Hillforts in the landscape
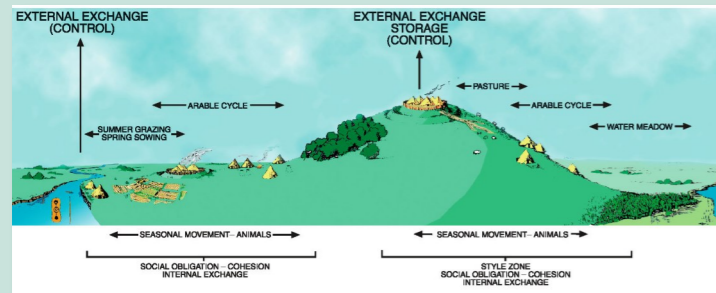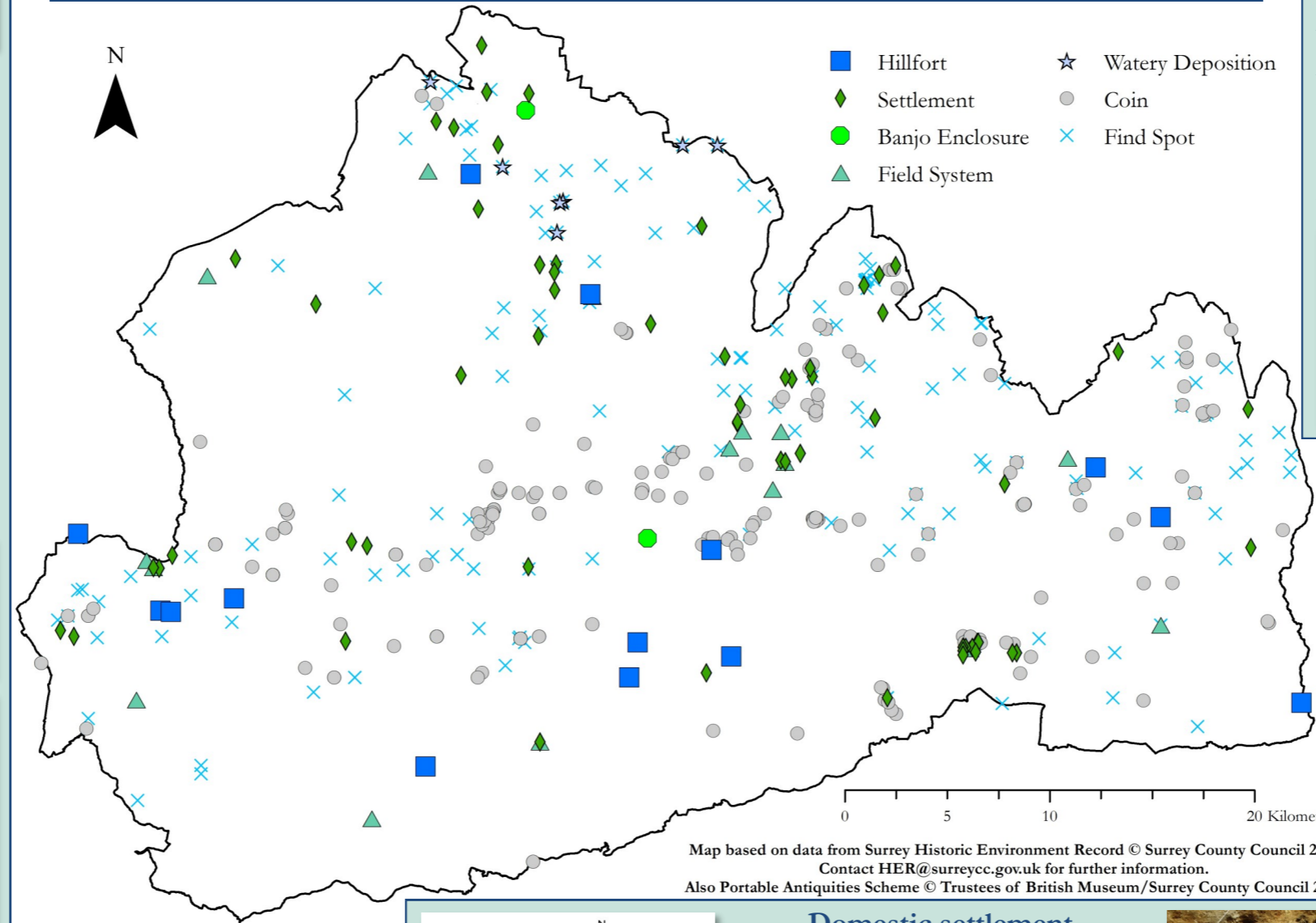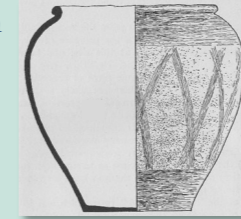

Before the end of the Bronze Age – around 800 BC – major developments were already taking place which would set the scene for the ensuing Iron Age. This included hillfort centres to which produce could be brought, where manufacturing could take place and where goods could be redistributed. These early forts – particularly those in the north of the county such as St Ann's Hill, Chertsey – served an important function within a marketing and exchange model (*above*) which also relied on river transport and agricultural production from surrounding farmsteads. The ramparted sites along the Greensand were later in date however – Middle to Late Iron Age – strategically positioned to control access to seasonal grazing land in the Weald. Both Holmbury (*below top*) and Hascombe (*bottom*) made use of banks, ditches and palisades to form impressive defences, and despite the presence of sling-stones, this was more likely a statement of conspicuous consumption, rather than being purely military in nature.

(Illustration: Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU); Plans: Judie English, Rose Hooker; Photos: Judie English, S E Winbolt, Guildford Heritage Services)
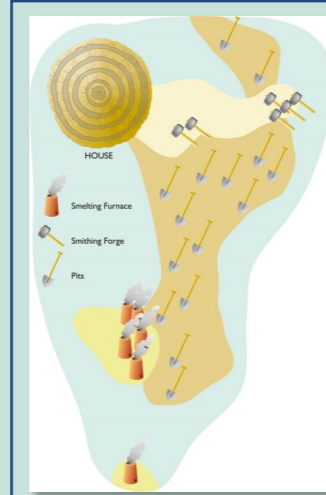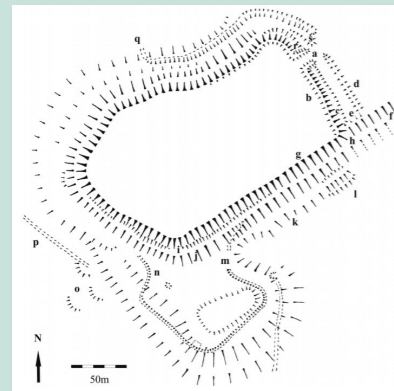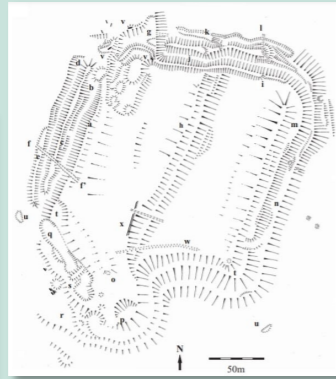
New technologies

Iron-working was a technology which was present on the Continent long before arriving in Britain. In Surrey, low-grade iron ores were worked and processed to produce tools and weapons at sites like Brooklands (*left*) and Ewell, where smithing hearths and slag were found, though the main source of ore was to the far south, in the Weald. Other advances during the period included the introduction of lathes for turning wooden and shale objects, the potter's wheel – which led to the curvaceous 'Belgic' forms, as at the Bourne Mill Spring site, Farnham (*right*) – and the development of the rotary quern. The quern industry also provided evidence of longer-distance trade, with querns found at both Ewell (*upper right*) and Holmbury (*cover*) sourced from non-local stone beds. (Illustration and Photo: SCAU; Drawing: AWG Lowther)

Watery deposits

Rivers were considered sacred places in this period, especially the Thames, where deliberate offerings were made of special deposits were made. These include both 'parade ornament' – so-called as it would not have been worn in battle – such as the Wandsworth shield boss (*bottom left*), Waterloo Bridge helmet (*top*) and Abbey Meads and Battersea shield (*below right*). The bronze Weybridge bucket (*right*) – a rare Alpine import and part of a wine-mixing set – was another watery deposit from the River Wey. (Photos: © The Trustees of the British Museum)

Map legend

- ■ Hillfort
- ◆ Settlement
- ● Banjo Enclosure
- ▲ Field System
- ☆ Watery Deposition
- ● Coin
- ✕ Find Spot

Map based on data from Surrey Historic Environment Record © Surrey County Council 2021
Contact HER@surreycc.gov.uk for further information.
Also Portable Antiquities Scheme © Trustees of British Museum/Surrey County Council 2021

Currency and tribal identity

Coinage was first introduced to Britain around 150 BC, and the first coins made locally were copper-alloy 'potins', which were influenced by continental design, as with the one from Abinger (*above left*). These coins were not used as currency in the modern manner, but formed part of a system of trade and exchange. Many Iron Age coin hoards have been explained in terms of safe-keeping or ritual deposits, such as the potin hoard from Sunbury (*right*), found inside a pot, which may have been buried as a special offering. The introduction of coinage also provides the first clues of tribal territories, as they bear the names of rulers, such as Verica of the Atrebates (inscribed on the silver unit from Wanborough *above right*), who was driven from Surrey and fled to Rome, prompting the Claudian invasion of AD 43. (Images: © Surrey County Council, © The Trustees of the British Museum, © Museum of London)

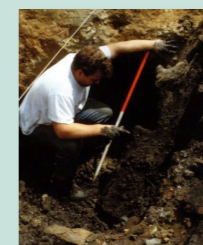## Metal Detecting

Portable Antiquities Scheme
www.finds.org.uk

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.
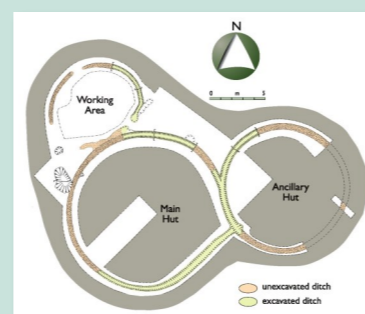
Domestic settlement

Although domestic building evidence is less obvious – often limited to post-holes, gullies or hearths – roundhouses have been excavated, including at the small family settlement at Lower Mill Farm, Stanwell (*upper left*) and much larger one at Tongham (*left* and *upper right*, where a log ladder was preserved in a well). Once thought to be exclusively for stock, 'banjo' enclosures like Epsom Downs (*right*) would have contained houses as well, often with associated field systems. (Images: SCAU)