

A REPORT ON THE BUTSER ANCIENT FARM KNAPPING WEEKEND 11th–13th AUGUST 2017

Tabitha Paterson

Always a highlight of the LSS events schedule, this year's Knapping Weekend was once again a great success. A full turnout combined with a wide variety of knapping skills resulted in a laid back and educational experience for all.

This year, we had three members from the LSS Committee at the event, Ella Egberts, Tabitha Paterson, and Rob Davis, who were present during the course of the weekend to oversee and supervise. Rob Davis was able to collect the keys to Butser at 5pm on Friday evening. As Butser closes to the public at this time, it is vital to have an LSS member present to receive the keys from the last member of Butser staff to leave. Tabitha and Ella hired a car and acted as runners for the event. This proved to be cost efficient and generally helpful for the smooth running of the event.

We were lucky enough to have John Lord and Ivana Jovanovic as our advertised experienced knappers. John has been a regular of previous LSS Butser Weekends and once again provided patient and informed teaching. Ivana is a newcomer to the event and provided an excellent boost of new techniques to the pool.

Our 2017 Knapping Weekend had an excellent attendance, with 17 people joining us to learn about lithic technology, many of whom stayed both the Friday and Saturday night. Once again, Butser kindly allowed attendees to sleep either in their own tents, or in the spacious reconstructed roundhouse. Most of us opted for the warmth of the open fire (which Butser kindly supplies) within the roundhouse for both nights. One of our attendees came with a truck-full of deer skin, which she shared around the group. This greatly added to the experience of sleeping under an Iron Age roof.

We were lucky enough that this year the group of attendees had a good range of abilities and everyone shared their knowledge and skills. This pool of evenly distributed experienced, intermediate and novice knappers resulted in a

particularly relaxed, inclusive, and overall educational environment. We were also very lucky with the weather—it was a wonderfully sunny weekend—and the event was finished off with a meteor shower on the final evening.

The Saturday night BBQ went very well, with the LSS providing condiments, rolls, tinfoil and napkins for all to share. Attendees, under prior instruction, had already brought food for themselves and catered to their own dietary requirements. Butser also allowed us to purchase their on-site charcoal for this occasion.

The presence of social media was an added bonus this year. Josie Mills ran the LSS twitter page with live updates over the weekend, consisting of photographs of the event in progress. This received positive feedback and will be an easy way to market and advertise the event in the future.

NOTES FOR 2018

- Deposit on booking is essential. We shall continue this for 2018. The deposit did not put people off attending and provided a much-needed financial security blanket.
- Booking in advance is essential. We had one person pay on the day in 2017. Although we were almost at capacity for space, we were able to accommodate this last-minute guest. However, further on-the-day bookings could have overcrowded the event and resulted in a less enjoyable experience. On the day payments should be discouraged.
- Institute a final booking cutoff point. An attendee had booked a place via the website the night before the event was due to begin. Similarly, this could result in last minute overcrowding. It is suggested that places should be limited, and a last booking put in place a week before the event if due.

- There is plenty of flint left for 2018's Knapping Weekend. We have approximately 20 nodules of flint

remaining at Butser. This is possibly even enough for the event in 2019.