

Surrey Archaeological Society

No 63

March 2026

E-newsletter

Welcome to the Society's March 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, 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 Community Archaeologist*)

Lithics work needed?

The two lithics groups of the Society assess collections of lithic artefacts, whether in museums or in private collections. This often leads on to research projects, and of course helps in training those new to this fascinating area of archaeology, who have joined our lithics group. If you have a collection or are aware of a lithics collection that you believe would be a good subject for the group, do get in touch with us via info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk.



Annual Symposium success

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our annual symposium earlier in March, from the speakers and volunteers who helped organise the day, to the audience itself. It was an informative day of interesting talks about recent fieldwork and research, and was an excellent chance, as always, to catch up and hear about some of the exciting work around the county. Congratulations as well to this year's Margary Award recipients, Spelthorne Museum and Spelthorne Archaeology and Local History Group, for their fantastic display!



2026 Margary Award recipients

Pottery sherds from Reigate Priory

The Medieval Pottery group meets fortnightly on Sundays at Abinger Research Centre. As we work through each collection, identifying and recording the sherds, we refer to previously published articles, either in hard copy journals held in the library or online, any existing accession cards and box numbers (if they have come from our Woking Road store), our medieval pottery reference collection at Abinger, and other relevant material such as maps and notes.

Each collection comes with a back story, and one of the more unusual came in a group of small retail packaging boxes dating from the 1950's. They were accompanied by three hand-written notes, signed by John Howard.

Mr Howard lived in Reigate, and walked past the site of Reigate Priory on his way home from work. He kept an eye on the site, and when garden works were carried out in 1958-9, to create a rockery, steps and a gateway, he picked up sherds of pottery on the surface, suggesting in his notes that they might indicate the existence of a kiln in the area.



When drainage works were being carried out in Bell Street in 1959, he checked the spoil heaps, finding bones and oyster shells, again keeping aside any sherds of pottery that he thought diagnostic. In 1960, he was on an afternoon walk in the same area, and picked up more sherds 'by the sun dial'.



The sherds were wrapped in pieces of newspaper and packed into the small boxes, then given to the Society, along with the explanatory letters, where they were recorded and then put into storage for 65 years. When we unpacked one box, we found half of the front page of the *Evening Standard*, dated Friday 16 March, 1962, with the headline 'Now Mr K springs Sputnik surprise', with the article below it suggesting that the launch of the Russian Kosmos I (or Sputnik 11, in the Western press) might be a 'try-out' for a 'moonship'. Russian Premier, Nikita Krushchey, announced the launch at an election rally, with the *Evening Standard* pondering the question of whether it carried men, was a military mission or a purely scientific experiment.

These two sherds were identified as 1) the rim of a white-ware bowl, classified as WW1B, dating from 1240-1400, and with external green glaze, and 2) the rim of a Hertfordshire grey ware jar, classified as HRW, dating from 1170-1400.

Christine Pittman





Chaldon Court test pitting



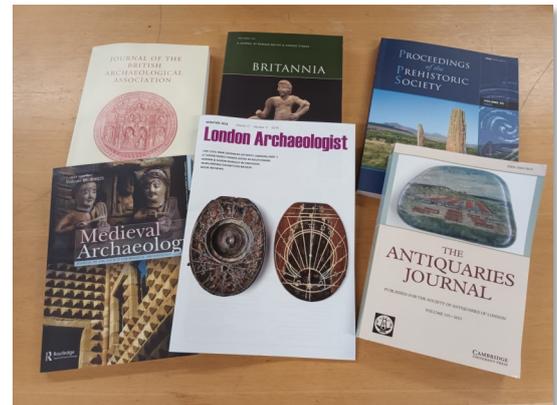
A test pitting programme is planned for two days over the weekend of **2-3 May 2026** at Chaldon Court. Three test pits will be set up on the lawn areas, and the pits will be positioned over the two areas of high resistivity found during a resistivity survey in October 2024. If time permits, a fourth will be located next to the house. This is a community project that will be targeted at members of the public from the modern village of Chaldon who will be encouraged to visit and take part in the test pitting and

finds processing. An open afternoon on **Saturday 2 May** from 14:00-16:00 will be available to those who wish to visit.

The 14th-century Chaldon Court is a Grade II* listed building that has many original features, including a Durn doorframe and 14th-century carved bargeboards to the gable front. The house is a two-storey, three bay, timber-framed building, built c.1320-70, representing the cross wing of a large hall that no longer exists. The building has been extended and altered over the years. The Church of St Peter and St Paul lies next door to Chaldon Court and is internationally renowned for the 12th-century Doom mural on the west wall. The church will be open for those interested in viewing the painting.

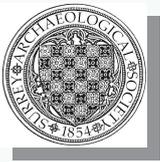
SyAS Library

The Society's library, which is located in the Abinger Research Centre, subscribes to a number of archaeological journals. Printed copies are held on the shelves until they become freely available online and the librarian, Helen Lynott, also has online access to certain titles. She is happy to assist members and non-members with research, either in person when the library is open, **Mondays** and **Tuesdays** 10:00-16:00, or via email at librarian@surreyarchaeology.org.uk.



Medieval pottery group

The Medieval pottery group meets on alternate Sundays at Abinger Research Centre (9:30-15:00) and would love more people to join. Why not come for a taster session? No experience is necessary, only a fascination with the past. Contact Emma (info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk) if interested.



Surrey Artists

The Surrey Local History Committee will be holding their spring symposium on **Saturday 9 May** (9:30-15:30) at Surrey History Centre, Woking, themed around 'Surrey Artists'. Speakers and talk titles include:

Hilary Underwood, Watts Gallery, '19th-century artists and the Surrey Hills'

Mary Alexander, Researcher, 'The Russell family of Guildford and polite society'

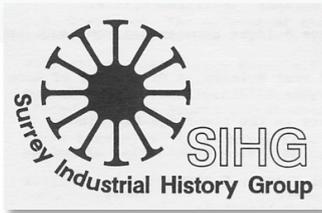
Janet Balchin, Local Historian, 'England's Vermeer: Leonard Campbell Taylor'

Annabel Watts, Munstead Wood/researcher, 'The life and art of Helen Allingham R.W.S.'

Mary Broughton, Sime Gallery Charitable Incorporated Organisation Trust, 'Sidney H Sime – Master of Fantasy'

Tickets booked in advance are £18; on the day £20 payable in cash only. For a full programme and to book, please visit the [webpage](#).

Surrey Industrial History Group lecture series



SIHG hold regular talks at Leatherhead and via Zoom throughout the year which are free to SIHG members (contact membership@sihg.org.uk). Talks can be found [online](#), including the next one at Leatherhead, 'Chatham Dockyard, at the heart of the Industrial Revolution' by Martin Watts on **Wednesday 8 April**.

Collections review group

The aim of the group is to reassess all the collections held by the Society, using up-to-date methods and codes, to produce a digital record that will ultimately be placed on the website. The group meets on **Thursdays** at Abinger (10:00-15:00) (sometimes elsewhere by arrangement) and looks at every kind of find: some building material, pottery, bone, glass, metal – some days it is tiny sherds, others complete vessels! The group welcomes new members and students on work experience; previous experience is an advantage but training is given. Contact info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk to get involved.

CBA South East grants

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





Albury Park community archaeology

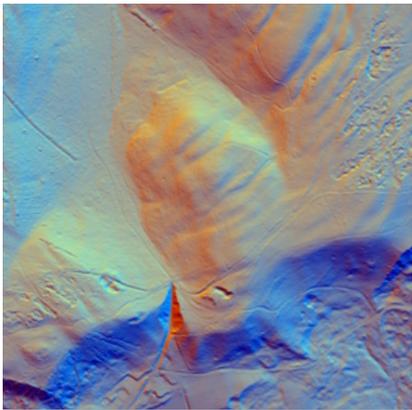
We will be returning for a fourth year of excavation this season at Albury Park to continue to investigate its deserted medieval settlement, displaced in the early 19th century (to the current village of Albury). Though little now remains of the former cottages, with the help of survey and a large-scale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

Currently for 2026, there will be limited test pitting over the weekend of **24-26 July**, as part of an open day event for the Festival of Archaeology (volunteers will be needed, though space will be more limited than usual). A larger dig will also take place in September, although dates are not yet confirmed. 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, which will be updated with dates soon, please contact our community archaeologist Anne at outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk.



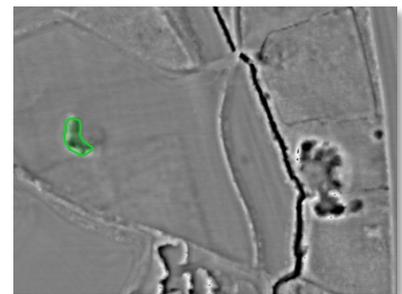
LiDAR Portal

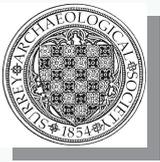
The [Surrey LiDAR Portal](#) is an on-going online interactive citizen science map which includes various LiDAR datasets for all of Surrey, including the historic county, as well as historic maps and HER data to help in analysing the imagery.



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 in digitising features are encouraged to read the tutorials and attend online training (contact outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk if you are interested, as we can discuss arranging a bespoke session).

A recent sub-project has also begun which is focusing specifically on the historic pits and quarries in Surrey. Volunteers are methodically covering areas by parish and revealing interesting insight into local industries, as well as links to the archaeological discoveries which resulted from the quarrying. Please also get in touch if you want to be more involved in this citizen science mini project.



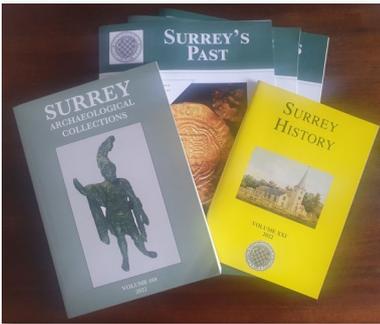


SyAS Research Committee Grants

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 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, such as C14 dating, are also covered by funds from the Bierton and Slade bequests. Applications are considered throughout the year. Details and application forms are available on the [website](#) or from the office.



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, plus 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 of which have their own events programmes. To join (and see the full range of what is offered), please visit our [website](#). Some of the groups include:

Artefacts and Archives Research Group – On-site processing of artefacts, and assessment at weekly meetings, including lithics and pottery; for details, visit the [AARG webpages](#).

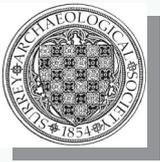
Medieval Studies Forum – In-person and online talks with workshops and visits focused on the period from c.400-1600; for more details, visit the [MSF](#) webpage.

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](#).

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](#)).



St Nicolas' 150th anniversary history lectures for 2026

St Nicolas' Church, Guildford will be 150 years old in 2026 but there has been a church on the site for nearly 800 years. A celebratory series of lectures is taking place throughout 2026, which seek to explore the long rich history of the parish and its three churches on the site: from PG Wodehouse, to the oldest monument in Guildford and the pre-medieval dragon on St Catherine's Hill. Two of the lectures relate to two articles in the latest *SyAS Collections* (vol 107, 2025) on St Catherine's Hill and the Loseley Correspondence. The lectures start at 19:30, are all free of charge and will be given either in church or in the adjacent modern Parish Centre which encompasses the Loseley Chapel. The next lecture will be on **Tuesday 3 March** by Canon Jeremy Haselock FSA, on 'The theology of the Oxford Movement and its influence on church architecture'. See www.saintnics.com for the full programme.



Minerva House lunch and learn webinar

On **Friday 27 February** at 12:00, Museum of London Archaeology will be holding an online webinar on their work on London's Southbank as part of GPE's development at The Delft (aka Minerva House). Discoveries include Roman waterside developments to Tudor nightlife, as well as the creation of beautiful tiles and pottery at one of London's first Delftware kilns. See the [webpage](#) for booking.



An Evening with National Trust Archaeologists

Ever wondered what archaeology looks like behind the scenes at National Trust places? Join ArchaeologyUK for a free online evening on **Tuesday 3 March** (19:00-20:30) exploring the archaeology cared for by the National Trust, from community digs and hilltop enclosures to Roman gold mining. The evening features three short talks from National Trust archaeologists: 'Weir Garden Community Project' by Viviana Caroli, 'Highdown Revisited: a summer of archaeology at Highdown Hill' by James Brown and 'Dolaucothi Gold Mines' by David Thomas. Booking via the [website](#).

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