

The Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA)

Dominic Perring*



Fig. 1: Excavation in progress on a late Medieval and early Modern cemetery site in Chichester where 1764 burials were recorded in advance of a housing scheme. These included shroud burials and coffined burials as well as a number of brick tombs.

This has been another difficult year for developer funded archaeology owing to the worsening recession in the UK construction industry. This is not altogether a bad thing because the slackening pace of construction activity means that fewer sites need to be dug in thoughtless haste. Freed from the distractions of rescue projects, the UCL Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), incorporating 'Archaeology South East', has been able to give clear priority to the study of the

mountain of unpublished finds and the 'grey literature' generated prior to the recession.

The article in this issue of *Archaeology International*, by Jim Stephenson, on the work at Brisley Farm, in Kent, is one such result (pp. xx–xx). The text of the definitive monograph on this important multi-period site, best known for its late Iron Age ritual landscape and warrior burials, is to be published later this year (Stephenson, forthcoming). Another noteworthy example is our study of Roman London, where ditches uncovered in rescue excavations appear to have been associated with a fort built at the time of the Claudian conquest – and are thus helping to rewrite the history of London's foun-

* UCL Institute of Archaeology,
London WC1H 0PY, United Kingdom
d.perring@ucl.ac.uk



Fig. 2: Two large circular Bronze Age buildings sealed by a burnt mound, being studied in advance of the construction of new coastal defences as part of the Medmerry managed realignment scheme.

dation (Perring, 2011). The breathing space afforded by the recession is also providing CAA with the opportunity to address a series of key issues in how archaeology currently works in the UK, as exemplified by James Doeser's recent report (2011) on ethnic diversity in the historic environment workforce.

It remains the case, however, that we need the revenues and project opportunities that come from developer funded archaeology. Without new sites, CAA will not be able to retain expert staff or invest in the new facilities and skills which are essential for our work. To this extent, we have been fortunate to have worked on two substantial cemetery clearance projects during the last year – in Chichester (West Sussex) and Westminster (London) – with work on the study of the human remains recovered now ongoing. Our biggest field-work project of the year is taking place near Selsey Bill, in West Sussex, as part of a coastal realignment being managed by the Environmental Agency. The main feature of this site is an extensive Bronze Age river or estuary shoreline, where several burnt mounds and an extensive fish-trap (which waits definitive dating) are in the course of study. Settlement

sites and a large cemetery (of 30–40 cremations) have been found nearby.

In addition, CAA is working in a joint venture with a Kazakhstan-based consultancy, 'Archeology Expertise', in the study of the silk-road city of Taraz, where we are also arranging for student training excavations to take place as part of an integrated programme of study and conservation.

These various project opportunities should keep CAA busy for the coming year, providing for the continuing employment of a core team of some 45 professional archaeologists.

References

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