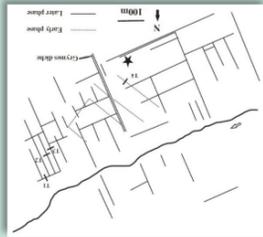


The principal roundhouse, with its imposing porch, was identified from postholes, and these also indicated the presence of fencing and other structures, mostly of uncertain form but including the four-posted raised granaries. The site is also notable for the bronze hoard discovered in a ditch which lay just behind the fence shown here. The viewpoint looks approximately west towards the wooded Coopers Hill in the distance. (Drawing by Giles Patison © Surrey County Archaeological Unit)

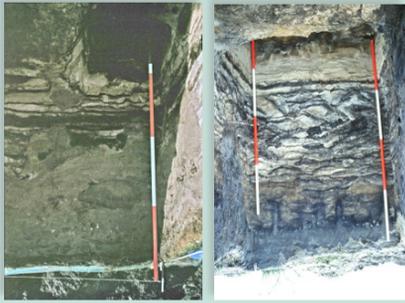
Peters Sports Field, Egham c. 850 BC

Many Bronze Age monuments have also been known about since antiquarian times, whether barrows – often labelled on early mapping as ‘tumuli’ – or field systems. However, aerial photography or more recent advances such as LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) have allowed for more features to be detected. Some of these field systems – such as Whitmoor Common – have even had small excavations which have confirmed their dating.



Probable Bronze Age field system, Whitmoor Common (Judie English)

Bronze Age, with the mounds possibly set within a small glade. Frensham showed that hazel and oak woodland dominated in the Middle Bronze Age, with the local heathland was in early development. A similar study at Thursley (cover image), study of the turf stacks indicated provide a reconstruction of the landscape of the time, including the wood-mounds which are extracted from excavated sites such as barrows, which can One such technique is palynological (pollen) analysis, where sediment are able to be applied towards analysis of Bronze Age material in Surrey. With more scientific techniques being developed every day, new advances making it a complex period with cultural change very gradual over time.



End section of barrows at Thursley (left) and Frensham (right) Commons

Although it is common to generalise late prehistory – and the Bronze Age in particular – as the period which saw the introduction of metallurgy, other important developments took place, including open settlement and field system patterns. At the same time, many practices continued from the Late Neolithic which preceded it, making it a complex period with cultural change very gradual over time.

The Bronze Age period c. 2500 - 800 BC

Where can I discover more?

Although one of the most characteristic prehistoric monuments in the landscape today, the numerous Bronze Age round barrows in Surrey are not



always easy to spot on the ground, having undergone much erosion over the centuries. The best surviving barrows – which are usually

scheduled sites – are particularly concentrated in areas of heathland and often paired or in a small grouping, including at Frensham, Thursley, Horsell and Reigate.

Thursley (above) and Frensham (right) barrows



“Promoting the study of archaeology and antiquities... and any other matters or things relating to the pre-history and history of the County.”

- Articles of Association
Surrey Archaeological Society

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Other suggested resources

University of Reading's **Grave Goods: Objects and Death in Later Prehistoric Britain** (archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/grave_ahrc_2020)

Schools Prehistory & Archaeology (schoolsprehistory.co.uk)

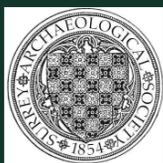
Ancient Craft Three Age Experience (ancientcraft.co.uk)

Portable Antiquities Scheme (finds.org.uk)

Exploring Surrey's Past (exploringsurreypast.org.uk)

In addition to the Society's own handling collections and teaching resources, local loans boxes are available from many of the county's museums, as well as Surrey History Centre.

Prehistoric and Bronze Age exhibits can be viewed at local museums including Chertsey, Guildford, Godalming, London and Kingston. Several barrows are well worth a visit, both in Surrey and elsewhere, and impressive reconstructions of domestic structures can be visited at Butser Ancient Farm.



Bronze Age Surrey



Explore your local heritage and discover more about the origins of Surrey's earliest settlements

800 BC

LATE BRONZE AGE

1200 BC

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

1600 BC

EARLY BRONZE AGE

2500 BC

- c.1200-800BC Both the forms and quantities of metalwork increase, including leaf-shaped sword blades for slashing
- c.1200-800BC Roundhouses become typical domestic structure
- c.1500-800BC New ceremonial and religious practices develop, such as cremation in cemeteries and hoards as votive offerings
- c.1500BC Emergence of flat-grave cremation, alongside open settlements, the laying out of fields and round-houses
- c.1500-1200BC More sophisticated metal weapons with ornamentation appear, including palstaves axes
- c.1800BC First industrial-scale copper mines are dug in Ireland and Wales
- c.2200-1600BC Wessex Culture and period of ceremonial landscapes and elaborate barrows, often with elite leaders buried underneath with grave goods and special funerary objects
- c.2200BC Bronze is first made by mixing copper and tin and gradually replaces stone as the main material for tools
- c.2300BC 'Amesbury Archer' dies near Stonehenge
- c.2400-2200BC Presence of 'specialists' indicated by appearance of metalwork and highly decorated beaker vessels
- c.2400BC Elements of the Beaker culture arrive from the continent, including new burial rites and objects
- c.2500BC Metalworking technology develops with the use of small furnaces, allowing higher temperatures and the production of jewellery and weapons from copper and gold



Bronze Age 2500-800 BC



Early Bronze Age pottery and flint

Defining the Neolithic to Early Bronze Age transition – around 2500 BC – relies heavily on artefact types such as those associated with the ‘Beaker culture’, which had a particular concentration in the Kingston area.



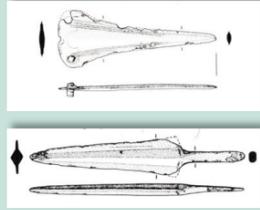
Most of the Early Bronze Age pottery in Surrey are food vessels encountered in funerary contexts, whether collared and biconical urns or inverted-bell beaker vessels, such as that from Ham (*below*). Despite the invention of metallurgy, flint objects were still commonly in use, including knives, barbed and tanged arrowheads (as found at Frensham, *above*) and daggers (Barn Elms, Thames, *left*).



(Photos: © Museum of London, David Graham)

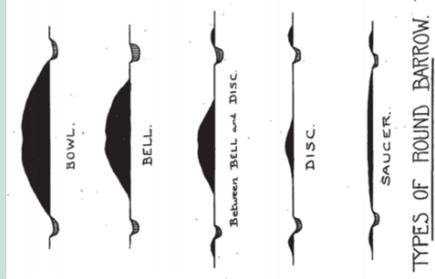
Metalwork

Axes are the most common type of early metalwork, and the earliest ones often had refined flat axe forms with low flanges – as with the one from Bagmoor (*left*) – sometimes with ornate decoration. The period also saw new tool and weapon

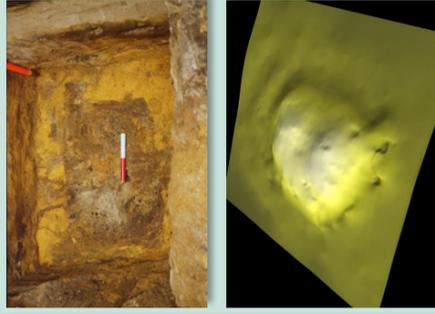


innovations, including tanged spear-heads (as at Lightwater, *upper left*), lugged chisels and elaborate daggers (Ankerwyke, *upper right*). While the palstave form (Crooksbury, *bottom left*) characterised the Middle Bronze Age, the socketed axe dominated the end of the period. A unique discovery at Shepperton also showed how the socketed head attached to its jointed wooden haft, functioning as a practical tool.

(Photos: David Graham, Anne Sassin, Brian Wood © Chertsey Museum; Drawings: Stuart Needham)



TYPES OF ROUND BARRROW.



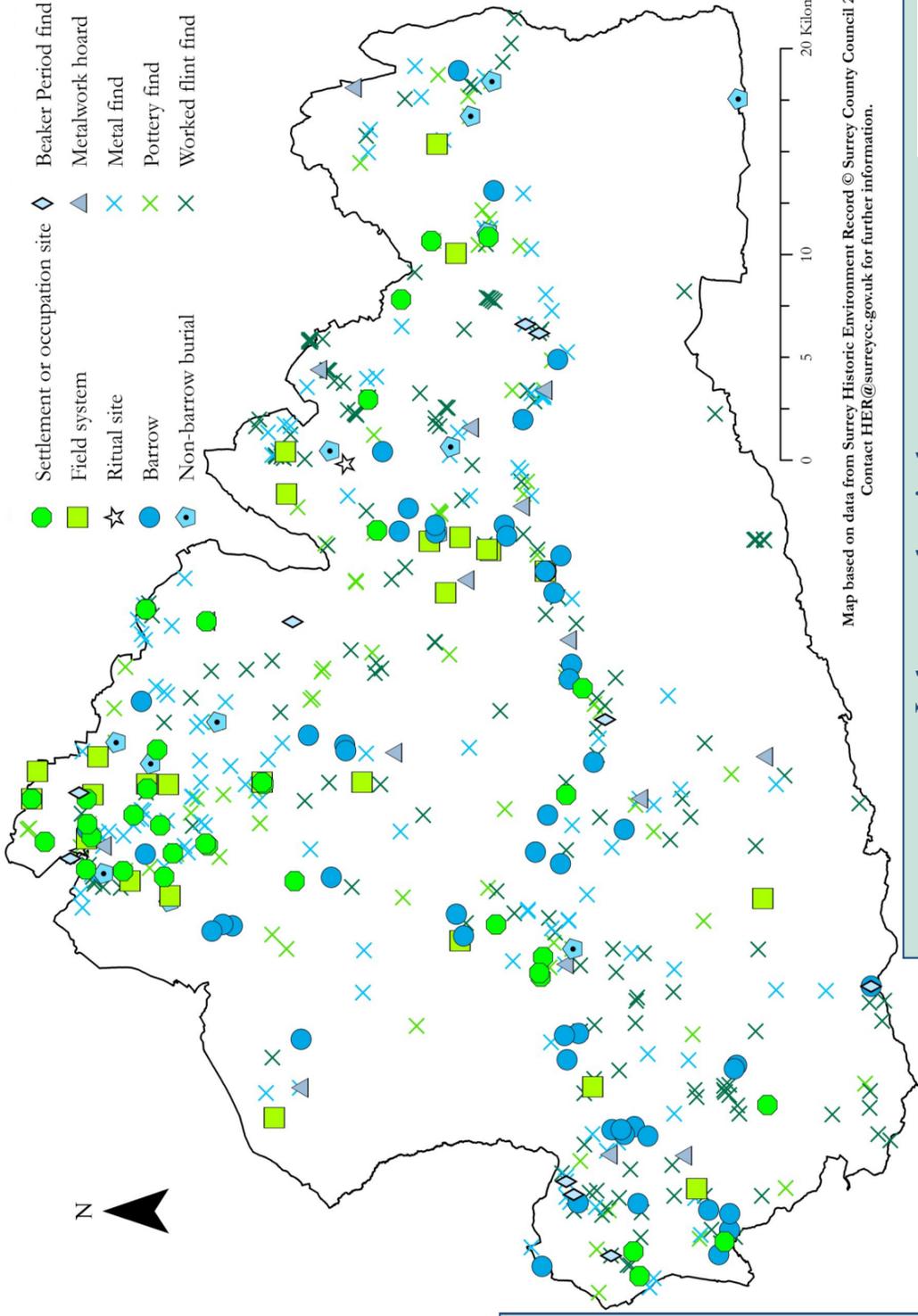
Barrows in the landscape

Barrows are the most common prehistoric monument type and focus on individual – rather than communal – burial. There are many different classifications based on their profile (*far left*), and although the county lacks large barrow cemeteries as in other regions, many appear in nucleated – and often linear – clusters, as at the quadruple group at West End Common, Chobham (*right*).

At one time, many Surrey barrows were deemed no more than natural sand dunes, however excavation at sites such as Thursley (*left*) have revealed their turf construction, along with features including pit burials. (Images: David Graham; © Environment Agency; Drawing: L V Grimsell)



- Settlement or occupation site
- Field system
- ☆ Ritual site
- Barrow
- Non-barrow burial
- ◇ Beaker Period find
- ▲ Metalwork hoard
- × Metal find
- × Pottery find
- × Worked flint find



Map based on data from Surrey Historic Environment Record © Surrey County Council 2021
Contact HER@surreycc.gov.uk for further information.

Hoards and ritual deposition

An organised social structure is also indicated by the weaponry born by the military elite, in particular swords and shields such as from Chertsey (*below*), as well as regional differences in hoard types. In the south-west, small hoards with 2-5 objects – usually axes and spear-heads, as with the Crooksbury or Hankley Common hoard (*below*) – seem to suggest personal armories or tool-kits. Elsewhere, hoards largely comprise obsolete



or mis-cast objects and ingots, buried either for safekeeping or as offerings. This can be seen with the smelters' hoard from Esher, containing 32 fragments of copper ingots, as well as the substantial hoard of tools and weapons from Petters Field (*bottom*) that had been possibly hidden in a ditch by the local bronzesmith. (Photos: S A Oliver Charitable Trust © Chertsey Museum, Surrey County Archaeological Unit)



Occupation sites and centres

Postholes provide an indication of the size and layout of the roundhouses of the time, some – such as Petters Field – with imposing porches (as in the reconstruction from Butser *below*). Regional centres like Carshalton (*bottom*) were constructed in the Late Bronze Age to act as defensive points

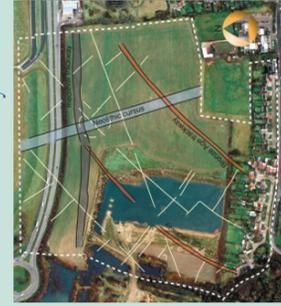


and meetings places, as well as display the occupants' means to order their construction. (Image: Butser Ancient Farm, Museum of London).



Industry and agriculture

Access to resources and skilled craftsmen were essential to production. While many relied on travelling smiths, specialist activity items at the sizeable manufacturing and trading site at Runnymede Bridge included a bronze razor still in its clay mould (*right*) and antler pieces for bridle equipment (*below*). With less reliance on wild resources and more woodland clearance, land tenure was also formalised, resulting in field systems as at Stanwell (*left*) being laid out, often with associated droveways.



(Images: SCAU/Surrey County Council, Stuart Needham)

Metal Detecting

If undertaken responsibly, detecting can make important contributions to archaeological knowledge. Detectorists are reminded that it is illegal to trespass – remember all land has an owner! – and to record

finds with their local Finds Liaison Officer and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. For more on the Code of Practice, please see www.finds.org.uk

