

# KAFS Newsletter: No.6.

Kent Archaeological Field School: Spring 2010



W elcome to the 2010 Spring issue of the Kent Archaeological Field School Newsletter. It has been a wonderful tenth season of excavation and courses with the Field School.

Great discoveries have been made which will enable us to understand even better the landscape archaeology of Kent. Further work was carried out on the site of the Roman town of Durolevum

*The excavation team at work during Easter at the small Roman town of Durolevum. They are removing a Roman cremation vessel from its pit. The pot, dating from the 2nd century was in a fragile state and on the advice of our conservation specialist has been wrapped in cling film before lifting. Under the cemetery are located double v-shaped Roman ditches which may be from an early marching camp dating from the AD43 Claudian invasion.*



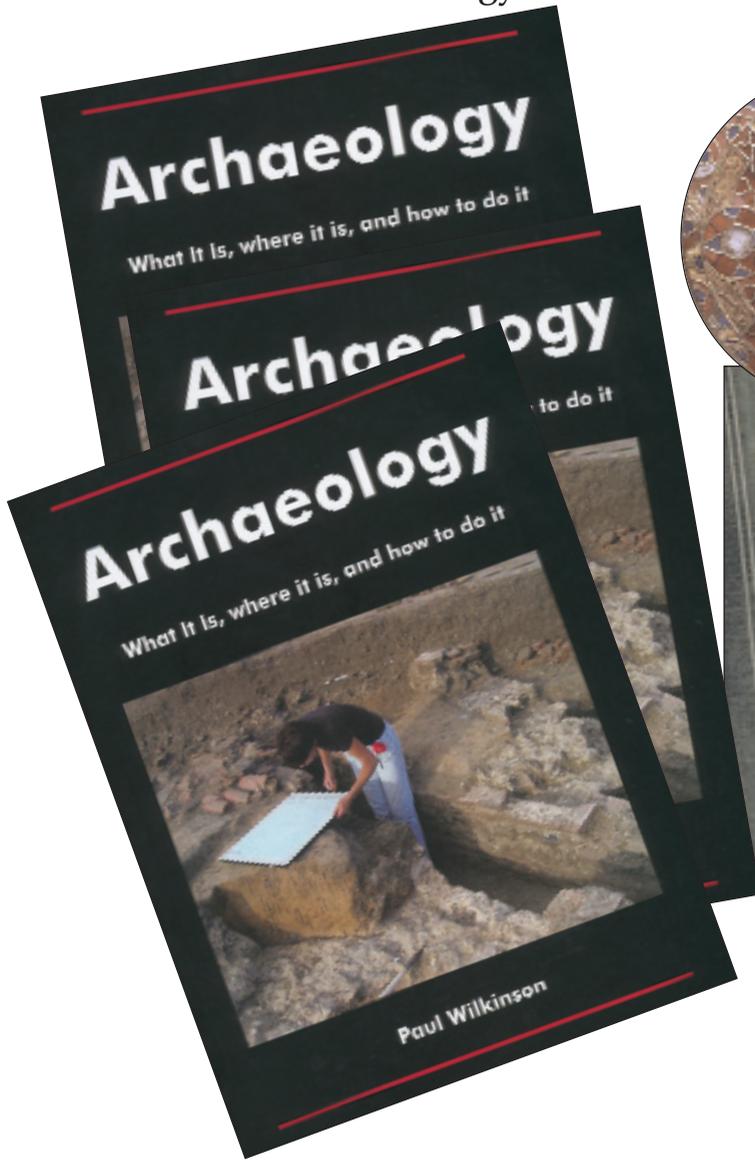
where we exposed Saxon and Roman cemeteries south of the A2 which overlaid deep Roman v-shaped ditches and which may be the circuit of a 1st century Roman marching camp. We will return to this site in August 2010 to unravel the mystery of the elusive Roman fort at Syndale. At Bax Farm, our main dig in 2009, we exposed the Roman foundations of a unique octagonal bath house. Whether the central plunge pool was used for Christian baptism is a question for post-excavation work, but nevertheless a unique building from the time of Constantine.



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# FIELD SCHOOL BOOKS

New book on Archaeology



## BBC Investigation of a field in Kent

Last December The Field School helped to make a BBC programme on "Burials in the Landscape". We showed how easy it was for treasure hunters to target unknown archaeological sites (below).



The site chosen was close to Bridge near Canterbury and in the vicinity where wonderful Anglo-Saxon jewellery had been plundered in the 18th century (above, top). On this Google aerial

photograph you can see the individual Anglo-Saxon graves within the ditched cemetery. Most of the graves are pointing west-east suggesting they are Christian burials.

The new book by Paul Wilkinson, the director of the Field School, launched last winter was an instant success. The book is a distillation of what is taught at the Field School and many students will find it invaluable in their studies. It is in full colour and covers subjects which are essential reading for today's student of archaeology.

Mick Aston says the book is "A very useful basic introduction to archaeology" whilst Francis Pryor says "I wish this book had been available when I started out in archaeology back in the 1960s. It tells you everything you need to know in order to decide what sort of archaeology you'd like to learn more about". To order the book at £10 fill in the form opposite.

### Order Form

If you would like a signed copy please put the name required at the bottom of the coupon.

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I enclose a cheque (payable to KAFS) for £10 which includes post and packaging

Name in book.....

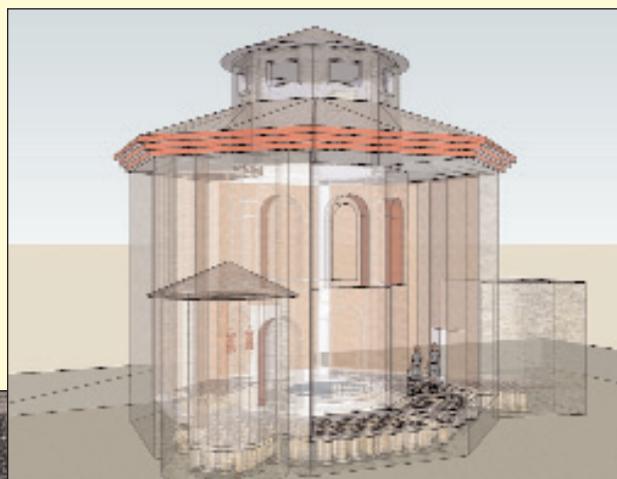
# BAX FARM EXCAVATION



The 2009 summer excavation of the Kent Archaeological Field School was to investigate a Roman octagonal building located as debris in a field by Dr Paul Wilkinson as part of the Swale Archaeological Survey in 2000. About 80 students from most of the major universities in Britain had gathered for three weeks' training and excavation at the end of which we had exposed all of a unique and magnificent late Roman octagonal structure with an octagonal central plunge bath probably built at the time of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor.

blue tile. Smaller marble mosaic cubes were also retrieved which suggest that some of the internal decoration may have had mosaics.

Octagonal buildings of this type have only been found in the West Country at Lufton and Holcombe. Others are further afield in Ravenna and Rome where they functioned as early Christian baptisteries. The function of



*Research by Bartosz Cichy (above) into the structure of the building show that some rooms at Bax Farm had underfloor heating as well as alcoves which contained hot plunge baths. It is logical to assume that above the central pool and its fountain was a vaulted ceiling carried on arcaded columns and a large dome set on pendentives pierced by clerestory lighting. The high building would have echoed and reflected the sound of cascading water on its blue domed ceiling.*

The blue coloured fresco floor of the plunge bath has survived as has the Roman lead water pipe leading from the massive Roman brick arched conduit which carried copious amounts of water to the bath. The structure was about 14 metres across and probably has arcaded columns surrounding the central octagonal pool. The walls of the building were originally covered with decorated painted plaster and the floors with the usual tesserae in black, red and

these elaborate and exotic buildings in Britain has often been discussed but most experts keep coming back to the idea that the astonishing octagonal frigidarium at the centre of the building could have been used for Christian or even Jewish baptism, a scenario reinforced by the finding of a Roman lead seal at Bax Farm, which probably is a "redemption of the first born" medal and depicts a special kind of five-branched menorah used in the ceremony of baptism.

# FIELD SCHOOL COURSES

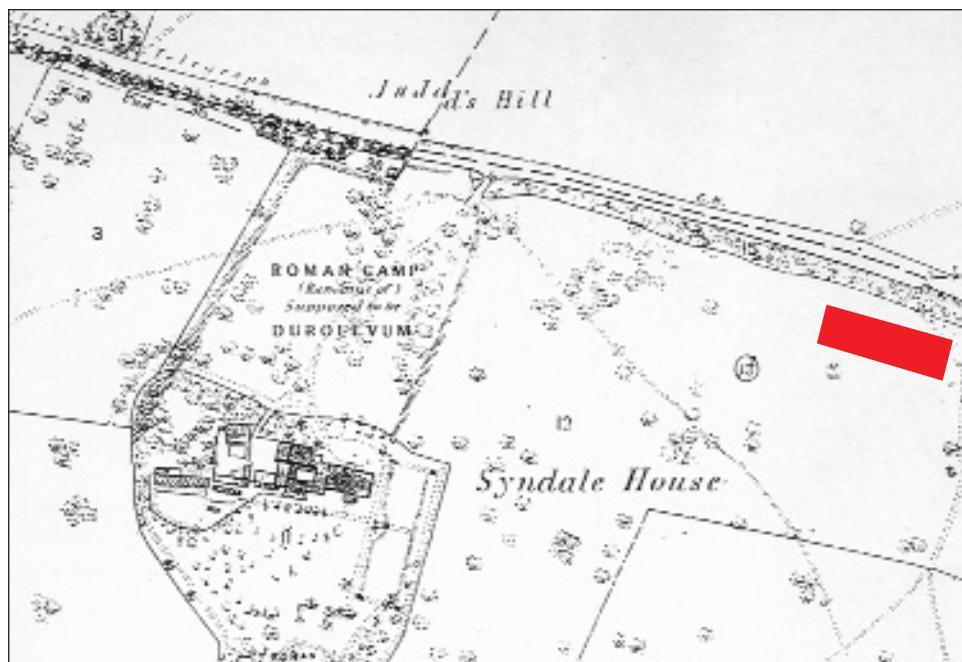
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## Investigations at Syndale Park in 2010

A programme of field survey and geophysical investigation supported by limited excavation by the KAFS over the last few seasons has now shed new light on the nature and extent of monuments within the park. This has led in turn to a wider investigation of the land north and south of the Roman Watling Street, which itself runs east/west through the park (below). The focus of attention in 2008/9 was an area (red) located at the eastern edge of the park and south of Watling Street. This area was originally investigated by Colonel Hawley in September 1922, where he reported

before Watling Street, itself dated to about AD 50. Investigation by Hawley in 1926-31 within Syndale Park to the west found the remains of Roman houses with intact hearths alongside the A2 (Watling Street). In Syndale Park itself he found the remains of two skeletons (Whiting & Hawley 1931).

In 2004-7 the KAFS found a number of Roman cremations, the remains of Watling Street and adjacent Roman buildings which is likely to be the Roman small town of Durolevum (Practical Archaeology Issues 2-7).



*The summer excavation at Syndale Park will concentrate on excavating the Roman cemeteries in the red zone to allow access to the 1st century double ditches located underneath. These ditches could be part of a Roman marching camp constructed by the Roman legions of Claudius when Britain was invaded in AD 43. Time Team has spent a week attempting to locate a Roman fort at Syndale in an area now known to have been a late Iron Age settlement.*

that: "a paved hearth and wall foundations" had been revealed (Whiting & Hawley 1931).

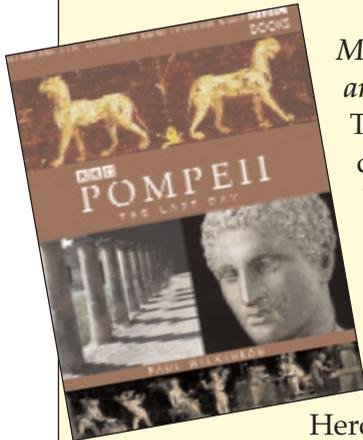
On investigation of his trench by the KAFS the 'paved hearth' turned out to be a monumental sarcophagus built out of chalk blocks and Kentish Ragstone with a terracotta ceramic lid covering the grave slot. The monument is late, having been built over the remains of a 3rd century kiln.

The terracotta lid has been damaged sometime in the past, but the grave has not been robbed and the burial is still in situ. Other features exposed were a Roman kiln or oven, Roman cremation burials, Roman Watling Street and a large Roman double ditch, some two metres deep, dated by coins and pottery to the 1st century and dug



# ROMAN HOLIDAY TRIPS

## Pompeii, Imperial Rome, and Roman Germany 2010: Libya in 2011



*May 22nd to 27th. Pompeii and the Bay of Naples*

This trip is for the cognoscenti who have been before but want to spend more time at Pompeii- it includes two days of guided tours of the well-preserved Roman town of Pompeii and

Herculaneum. We will also visit Cumae, Baiae, Pozzuoli, Oplontis, Boscoreale, the villas' at Stabiae, and the Naples Archaeological Museum.

Also included is a free book (above) written by your guide-Dr Paul Wilkinson. The trip includes full board and flights, entrance fees, transfers, coach, and Italian guide and costs £998 per person (single £1,249).



*September 17th to 24th, 2010.*

*Imperial Rome, Ostia and Hadrians Villa*

A trip without equal-the

marvellous imperial buildings, the mosaic clad palaces, a fast moving and full itinerary will take you places few tourists see- including a visit to Ostia and Hadrians Villa at Tivoli.

The trip costs £1,198 per person (single £1,465).



*December 4th to 9th. Winter Trip to Roman Germany-the Edge of Empire*

A tour to the heart of Roman Germanica. Who can forget the opening scene of the film *Gladiator*, set in

the Teutoburg Forest? Our tour begins in Cologne, Germany's oldest city on the very edge of Empire. We move on to Xanten and visit the rebuilt Roman town and then on to Saalburg Roman fort high in the German forests where Varus led his legions to disaster. At Trier we will enjoy the Christmas markets and visit the Porta Nigra, the Cathedral, The Roman Baths, Episcopal Museum, the Constantine Basilica, and the Rheinisches Landesmuseum.

Price £998 per person (single £1,145).

All of the trips fully guided by Dr Paul Wilkinson. Prices include flights, transfers, b&b, dinner, some lunches, entrance fees and coach travel.

For further details, and to book see: [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk)-

To book Libya for 2011 we will need your deposit of £250 by September 2010.

For details of the trip see [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk)



# FIELD SCHOOL COURSES

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*KAFS two-day courses cost £70, three-day courses cost £100. Unless otherwise stated, KAFS members enjoy a 10% discount on full prices, except field trips. To book, fill in the form on page 8. For further details of all courses and membership, see: [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk)*



## *March 6th & 7th, Field Walking and Historic Map Analysis*

Walking across the landscape, and recording features seen on the ground is fundamental to most rural archaeology. This weekend course explains how to recognise and record artefacts found within the plough soil. These objects include flint tools, building material, pottery, glass and metal artefacts. We will consider the importance of historic map analysis as part of this procedure. KAFS members free.



## *Easter, April 2nd to April 11th, Investigation of a Roman villa.*

An opportunity for KAFS members to join the professional SWAT archaeologists in investigating by evaluation trenching the environs of a Roman villa and its outbuildings. KAFS 'five year' member's free, non-members £35 per day, members £20 a day.

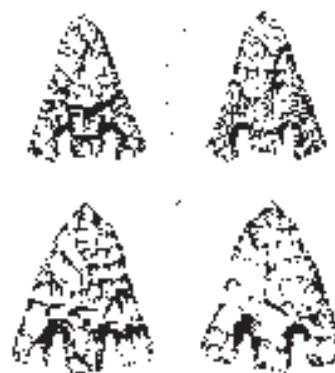
## *May Bank Holiday, May 1st, 2nd, 3rd Introduction to Archaeology*

A practical three-day Bank Holiday course. We will survey the extent of a Roman settlement, its access roads, field systems, and sample, through survey and field-walking the extent and quality of survival of the Roman infrastructure. This course is ideal for newcomers and families new to archaeology who wish to understand the archaeological process. We shall look at how archaeological sites are discovered and find out how different types of finds, such as pottery, bones and flints, reveal the lives of former

peoples. The three-day Bank Holiday course costs £50 if membership is taken out at the time of booking, KAFS 'five year' members free.

## *May 29th, 30th, How to Identify Prehistoric Flints*

A course on the identification of prehistoric flint and stone with Hugo Lamdin-Whymark who will explain the technology used to produce prehistoric tools from all periods. On Sunday there will be a practical exercise on field walking for lithics and flint knapping with John Lord, one of the country's leading practitioners of the craft.



## *July 24th, 25th, Soil sampling for Archaeologists*

A course on the theory and practice of soil sampling with Lisa Gray an experienced archaeobotanist. Methods from how to take samples in the field to the recovery of seeds and plant remains, molluscs, animal and fish bones, by water flotation utilising a flushing system of sieves and recycled water. Samples will be sorted for recovery of seeds and prepared for analysis. Practical exercises for students with the flotation tanks will take place at the KAFS Field School.

## *August 28th and 29th, Bones and Burials*

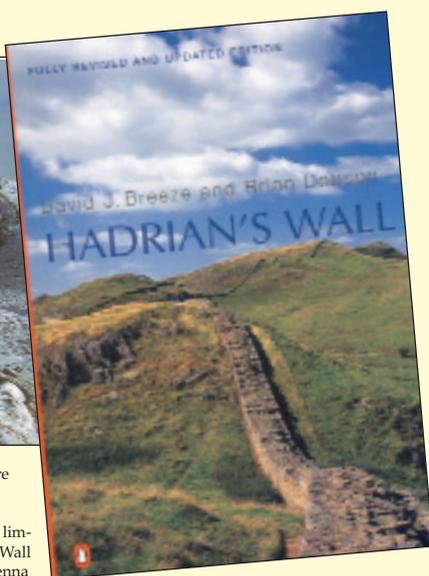
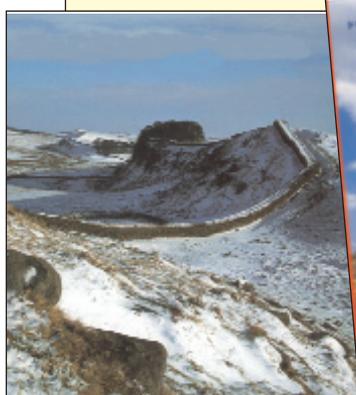
Osteo-archaeology is the study of human remains. The course will be led by Dr Chris Deter from the Dept of Anthropology, University of Kent. The course will cover the on-site recording of human remains and how they can reveal information about the person's age, sex and state of health. Excavated skeletons will be available for study and analysis in practical sessions.

Cost for the weekend is £70 for non-members and KAFS member's special fee of £60.

# FIELD SCHOOL TRIPS

## June 5th, 6th, Hadrian's Wall

An exciting trip to the very edge of the Roman Empire with Professor David Breeze author of the definitive work on Hadrian's Wall. We will visit Housesteads, Birdoswald, Vindolanda, Great Chesters, Segedunum, and Arbeia, the Roman supply base of Corbridge and the working replica baths at Segedunum. Price for the weekend is £99, which includes entrance fees and coach travel to sites along the Wall.



Field School 'No Frills' trips are for the adventurous at heart. Advice is given on flights and accommodation. Numbers are limited to 30 people on Hadrian's Wall trip and 16 people on the Ravenna trip. We have booked our flights and accommodation to Newcastle and Ravenna and will be at Newcastle and Ravenna to receive guests. Paul & Catherine Wilkinson.

## May 14th, 15th, 16th, Ravenna, Italy

Ravenna was the last capital of the Roman



Empire in the West, before becoming the capital of Byzantine Italy. The city has wonderful examples of early Christian architecture and some of the best

early Christian mosaics in the world. Price for the long weekend is £120 which includes mini bus travel from the airport at Bologna, entrance fees and advice on flights and where to stay. We will visit the National Museum, in San Vitale, and see the cross-shaped Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where the early mosaics include a star-encrusted cupola. There are two baptisteries in Ravenna; the Catholic one with Hellenic-Roman style mosaics dating from 450, and the Arian Baptistery with its figure of Christ. We will visit the remains of Theodoric's mausoleum that he built for himself in 520. We travel out of the city to Saint Apollinare in Classe. When it was built, in the 5th century, it stood on the Adriatic coast, next to where the Roman fleet once moored.

## August 14th to September 12th.

*Excavation of the Roman cemetery to reveal a possible 1st century Roman invasion marching camp at Syndale Park, Faversham*

Recent geophysical survey and excavation in the summer of 2009 has identified Roman burials (right) and 1st century Roman double ditches alongside the Roman Watling Street at Syndale Park, just west of Faversham. We will spend thirty days excavating and recording these Roman features in a genuine course of discovery. Beginners are welcome to the Training Course on the Monday 23rd to Friday 27th August course, with the option to continue for further days (same daily fee applies). Experienced participants may book the days they wish.

Topics taught each day are: Monday: History of the Site & Why dig? Tuesday: Excavation



Techniques; Wednesday: Site Survey; Thursday: Archaeological Recording; Friday: Small Finds Recording.

KAFS 'five year' members free, joining member's special fee £20 per day, non-members £30 per day.

# FIELD SCHOOL COURSES

*Even more courses in the Autumn.*

*For further details of all courses and membership, see: [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk)*

*October 2nd and 3rd, Anglo-Saxon Weekend*  
with Paul Blinkhorn

*October 16th and 17th, Archaeological Drawing*  
A beginner's and refresher course introducing participants to drawing archaeological artefacts. There will be practical sessions each day demonstrating how to illustrate pottery, bone, metal. Course led by Jane Russell, who was senior illustrator of the UCL Field Archaeology Unit.

*October 30th and 31st, Professional recording in the Field* with SWAT Archaeology. Learn how to set up the 'Site Archive': Free to members.

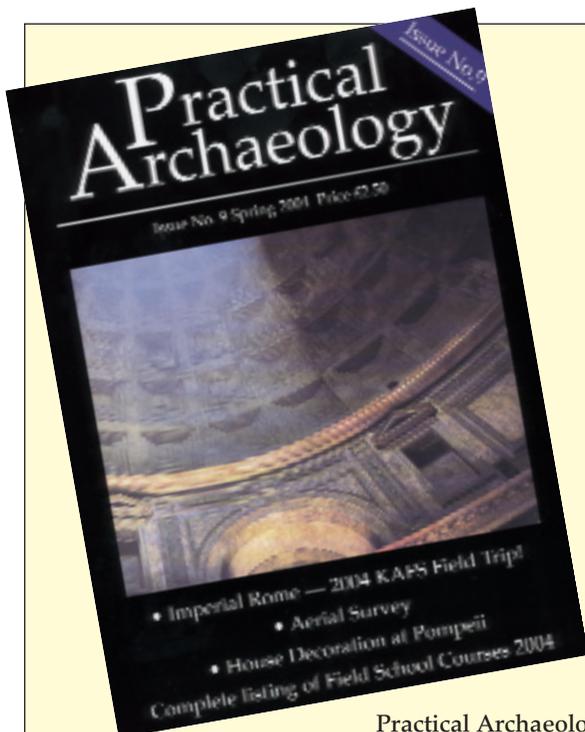
*November 13th and 14th, Professional recording in the Field* with SWAT Archaeology. Learn how to survey on site, site plans, sections, and the site grid

*May to June, Excavation of the Roman Palace at Oplontis*

A small team from SWAT Archaeology and selected members of KAFS will be working with the University of Texas on a research excavation at the world famous palace of Nero's wife Poppaea.



The palace was overwhelmed by Vesuvius in AD79 and buried. The World Heritage site was excavated in the 1960's with stunning results. This is a unique opportunity to join that small select band of archaeologists to have excavated at Oplontis/Pompeii. Cost is £175 per week. Accommodation and meals not included.



*To become a member and enjoy a 10% discount on courses plus a subscription to*

*Practical Archaeology. Tick the box on the right and the forms will be sent to you, or download them from our website — [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk).*

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 Website: [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk) e-mail: [info@kafs.co.uk](mailto:info@kafs.co.uk)  
 Please note that courses are bookable in advance only and are non-refundable or transferable. Member's 10% discount does not apply to special fees and field trips. Children over 14 and under 16 years old are welcome on courses, but must be accompanied by an adult; under-16s are not allowed on excavations.