



SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CASTLE ARCH, GUILDFORD GU1 3SX
Guildford 32454

Bulletin

Number 248

June 1990

COUNCIL NEWS

New Members

We welcome to the Society the following new members:

Mrs J Beckett, 7 Braeside Close, Sevenoaks, Kent, TW13 2JL
 Mrs V Bedwell, 37 Seymour Avenue, Ewell, Epsom, KT17 2RS
 C J Davey, The Cottage, 2 Heatherley Road, Camberley, GU15 3LW
 J. Day, Kingswell, 72 The Street, Capel, Dorking, RH5 5LA
 H G Fischer, 111 Yaverland Drive, Bagshot, GU19 5DZ
 Mrs H Girdler, 6 Faris Barn Drive, Woodham, Weybridge, KT15 3DZ
 Miss L C Gray, 6 Colebrook, Off Fletcher Road, Ottershaw, Chertsey, KT16 OJU
 Mr & Mrs C I Hobbs, 19 Roding Close, Elmbridge, Cranleigh, GU6 8TE
 M R Lockwood, 128 Gibsons Hill, Streatham, London SW16 3EY
 Mrs D Marshall, 2 Marlyns Close, Burpham, Guildford, GU4 7LR
 Miss J Milroy, Bankside Cottage, The Street, Witley, Godalming, GU8 5PA
 A J & F J Rider, 4 Belmont Road, Reigate, RH2 7EE
 P F Rutland, 87 Ambleside Road, Lightwater, GU18 5UH
 P Sagar, 48 Quarry Street, Guildford, GU1 3UA
 Ms C Scott, 15 Middleton Way, Ifield, West Sussex, RH11 0UD
 R Sinclair, 15 Bengal House, Duckett Street, Stepney, London E1 4SU
 Mr & Mrs J Tanqueray, Chalfont, 1 Wayneflete Tower Avenue, Esher, KT10 8QQ
 Miss J M Tate, Tenacres, Horsham Lane, Ewhurst, Cranleigh, GU6 7SW

Annual General Meeting

Provisional arrangements have been made to hold the 1990 AGM at Painshill Park, Cobham, on Saturday 24th November. Guided tours of the Park will take place from 1 – 2.30 pm, if the weather is suitable (a transit van will be available for those not able to walk the whole distance). Otherwise, videos about the Park will be shown in the Visitor Centre. This will be followed by the AGM and an illustrated talk by Mavis Collier on 'The Hon Charles Hamilton's work at Painshill'. Tea will be served following the lecture. No charge will be made for any of the afternoon's activities and there is ample parking available near the Visitor Centre.

NOTE As accommodation for meetings at Painshill is limited, alternative arrangements could be made to hold the AGM and lecture at the nearby Whiteley Village Hall. The Hon Secretaries would, therefore, very much appreciate hearing from those members who might wish to attend the event, as soon as possible, in order that appropriate arrangements can be made (please either write or telephone to the Society's office at Castle Arch, Guildford GU1 3SX, Tel. Guildford 32454).

VISITS COMMITTEE

SAS VISIT TO BIGNOR, SOMPTING AND BOXGROVE PRIORY arranged by Richard Butler

Wednesday 15th August

- 8.00 am Coach leaves Guildford at the rear of the BR Station in Guildford Park Road
- 8.30 am Dorking Halls
- 8.45 am Reigate at the Red Cross pub at the junction of the High Street, Park Lane and West Street Proceed to the Roman Villa at Bignor Times will be confirmed throughout the day
- 10.00 am Arrive at the Roman Villa which was of the courtyard type. The inner courtyard was surrounded by corridors from which rooms opened on to the north, south and west sides, many rooms are decorated with mosaics of highest quality and noted for their detail. The villa appears to have been occupied from the 1st to 4th centuries. Coffee will be available in the refreshment room for those requiring it. (Cost not included)
- The lunch break will be in Worthing where there are ample facilities. Rejoin the coach for Sompting church which is just north of Worthing and is noted for its Saxon tower, which is the only one of its type in the country. Its gabled pyramidal cap is often called a Rhenish Helm. The church dates from about 1000 AD. In spite of some rebuilding in the C12th some of the Saxon design has been retained.
- Proceed to Boxgrove Priory which is, after Chichester Cathedral, the most important Early English building in Sussex. It was founded from Lessay in Normandy in c1117. Much of the C12th work survives and most of the remainder dates from c1220. Of the monastic building, the Guest House survives and has been restored by English Heritage.
- Rejoin the coach and proceed to Chichester for afternoon tea at the Shepards Tea Rooms. (Please state if not required)

TICKETS: Members (Adults) £10.50, OAPs £10.00, Visitors non-members an extra £1.00, Students £6.50 to include coach, gratuity, afternoon tea, donations, admissions and administration. Please send SAE with cheque to Mrs Jean West, 123 Ewell By Pass, Ewell, Epsom KT17 2PX (Tel: 081 393 8970) not later than 31st July to enable final arrangements to be completed.

SAS Visit to Leicester and East Midlands 7th-14th July — See *Bulletin* 242 for details.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

SOS Private Bills Threat. Private Bills in Parliament are being increasingly used to sidestep the legal system of protecting historic buildings. It has particularly arisen over public transport but there is concern that it will be used more widely. The Kings Cross Bill, for example, is a Private Bill which seeks to override listed building procedures. Other conservation bodies including The Royal Fine Art Commission, Countryside Commission, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and Nature Conservancy Council have expressed similar fears about this trend.

It might limit this trend if members would write to their MP expressing concern.

EXCAVATIONS COMMITTEE

At a recent meeting of Council it was formally proposed to change the name of the Excavations Committee to reflect the present role of the Committee and its work within the Society. Much of the Committee's effort is directed towards the Historic Landscape Project and the current pilot study, and it now seldom has control over excavations. Excavations undertaken by the Society, such as Wanborough and the present Training Dig are co-ordinated by a sub-committee.

Council therefore agreed that the Committee should be re-named Archaeological Research Committee.

It was also agreed that the Committee should widen its membership to include those actively involved in all aspects of the study of the historic landscape.

SURREY INDUSTRIAL HISTORY GROUP

A reminder: the Annual Conference of the AIA is being held at the University of Surrey from 7 September to 13 September. See *Bulletin* 246 for preliminary details.

SOUTH LONDON ARCHAEOLOGY

D J Turner

Lectures at Sutton February 17th

More than eighty people came to Sutton Civic Centre on 17th February for a day of public lectures by London Museum Archaeologists. Many were probably particularly attracted by the prospect of a talk by Julian Browsher on the much-publicised and controversial excavations at the site of the Rose Theatre but talks on the important sites at Kingston Bridge and Merton Priory by Geoff Potter and Penny Bruce will also have attracted their devotees. The interests of Sutton itself were represented by Jonathan Nowell talking about recent excavations in the High Street.

Particularly gripping — and unexpectedly so for this listener — was Gill Batchelor's fascinating account of how the pupils and teachers of Attwood School were brought into a highly rewarding involvement with the excavation of a Romano-British site in the school grounds. A site which, on the face of it, might have been thought to have had little educative potential in view of its shallow stratigraphy, shortage of small finds and confusion of post-holes.

The lecture day was jointly arranged by the Society and the Sutton Heritage Service with the cooperation of the Museum of London. A follow up is planned concentrating on the Sutton area and touching on the considerable evidence of English garden history that is to be found in the vicinity.

NOTES

Evidence of strip farming in Abinger Hammer

Owen Davies

Evidence of ridge and furrow ploughing in Abinger Hammer, Walliswood, and in fields near the hamlet of Sutton Abinger seem to represent small scale strip farming within a typically enclosed landscape.

Fields (TQ04/14, 10 45) between Sutton Abinger and Hoe, which have not been ploughed for at least fifty-five years, have definite ridge and furrow in one field and

faint remnants in several others. Similar evidence can be seen in fields between Wallis Wood and Mayes Green. In the case of the Sutton Abinger fields (actually in Shere Parish) an estate map of 1724 provides no evidence of strip farming, and neither does the Shere Tithe Map. Botanical dating would place the dividing hedges as being at least 300 years old.

However, the Abinger Tithe Map of 1838 clearly depicts the individual strips which made up the Abinger Common Field, which lay just to the north of Abinger Hammer at the base of the Downs. Surrey Record Office also holds an inventory of 'Lands belonging to Paddington Farm lying in Abinger Common Field' dated 1772. Today hardly any trace of the strips can be seen.

It would thus seem possible that a system of small-scale common strip farming operated amongst some of the settlements in this area. Do any other examples of ridge and furrow exist in this distinct topographical area around the Greensand ridges?

Recent Excavations in Church Square, Dorking

G Hayman

The work undertaken by a team of archaeologists from Surrey County Council in Church Square, Dorking, between 2 May and 9 June 1989 has provided valuable information about the town's history in the early Medieval and Roman periods.

In the upper car park the remains of 13 human burials dating back to the 13th century were uncovered and a further burial lying just south of the excavated area is known to exist from the initial trial trench. Slightly to the east of the burials a ditch of the same date appears to mark the limit of the early Medieval cemetery — certainly no burials were found on the other side of this feature.

This information suggests that Dorking has had a church from at least the 13th century and is confirmed by the known existence of 13th century constructional features which survived until St Martin's was rebuilt between 1835-37.

It was not possible to excavate fully all the burials as the upper halves of all but two lay outside the western edge of the site and the position of the present boundary wall of St Martin's meant that an extension of the excavated area was not possible. Those that were totally accessible appeared to be an adult and a child of roughly 10-12 years, while the legs recovered from the other graves suggest that most were adults. All the skeletons were lying on their backs with hands, where discernible, by their sides and heads in the west; coffins were not used. The date and style of the burials suggests that they were Christian and part of a formal cemetery bounded by the ditch mentioned above. Later this part of the cemetery seems to have been abandoned, with a new boundary being established roughly on line with the present church wall — a late 13th century date being likely for this.

The human remains removed from the site are at present awaiting specialist examination, which may provide such information as the age, sex and height of those buried, and may give an indication of their physical condition and/or cause of death as certain injuries and diseases leave clear indications on bone.

Further the excavations in the upper car park revealed a small ditch or gully of the Roman Period closely dated by the abundance of pottery recovered from it to the late 1st or early 2nd century AD. The quantity and condition of this pottery, together with Roman building materials also found, suggest the close proximity of a settlement of this period. The direction of this ditch indicates it was used as a boundary rather than a drainage feature, as it does not follow the natural slope of the hillside.

In the lower car park two further Roman ditches were found, also dating to the late 1st or early 2nd century. These ditches were substantial, with one surviving

approximately 2m wide and 80cm deep, and may have served dual roles as drainage and boundary features, again implying the nearness of some form of settlement.

More detailed examination of the Roman and Medieval pottery from both the excavated areas may give an indication of the economy and importance of Dorking in these periods. For the moment it may be said that the discoveries of Roman date have taken us rather closer to a true appreciation of the status of the settlement in that period, while the Medieval finds begin to suggest a radical reorganisation of land use in the later 13th century, marking an important phase in the development of the town.

15 Bell Street, Reigate

G N Hayman

The continuing redevelopment of Reigate town centre recently provided the opportunity for an archaeological investigation of a small area immediately behind No 15 Bell Street. The site in question was believed to be of considerable archaeological potential, partly because of its close proximity to the Medieval street front and also because No 15 is the site of St Lawrence's Chapel (built in the 14th century) — visible structural evidence of which can still be seen internally. Consequently, and after the demolition of several modern small office and storage structures by the developers, two small areas were excavated by archaeologists working for Surrey County Council. This work took place between 8 and 28 November and was funded by English Heritage.

With the removal of the topsoil it was apparent that a considerable amount of post-Medieval, largely 18th and 19th century activity had taken place. This, in the form of a stone-built privy backfilled with rubbish, two well shafts and a number of rubbish pits cutting well into the natural sand, meant that the area remaining undisturbed by such features was comparatively small.

The removal of these features and their associated stratigraphy revealed a Medieval soil layer which contained almost exclusively late 12th and 13th century pottery and was cut by several large pits of 13th and 16th century date and a number of smaller features of uncertain though probably Medieval date. After the excavation of these features the soil layer through which they were cut was removed and for the most part was found to overlap clean white natural sand. However, it also sealed two pits of late 12th or 13th century date, a small pit or post hole of uncertain date and perhaps most interestingly a large ditch some 2m wide and 0.40m deep which may have been used to mark a boundary; the apparent truncation and sealing of certain early Medieval features by this layer while others of similar date clearly cut through it may suggest that the soil was dug over sometime in the 13th century.

Despite careful excavation the ditch failed to provide a single dateable find and although the length examined would appear to follow a course roughly parallel to Bell street, suggesting a possible Medieval origin, the absence of a single Medieval find in its fill and its position so close to the backs of the buildings fronting this street may indicate that an earlier origin is more likely. Further, as well as being sealed by a layer containing early Medieval pottery in fair quantity the ditch was clearly cut by a large pit, also of late 12th-13th century date, and must therefore be earlier than both.

Ignoring the ditch, the exact significance of which must remain uncertain without a closer indication of its age and knowledge of its true extent, the excavation suggests that the land behind No 15 was used for pit digging (presumably for domestic purposes) in the 12th and 13th centuries and was again used for similar purposes in the late Medieval and post Medieval periods. The paucity of 14th and 15th century material indicates a period of land use activity which has left no visible archaeological traces possibly reflecting a tranquil environment surrounding St Lawrence's Chapel in the form of a chapel garden.

Merton Bus Garage, Colliers Wood, SW19 (TQ 2655 7037)

Robin Nielsen

The Museum of London's Department of Greater London Archaeology carried out excavations between 20.11.89 and 15.12.89 on the rear part of the Merton Bus Garage site, off Merton High Street, prior to redevelopment by London Buses Limited, producing the following results:

Evidence of geological strata typical of the Wandle Valley, consisting of gravels laid down in the Pleistocene era and overlain by alluvial clays. The interface between these layers in the excavated area sloped to the west, away from the present course of the Wandle, suggesting a possible braiding, sub-channel, or alternative course of the Wandle in that direction. Cutting prehistoric and later subsoils a number of post and stake holes and a ditch, the latter dating to the 14th century were identified. The ditch was located running N-S for at least 12 metres and may have been considerably longer, forming a field or property boundary or drainage feature approximately 25 metres to the west of the Wandle and roughly parallel with it.

Subsequent deposits, sealing the ditch, suggest that in the late medieval or early post-medieval period the land was subject to flooding, which scoured the surface and truncated cut features in the area. Silts deposited during this event contained unstratified finds ranging from Roman to early post-medieval, and included worked Reigate sandstone possibly derived from the post-Dissolution demolition of the nearby Merton Priory (some 250-300 metres to the south). A 16th-17th century ground level, including laid gravel deposits were also identified overlain by later make-ups to the current ground level.

Two sites on the River Mole

Gerry Corti

The presence of Roman material in the structure of the pre-Conquest St Mary's Church at Stoke d'Abernon has been recorded and includes tiles, bricks and dressed stone (Johnson, SAC Vol XX, 107). The material is clearly visible externally in the south, and to a lesser extent, the east walls. When the Chancel arch was enlarged in 1866, the walling removed was said to be largely of Roman brick. A drawing of 1828 shows moulded stone cornices set below the chancel arch.

It has been generally assumed that this material comes from a Roman site or villa "nearby". The guidebook on St Mary's states that the material comes from a villa under the Manor house which adjoins the church, further noting that the hypocausts of the bathhouse lie below the lawns fronting the terrace. There has however been no recorded excavation of the "villa" or lawn and it has been suggested that the conviction that there was a Roman Villa on the site of the manor house, may be attributable to a former Rector. Accordingly, with the permission of the Headmaster and Bursar of Parkside School, an examination of the flower beds above the lawn and between the church and the manor house was undertaken in March. No material similar to that visible in the church was found, although it is believed probable that there may be an early structure, possibly medieval, below the lawn. On present evidence the onus for calling it Roman, let alone a villa, lies with anyone wishing to advance their claims.

Another relatively nearby site with established Roman connections is Pachesham Farm, but the moulded stone at St Mary's suggests an origin in a building richer than the simpler type of farm.

A third possibility is suggested by the Roman bath-house buildings at Chatley Farm excavated by Professor Frere in about 1942. He concluded that the buildings with which the baths were connected might lie to the north, ie where the Mole now runs. A subsequent dig and resistivity survey in 1985/6 (Poulton, SAC Vol LXXVII) eliminated the possibility of the related building lying on the west bank of the river. If the building

lay to the north, then it is plausible that by now the structure has been wholly river eroded because the meander is slowed by the hill to the west. A field walk in 1989 showed the nature of the meander, the heavy overgrowth of the east bank and Roman brick-bats and tile sherds on the site surface. If the buildings had been abandoned and erosion started by the 7th-9th century AD, when St Mary's was built, this would have represented a considerable quarry both sites being conveniently adjacent to the river which is navigable. This hypothesis is at present unprovable, but it may offer some clues as to what to look for if the Mole should ever be drained and the debris of the villa appear.

(Further notes and complete references are lodged with the Society's Museum)

EXCAVATIONS

GUILDFORD CASTLE — Training Dig

Volunteer diggers are still needed for the above excavation, which is due to be held from 2nd to 22nd July, 9am-5 pm, full-time except for Monday 9th and 16th July. No previous experience is necessary as training will be given on site. Volunteers are welcome at any time, subject to space being available, but it is recommended that advance application is made to the Society's office at Castle Arch, Guildford GU1 3SX (Tel. Guildford 32454) giving the dates on which you are likely to attend.

PUBLICATIONS

"Great Walks — The Downs and Weald" by Barbara Blatchford and Catriona Mulligan, published by Ward Lock. 70 colour photographs, 40 maps, 176 pages. Price £15.95 from bookshops. Necessarily brief topographical and historical notes illuminate the current environment and landscapes encountered on each of the 24 walks described.

Epsom Entertained by Trevor White published privately. A fascinating and unusual little book about the theatres and cinemas of Epsom — now all swept away — over a period of almost a century. Available from local bookshops or by post from Trevor White at 65 Church Road, Epsom KT16 4DN. Price £4.50 plus 50p postage.

Kingston upon Thames: A Pictorial History by Anne McCormack, Kingston Borough Archivist. The book contains 158 illustrations of excellent quality each with detailed information. For those who knew Kingston before the recent developments and for those who did not, this book will be a source of knowledge and pleasure. Priced £9.95 it is available at Kingston Heritage Centre and local bookshops.

A Short History of Walton-on-Thames written by Michael Blackman and published by the Walton and Weybridge Local History Society. Price £2.50 from local bookshops or by post from Mrs M Forge, 12c Bowes Road, Walton (tel: 225829) plus 34p for postage.

MEETINGS

29th May

SAS Lecture Series — Historic Towns in Surrey "Southwark" by Mr Harvey Sheldon

31st May

"Bringing the past alive at Amberley" A talk by Mike Wall to the Egham by Runnymede Historical Society in the Literary Institute at 8 pm

1st June

SAS Visit to Poole. See *Bulletin* 246 for details

4th June

“Sidelines on old Guildford” Second in series of lunchtime lectures at The Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford given by the Guildford Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society in association with their Exhibition on “Aspects of Guildford’s Past”. Lecture commences at 1 pm. Admission Free.

5th June

SAS Lecture Series — Historic Towns in Surrey “Croydon” by Dr Ron Cox

6th June

“Medieval Sutton, recent excavations in the High Street” a talk by Mr Jonathan Nowell to the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society in St Mary’s Church Hall, Kingston Road, Ewell at 8 pm.

11th June

“The Great Inns of the High Street” Third lecture by the Guildford Group at the Guildford Institute at 1 pm.

17th June

Guided tour of Old Woking, including St Peter’s Church, Manor House and remains of Woking Palace by Mr T Harding organised by Walton & Weybridge History Society. Meet 2.30 pm in car park in Old Woking

18th June

“Quarry Street — an Ancient Thoroughfare” Fourth lecture by The Guildford Group at the Guildford Institute at 1 pm.

19th June

“Museum of London Excavations at Clarence Street, Charter Quay and Eden Street, Kingston” a talk by Phil Emery and Robin Nielson to Kutas at the Heritage Centre, Kingston at 8 pm

25th June

“Excavations in the Town Centre” Fifth lecture by the Guildford Group at the Guildford Institute at 1 pm.

28th June

“The History of Stanwell Village” a talk by Dr Frederick C Grigg to the Egham by Runnymede Historical Society at the Literary Institute at 8 pm

29th June

“Price’s Patent Candle Company Limited” a talk (following the AGM) by Mr David Stait to the Wandsworth Historical Society at the Friends’ Meeting House, Wandsworth High Street at 8 pm

17th July

“Coins from Kingston” a talk by Norman Clarkson to KuTAS at the Heritage Centre at 8 pm

18th July

The East Grinstead Society invited us to a lecture by Dr B Short, School of Cultural and Community Studies, University of Sussex, entitled “The Development of Regional Inequality within South-East England”, East Court, East Grinstead at 8 pm (Non-members £1)

Editor: Audrey Monk, Bryony Bank, Beech Hill, Hambledon, Nr Godalming GU8 4HL

Next issue: Copy to the Editor required by 15th June for July issue