

Medieval Studies Forum Newsletter No. 2

August 2007

Welcome to the second in our series of occasional Newsletters. We are delighted that Mary Alexander and Phil Stevens have now joined the organising Committee as we continue to seek ways to bring together archaeologists and historians with an interest in the medieval period to work on the problems of Surrey's past. Following the discussion at the launch meeting on 9 June we have decided at this stage of the Forum's evolution to organise three 'full-day' meetings a year, with the possibility that specialist and project groups may decide to meet more frequently.

Launch meeting on 9th June

A report of the meeting is attached. As requested by a number of members of both the Forum and the Villages Study Group, this includes a summary of the presentation of the main points from the Whittlewood Project that might be of relevance to Surrey.

The second meeting of the Forum is to be held on 13th October 2007

This meeting is to be based around **Medieval use of Surrey's rivers**, and will include a walk around Leatherhead's medieval buildings led by Derek Renn; lunch will be included. Details are on the attached notice and we hope to see as many of you as possible. Although we are not asking for payment prior to the event we would ask that you let us know if you will be coming by Sat 6th October so that we may cater for the appropriate number of people.

We hope that the Forum session in the afternoon, chaired by Phil Stevens, will include a wide-ranging discussion of ongoing projects. Those wishing to raise particular topics are invited to have a prior word with Phil.

Forum Meetings in 2008

We are currently proposing meetings based around broad topics as follows:

March (8th or 15th)	Pre- and post-Conquest Estates and Manors
June	Churches and ecclesiastical organisation
September	Medieval Pottery

We would be pleased to hear from those who would like to make presentations at any of these meetings of the Forum, and from those with suggestions for other topics to be covered during future meetings of the Forum.

"Medieval Seminar" series in London 2007/8

Joe Flatman has kindly provided the attached list of the joint Medieval Seminars organised by the Institute of Archaeology and the British Museum. These are open to all.

Post-Roman Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium

Rose Hooker has forwarded the details below from Andrew Seaman, who can be contacted at BRITARCH@JISCMAIL.AC.UK

“We are pleased to announce the launch of the PREMASS website and mailing list. These initiatives were formed in the aftermath of the EMASS 2007 conference held at the University of Cardiff last May. One of the many themes to emerge from EMASS 2007 was the feeling that there was currently no academic arena within British or Irish archaeology dedicated specifically to research students of the early medieval period. It was also felt that there needed to be a more explicit emphasis on theoretical and methodological debate within early medieval studies.

“As such, the Post Roman & Early Medieval Archaeology Group aims to provide a constructive and interdisciplinary forum to facilitate discussion and debate between researchers from different institutions and specialities. The PREMASS conference is the primary venue for this discussion, and, following the success of EMASS 2007, PREMASS 2008 will be hosted by the University of Exeter. Plans for PREMASS 2009 (in Dublin) have also already been discussed.

“In addition to the PREMASS, we decided to establish a website and mailing list to allow a continual dialogue between researchers to emerge. This is our website, where you will find information about upcoming seminars, conferences, lectures and other related events. The mailing list will provide a platform for new researchers to share and discuss their opinions and ideas about early medieval archaeology, and to post questions about any aspect of their research.”

Details of the 2008 Conference can be found at:

<http://www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/archaeology/conferences/present/premass2008.shtml>

Surrey Excavations:

Waynflete's Tower, Esher

We are grateful that, at short notice, Peter Harp stepped in to lead a two week “rescue” excavation at Waynflete's Tower in Esher on the site of a demolished garage. This turned out to be a tricky excavation, with problems with the high water table close to the River Mole. Peter writes:

“As is so often the case, everything became clear on the last day with all the loose ends coming together. We have been entirely within "basement" levels of the 1729 gothic extension to the Tower (& later demolition levels), and have uncovered 3 "rooms" together with a later phase (but still Georgian) semi-circular staircase foundation. This was not unexpected, merely the depth of these Georgian walls was surprising (we were unable to bottom them at 2.45m (just over 8ft in old money) & did not reach natural) - we had been hoping earlier structures might have survived within the later building footprint.”

Peter's interim report has been published in the Society's *Bulletin*, number 406, August/September 2007.

Cobham

The Society is currently seeking financial support for a series of training excavations to commence at Cobham in the summer of 2008.

Other Surrey projects

The Society has been invited to carry out a **watching brief** on the installation of a new water main close to the **medieval farmstead at Northbridge in Chiddingfold** in the first week of September; anyone interested in helping please contact Chris Hayward.

At the launch meeting of the Forum, Mary Alexander invited help with her project on **medieval floor tiles**. She writes:

“Surrey Museums Consultative Committee has organised projects to list all examples of a particular type of objects in all the Museums in Surrey. The first photographic project has been on coins, the next is medieval floor tiles. I am particularly interested in the 13th century two-colour impressed floor tiles from Surrey's religious houses. I would like to analyse the patterns and see what influences there were between each location that tiles were made for. In the 13th century floor (and roof) tiles were made on site for each building and only very wealthy people or institutions could afford them. Guildford Museum and the Surrey Archaeological Society have very good collections of 13th century tiles from Chertsey Abbey, Newark Priory and Waverley Abbey. The photography is being done by Brian Wood, a member of the SyAS, who is producing some wonderful digital photographs and manipulating the images to complete fragmentary patterns and show how patterns repeat. I have done a lot of research on the art history of the tiles and who made them, but we need to see as many tiles as possible in order to catalogue the patterns. Elizabeth Eames has, of course, done an excellent catalogue of the tiles in the British Museum and we would probably use her numbering system, though we do have designs which are not in the BM.

“I'm not sure yet how we will tackle this, but I suspect that we will need a group of people to analyse the designs, probably with the aid of a computer.

“This could easily extend beyond Surrey, as we know that Chertsey designs were used in several other places in England.

“We will definitely need volunteers to record medieval tiles in parish churches throughout Surrey. These will probably be 14th-century, mass-produced, two-colour tiles made in Penn, Bucks, but we may find some surprises. Medieval tiles are likely to survive only in odd corners, as many will have been replaced during Victorian church restorations.

“A further aspect of recording the tiles in museums will, we hope, be analysis of the clay. This should show us where clay was obtained and give some idea of how the tile industry was organised. It would be best to do this when we have analysed the designs so we can compare the clays of tiles with the same pattern from different religious houses, for example, though any analysis of the clay would be useful. This would be done professionally, probably by Ian Betts of MoLAS.”

Rob Poulton of ‘Heritage Enterprises’ (better known to all of us as Surrey County Archaeological Unit) is seeking English Heritage funding for a major project on the **Wealden Glass Industry** and has invited members of the Forum to participate in the fieldwork. Further details to follow.

We have also been invited to complete a series of measured drawings of the standing buildings at **Woking Palace**; this is still in the planning stage and will probably take place in the spring of 2008. If interested, please contact Richard or Pamela (see below).

A recent lecture by Joe Flatman at the Surrey History Centre has prompted a number of members of the Society to enquire whether there would be any interest in setting up a training course on the interpretation of **aerial photographs**. If you would potentially be interested, please contact Richard or Pamela (see below).

Membership List

A number of members have asked us to publish a list of all Forum members, their contact details (including e-mail addresses) and any specific areas of interest in order to further the aim of encouraging co-operation between those studying the medieval period in Surrey. We are very happy to do so if members would find this helpful but would like you all to be able to have a say in whether personal information is published and would therefore be grateful for feedback. Please let us know by 30 September if you do not wish your details to be included. The list produced (with any requested exclusions) will only go to those who were members of the Forum. Information kept on computer for such a list would only be held in order for communication between members and for no other purpose.

A reminder

Where members have e-mail addresses, communications will be sent only by e-mail (unless they request otherwise) in order to minimise the administration costs of running the Forum. Please let Richard or Pamela know of any changes to e-mail addresses as they occur.

Committee Members

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