building survey.

Undergraduate student numbers are limited by the size of the Base Camp. There will be places for up to 6 Northwestern students and up to 6 Southampton students.

Total team: c. 12 undergraduates, c. 8 staff and PhD students.

2012 Fieldwork

Students will engage in a range of non-destructive techniques of archaeological fieldwork, including topographical and geophysical survey, survey of the remains of the castles, and coring. No previous archaeological experience is required, only a readiness for hard work.

Scotney:

- a) continue topographical survey – working round site from area to W and S of castle (surveyed last year) to area SE and E of castle.
- b) geophysical survey in selected areas -- ? to locate site of mill, around recognised earthworks.

Bodiam:

- a) finish topographic survey and do complete geophysical survey of the Gun Garden.
- b) finish geophysical survey in Dokes Field.
- c) further internal survey of castle.

Ightham Mote:

- a) Visit by staff to determine possible work in 2013

What to Bring

Clothing suitable for a variety of weather conditions (southern England can be sunny and hot in August, but it can also be cool and wet). You will be issued with project T-shirts, which should be worn during working hours, so that castle staff and the public can readily identify project members.

- Sunhat, sunblock, but also waterproofs.
- Boots or stout footwear.

How To Get There

A minibus will leave the Avenue campus on Saturday 4th August (time TBC), or you can make your own way to the Scotney basecamp – please let me know how you will be getting there (tim.sly@soton.ac.uk).

Accommodation

Accommodation will be at the 'Base Camp', a hostel-type building owned and run by the National Trust close to Scotney Castle and c.7 miles from Bodiam. There are c. 14 beds in the Base Camp, in 3-4 rooms. There is a kitchen and dining area. If there is an 'overflow', there will be room outside the building for extra camping.

Food will be basic, with a vegetarian option, and prepared at the Base Camp by a cook assisted by students on a rota basis. Packed lunches will be provided on all working days.

Local Amenities

Local amenities: Although it is only 50 miles from London, Scotney and Bodiam can feel quite remote and poorly served by public transport, and you should not plan on having easy access to shopping and other amenities. There are several pubs within walking distance of the Base Camp. Trips to local supermarkets will be possible (there will be a minibus). At Hawkhurst, there is a supermarket, a fish and chip shop, and other small shops. It may be possible to get to Tonbridge, Battle or Hastings at the weekends, or to take the train in from Robertsbridge to London.

Dates: 4th-23rd August

The field season will run for three weeks. We will work a Sunday-Thursday working week, with Fridays and Saturdays free. Working hours may vary but will generally be 9-5 with a break for lunch. On the two Fridays in between, we will run an optional field excursion to a range of castles and other medieval/historic sites in the region, for example Battle Abbey, Tonbridge Castle, Ightham Mote, and possibly Westenhanger and Dover Castles.

Saturday 4 th August	Students arrive at Base Camp. Optional visit to 1940s Day at Bodiam.
Sunday 5 th -Thursday 9 th August	First working week. (N.B. No work in public areas/Dokes Field at Bodiam 5 th August and 8 th -9 th August due to 1940s Weekend and Medieval Weekend preparations.).
Friday 10 th August	Field excursion to Battle, Hastings, Winchelsea, Rye and sites in between.
Saturday 11 th August	Free day. Optional visit to Medieval Weekend at Bodiam.
Sunday 12 th -Thursday 16 th August	Second working week. (N.B. no work in public areas/Dokes Field at Bodiam 12 th -13 th August due to Medieval Weekend and clear up following.).
Friday 17 th August	Field excursion to Ightham, Knole and sites in between.
Saturday 18 th August	Free day.
Sunday 19 th -Thursday 23 rd August	Third working week.
Thursday 23 rd August.	Work finishes and team are free to go by end of the day.

N.B. On 4th/5th August and 12th/13th August, Bodiam will host a '1940s Weekend' and a 'Medieval Weekend' respectively. The latter event will feature jousting!

General Research Context

The Bodiam/Scotney project is a research collaboration between the University of Southampton (Kris Strutt, Tim Sly, Dom Barker) and Northwestern University (Matthew Johnson), in partnership with the National Trust, who own and act as steward for both sites.

Aim of research: To understand late-medieval high-status sites in local and regional context. Hitherto, sites have been understood in abstraction – as examples of evolutionary types (Viollet le Duc), as exemplars of military trends (Cathcart King), or as abstracted 'designed landscapes'. The project will first and foremost understand these sites as artefacts of late medieval society, economy and culture. It will do this by foregrounding the relationship of the sites to their immediate contexts:

- Geophysical and topographical survey: lower courts.
- Relationship of the monuments to churches, roads, fields: routeways.
- The lived experience of the castle: beyond 'meaning'.
- Beyond 'designed landscapes'.
- Economics (labour, resources, political economy of castle building).
- Site biography (prehistory and post-medieval history of sites).

Key to this approach is an emphasis on scale – sites are examined and understood at a series of scales, from the most intimate (stone by stone analysis, arrangements of space) through geophysical and topographic survey of context, to regional links, to the widest temporal and spatial scales.

- Objectives: cluster of activities in and around castles and high-status sites in southern England.
- Methods: non-destructive (standing buildings survey, topographic, geophysics, ? coring).

There will be three phases to the project:

- First, Easter 2010 and 2011: complete topographic and geophysical survey of Bodiam, preliminary work at Scotney.
- Second, August 2012 and 2013: further work at Scotney, topographic and geophysical survey at Ightham in 2013.
- Third, Post-2013: major grant proposal (? jointly to AHRC and NSF) extending work to other sites in southern England.

