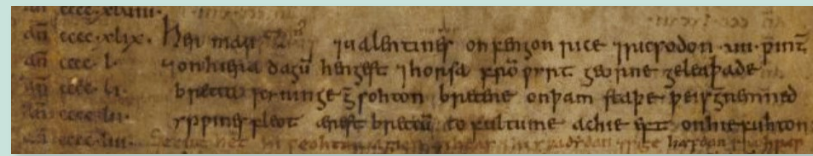




The fall of Rome and coming of the Saxons



Evidence for early 5th century – so-called ‘Dark Age’ – Surrey is extremely limited, due to an almost complete dearth of written records or dateable artefacts for sites. At Flexford, however, a rare coin struck in the Mediterranean AD 408-23 (*right*, showing Honorius and Theodosius II) attests to continued use of the Roman road at the site. Despite continental accounts for Roman withdrawal in 410 and the subsequent arrival of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, the earliest English sources – including Bede’s *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* – are not contemporary with the events described and should not be taken at face value. (CCCC MS 173: The Parker Chronicle, Folio 4v © Corpus Christi College, Cambridge CC Lic.; Photo: David Calow)

Early domestic settlement

Most of Surrey’s Early Saxon sites – including those within the historic county – have suffered from poor quality antiquarian excavations and a lack of closely dateable artefacts. As structures were built out of timber, they are rarely uncovered, and only a small number of 5th and 6th century sunken-featured buildings – also

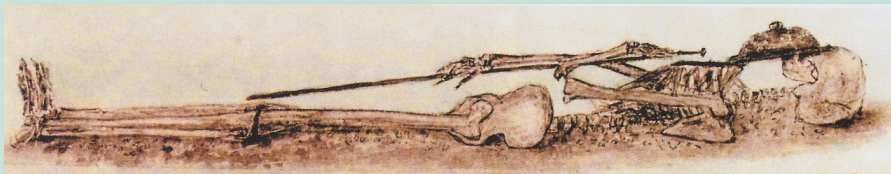
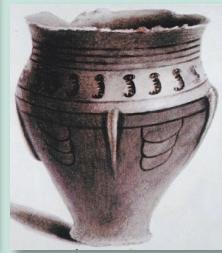
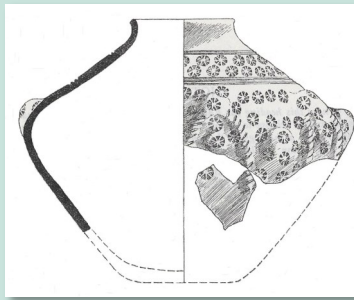


referred to as *grubenhäuser* – are known, including ones at Hurst Park, Shepperton and Farnham (*left*). These would have usually formed a complex incorporating at least one rectangular hall, and although many were later re-used as middens, domestic artefacts such as loomweights (as from Farnham, *left*) indicate specialist functions. (Photos: E Borelli; Anne Sassin)



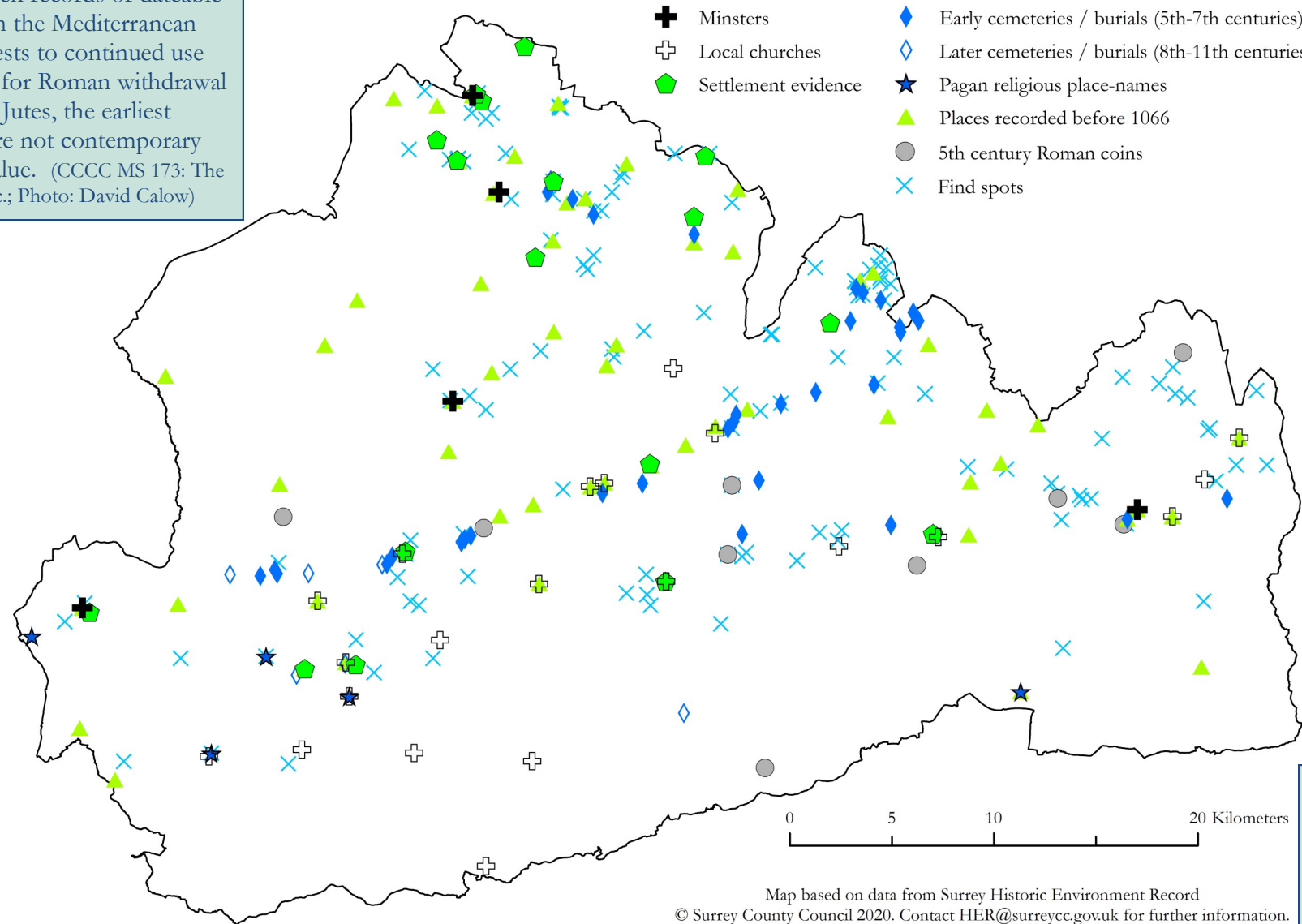
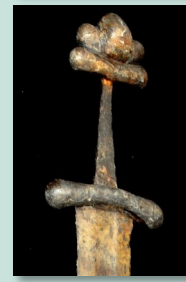
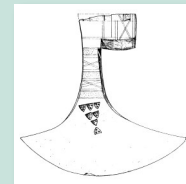
Pagan burials and sacred sites

As the Saxon settlers who first arrived were pagan – rather than Christian – their burials were either cremations often contained in ceramic urns (*left*), furnished inhumations with grave goods (such as beads and brooches as in the 6th century Guildown inhumations (*right*), more intricate items such as the Watersmeet carved bucket (*middle right*) or weapons as in the early 6th century warrior burial from Shepperton (*bottom left*), or mixed rite. Occasional placenames – such as Thursley from the god Thunor – also attest to former sacred places. From the later 6th and 7th century, barrows were raised over particularly high status burials, as at Farthing Down, which was accompanied by a wooden cup with bronze bindings (*upper right*). (Watercolours: c/o Guildford Heritage Services; Drawings: AWG Lowther & David Williams; Photos: SyAS)



Christians and Pagans

By c. AD 700, the conversion to Christianity was mostly complete, and charters record minster churches at Farnham and Chertsey. Few churches today retain Saxon fabric, other than foundations as at Farnham (*far left*), though St Mary’s, Guildford has features such as pilaster strips and double-splayed windows which date to the late 10th or 11th century. Although the Vikings’ arrival in the late 8th century re-introduced paganism, their impact was not as strong in Surrey, with only a handful of finds including the Chertsey sword – an offering recovered from the Thames (*bottom right*) – and Tilford axe. (Photos: David Graham, Mary Alexander, Brian Wood © Chertsey Museum; Drawing: David Williams)



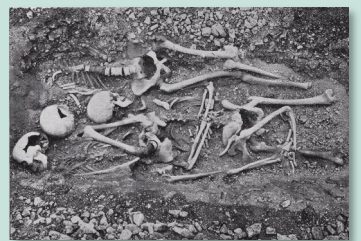
Metal Detecting

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, see www.finds.org.uk.



Law and order

As Surrey was a frontier which at various times fell under Wessex, Mercian and Kentish kingdoms, its control was of great importance, and law and order in Late Saxon society was particularly strict. For major crimes, the death penalty was issued, which for most involved hanging. Execution cemeteries – mostly 8th-11th century and positioned on the edge of territories – are known at Guildown, Ashted, Staines and Banstead. Burials were often placed over earlier ones, with



hands tied behind their back (as at the Goblin Works site, Ashted), or occasionally decapitated as in the multiple grave from Guildown (*above*). (Photos: Surrey County Archaeological Unit and AWG Lowther)

Late Saxon burhs



In response to Scandinavian attacks – including the sacking of Chertsey Abbey – a network of fortified *burhs* was established. The *burhs* served as both military sites such as Eashing (*bottom*) – which occupied a strategic position over-looking the Wey – and towns as at Southwark and Guildford, the latter replacing Eashing in the 10th century. Trade and the minting of coins took place in Late Saxon towns, as seen in coins from Guildford such as that of Cnut (reign 1016-35).

(Photo: Guildford Heritage Service; Map: Surrey County Archaeological Unit)

