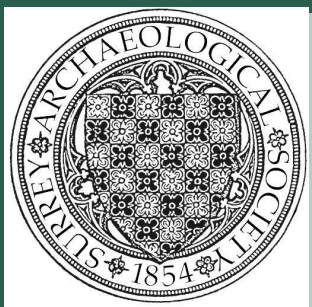




SURREY'S PAST



Fieldwork in Albury Park in 2025

**2025 Cocks Farm Abinger
excavations**

**Palaeolithic artefacts in
Farnham Museum store**

**Surrey Historic
Environment
Planning Team
update**

**Notes &
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Further community fieldwork undertaken at Albury Park in 2025

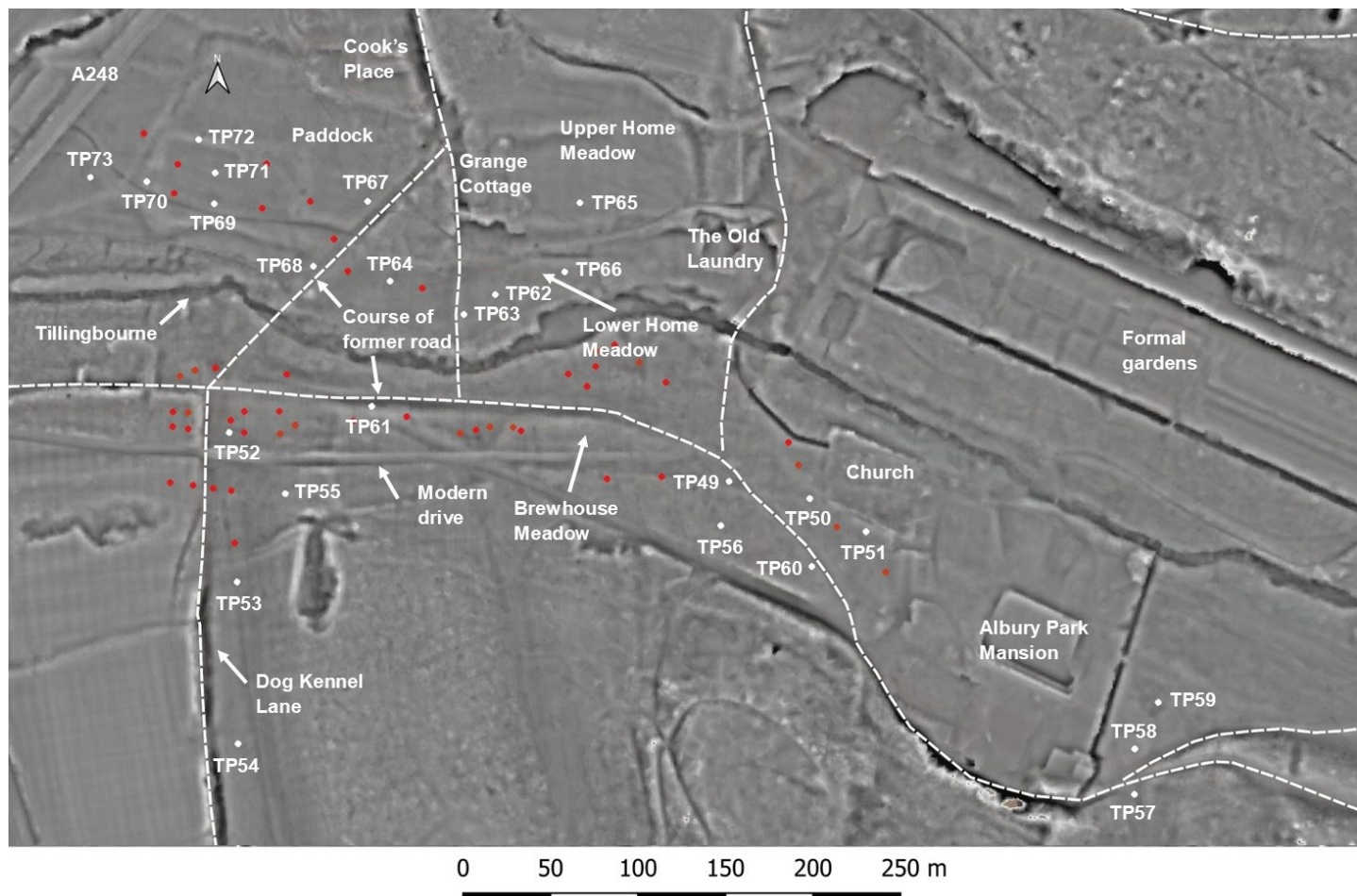
By Anne Sassin

Summary

A third season of Surrey Archaeological Society's community archaeology project at Albury Park took place in 2025. This fieldwork involved further geophysical survey, metal detecting and test pitting in order to help characterise the development of the original medieval settlement and manor of Albury, which was later displaced and re-located to the current village of the same name, formerly the manor of Weston, a kilometre to the west. This note follows from accounts of the 2023 and 2024 seasons (Surrey's Past 496, 499), the former which includes a more detailed site background and history.

The electrical resistance survey identified further features of interest in the field north of the Tillingbourne, related to likely Roman settlement, including probable structural remains. 25 test pits were excavated in areas either side of the river: Brewhouse Meadow and Pond Meadow to the south and the Paddock/Lower Home Meadow and Upper Home Meadow to the north. The results further support 12th-century activity along a wide stretch of old Dog Kennel Lane, but also reveal potential early medieval origins for the old east-west road to Shere, and confirm definite Roman settlement and possible building(s) north of the river.

Fig 1 Location of test pits to date (2025 pits labelled; former test pits in red) and key landscape features, plotted over 1m LiDAR LRM visualisation (© Environment Agency, visualised by PTS Consultancy)



Geophysical survey

Over the course of 2 days in April 2025, a team of 15 volunteers undertook geophysical survey – both magnetometry and electrical resistance – across three areas which total circa 46,843 metres squared (4.6 hectares). This included magnetometry of two fields: the one north of the Tillingbourne known as Upper Home Meadow and ‘Pond Meadow’ to the immediate east of the current Albury Park house, totalling $c.16,790\text{m}^2$ (16 hectares). The electrical resistance survey took place over the area of the Paddock, north of the Tillingbourne, covering $c.9,367\text{m}^2$ (9 ha) across grids not previously surveyed the year before.

The magnetic gradiometer survey was carried out using the Society’s Bartington Grad601 gradiometer. The data was collected in zig-zag mode at 0.25 centres along traverses 1m apart, with 4 readings per metre along the traverses. The electrical resistance survey, conducted with a RM Frobisher TAR-3 Resistance Meter, used a sampling interval of data collected every 0.5m along traverses 1m apart.

As was apparent in the previous magnetometry surveys, several service pipes (represented by bipolar linears) affect the results across the park, and

neither of the two new meadows surveyed are excluded from this (Fig 2). This disturbance – and the underlying geology – may partially contribute to a general lack of archaeological features in these fields. One feature of note in Upper Home Meadow are two positive linears, running in parallel, to the east of Grange Cottage, representing a banked enclosure also apparent on the LiDAR (see Fig 1). Although difficult to pinpoint the precise origins of this enclosure, it does not seem to appear on maps until the 1701 manor map (and even then is not definitely the same enclosure), suggesting a possibly larger boundary for the property before the 18th century. It is likely that modern pipes are mainly represented in Pond Meadow’s anomalies, although sections across two separate tracks (also apparent in the 1701 map) which connect with the eastern end of the estate can be seen. Otherwise, large areas of magnetic debris indicate disturbed ground across much of the meadow; although it is assumed the ‘pond’ which gave the field its name at the time of the Tithe apportionment is the large pond bay to the east of the former landscaped canal, one sunken feature ($c.20\text{m}$ in length) is apparent on the LiDAR to the immediate east of the house which might indicate a ‘ghost pond’.



Fig 2 Map of the 2025 magnetometry survey of Upper Home Meadow and Pond Meadow, with associated anomalies

Eleven 30m² grids were covered in the electrical resistance survey, undertaken in order to supplement the 2024 survey in the Paddock which first revealed the building foundations now thought to relate to Roman masonry buildings. Fig 3 shows both surveys processed and merged together, with the datasets shifted in order to best match and account for the baseline changes and soil moisture variation over the course of the year. The results are not as optimal as hoped, with the high resolution (white) lines in particular less clear than the previous year (compare with Fig 4). Although interpretation is difficult with such lack of clarity, there is an evident continuation of regular linears to the north and east of the already identified area of structures which suggests the foundations may have extended closer to the former road. More than one possible ditch (low resistance, in black) can also be discerned from the survey, and although these likely pre-date the post-medieval period, not all are necessarily contemporary with the likely masonry foundations.

Test pitting

Two weeks of test pitting took place in June and September, with 25 1m² test pits excavated. All pits utilised the CORS (Current Occupied Rural Settlement) methodology and same procedure of soil being removed and sieved in 10cm spits, with finds from each spit recorded separately.

Pond Meadow

Test pits 57, 58 and 59 were located in Pond Meadow, immediately to the east of the mansion, along the course of the old east-west road as it runs past the house and continues towards Shere.

Although the pits did not reach natural, even at 0.9m depth, they only contained small quantities of finds, mainly ceramic building material (CBM) in the upper levels. TP57 however, situated along the old road, contained four sherds of Saxon pottery in spits 5-7, both SAXQ (Saxon sand-tempered) and QIRON (quartz sand and iron). With no other finds to indicate they were residual in context, it is notable that they are amongst the only Early/Late Saxon (*c.* AD 400-1050) fabrics yet identified from the site, suggesting possibly earlier origins for the old road than has previously been assumed.

Brewhouse Meadow and by the church

Test pits 50 and 51 were located to the south of the current churchyard, approximately 5m from the southern wall. TP50, outside its SW corner, was dug to full depth, with spits 4-12 comprising a thick levelling-up layer largely containing brick and tile, dated both by brick type and Surrey-Hampshire border ware to the late 16th or 17th century. A similar stratigraphy was uncovered in TP51 (Fig 5), though with considerably more building demolition (over 31kg of brick and 1kg of tile, plus shaped

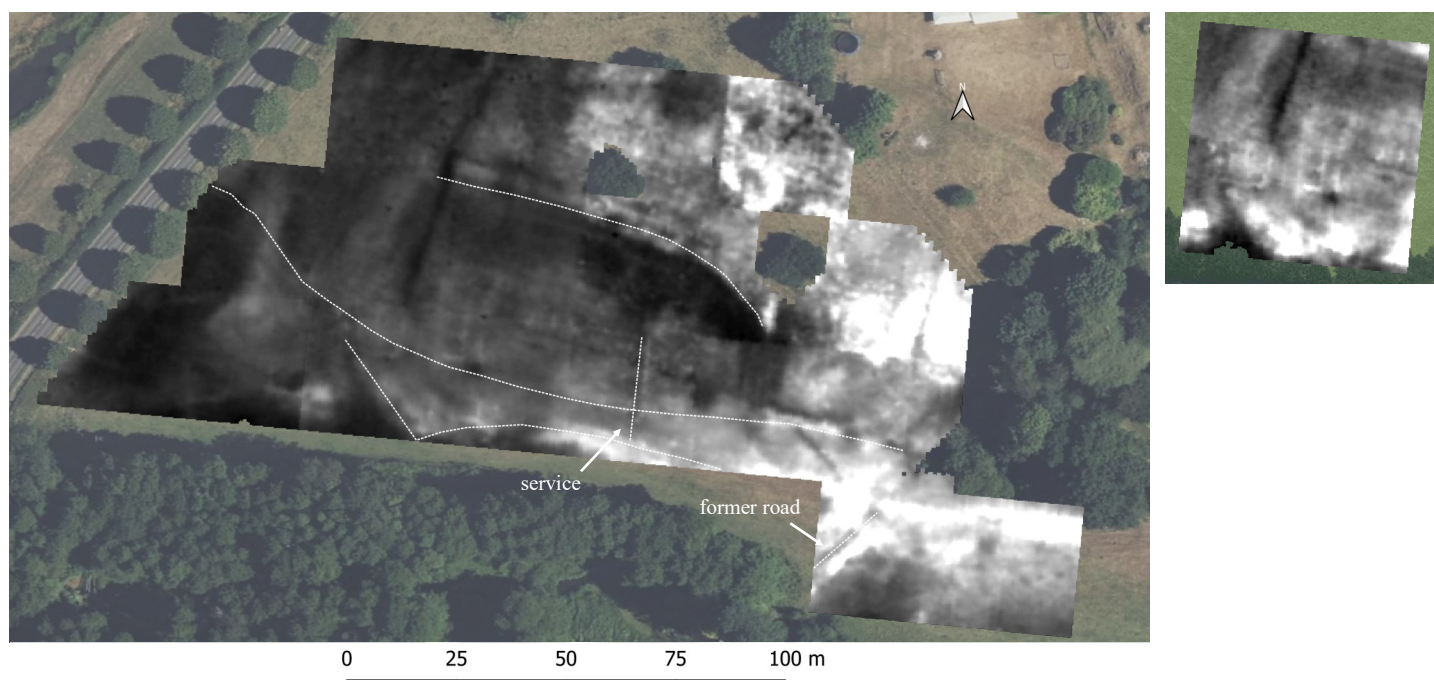


Fig 3 (*above*) Map of the 2024-25 resistivity survey of the Paddock in Albury Park, with select anomalies highlighted such as the former road and post-medieval or modern earthworks and services (dashed in white); for clarity, the high resistance (white) and low resistance (black) linears have not been annotated; Fig 4 (*right*) depicts the isolated 2024 survey, with more evident linears apparent

chalk block c.20cm long), suggesting this area of the green adjacent to the churchyard was levelled up some time in the 17th century. Below the demolition in TP51, a greyish brown clayey sand was excavated in spits 11-14 whose only two finds were sherds of SAXQ and Q2 (grey-brown sandy ware, 1150-1250), suggesting the top of the medieval level had been reached.



Fig 5 TP51, looking E

TPs 49, 56 and 60 were located in the triangle between the modern drives to the mansion and church, near to the course of the old east-west road. Although placed to avoid services, TP60 came down onto a water pipe at over 0.9m down. TPs 49 and 56 were only dug to 0.6-0.7m, with few finds from the clayey sand other than occasional CBM, although TP49 had a considerable assemblage (over 900g) of 17th/18th-century pottery in its spit 3, suggesting a likely midden dump, possibly associated with work on the adjacent track.

Though dug to 1m, very little was found in TP61, on the steep slope to the southern edge of the old road in the centre of the meadow. TP55, on the slopes south of the modern drive, also had little in the way of finds in its four excavated spits, beyond a few sherds of post-medieval redware and border ware, before reaching the natural sand.

Dog Kennel Lane

Three further pits, TPs 52, 53 and 54, were located along the length of the old N-S Dog Kennel Lane, at the far western end of the meadow, an area which previously has produced the highest concentration of

in situ medieval levels. TP52, which was plotted near the junction of the modern drive and Dog Kennel Lane, had mixed deposits throughout (down to spit 7) of likely 19th-century date, including over 70 sherds of later earthenware, possibly related to demolition of the 'Keeper's Cottage' which would have been nearby. TPs 53 and 54 were much further south, 70m and 160m south of the drive respectively. Both were dug to 0.6m, but with few finds, other than singular sherds of OQ (orange sandy ware, c.1250-1500), suggesting continued 13th/14th century medieval levels along the old road, though with notably less pottery the further south / away from the road junction.

As seen through all the pits dug to date, evidence for medieval activity along Brewhouse Meadow is very limited, with most finds of late 16th- or 17th-century date at the earliest, though not enough pits have been able to be plotted along the old east-west road without hitting disturbed areas. The main area of medieval occupation south of the river appears to focus around the old Dog Kennel Lane road junction (also the manor boundary with Weston) with the second highest area centred around the riverbank bend, opposite where the mill once stood, which may represent a former river crossing. Roman CBM continues to only be identified in small fragments south of the river, but where it is, it is notably concentrated along Dog Kennel Lane.

Upper and Lower Home Meadow

2025 also focused on the opportunity to expand the number of test pits north of the river, including investigating further the areas around Grange Cottage (dated to the 16th century and the only surviving cottage known from the 18th-century maps) and the former mill. Only one test pit, TP65, was excavated at the southern end of Upper Home Meadow, which – though mostly containing medieval pottery – had a sherd of border ware (AD 1550-1700) in its lowest spit (6), suggesting mixed deposits.

TPs 62, 63, 64 and 66 were evenly spaced along Lower Home Meadow. TP66, at the eastern end, was mostly 16th and 17th century in its finds and relatively shallow, hitting natural ironstone at less than 0.5m depth, whilst TP63, near the river and the eastern of the two former road crossings, contained a mixed spread in its upper fill of later building

material and occasional medieval pottery and Roman CBM, above waterlogged sandy clay layers (spits 6-9) which could not be dated from their finds. Nearby TPs 62 and 64 (dug to 1.1m and 0.8m respectively) had clear 13th/14th-century deposits between spits 6-9, mixed with occasional, residual Roman pot/CBM and singular sherds of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Early Saxon (QIRON) ware.

The Paddock

TPs 67 and 68 were positioned just to the west of the former road crossing, and though also medieval deposits with residual Roman material, the vast majority of Roman finds from TP67 in particular (36 Roman compared to 7 medieval sherds) indicate concentrated activity at this part of the site. TPs 69-73 were more central within the Paddock and near the area of the suspected Roman structures. Though slightly more shallow in their stratigraphy, with no finds below spit 6 before reaching natural (clayey sand or chalk and gravel) in TPs 69-71, the contents were all similar in composition – medieval mixed with Roman – with a notably higher concentration of Roman building material in particular where in proximity to the buried foundations. TP73, the furthest west and near the A248, hit the natural chalk/gravel at only 0.2m depth, possibly indicating the western extent of the main occupation area, while TP72 was still producing finds at 0.9m, no doubt due to its position cut into the bank of one of the post-medieval field boundaries.

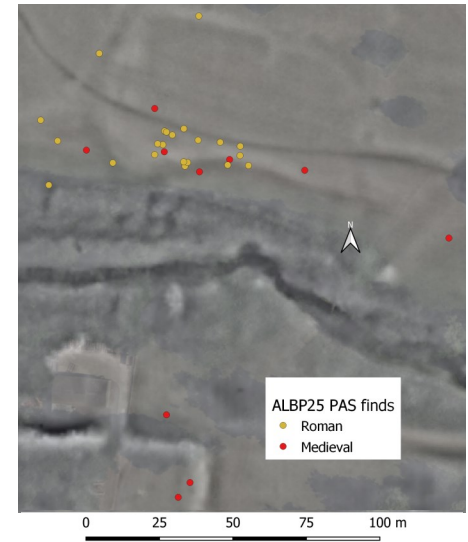
Metal detecting



Fig 7 SUR-4F345B, near complete copper-alloy lozenge-shaped continental plate brooch, c.AD 100-200

2025 was also the first season a controlled detecting survey took place across the site, with special permission from the estate, and a particular focus on

Fig 7 Map of metal small finds from Albury Park of Roman or medieval date, recorded on the PAS; while the Roman items are heavily concentrated around the building foundations within the Paddock (and later field banks), the medieval items also cluster along the line of the old road



the Paddock. Although finds were largely uncovered due to being within the upcast of the later field boundaries (see Fig 7), the result was a clear concentration of Roman items around the suspected building foundations: 22 non-ferrous objects to date, 20 of which are coins (all Late Roman), as well as a 2nd-century continental plate brooch (SUR-4F345B, Fig 6) and 3rd-century 'vulvate' mount (SUR-B519F0) (see finds.org.uk for the full list, including the medieval items).

Overall, 2025 was another very successful season, with further revelations on the pre-medieval settlement at Albury, as well as quality engagement with the community, including being able to welcome the Chertsey Young Archaeologists Club for a day. We look forward to the upcoming season!

Acknowledgements

The volunteer team continues to be the driving force of the project fieldwork, all of whom need to be thanked for the work undertaken. In addition to all those helping with the dig (unfortunately too many to name individually), this included the finds team (Sylvia, Anne V, Anne M, Ann M, Rosemary, Janet, Irene, John, Kathy); John Peters and the geophysics team; Andrew, Chris and Mairi for the metal detecting; Lyn Spencer and the Roman Pottery Group for assessment of the pottery; Ann Russel, Ann Isenberg, Sylvia Solarski, Anne McLaughlin and Simon Maslin for work on the clay pipes, CBM, lithics, metalwork and small finds. A special thanks must also be made to Michael Baxter and the Albury Estate, for their kind permission and support throughout the project.