

Where can I discover more?

Very little survives on the ground today of the monuments which would have comprised the landscape of Neolithic Surrey, with many having been levelled and quarried away over the years, such as the Badshot Lea long barrow. However, part of the Stanwell cursus, Heathrow



can still be seen as cropmarks, and potential sarsen – prehistoric standing stones – have been identified, including around Wisley and Camberley.

Sarsen block near Pyrford church (left) and cursus cropmarks at Stanwell (above, © Google Earth)

Some learning sources on Neolithic Surrey

Bird, J and D G Bird (1987) *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540*
Cotton, J et al (2004) *Aspects of Archaeology and History in Surrey*
Hunt, R (2002) *Hidden Depths: an Archaeological Exploration of Surrey's Past*

Other suggested resources

Canterbury Christ Church University's **Stone Age teaching resource for Key Stage 2** (canterbury.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/school-of-humanities/docs/Stone-Age-for-Key-Stage-2-Teaching-resource.pdf)
English Heritage's **Interactive Map of the Stonehenge Landscape** (english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/history-and-stories/)
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.

Local prehistoric exhibits can be viewed at museums including Chertsey, Guildford, Bourne Hall and East Surrey. Other sites worth a visit include the Coldrum long barrow and Medway megaliths, as well as the impressive monuments of the Stonehenge and Avebury landscape.



“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*

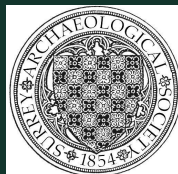
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Neolithic Surrey



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

4000 BC

EARLY NEOLITHIC

c.4000BC Farming and pottery introduced to Britain

4000-3300BC Construction of earliest earthworks, including early enclosures and burial chambers

c.3900-3500BC Construction of monuments accelerates clearance horizons and elm decline, as identified in pollen diagrams along Thames Valley

3800 BC

3807BC Oldest wooden trackway in Britain (the Sweet Track) constructed in Somerset

c.3700-3500BC Main period of causewayed enclosure in the south

c.3600BC Burials in West Kennet long barrow

c.3600-3000BC Main period of cursus monument construction

c.3400-2500BC Local distribution of Peterborough Ware

c.3300-2900BC Main period when cursus monuments, chamber tombs and stone circles begin

c.3000-2500BC Bank and ditch first constructed at Stonehenge, followed by sarsen stones (including bluestones from the Preselis, South Wales)

2900-2200BC Staines/Heathrow complex of monuments at their peak

c.2800-2500BC Period of Grooved Ware

2600 BC

2650-2530BC Carbon dates from primary silts at Badshot Lea long barrow

c.2600-2400BC Main period of flint mining, including at Grimes Graves

c.2400BC Great mound of Silbury Hill is built

c.2400BC Tools and weapons made from copper

c.2300BC Burial of Amesbury Archer

2200 BC

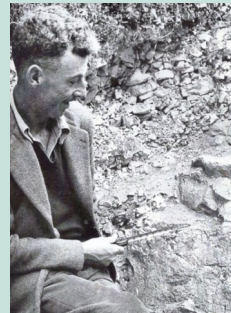
LATE NEOLITHIC

The Neolithic period c. 4000 - 2200 BC

Although the 'New Stone Age' is traditionally seen as the period when farming was introduced to Britain, the vast timeframe of early prehistory can make it easy to generalise on the many – often complex – developments which took place. Rather than too much focus on 'settling down' however, emphasis has shifted to the real change being a new world view comprising notions of time, descent, origin, ancestry, community, nature, etc.

With more scientific advances being developed every day, special techniques can be applied to local research, leading to new insights and discoveries. One such technique is organic residue analysis, in which lipids – fats, waxes and resins – that survive in the porous walls of ceramics can give an indication of the use of the vessels and animal products consumed. At Betchworth, a small number of Grooved Ware pot sherds were assessed, suggesting they contained dairy products.

Grooved Ware pots at base of Neolithic pit, Betchworth



Sometimes the interpretation of sites changes over time, after evidence is re-examined. The supposed Neolithic flint mines at East Horsley, excavated in 1949, are a case in point, as despite tools and pottery of this period – indicating surface extraction – the shafts were determined to be medieval, as the steps cut into the chalk matched those of a

Commander Todd at East Horsley metal pick.

**Ashford Prison/Hengrove Farm, Staines
c. 3500 BC**

The principal building was identified from a series of postholes and stakeholes, but the other structures are conjectural, reflecting the wider distribution of pottery and flintwork from the excavation of almost 20Ha on these sites. The rectangular building is the only one of this period known from the Surrey area, and they are very rare nationally. Their exact purpose is uncertain. Agriculture was not yet based around permanent farms and fields, and it is possible that the landscape of this Thames terrace was less open than the image suggests. The viewpoint looks approximately west. (Drawing by Giles Pattison © Surrey County Archaeological Unit)

