



Butser Plus Press Release

Ground-breaking Stone Age House reconstruction unveiled as Butser Ancient Farm launches new online platform

Butser Ancient Farm has today launched Butser Plus – a new online platform that will allow users to enter an online world featuring professionally shot behind-the-scenes video content about life at this unique heritage site. Supporters from around the globe will be able to sign up to access the exclusive content, and their donations will help to safeguard the farm's future as it recovers from the impact of COVID and the subsequent loss of visitors over the last year.

As part of the launch, the Butser team unveiled the latest reconstruction of an ancient Neolithic building – The Horton House – which the team have been hard at work on over the past year. The new building is a reconstruction of the remains of one of the most important Neolithic stone age houses to be unearthed in the UK which was found at Horton in Berkshire in 2012 by Wessex Archaeology.

Simon Jay, Director of Butser Ancient Farm said:

“As a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, we have been affected very badly by the pandemic and loss of visitors to the site over the past year. Without the generosity of people across the world, it would have been impossible to stay viable given that it has been costing us around £800 a day just to keep the Farm running, maintain the buildings and feed the animals. We hope that our new online site will help to counter this loss and protect our future, as a place to both share and support our work. It aims to capture the very essence of Butser and provides a connection back to our ancient past, whilst embracing modern technology and the global connections this allows.”

Butser Ancient Farm has had help this year via funding from the UK Government Culture Recovery Fund, which also enabled it to develop this innovative way to bring the ancient farm to life as part of an online virtual space. The pandemic has shown how online tools can be used to help people stay connected with the places we love and Butser Plus aims to translate aspects of the inspirational and calming nature of the Farm to an online world of creativity and discovery that anyone will be able to enjoy. The website will not only showcase experimental archaeology and ancient skills such as coppicing, flintknapping and thatching, but it will also share nature and mindful content, giving remote access to the gentle beauty of the Farm's rural location in the South Downs National Park.



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Simon Jay added:

“Over the past year we have become more and more convinced of the importance of places like Butser to provide a space of tranquillity and inspiration in an increasingly uncertain world. We have supporters from all walks of life and from countries all over the world who are keen to see Butser continue and I’m delighted that they will now be able to share some of the beauty of Butser wherever they are.”

Butser Plus will run alongside the physical farm site, which it is hoped will reopen to visitors and educational groups from mid-April. Virtual visitors to Butser Plus will be asked for a small monthly donation to access the behind-the-scenes content, all of which will go towards keeping the farm open and enabling it to continue to bring the past to life, long into the future.

Dr Matt Pope, Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Archaeology said:

“Butser Ancient Farm is known globally as a pioneering centre for experimental archaeological research and education. The new digital platform is a welcome addition to the Butser experience as the work of the Farm is firmly rooted in excellence, experience and accessibility. This new offering cements Butser Ancient Farm as a true treasure in our national heritage portfolio and will now allow it be enjoyed by people from across the whole of the UK and beyond .”

The work done in reconstructing the brand-new Horton House building, using prehistoric techniques and tools, will be showcased on Butser Plus in coming months, alongside other unique projects including thatching a Saxon house, building a Bronze Age roundhouse, laying mosaic floors, prehistoric art techniques and much more.

Notes for editors

1. Butser Ancient Farm is a unique experimental archaeology site nestled into the rolling countryside of the South Downs National Park. For almost 50 years it has pioneered a hands-on practical approach to understanding life in the ancient past through experimentation and reconstruction.

Butser welcomes thousands of visitors and education groups to the farm each year to explore its timeline of homes from the Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods, as well as discovering crops from pre-history and meeting rare-breed animals such as Manx Loaghtan sheep and English goats. More about the farm can be found at www.butserancientfarm.co.uk

2. The new Butser Plus platform can be found at; www.butserplus.com



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3. The work at Butser has been fundamental in shaping the established view of prehistoric life that we have today, with the site appearing frequently in both feature films and documentaries.

Video/photographs from the new Butser Plus platform as well as of the Butser site itself and of Horton House can be found at www.butserancientfarm.co.uk/press-page

For more information about the work done in reconstructing Horton House please find fact sheet attached.