

SyAC 98 abstracts of articles

Late prehistoric settlement and post-medieval industrial activity on the route of the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme

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A programme of archaeological works, undertaken in advance of improvements to the A3 London to Portsmouth road at Hindhead, Surrey, saw the investigation of 21 mitigation sites along the proposed 6.7km route between Bramshott Common and Thursley.

Although archaeological remains were relatively sparse along much of the route, a number of discoveries were made that add to the known archaeology of this part of Surrey. These included residual Neolithic finds, and the discovery of a small Middle/Late Bronze Age settlement towards the northern end of the route.

The examination of peat deposits in Boundless Copse demonstrates initial formation in the Early-Middle Saxon period, and contains a record of local heathland expansion, development of beech woodland and increase of pastoral activity during the Late Saxon/medieval period. Field boundaries and land use divisions of probable post-medieval date were examined at various points along the route, and a number of lime kilns, shown to date from the early 17th to early 18th centuries, were excavated.

Recent archaeological work at St George's church, Borough High Street, Southwark

BRUCE WATSON

During 2005--6 the stabilisation of the foundations and the enlargement of the crypt of the church of St George the Martyr, Southwark included a programme of archaeological investigation carried out by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) Natural geology consisted of flood plain gravels, overlain by prehistoric wetland situated on the southern edge of a palaeochannel. Initial Roman activity (*c* AD 50--70) consisted of dumping to raise the ground level, which was then occupied by a succession of late 1st and early 2nd century clay and timber building fronting onto the western edge of the bridge approach road. To the rear of these buildings was a series of yard surfaces, containing hearths, ovens and an oval animal pen. Late Roman activity consisted of a rubbish pit (AD 250--400).

The earliest post-Roman activity consisted of external dumping and rubbish pits, dating from the 13th century. During the late 13th or early 14th centuries a cemetery was established to the east of the parish church of St George the Martyr, the existence of which is first documented in 1122. Fragments of two phases of masonry church foundations were identified. The earlier phase was of 12th--14th century date and the later of 15th century date. Latterly the church consisted of a nave and chancel with asymmetrical north and south transepts or chapels. The area to the south-east of the church was occupied by a cemetery.

During *c* 1515--34 the church was rebuilt; the new building possessed a west tower and twin aisles. The pier bases of the north aisle contained over 113 fragments of moulded Tudor architectural terracotta. The terracottas are believed to be waste material from the construction of Suffolk House (*c* 1518--22) on the opposite side of Borough High Street from St George's. This mansion was the London residence of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and is considered to be one of the key sites for the early use of terracotta during the English Renaissance.

The church was rebuilt again during 1734--6 in the Baroque style. In 1899 when the crypt of the present church was cleared of burials, many coffins were re-interred in pits dug under its floor. The present church has a long history of structural problems, which necessitated the 2005--6 restoration.

The topography and reclamation of Bankside Eyot: archaeological excavations at 231-241 Blackfriars Road, Southwark

JOHN PAYNE

Archaeological excavations at 231–241 Blackfriars Road, Southwark in March and April 2008 revealed evidence of archaeological remains that date from the prehistoric and Roman periods to the earlier post-medieval. The site is situated on a former gravel eyot lying adjacent to the main channel of the Thames. Evidence for prehistoric activity was indicated by residual worked and burnt flint of Mesolithic through to Bronze Age date, as well as ceramics of probable Iron Age date. A substantial ditch may represent evidence of agricultural activity with attempts to drain the area during the medieval period. Alluvial clays and silts of early post-medieval date indicate a period of increasingly wetter conditions and visible evidence for anthropogenic activity did not recommence until the 17th century, when a series of east–west ditches suggests a concerted effort to drain the area for agricultural and industrial use. This activity gradually increased and was eventually replaced by structures associated with permanent occupation, which expanded rapidly with the construction of the first bridge at Blackfriars in 1769.

Defence against invasion: Reigate Fort

VICTOR SMITH

Built on the crest of the North Downs, Reigate Fort is a reminder in earth, concrete and brick of the period of competition and mistrust between Britain and France that characterised the second half of the 19th century. This, it was feared, might at some stage lead to war, with the consequent risk of invasion. During one of a number of bursts of defensive effort against this perceived danger, the fort was constructed in 1898 as part of a project for the protection of London. The latter combined limited permanent construction with contingency planning for a shielding arc of fieldworks to create a vast entrenched camp. This was the last scheme of defence for a land front in Britain during peacetime and one of the more remarkable episodes in the history of anti-invasion defence. Recognising the fort's heritage importance as a distinctive element of this, its owner, the National Trust, has carried out extensive restoration and interpretation for visitors.

Environmental sampling of a bell barrow on Horsell Common, Woking

DAVID GRAHAM, AUDREY GRAHAM, NICHOLAS P BRANCH and MICHAEL SIMMONDS

In July 2012 a slit trench was excavated on the south slope of the western of the two bell barrows on Horsell Common. This was to establish the state of preservation of the mound and obtain environmental samples from any surviving buried soil level and turves. The work was in advance of a programme to repair visible damage to the mound caused by various interventions in the past and continuing erosion from use of the footpath that crossed the monument. The trench showed that, at least in the area investigated, the mound had been disturbed on several occasions, probably initially by one or more antiquarian 'treasure hunts', later by the insertion of an iron sheet-lined Second World War foxhole/machine gun position and finally, more recently, by several small pits. Despite all this, parts of the turf stack core of the barrow remained intact and the environmental samples showed that the barrow was constructed on developed heathland and contained turves from a variety of sources.

Hide Hill in Malden and the de Malden family

PETER HOPKINS

The two small fields, which today survive as the Sir Joseph Hood Playing Fields near Motspur Park station, in the London Borough of Merton, and the adjoining horse pastures behind Green Lane primary school, Worcester Park, in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, are welcome oases of green space in the midst of suburban housing. However, the origins of these two fields, and the reason why the parish and hundred boundaries intersect with such mathematical precision at this spot, are as yet unclear. Three possible explanations are considered here: that this was the location of an ancient meeting place; that the boundaries represent the division of former intercommoning; or that these fields had formed an early Anglo-Saxon one-hide holding divided in the mid-12th century. This study also attempts to unravel the confusion that 20th century historians created concerning the descent of the de Malden family who held this land in the 12th century.

The lost chantry college of Lingfield

†DENNIS TURNER and NIGEL SAUL

John Aubrey in his posthumously published *Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* offered a brief description of the now-lost 15th century buildings of Lingfield College, noting in particular that the upper storey of the cloister block was ‘of Brick and Timber’. It is suggested here that the use of brick at Lingfield was probably the earliest such in the Weald of Surrey in a high-status building, and that a source for the design may have been the cloister court provided by the de la Poles for their almshouse foundation at Ewelme in Oxfordshire.

The later owners of Bletchingley Castle

†DENNIS TURNER

The story of the de Clare owners of Bletchingley, earls of Gloucester and Hereford, is here continued, together with that of subsequent owners of the castle site. Tradition asserts that Bletchingley Castle was ‘slighted’ [ie rendered untenable] at the time of the battle of Lewes (1264). This paper argues that a persistent animosity between the de Clare family and Roger de Leyburn, sometime steward of the Lord Edward and later sheriff of Kent, which was never resolved, may have had a fundamental bearing on the ultimate fate of Bletchingley Castle, and a new scenario and date for its destruction are proposed

A water-powered industrial site on Coneyhurst Gill, Ewhurst and its possible relationship with Wealden timber production

JUDIE ENGLISH

An industrial site on Coneyhurst Gill, Ewhurst was excavated by the late A J (Tony) Clark in 1962 and was supposed to have been a water-powered bloomery. However, analytical survey has shown a larger complex and documentary research has led to the alternative suggestion that the earthworks represent a series of water-powered sawmills for commercial timber production.