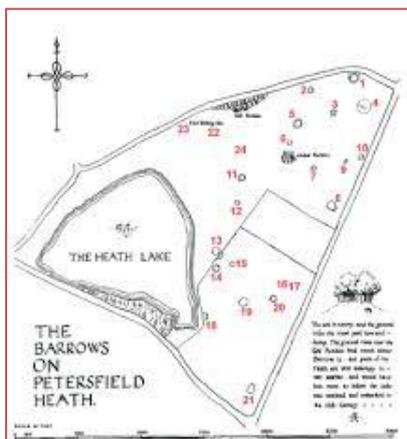


PEOPLE OF THE HEATH, PETERSFIELD

Members of the Friends do not take an interest solely in the Roman period, of course. Mary and Neville Haskins have been deeply involved in "People of the Heath", a four-year project focussed on a remarkable but little-known prehistoric monument complex on the edge of Petersfield, Hampshire, dating to the Early Bronze Age, between 2200 and 1500 BC. Although designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the large group of barrows (burial and ritual monuments) spread across Petersfield Heath has seen no active research since it was mapped in the 1930s and there is no record of any past excavations. Yet it is one of the most impressive and diverse barrow cemeteries to have survived in south-east England, boasting at least 21 monuments representing five or six different types.



Sorry about the quality of this map. It's from the museum website (Ed)

At the Friends' Tenth Anniversary meeting in June 2015 Mary and Neville showed a poster on the progress of the project. This brief report by them covers the exciting finds made since then.

"We have carried out further geophysical surveys prior to the latest excavations which guided the archaeological team to the areas of interest to dig. So far 7 of the 21 features identified by Stuart Piggott in his survey of the Heath in the 1920s have been excavated. Besides the burial in Barrow 11 (with bronze dagger) described in our original poster, two more excavations have uncovered burials. The first consisted of the remains of a cremation burial probably contained in a bag with a wooden handle; the handle is currently on display in Petersfield museum.



Collared urn from Barrow 8

Of course these remains are basically sand impressions as organic material is destroyed by the acidic sands of the Heath. The second discovery this year is a large collared urn (dated 2000-1500 B.C.) found beneath Barrow 8 (left). Following a CT scan at Winchester hospital the contents are currently being excavated in the lab at Winchester Museum. The excavation of Barrow 17 yielded a large spread of charcoal accompanied by a mineralised boar's tusk. The latest excavation has just finished (24th September) and concentrated on three more of the 21 barrows and a re-opening of Barrow 11 to extend the excavation around the area where the burial was found. Barrow 10 has the remains of a large badger sett and has probably been damaged by road building. There was little to see on Barrow 9 as the trench had to avoid the large oak tree growing on the top. Barrow 19 appears to have another burial urn, this time inverted. It needs to be excavated slowly and carefully, so had not been lifted by the official end of the dig. A small team will work on it on the week

after the dig officially closed.

"The excavation of Site 24 is also being re-visited; this time by a team of students from Winchester University led by their tutor Nick Thorpe. Finally Site 23 is being further excavated by a small team led by Anthony Haskins to clarify the findings from the test pits dug by school children two years ago."

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