

Where can I discover more?

Surrey does not have a wealth of standing Roman remains, unlike its surrounding counties, and most excavated sites are now re-buried with little to see on the ground. However, you can walk a stretch of Roman Stane Street at Mickleham Downs, and the reconstruction of a tile kiln in Reigate caves is available to view on special visits. The rural temple at Farley Heath also has



some trace of its outline which can still be seen today.

*Reigate Caves tile kiln (top)
and Farley Heath temple (left)*



“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
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Roman Surrey



Other suggested resources

University of Reading's **The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain** (archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/romangl/)
Sussex Archaeological Society's **Romans in Sussex** (romansinsussex.weebly.com)

University of Reading/Runnymede Trust's **Romans Revealed** (www.romansrevealed.com)

Exploring Surrey's Past (exploringsurreyspast.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.

Roman exhibits can be viewed at local museums including Guildford and Kingston, and the Museum of London, London Mithraeum, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Portchester Roman Fort, Silchester and Reading Museum are also worth a visit, amongst several villa sites in the south-east.

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

AD 43

EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

AD50 Founding of London, later the capital, and construction of Stane Street

AD61 Revolt of Boudica, queen of Iceni

AD65-70 Building evidence at Staines, which followed Southwark as first towns in Surrey

AD70 Roadside settlements begin to emerge as result of new trading patterns

AD80-210 Major tile production centre at Ashtead

AD90-150 Main period of Surrey villa building

AD100 Most of Roman roads in Britain complete

AD122 Construction of Hadrian's Wall begins

AD142 Work ordered to begin on Antonine Wall

AD 192

AD211 Britain divided into Britannia 'Superior' in the south and 'Inferior' in the north

c.AD200-380 Major pottery production centre at Alice Holt/Farnham

AD296 Short-lived empire of Carausius and Allectus brought to an end by imperial forces

AD314 Christianity made legal in the empire

c.AD300-350 Surrey villas mostly abandoned

AD326 No more coinage minted in Britain, which is now reliant on imports

c.AD320-360 Deposition of ritually 'killed' coins and jewellery at Kingston stream crossing

AD367 *Barbarica conspiratio* concerted attack on Britain

AD 410

TRANSITION

AD402 End of imports of official coinage

AD410 Sacking of Rome by Visigoths and Britons told to 'look to their own defences' by Emperor Honorius

AD 450

The Roman period AD 43-410

Study of the Romans has always been a popular period in British archaeology, although research in more recent years has shifted emphasis away from military expansion to themes of change and continuation – e.g. transitions from the Iron Age and to the Saxon era – as well as the everyday life of ordinary citizens in the countryside.

With more scientific advances being developed every day, new techniques are able to be applied to Roman studies, including within the county. At Ashtead villa, samples of fired clay tile had archaeo-magnetic dating applied to them in 2010 by a team from MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), showing the tile kiln's last firing to be AD 205-225. Miniature ceramic pots from the early Roman site at Frensham, excavated in 2000, underwent high-resolution geochemical analysis of their contents – revealing traces of cannabis, oil and beeswax – which support interpretation for ritual activity.

Frensham miniature pots and tile kiln flue from Ashtead



As many sites were relatively early excavations, they are comparatively limited in the resources available at the time. However, re-assessment of some assemblages can prove useful and help to clarify discrepancies in their dating or provenance. A mixed assemblage of fragments of painted plaster, for instance, from the two villa sites excavated by A.W.G. Lowther – Ashtead from 1924-9 and Six Bells in 1946-7 – have recently been able to be allocated to their respective sites through careful analysis of their decorative schemes and mortar backing.



Painted plaster from Six Bells, Farnham

Ashtead Roman Villa
c. AD 150

The Roman villa was discovered on what is now Ashtead Common and is closely associated both with a sophisticated bathhouse and with a major site for the production of ceramic tiles that were widely used on other high status sites. The building was much altered over its lifetime and it is not always certain which parts are contemporary. The site lies on the London Clay and drainage was evidently a persistent problem. The viewpoint looks approximately north-west. (Drawing by Giles Pattison © Surrey County Archaeological Unit)

