



Surrey Archaeological Society

No 5 May 2021

E-newsletter

Welcome to the Society's May e-newsletter, which highlights a few of the various events – conferences, lectures, training sessions, news items, etc – which we hope to be of interest to our members. Although general queries should continue to be directed to Hannah (info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk), those interested in volunteer opportunities or general outreach can contact me at outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk. Please also keep up-to-date via the website and social media ([@surreyarch](https://www.instagram.com/surreyarch)) for group and event updates.

Anne Sassin (*SyAS Projects and Outreach Officer*)

Surrey Heritage online talks

Wednesday 26 May – Portrait of a Surrey town between the wars: the photographic archive of Sidney Francis



Wednesday 9 June – From Punishment to Pride: LGBTQ+ archives at SHC

Wednesday 23 June – James Henry Pullen (1835-1916) and the 'Royal Earlswood Asylum for Idiots', Redhill

All talks begin at 17:30, are £5 each and must be booked [online](#).

Wednesday 30 June, 17:00-19:00 – Surrey History Trust AGM and talk 'The Book That Changed My Life'.



Tickets are free and must be booked [online](#).

Monday 21 June, 14:00-15.45 – Exploring Magna Carta

As part of the Runnymede Explored project, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, this evening of two free talks offers an introduction to the Magna Carta and what life was like in Surrey at the time. The first talk, which will be given by Mike Page, the County Archivist, is titled 'Runnymede, Magna Carta and All That' and will consider the background to the events of 1215 and the subsequent history of Magna Carta, briefly examining the place where it happened, as reflected in records at Surrey History Centre. The second talk will be given by Rob Poulton, Senior Archaeological Advisor for SCAU, and will focus on the Surrey landscape and society in the 13th century.



The live talk on Tuesday 15 June is now fully booked. However, a video of the recording will be played on Monday 21 June at 14:00, with National Trust archaeologists on hand live, to answer any questions. Tickets are free, but booking is required [online](#).



Photography and illustration workshop series

As part of the Society's NLHF Sustainable Impact project, a free online workshop series on photography and illustration is being offered, run by Archaeology South-East's Heritage Photographer and GIS Illustrator, Antonio Reis. These sessions will take place via Zoom, and consist of two parts, including an exercise to be reviewed at the second session. Participants are not expected to attend the entire workshop series, but encouraged to engage with the sessions of most interest to them. The intention is that the workshops will be recorded and made available to those who are booked. Although free of cost, spaces are limited and will be offered firstly to those who are currently (or intend to be) working on Society-led projects. Please contact outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk with any queries and expressions of interest to be allocated a place.

Introduction to 3D modelling

Monday 24 May (16:00-17:30) – Principles of photogrammetry

Thursday 27 May (16:00-17:30) – Exercise review and feedback

Introduction to finds illustrations

Monday 7 June (16:00-17:30) – Principles of hand drawing archaeological artefacts and digitizing for publication

Thursday 10 June (16:00-17:30) – Exercise review and feedback

Runnymede Explored

Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) are thrilled to be working with the National Trust to deliver the archaeology aspect of Runnymede Explored, with SCAU Community Archaeologist Hannah Potter working as the Project Archaeologist for the next 2.5 years, developing opportunities for volunteer groups to get involved and enhance understanding of the history and archaeology of the site at Runnymede and Ankerwycke.

It is over 800 years since feudal barons forced King John to seal Magna Carta at Runnymede, on the banks of the Thames. Magna Carta remains one of the world's most important and influential documents, and Runnymede is widely acknowledged as the birthplace of modern democracy. On the opposite riverbank, Ankerwycke is home to the remains of a Benedictine priory, as well as famous ancient yew tree.



There will be numerous volunteering opportunities, including excavations, geophysics, finds processing, sorting museum archives, talking to site visitors and archive research, throughout the summer. If you are interested in any of the listed roles, or would like to get involved with the project in any way, please email Hannah.potter@nationaltrust.org.uk.



Festival of Archaeology event at the Devil's Punch Bowl, Hindhead

Thursday 29 July marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Hindhead Tunnel (does that bring back some memories?) As this date falls within the Festival of Archaeology window, the National Trust are planning on running an archaeology-themed day to mark the occasion. Though the event won't focus on the tunnel, it will be an opportunity to chat about the changing landscape and wider history of the site. The event is in the early planning stages, but the National Trust will be partnering with the Society to run a number of activities and guided walks. This is a call out for any volunteers who might be interested in helping lead a guided walk around Hindhead (focusing on your own interests), or helping with some activities or promotion of the Society on site. Please contact outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk if interested in helping.



Deeper than 'The Dig', with Martin Carver

'Deeper Than The Dig' marked the launch of a brand new series of online talks hosted by DigVentures. Featuring Martin Carver, the lead archaeologist at Sutton Hoo from 1983-2005, the talk revealed what was learned about the site since the original excavation. Event attendees also get a special 35% discount on 'The Sutton Hoo Story', Martin's account of excavations at the site (offer ends 30 June). For more details, visit Dig-Ventures' [website](#).

Medieval Settlement Research Group spring seminar

Following the recent MSRG Spring Seminar on Medieval Settlement and Infrastructure Archaeology in the UK and Ireland, the recorded papers and discussion panel, which include a talk from Carenza Lewis, are now available to view on [YouTube](#).

Unstopping a 17th-century 'witch bottle'

On Tuesday 18 May, presenter Raksha Dave broadcast live from the Pitt Rivers Museum as a team of specialists unstopped a 17th-century 'witch bottle', which was found in 1893 from the courtyard/garden of the former Duke of Norfolk's Palace in Norwich. Whilst it seems to have been opened sometime after its discovery and the contents noted, it was subsequently re-sealed. This is now available to view on MOLA's [Facebook](#).

Chilworth Gunpowder Mills

For last week's National Mills Weekend, we celebrated the Chilworth Gunpowder Mills, a scheduled monument owned and managed by Guildford Borough Council and one of the best surviving mill complexes of this type in the country. Chilworth is one of the earliest examples of powder mills, having been established in 1626 by the East India Company on the banks of the Tillingbourne. Although the Lower Works site was converted to paper mills by the 1700s, the Middle Works (which you can visit today) continued to develop, with steam power introduced in 1865, followed by a smokeless nitrate explosives factory in 1882. The site was a dangerous place to work, and a slip on a hobnail boot in 1901 led to an explosion in the corning house, killing six men.

The German company which took over the mills in 1885 installed a tramway which operated until the works closed in 1920, after having served as a cordite factory in the war. The most striking surviving feature is a swingbridge which carried a branch of the tramway across the millstream to the local railway station. You can read more about some of the research and survey work undertaken, in particular by the late Alan Crocker, from the *Collections* [article](#) (Volume 82, 1994), as well as the HE [list entry](#). Two downloadable heritage leaflets are also available: the [Chilworth Gunpowder Mills Heritage Trail leaflet](#) from GBC and the [Chilworth Tillingbourne Trail leaflet](#) from Surrey Hills Society.



1880s steam incorporating mills, where underfloor gear rooms and blast-proof walls still remain



Edge runner mill stones, near the site of a collapsed incorporating mill



West Lodge gate house, where workers would check in for materials that might cause a spark



Swing bridge, which would have allowed access to the New Cut

#FindsFriday posts from the FLO

Simon Maslin, the Surrey Finds Liaison Officer, shares some interesting pieces recently uncovered by detectorists who recorded their finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Odd lumps of lead turn up all over the place and usually turn out to be modern or simply unidentifiable; occasionally though, they are something rather special. This 4oz trade weight from the reign of Charles I or II ([SUR-E3F426](#)) has three incuse stamps arranged in a triangle on one side: a crowned letter C (Royal Cypher for Charles), Sword of St Pauls (City of London Guildhall) and an 'angel and scales' (the Plumbers Company's stamp).



Every day we are systematically making rare Iron Age coins much less rare! Here is a silver unit of the Cantii (from Kent) of the 'Torc Head Pegasus' type c. 50-20 BC, recently dug up in Surrey ([SUR-AC79D2](#)), and one of only a handful of the type known to exist.



A Building Stone Atlas of Surrey

Historic England and the British Geological Survey published a survey of Surrey building stone and its use in Surrey buildings in October 2020. This is now freely available on the [British Geological Survey website](#).



Guildford Museum finds photography

Over the lockdown, Guildford Museum have been busily getting ready to re-open, whilst taking the opportunity to photograph as many objects as possible currently on display, including some of the artefacts on loan from the Society. These have since been shared as posts on their social media pages ([@VisitGuildford](#) and [@Gfdheritage](#)).

This Roman brick from Ashtead Villa bears a pattern on its surface, most likely created by the maker accidentally pressing his clothing onto the wet clay. The fabric would have been wool and with a twill weave, making a diagonal pattern and leaving a fascinating insight into the clothing that was worn.



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This small bronze figure of a Roman god (or 'lar') from the Butterworth Collection, which comprised finds from Southwark and London, was used in a household shrine ('lararium'). It would have been set into a wooden or clay base and its arms would likely have held a rhyton (drinking vessel) and patera (offering dish). The Romans believed these household gods would protect their family, ensuring their health and prosperity.

Although rabbits are a familiar part of Britain's wildlife, they are not a native species, but were imported from the Mediterranean, most probably from southern France or Spain. Researchers at the University of Exeter have included a rabbit bone into their 'Exploring the Easter E.g.' research project which was excavated at Guildford Castle. The project discovered that the earliest evidence for the presence of rabbits in medieval England is actually found in

Surrey. The Close Rolls for 1235 record that Henry III gave a gift of 10 live rabbits from his park at Guildford, and the Guildford Castle rabbit bone (pictured via 3D scanning) has been radiocarbon dated to between AD 1250-1295.



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For more information on opportunities in your local region, be sure to follow SCAU (education.scau@surreycc.gov.uk and [@diggingsurreypast](#)), as well as the Council for British Archaeology South-East (www.cbasmouth-east.org and [@CBASouthEast](#)).