

# Surrey Archaeological Society

No 54

June 2025

## E-newsletter

Welcome to the Society's June 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.

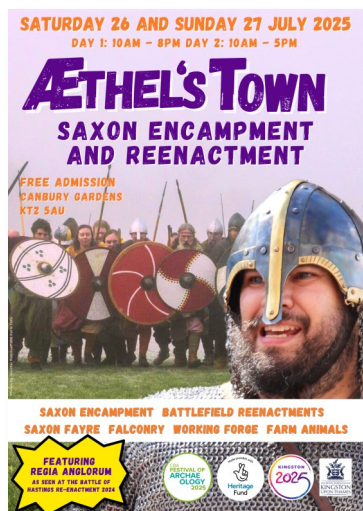
Anne Sassin (*SyAS Community Archaeologist*)

### Festival of Archaeology

This year's Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology will take place from **19 July to 3 August 2025**. Archaeology is a

wonderful way to make a positive impact on people's well-being, and this year's theme revolves around the five ways to wellbeing, creating opportunities for people to give, be active, learn, take notice and connect.

There are many events in your local area (follow the [festival event listings](#) as not all events are yet up), including a Roman tented encampment at Bourne Hall Park, Ewell on **Saturday 19 July** (11:00-16:00), with gladiatorial fighting, living history talks and demonstrations (see [event listing](#) for more info).



The Kingston Saxon Fayre (Æthel's Town) is also back and taking place in Canbury Gardens on **Saturday 26** and **Sunday 27 July** ([listing](#)). The Society will be there with a stall and display on the Sunday, so do come see us and join in the fun!

Other events include a hybrid session on careers in heritage and archaeology for senior school/college students on **Friday 18 July** ([listing](#)), online well-being event on **Tuesday 22 July** to help you learn a new skill ([listing](#)), annual Ask an Archaeologist Day on **Friday 25 July** ([listing](#)), Youth Day ([listing](#)) and Student and Early Careers Online Conference ([listing](#)) on **Wednesday 30 July**, and online showcase of 'a day in the life' of our UK archaeologists on **Thursday 31 July** ([listing](#)).

## Nene Valley Hare pottery sherd from Rapsley

Further examination of the hare sherd shown in May's e-newsletter indicates that it may possibly be more unusual than thought. The curve of the sherd and a throwing-line on the interior show that the hare's body is upright (vertical on the vessel) in contrast to the normal horizontal body (around the vessel), on 'hunt cups'. The body is also much more compact and the limbs more bunched together than the usually depicted elongated and outstretched ones of an animal running at top speed to escape hounds. I have been unable to find any parallels but it strikes me that this could be a depiction of a 'boxing' March hare. Alternatively it could of course just be a case of the potter running out of space. Even so, this would be unusual.



The sherd was found in 1962 and is described as coming from 'Site 2. By doorway of building 3'. Building 3 is interpreted as a byre or barn of period 2 (AD 120-200). The mural crown sherds (on display in Guildford Museum) were found in this building.

*Emma Corke*

## Lid of a cooking pot

Another find by the Wednesday evening Artefacts and Archives Research Group (AARG) was this pottery sherd. It is the knob from the lid of a cooking pot. Although the group often find sherds of pottery that belong to lids, it is rare to find a knob of this size and shape. This sherd was found at an excavation at Rapsley Roman villa between 1960 to 1968. We have determined that the fabric of this sherd is SAND.

The fabric is the material from which the sherd is manufactured. This comprises clay and a temper, such as quartz sand, flint, chalk, shell or organic material. The knob is unevenly packed with quartz sand and its fabric cannot be attributed to any known kiln. Pottery finds are an excellent way of dating contexts if they come from known kilns where carbon dating has been used to date the kiln. We can only give SAND sherds a date of 43-400.



The knob on  
the Rapsley lid



The lid may have  
looked similar to  
this lid



## CBM day out at MoLA

Earlier this month, a small group of Society members with an interest in ceramic building material had the chance to visit Museum of London Archaeology's HQ and meet with Han Li, their CBM expert.



Han has recently examined some of the finds from the tile kiln at Rosehill, Reigate, and you can see his contribution to the report in the latest *Collections* (vol.106). He gets to work with all kinds of interesting material from excavations in London and we started off by looking at some fascinating Roman items that had just been filmed for a BBC programme. He has spent much of the last year piecing back together beautiful painted wall plaster from the collapsed walls of a high status Roman building and it was a privilege to be able to spend time admiring, close up, the section he had laid out (see link to [BBC article](#)).

In Han's workroom, we handled and examined items from MoLA's CBM reference collection and various artefacts that he had picked to take us through the key types of brick and tile from the Roman period through to modern times and show us some of the distinguishing features that aid identification and dating.

We had brought along some of our own material to share with Han and, as the session drew to a close, we discussed the possible sources of the pale Roman brick, known as "Abinger Cream", found at the Abinger villa site in the 1990s and the unusual shelly nib tiles from the Banstead manor house excavation of 2023.

A day on which we all learned something – and realised how much there still is to learn!

Many thanks to Han for a very instructive session and to Cat Gibbs, Engagement Project Officer at MOLA, and our own Rose Hooker for arranging the visit.

*James Crouch*





### 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 are currently in our third year of test pitting at Albury Park, investigating its deserted medieval settlement, displaced in the early 19th century. 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, one final week of test pitting is planned from **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).



### Medieval pottery group



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.

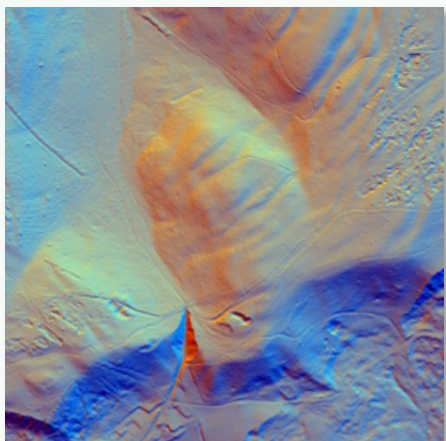
### SyAS AGM and Annual Symposium

This year's Society Annual General Meeting will take place on Zoom on **Saturday 15 November** (14:00-16:00). The 2026 Annual Symposium will be held on **Saturday 14 March** at East Horsley Village Hall. More details on both of these events will be available soon, but please save the date in the meantime.



## 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.

## Heritage Open Days

The Society's Research Centre at Abinger Hammer will be open to visitors for a Heritage Open Day on **Sunday 14 September** (10:00-15:00). Visitors are welcome to explore the library and ask about any journals and pamphlets of interest to them, and view the work of our medieval pottery group and displays from other groups. For other events in your area during the course of the celebration (12-21 September), see the [website](#).







## Heritage For All fund

Surrey Cultural Partnership and Community Foundation for Surrey, with funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund, have launched Surrey Heritage For All. This Fund will provide grants to not-for-profit community organisations who are harnessing the power of Surrey's amazing heritage to change the lives of those most in need in our county. Organisations can apply for grants of up to £10,000 to increase

opportunities for diverse communities to engage with Surrey's rich heritage and natural environment. Round 2 is open for EOI on 7 July 2025 for award in January 2026. For more information, see the [website](#).

## Wandle Industrial Museum events

The Wandle Industrial Museum is pleased to announce the opening of its new exhibition Women of the Wandle. Many women inherited mills and property upon the death of their husband. Some chose to sell, some continued to run the business whilst others leased out the mills and property. Along with Queens and heroines linked to the Wandle, this exhibition tells their stories. The museum is open Wednesday 13:00-16:00 and Sunday 14:00-17:00. The Museum will also be attending Croydon Green Spaces day on **Saturday 28 June**. In the afternoon they will be hosting a talk and printing session for children. More details can be found on the [website](#). The UK River Summit also returns to the Wandle on **Tuesday 8 July** at Morden Hall. For more info and to book your place, visit the [event website](#).



## Walking tour of Roman and Medieval Chichester

This tour, run on behalf of Chichester & District Archaeological Society and led by James Kenny, Archaeology Officer for Chichester District Council, will take place on **Saturday 6 September 2025** (10:00). The cost is £12.50 for non-CDAS members. To book, contact [activities@cdas.info](mailto:activities@cdas.info).

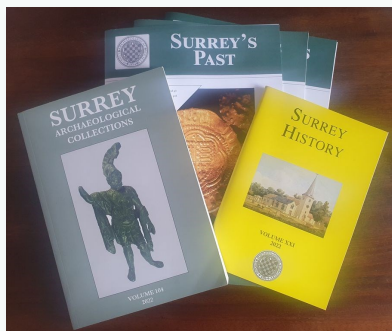


## CBA South East grants

The CBA-SE distribute a limited number of small grants to go towards research, outreach or publication, as well as a Young Archaeologists Grant which allows YAC groups, museum clubs and other youth organisations to apply for funding towards sessions, materials or other costs. For more on this scheme, visit the [CBASE grants page](#).



## 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 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 [@diggingsurreyspast](#)), as well as the Council for British Archaeology South-East ([www.cbасouth-east.org](http://www.cbасouth-east.org) and [@CBASouthEast](#)).