

# Surrey Archaeological Society

No 53

May 2025

## 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 [info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk), those interested in volunteer opportunities or general outreach can contact me at [outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk). Please also keep up-to-date via the website and social media ([@surreyarch](https://www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk)) for group and event updates.

Anne Sassin (*SyAS Community Archaeologist*)



### The Rabbit's Tale

The Wednesday evening Artefacts and Archives Research Group (AARG) found this pottery sherd at Easter. We thought it might be an Easter rabbit, but is more likely to be a hare. It was part of a hunting scene on a Roman Nene valley beaker showing dogs hunting hares. Specialised colour coated forms of Nene valley pottery had a pale fabric with a darker colour coat. The forms included beakers, flagons, jugs and bowls that often had painted or barbotine decoration. This sherd was found at an excavation at Rapsley villa between 1960 to 1968.

The Romans made Nene Valley pottery at a site near modern day Peterborough. It was distributed widely throughout the Fenlands using the waterways and transported to south-east England via Ermine Street. Nene Valley production was probably most extensive during the 3rd century prior to the expansion of the Oxfordshire industry.



The Medieval pottery group meets on alternate Sundays at Abinger Research Centre. We would love more people to join our friendly group. Why not come for a taster session? We start at 9:30 and finish by 15:00. Currently, we are examining pottery found on antiquarian excavations, which is briefly mentioned in the short reports that were produced, but with no full assessment of the finds. No experience is necessary, only a fascination with the past. Please contact Emma via [info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk) if interested.



## Shining a Light on Roman Roadside Settlements in South-East England and beyond

On **Saturday 7 June**, the Roman Studies Group will again be holding its bi-annual conference, in conjunction with Sussex Archaeology and History. This will be a hybrid conference, held at Kings Church, Brooks Road, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 2BY and with an online option.

10:00-10:10 Dr David Rudling, Chairman's welcome

10:10-11:00 Prof Tony King (keynote speaker), 'On the road in the Western Roman Empire: ancient motels, caravanserais and emporia'

11:30-12:15 Mike Luke, 'Alfoldean: what do we know after 100 years of archaeological investigation?'

12:15-13:00 David Calow, 'Four coin-rich roadside settlements in Surrey'

14:00-14:40 Chris Butler, 'The Roman settlement at Hassocks in its landscape setting, and its Anglo-Saxon successor'

14:40-15:20 Blake Galloway, 'Bridge Farm: the nature of a defended settlement at the junction of two Roman roads and the River Ouse'

15:40-16:10 Matt Sparks and David Rudling, 'Roman Croydon: the course of the road and the location of the settlement'

16:10-16:40 David Staveley, 'Icklesham: which came first, the chicken or the settlement?'

16:40-16:50 David Calow, Chairman's closing remarks

Early bird tickets (available until 30 May) £18 for in-person attendance, or £12 online; thereafter £20 and £15 respectively. Booking is now open via [Eventbrite](#).



## Escorted tour of the Rapsley Roman villa area

Join the Roman Studies Group on **Thursday 12 June** (10:30-16:00) for a 3-mile escorted walk to visit the elusive site of one of Surrey's most interesting Roman buildings, Rapsley Roman villa. There are just a few signs of the bathhouse above ground but you can look at plans, see the landscape and imagine the rest. You can also see the site of Wykehurst Farm Roman tile works, the formidable Coneyhurst Gill, learn about the Rowhook to Farley Heath Roman road and have lunch in the Bull's Head Inn, Ewhurst.

Please visit the [event page](#) for the full itinerary and more details on the day. Contact David Calow at [dm.calow@ntlworld.com](mailto:dm.calow@ntlworld.com) to book a place.



## Banstead community test pitting

Members of Plateau, the Society's local group dedicated to the North Downs plateau in the area bounded by Headley, Box Hill, Mogador, Chipstead, Woodmansterne, Banstead, Nork and Tadworth, are running a multi-year test pitting programme to investigate the development of the village of Banstead and identify sites for further investigation. The 2025 season will take place on 8-10 Saturdays between **5 April** and **October**. The project is open to all, so if you live in – or have an interest in – this area and would like to take part, please contact Plateau at [plateau.surrey@gmail.com](mailto:plateau.surrey@gmail.com).

## Albury Park community test pitting

We will be returning for a third year of test pitting this season at Albury Park to investigate its deserted medieval settlement, displaced in the early 19th century (to the current village of Albury). Though little now remains of the former cottages, with the help of survey and a large-scale series of test pits spread across the site, we are working to uncover and learn more about the original settlement!

Currently for 2025, two separate weeks of test pitting are planned, **Monday 9 to Thursday 12 June** and **Monday 8 to Thursday 11 September**. Volunteers are welcome for both finds and digging; no prior experience needed. If interested in taking part and wanting to be added to the project mailing list, please contact our community archaeologist Anne at [outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk).



## Exploring the Medieval Chaldon area

This guided tour, arranged by the Medieval Studies Forum, will take place on **Thursday 3 July** (10:00-16:30). It will begin in the Farthing Downs car park for a tour of the Downs throughout history, including the Iron Age site and the many Saxon graves. The leisurely walk will take about 1.5 to 2 hours with the route following the top of the downs with a few gentle slopes. The total length of the route is around 1-2km and will finish at the car park where there are toilets.

The group will then drive to The Well House Inn in Mugswell for lunch (please note that currently the pub bookings are full but to be discussed with the organisers). After lunch, there will be a short drive to visit St Katharine's church in Merstham, followed by St Peter's and St Paul's church at Chaldon to see the famous Medieval Doom painting. The Friends of Chaldon church will give a talk about the history of the church and its painting.

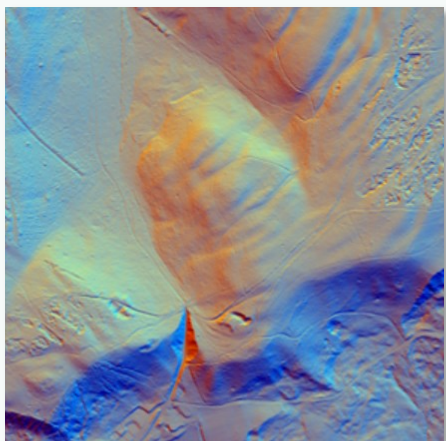
To book your place, please email [medforum@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:medforum@hotmail.co.uk). See the [event booking](#) for more info. Numbers for this visit will be restricted, so please book early.





## LiDAR Portal

The [Surrey LiDAR Portal](#) is an on-going online interactive citizen science map which includes various LiDAR datasets for all of Surrey, including the historic county, as well as historic maps and HER data to help in analysing the imagery.



LiDAR has enormous potential to uncover previously unknown archaeological features, and by helping map and interpret these sites online, volunteers can work to build a more complete story of the local landscape. Anyone is welcome to register for a free account, which will allow access to the interactive map. Volunteers who would like to be involved and help in digitising features should read the available tutorials and are encouraged to attend online training sessions (please contact us at [outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk) if you are interested, as we can discuss arranging a bespoke session).

## SyAS Research Committee Grants

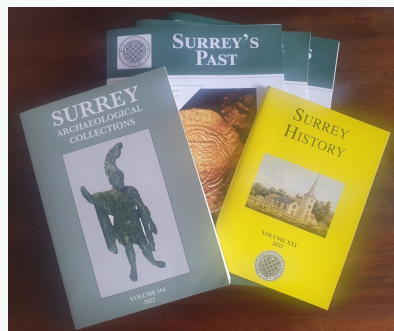
The Research Committee would like to remind all members that grants are available for Surrey projects and are available to Society groups with no budget and to external groups with limited resources. Society excavations such as Abinger in 2024 and post-excavation for Ashted, Abinger and Flexford have been funded. Surveys, documentary research, training and scientific analyses are all suitable for consideration and have been supported by Society grants in recent years, such as work on the historic excavation at Lightwater and to enable a report on the more recent Hatch Furlong dig to commence. Scientific analyses are also specifically covered by funds from the Bierton and Slade bequests which have recently funded C14 dating for the Abinger excavation. Applications are considered throughout the year and the Committee's decision is final. Details and an application form are available on the website or from the office.

## Surrey Historic Environment Record (HER) office relocation

The Surrey HER team and all physical HER resources are moving. The office will be closed to staff and members of the public from **1 May** until further notice, with an anticipated reopening in June 2025. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to arrange visits to view HER material in-person whilst the office relocation is undertaken. Please do not send enquiries or other documents to the HER via post for the same reason. Whilst the HER team will have limited access to published materials, archaeological grey literature and similar office-based resources, they will continue operating business-as-usual for all digital requests during this period and remain contactable at [her@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:her@surreycc.gov.uk).



## Thinking about joining and getting involved?



If you aren't yet a member of SyAS, now is the perfect time to join! In addition to three issues of *Surrey's Past* a year, the annual journal(s) *Surrey Archaeological Collections* and *Surrey History*, members have access to a wide range of fieldwork opportunities, research projects and special interest groups, many with their own programmes. To join (and see the full range of what is offered), please visit our [website](#). Some of the groups you might wish to join include:

Artefacts and Archives Research Group (AARG) – On-site processing of artefacts, with further work carried out at weekly meetings, including lithics and pottery; for more details on sessions and work available, visit the [AARG webpages](#).

Medieval Studies Forum – In-person and online talks with workshops and visits focused on the period from c.400-1600; for more details, visit the [MSF](#) webpage.

Prehistoric Group – In-person meetings, regular newsletter and study of collections in museums; for more details, visit the [PG](#) webpage.

Roman Studies Group – A varied programme which includes fieldwork, monthly lecture meetings, full-day seminars and day trips; for more details, visit the [RSG](#) webpage.

Surrey Industrial History Group – In-person visits, regular meeting programme, bi-monthly newsletter and annual journal; for more details, visit the [SIHG webpage](#).



### Surrey Industrial History Group lecture series

SIHG hold regular short talks at Leatherhead and via Zoom throughout the year which are free to SIHG members (annual membership is currently free until the end of 2026; contact [membership@sihg.org.uk](mailto:membership@sihg.org.uk)).

Talks can be found [online](#), as well as info on summer tours, including a visit to the Rural Life Museum on **Thursday 5 June** and walking tour of Farnham's industries on **Thursday 3 July**. See the website for the full programme.

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