

WEALDEN IRON RESEARCH GROUP

SITE QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Field Work

- a. Site Name (accepted name, derived from Straker or other source - state which). *Piper's Copse, KIRDFORD SX
Sussex Arch. Collection LXXVII (1976) p 245.*
- b. National Grid Reference (2 letters, 6 figures).
SU 978 296
- c. Accessibility (state difficulties, or name of owner or agent to whom any prior written application may be necessary)
An thick woodland near road (on N.) Kirdford to North Chapel.
- d. Owner, and tenant if let (see above also)
- e. Main features visible on the ground (state if these differ from published descriptions - due, for instance, to later ploughing or building).
Very prominent earthwork enclosing 1.2 acres.
- f. Are there any buildings, industrial, domestic or agricultural apparently dating from the likely period of the site? If so, describe, give location, and any published descriptions or references.
- g. Has the site been re-used (e.g. Corn mill)
- h. Surface finds.
 - Iron
 - Ore *see S.A.C. on above*
 - ✓ Slags/cinders - what type? if sampled, where kept? *include furnace bottom. with C.F.T.*
 - Pottery *see S.A.C. on above*
 - Other

- j. Has any excavation, published or unpublished, ever taken place ?
Have you any details, in the case of unpublished work, of the excavator or location of finds ?

*Yes, see Early Iron Age Camp in Pipers' Copse, Kirdford
Winbolt. S.A.C. LXXVII (1926) p 245*

- k. IS THE SITE THREATENED IN ANY WAY ?

No Iron threat, some disturbance of surface by recent digging

- l. Other comments.

II. Documentary Work

No questionnaire, particularly on documentary material, can hope to be comprehensive. Collections of estate papers contain many miscellaneous and unpredictable items, which only examination of catalogues in the Record Office will disclose.

The use of exact location of the site will often serve as a focus for search for scattered material whose existence might not always be expected.

- a. Bibliography:

Published references to manuscript document sources:
Have you discovered whether anyone has worked on such sources ?

- b. Was the site ever part of a large estate ?

Are archives from such an estate deposited accessibly ?

(These might comprise manorial records (useful in the medieval period for relevant occupational surnames, found in charters, leases, Views of Frankpledge, etc) estate accounts, maps and surveys, deeds and leases, correspondence etc.)

What dates do such collections - or isolated items - cover ?

What are the main classes of record surviving ?

- c. Do Parish Registers survive for the locality (16th century and after?). Do they refer to the occupations of the persons named, or of their relations ?

- d. Have Wills and Probate Inventories for the area been collected in the appropriate County Record Office ?

- e. Do any indications of the site - e.g. field names, ponds, - appear on the tithe appropriation map kept in the County Record Office for the area ?
- f. Persons found to have owned, leased or worked the site (with dates and maximum details.)
- g. Supplementary information.

III. Layout of Site

Please sketch the visible features and attach any relevant photographs.

When visited with Eric Holder in Oct. 1972 we found the camp much as Winbolt described it although the area to the E. had been cleared and replanted. At the area marked "Lime Kiln" we found about 6 large pieces of iron slag - parts of a broken up furnace bottom - probably from a smelting rather than forging site - On the opposite W. side of the rampart at a new "Ash Tree" there had been much disturbance of the rampart site from Winbolt's excavations or badgers / fox or human digging. In the course of this several large lumps of cinder / slag had been turned out to lay on the surface inside the camp.

to W. I. R. G. with kind wishes
G. H. X

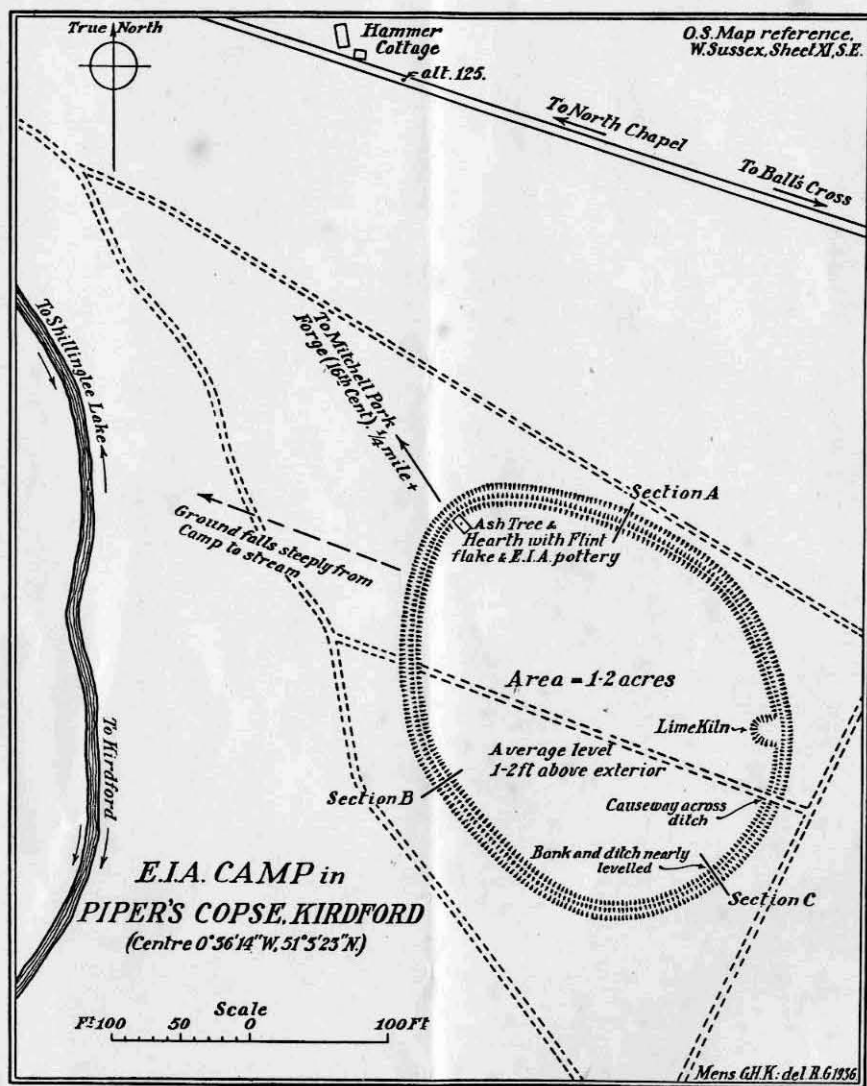
**AN EARLY IRON AGE
CAMP IN PIPER'S COPSE
KIRDFORD**

By S. E. WINBOLT

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AN EARLY IRON AGE CAMP IN PIPER'S COPSE, KIRD FORD

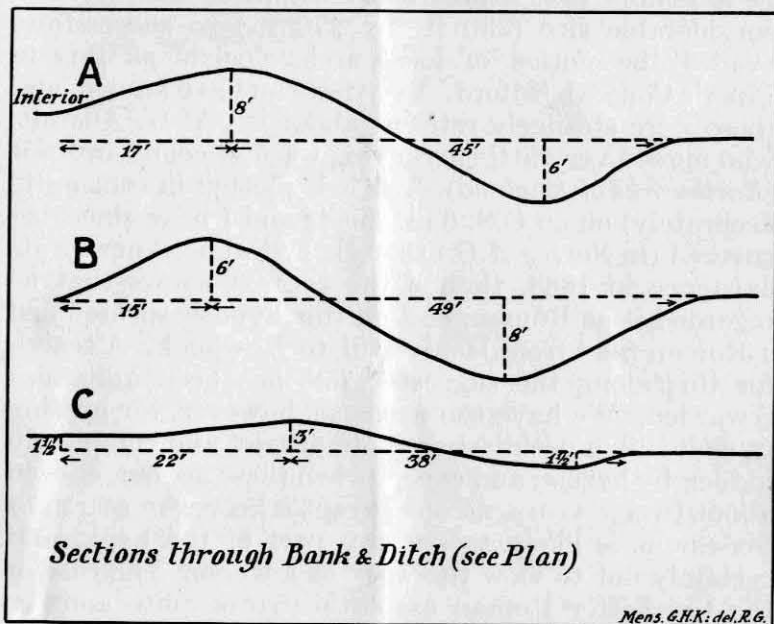
BY S. E. WINBOLT

It is seldom that a practically complete earthwork of considerable size (330 ft. by 270 ft.) so successfully evades the notice of local archæologists as this in Piper's Copse, Kirdford. Very few can have known, and these were strangely reticent about it. A. H. Allcroft, who missed very little in Sussex, was not cognizant of it (*Earthworks of England*). Yet it is plotted in (not quite accurately) on an O.S. 6 in. sheet; and I have since discovered (in *Surrey A.C.*) that H. F. Napper knew of its existence in 1888, though the context shows that he regarded it as Roman, and on this hypothesis assumed a Roman road from Henly Hill to Rowhook. A search for this along the suggested line has been quite unrewarded. We have some excuse, however, for missing it, as it is in a peculiarly remote district and completely hidden by hazels; and except when these are cut, once in about twelve years, no one except a keeper in search of fox-earths is likely to see any part of the bank, and certainly not to view the work as a whole. The case of the Chichester Roman amphitheatre is quite another story; for, though plotted in on no map, it stands up boldly in a field quite close to the city wall, and moreover is traversed by a public footpath which ascends the west bank, descends into the arena, and then goes over the east bank. It is amazing that it was not identified before and put on the map, through all these centuries. The existence of an earthwork in Piper's Copse was reported to me in 1934 by the Misses Farmer, of Loxwood, with an indirect suggestion that it was of neolithic date. With the permission of Lord Leconfield, Mr. G. H. Kenyon and I set about investigating. The openings of an old fox-earth into the bank showed burnt clay and charcoal, and a moderate amount of

Map re/ Nat Grid. 978.295. ✓
Hill (grid same later)
Survey done with army compass + tape
only, it overgrown copse.

spade work brought us down on to a red-burnt hearth, 9 ft. from the inner edge of the bank (at the point marked in the plan) and 4 ft. from the surface. Scattered about on the hearth were six fragments of, apparently, E.I.A. pottery of La Tène III (possibly II) type, and a neat flint flake, and there were a number of nodules of local (puddingstone) iron ore, some burnt,

Can see said
A.B.C.



some unburnt. Close by, inside the area, were big chunks of ore, either on the surface or just below it. A hearth, probably of the latest period of the Early Iron Age (say, the last century B.C.), had been made, as in cases recorded elsewhere, well in the slope of the bank. It is probable that an examination of the bank would prove the existence of several other such hearths. There are, however, very few, if any, places in such a close-planted area where digging can be done: nowhere on the inner floor can one see more than a few feet ahead. But should funds and labour become available at the right time, i.e. when the undergrowth is cut three or four

x 2 small scraps given by me to S.A.S. museum Leaver
in 1946 (see S.A.C. 86. XXXIX) verif. by N.W.
the picnic

years hence, the bank should be tested, and the fosse trenched in the few places where there is a comparatively clear run. There is now no obvious entrance visible, but it was probably in the south-east portion where the bank has apparently been shovelled down into the ditch and where the modern path enters the camp. This also would demand investigation. The evidence at present is, of course, exiguous, but the nature of the earthwork, a hearth, the pottery in association, and the fact that the surrounding country is rich in iron ore (though of a moderate quality), having been worked in four furnaces of sixteenth-century date, seems to be fairly conclusive for an E.I.A. date for the camp. This note is written so that, if Mr. Kenyon and I fail to tackle the job, other intending excavators in future may know what to expect.

The situation of the camp, about two miles east of the lower slopes of Blackdown and on the Wealden level (c. 125 ft.), makes it exceptional. We know of Wealden camps on heights, e.g. Saxonbury and Dry Hill, where iron was worked; and there are others on the heights fringing the Weald, e.g. Holmbury and Hascombe, where iron was worked. In the latter case an iron hearth was made in the south fosse and into the bank (*Surrey A.C.* XL. 89). Piper's Copse is the only place in Sussex known to me where such a camp is situated on low ground. Here, however, there was the advantage of a fairly copious stream close outside the camp. Hascombe, the nearest E.I.A. camp, is just six miles away to the north-north-east. One hardly sees why a camp should have been made here for any other reason than for exploiting the local iron ore. The small size (1½ acres) seems to preclude any idea of an ordinary township. Hascombe and Holmbury are better situated and very much bigger—the former 5¼ acres. Both these have some Roman-British remains; and it is not altogether surprising that Roman-British shards have also been found at Piper's Copse. The shape of the camp, a rough ovoid, was deliberate, i.e. not determined, as so often on hill-tops, by the nature of the ground: for, though along the north-

west side defensive advantage was taken of the steep slope to the stream, there was nothing in the levels elsewhere to prevent the defences from being constructed on any predetermined plan, circular or rectangular. It is on a kind of promontory, but there was room to make the camp any shape desired. The oval was chosen, as for the earlier camp at Saxonbury. For a camp of so small an area the bank and ditch are not inconsiderable, the average height of the crown of bank from the bottom of ditch now being 14 ft. (having been originally as much, perhaps, as 18 ft. or more), and the measure through bank and ditch averaging 62ft., precisely the same as that at Hascombe (*Surrey A.C.* XI. 85). Piper's Copse may have been purely business premises; if so, it is probably unique.

ADDENDUM

(August, 1936.) Since the above was written, the bank and fosse have been dug through, Mr. G. H. Kenyon kindly supplying the labour, at a point where the base of the bank gave a measurement of 25 ft. 6 in., and the top of the fosse in the same horizontal line 29 ft. 8 in. This cut was close east of Section A on plan. No dating evidence was found, but it is clear that both sides of the fosse were dug out in two steps each, very much as was the case with the fosse at Hascombe, probably to ease the work of men carrying baskets of earth. The bank was 5 ft. 10 in. high, and the fosse 6 ft. 3 in. deep. Digging at a spot, close S. of Hearth on plan, in the area revealed points of interest. The water table was very high, only 18 in. down at the end of April, 1936. About a hundred fragments of pots were found evenly spread over 6 square yards, at depths varying from 12 to 19 in., and these, mysteriously enough, were a 'mixed bag of medieval (mostly) and Roman-British'. Many of them were beneath a layer of stones, themselves just below the surface. There was also charcoal from beech, common oak, and hawthorn (J. C. Maby) under the stones, and close by lumps of baked clay and cooked

x Harker's note at B.M.

puddingstones. The laid stones—puddingstone, winklestone, and sandstone—were in a line 6-7 ft. long and 1½ ft. wide, and appear to have been laid over earlier debris as stepping-stones over a very wet place. The geology here is: 17 in. of clay top soil, below which is sand—very bad land agriculturally. Mr. F. H. Edmunds reports that the iron ore is typical 'shrove', 'a Pleistocene deposit, formed partly from gravel derived from the Hastings Beds, and partly as a "bog ore". It is usually overlain by a few feet of re-sorted clay'. It contained 'sufficient iron to smelt in the old Wealden Bloomeries'. Mr. Kenyon has carefully examined the sharply falling stream-bank which forms the west side of the camp and continues for half a mile south. It is cut into irregular shelves and hollows, which appear to be diggings for the puddingstone ore, of what date it is difficult to say. So far, the scanty evidence seems to suggest iron working in Early Iron, Roman-British, and Mediæval times. x

A party of the Sussex Archaeological Society, with Dr. Eliot Curwen, has visited the site, and a few friends have subscribed a small excavation fund. Further work will be done as soon as labour is available and woodland conditions permit, and I hope in my next report to have better evidence for the various periods suggested.

1954. Later note. S.N.Q. XIV p. 59.
mainly 17 & 18c. showing earthwork
x 1968 shown by Geological Survey c. 1958
& the large digging of Sussex near the (Pahedra)
a short note in S.N.Q. May 1969

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EARLY IRON AGE CAMP IN WEST SUSSEX

11.5. 5 August 1935
CLUE GIVEN BY FOX

Mr. S. E. Winbolt writes:—An Early Iron Age camp, roughly ovoid, has been identified $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of North Chapel, in West Sussex. It is in Piper's Copse, on Lord Leconfield's land, a remote place known to very few but fox-hunters and the men who periodically cut the undergrowth. The earthwork is a bold bank and deepish ditch, in good condition except on the south-east, where an attempt seems to have been made to level bank and ditch. A fox-earth in the bank gave the clue. Fox had chosen a dry place where a small iron-smelting hearth had been constructed in the inner slope of the bank at the north-west end.

Red-burnt material, charcoal, small broken nodules of local iron ore called puddingstone, and five fragments of La Tène III. pottery, together with many big lumps of ore close by, leave no doubt as to the original purpose and date of this curiously reticent earthwork. It lies on Wealden level (c. 120ft.) about two miles from the eastern slope of Blackdown, is near a good-sized stream flowing into the Arun through Kirdford and Wisborough, and in country rich in iron ore of moderate quality. Late medieval iron furnaces and forges are all around, the nearest being Mitchell Park (sixteenth century), a quarter of a mile north-west of the camp; and the iron works of Shillinglee, Ebernoe, and Roundwyck are all close. Woodland conditions make further investigation exceedingly difficult. The dimensions of the camp from outsides of the bank are a little over 300ft. by 270ft., the inner area comprising about $1\frac{1}{4}$ acre. From bottom of ditch to crown of rampart where best preserved is 14ft.

Such Early Iron Age camps are known on heights fringing the Weald, as at Holmbury and Hascombe, and on hills in the Weald, as at Saxonbury and Dry Hill, but this would appear to be a unique example on Wealden level. It is now becoming a commonplace that almost always where there were medieval and Tudor iron furnaces they were preceded by Roman and Celtic iron-workers.

From the pebble to Fox Rd

~~Handwritten scribbles~~ Piperno Capas ¹⁸⁰⁰ old, ^{Hors.} 8 Nov '34
Spottiswoode

Dear K

In fact you set about surveying & plotting P. Capas:
I rather hoped you would.

Prob. orig. Pypchunget, Pype perhaps the name of
the stream; clawton then is a 14th cent. family
le Pipers.

Bearing fully in mind the various origins possible for
ring works, I plump for this as E. I. A. and
Latin, say ¹² 1200 - A.D.

The account of its position is prob. iron: it is in the midst
of later iron works (see map), and on a fordish stream.
I incline to hold with Borden who wrote me some time
ago, "I have come to the opinion that almost wherever there
has been iron-ore, Tindor or Stuart iron works, there was
Roman and pre-Roman." Hence, as at Saxenburg and
Dy Mire, prob. iron slag ('cinder' seems the accepted word)
and perhaps bits of E. I. A. (d??im. l. pot) but Danish
little iron: also some flint things.

The survey, the surround on the big bank into which
v. interesting. Protective works outside entrance (or
entrances) quite possible. I did not grasp the
relative positions of stream & castle. (B.F.O.)

Central Point to Fort & Camp

S.N.Q. May. 1969.

Piper's Copse camp. Northchapel. S.U. 9780.2955.

This camp was examined, planned and sectioned by Winbolt and myself in 1935/6. and a brief interim report was printed. ¹ An additional short note on the camp and its appearance on various maps from the 17th century onwards was printed in S.N.Q. XIV. p.59.

Some further details need bringing up to date. I was wrong in suggesting in Winbolt's report (p. 249) that the irregular shelves and hollows in the sharply falling stream bank to the west of the camp "appear to be diggings for the puddingstone ore". They have since been shown to be part of extensive quarrying for Sussex or Petworth marble (Saluda limestone). ² On p.246 Winbolt refers to a hearth inside the bank. In The Times of 5th August 1935 he described it as a small iron-smelting hearth. Today in addition to iron ore we should require some traces of ~~iron~~ bloomery cinder as evidence of iron working. We found none. ³ A few scraps of E.I.A. ABC pottery were found in the hearth some of which are now in the Society's museum at Lewes. The hearth had been disturbed by the making ⁴ making of an artificial fox earth roofed with a slab of Sussex marble.

1. S.A.C. 77. p.245.

2. See also S.A.C. 99. p.104.(A).

3. S.A.C. 86. p. XXXIX.

4. Sometime in the last century when foxes were scarce in this district, they were said to have been imported from the shires. This earth was in use and three times in an hour a fox came along to see what I was up to.

G.H.Kenyon.

X? He recognized me.

1.
Iron Pear Tree Farm.
Kirkford, Billingshurst.

18.10.72.

Dear Mr Tebbutt,

Many thanks for yr phone call re. Pipers camp.

When I came home after the war I sorted out the few significant ornaments I had and gave them to museums. The only two surviving scraps of suggested EIA. ABC pottery I sent to our museum at Barb.House. see SAC. 86. p. XXXIX. ⁽¹⁹⁴⁷⁾ additions to museum. then London Mus. I think mislaid them. ^{after dating} I hope they are traceable, so they can be checked, ^{see below} Wheeler saw other scraps and I think Cecil Curwen saw the Barb House ones. former said La Tene III and Curwen ABC. I should be very interested to hear recent opinion.

~~Some~~ Scraps of medieval pot I still have, as they did not seem important. Please let me know if you want ^{them} otherwise I shall prob. bury them with other trifling site refuse. Plainly someone lived in the camp and there appear to be foundations of possibly timber framed hovel inside the camp. The name on the c.1630 map of Jomane Neuling's Toft suggests this. At the time the EIA. pot seemed to me valuable so I sent it to Barb.House. The whole of this letter &c may be of some value to WIR Gp. if so please file it or ~~throw~~ ^{send} it away or ~~send~~ it to Owenen. I normally correspond with him as I am in his "area". but thought as this was prehistory and you had visited the camp, it might go to you. Please sort out this. I looked out what I had left on Pipers and as it is spare I enclose it as a final clear up, for the WIR gp to keep if ^{key} you want it.

1. An offprint of the brief paper in SAC. 77. p.245. 1956.

2. a copy of a brief note in SNQ May 1969.

3¹/₂ 3 poor photos of camp.

4. Winbolt's note to The Times. Aug.55. referred to in 2 above.

5. a letter from Winbolt re Pipers camp (with my inked comment that Fox had got his K. first !)

The only other ref. to ~~the~~ Pipers I know of and of which I have no spare copy

The survey of the camp in SAC.77. ~~was~~ p.244. was done with some difficulty as I think it is pretty correct.

had only a ~~low~~ compass from the 1st war and tape in heavily copse conditions. I told the O.S. about it and they did it properly c.20 yrs later. I tried to get it scheduled, without success.

from p. 1

is a longer note I put in SNQ XIV. p.59. ^{The note} It is easily seen, and is mainly about the maps on which the camp is shown. In it I mention where ~~the~~ ^{the} so called

(L935/6) medieval pottery was being found (post survey), close to where the fetterfoot path leaves the N.W. side of the camp. I suspect there may have been some foundations of a welling about half way between the centre of the camp and its West vallum where there is a line of winkle stone (Sx marble) and a large lump of putting stone ore. it was adjoining this that the med. pot. (above) was found. The first find here (see SAC. 77.p248) as far as I remember went up to Hawkes then at the BM. who diagnosed it as 'a mixed bag of medieval (mostly) and Roman-British'. I don't remember seeing this again. One ~~was~~ often

in 1947. the two scraps of ABC (now in SA museum). Winbolt was always careful to report new sites and their evidence without delay. possibly today some chaps, who sit on things for years, might copy him. There is one well known archaeologist who is said to have both his baths full of pot &c, his own and stuff sent for eating. jolly inconvenient, like the famous book collector in Lewes, who was forced to move to another house, because his first one was stacked to the roof with books.

I remember the thrill, when I first saw this ~~camp~~ earthwork buried in copse and I guessed it might be EIA, a most improbable if not unique camp in the Weald Clay (not the much more diverse and vast Weald), and ringing dear old Winbolt up. I am now old and none and happy to pass on this modest stuff.

where in the 1972 season we are already
getting, as a basis, an extensive survey of
Thomson. Further bettering of his life style, associated with
detailed Thomson waves and winds.

I would like to thank the G-4 Group
F.S.A. for giving me so much help & information
about Paper Lake.

It is to be hoped that future year work at
Grand Hill will help to solve some of these problems
so important for wildlife history.