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SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
HACKHURST LANE, ABINGER HAMMER RH5 6SE
Tel: 01306 731275
E-mail: info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk
Website: www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk

Bulletin *480*

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COCKS FARM ABINGER EXCAVATIONS 2019 **(see p2)**

Cocks Farm Abinger 2019: part one

Emma Corke

Part one of this report will describe trenches 26 and 27, and the Roman and later activities in trench 25.

2019's successful excavation provided evidence that extended the time of occupation of the site as far back as c. 3000BC, although the nature of the earlier activities is as yet very uncertain. Three trenches were dug: T25 (420 sq m), T26 (260 sq m) and T27 (23 sq m).

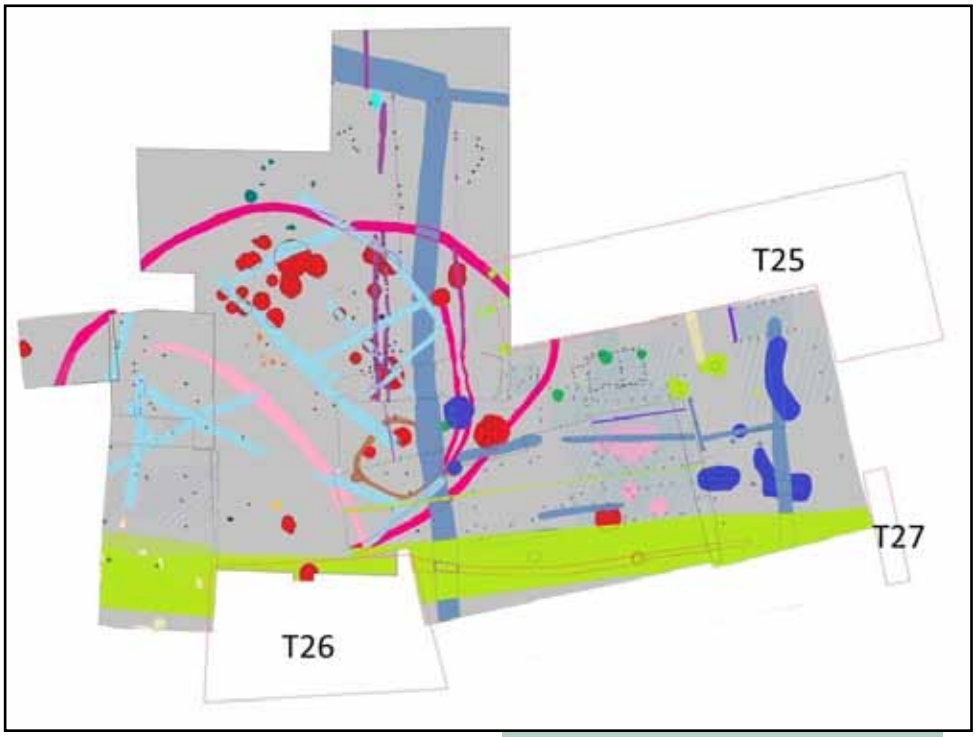


Figure 1: previous archaeology and 2019 trenches

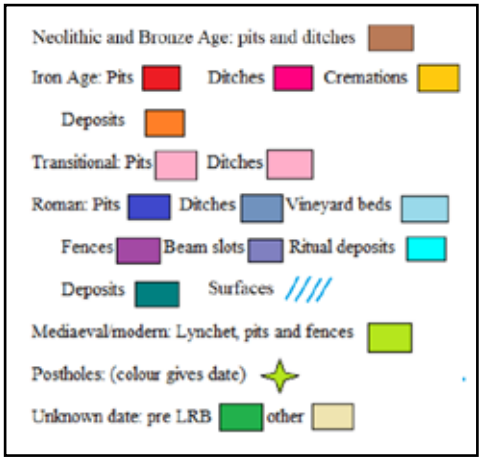


Figure 2: key for all plans

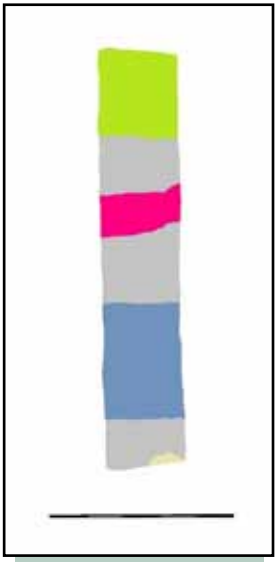


Figure 3: T27 interpretation

T 27 (directed by David Calow) investigated the relationship between a possible Iron Age ditch, a Roman ditch seen only on magnetometry, and the Mediaeval (and later) lynchet (bank and ditch caused by ploughing on a slope). As hoped, the lynchet (yellow/green in fig 3) did not overlie the ditches in this area. The (more southern, blue) Roman ditch was a shallow V in shape and a consistent 3m wide and 75cm deep, while the other (northern, pink) ditch was U-shaped, very varied in size and shape and an average of 1m wide and 30 cms deep. A layer also seen in T25 to the north, and there identified as an early or middle phase Roman ploughsoil, was cut by the southern, Roman, ditch, but overlay the northern ditch. This, the form and size of the northern ditch which was consistent with other IA ditches seen elsewhere on site, and the lack of finds confirmed that this was an Iron Age (or conceivably earlier) ditch. It is thought to be a contour enclosure ditch running around the hillock top, and possibly enclosing the entire IA area of occupation. The ploughsoil also proved that the Roman ditch was not dug until a late phase. As it appears to be part of the most extensive RB field system on site, this is a valuable piece of evidence. A number of other features were seen in the trench which were most probably tree-throws or turbation, but might have been pits; they contained no finds.

T26 was directed by Nikki Cowlard. It covered an area partially excavated in previous years, filling in many previously unexcavated gaps. This, the fact that this area of the site has been more deeply eroded than elsewhere, and the loose natural sand made this a difficult trench to dig and interpret, but the courses of the three suspected ditches (2120/1140, 628 and 619 in fig 4) were successfully identified.

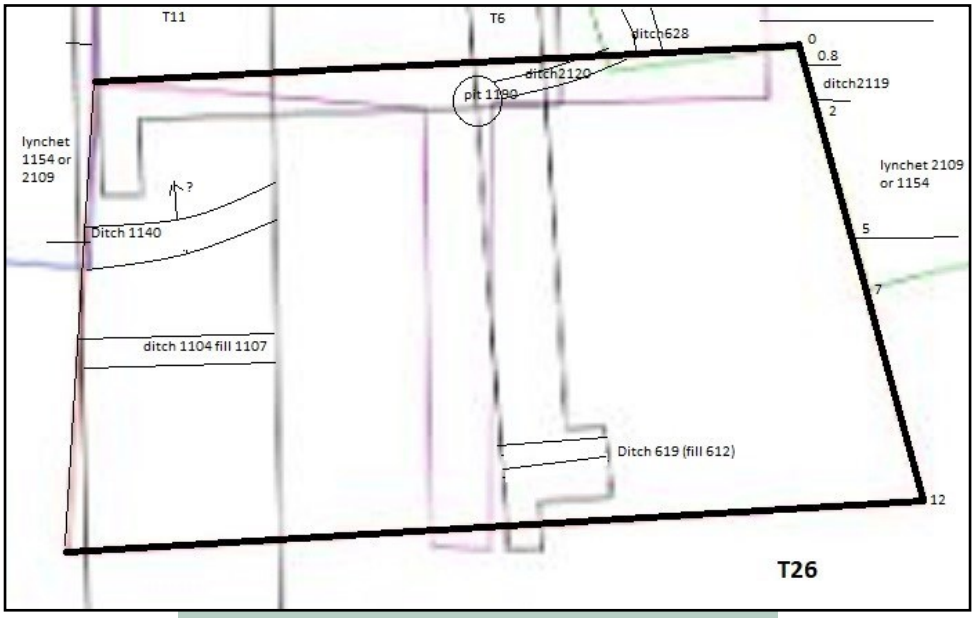


Figure 4: T26 showing the previously excavated trenches and the archaeology within them. NB the N/S position of T11 was not certain.

After removing backfill and cleaning, slots (eventually 16) were placed across observed features. In the southern part, the ditch previously numbered 619 ran right across the trench. It had been recut at least once, probably more often, and varied in width from 1.8-2.2m, and 40-60cms deep. Its alignment and magnetometry confirmed that this is the same RB ditch as in T27. Its lesser size is presumably due to greater erosion in T26 than in T27.

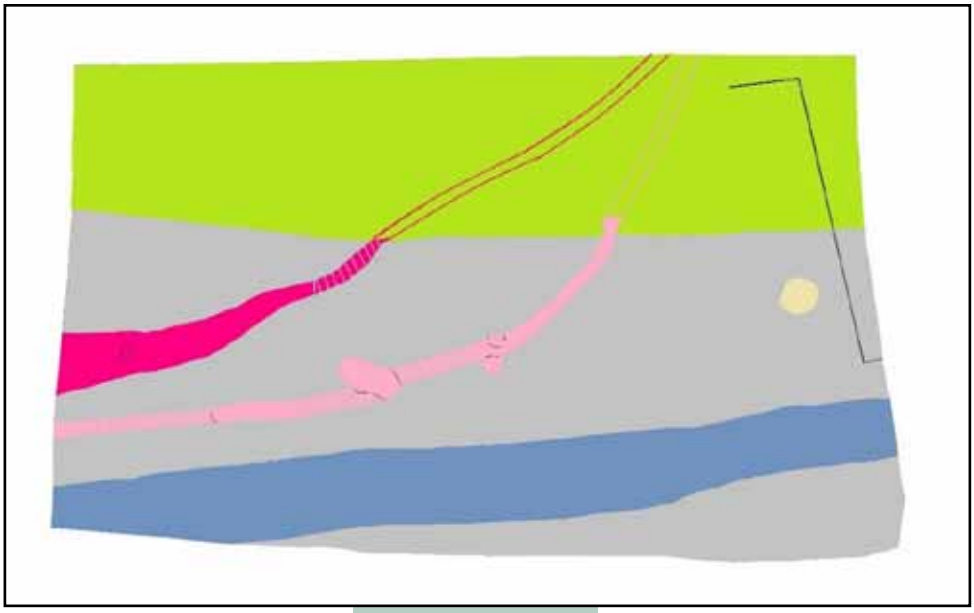


Figure 5: T26 interpretation

While the course of this ditch was easy to see, the other two presented more challenges. The lynchet had removed them entirely in the northern third of the trench, while erosion, probably both post-Roman and during the early Roman period (seen in other trenches), had entirely removed some sections.

The pale pink ditch (fig 5) had been previously identified as a transitional IA/RB ditch. In T6/11 its chocolate-brown fill contained a considerable quantity of pottery, nearly all in the upper fills. In T26 the fill was again chocolate-brown and contained burnt ironstone, but very little pottery. The ditch was not seen as a continuous line, but patches of consistent fill showed it bending in quite a tight curve, possibly to join the earlier, more northern, magenta ditch to the west of T26.

This more northern ditch had been seen in nearly every trench excavated, and was known to be a much recut IA sub-circular enclosure ditch with several phases (the pale pink ditch may be the last of the phases). It often appears as a series of small pits, many with some sort of possibly placed deposit, joined by shallower ditch sections. The ditch in T26 was consistent with this, with many of the shallower sections having completely disappeared. We have now therefore established the course of c80% of this ditch: the remaining part has almost certainly been completely lost owing to the lynchet, ploughing and erosion.

T25 wrapped around 2018's T23. Its northern, east/west part lay on the flat top of the hillock, while the southern (eastern) part sloped quite steeply southwards. The trench overlapped T6/11 to the west and T23 to the south (and west in the southern part).

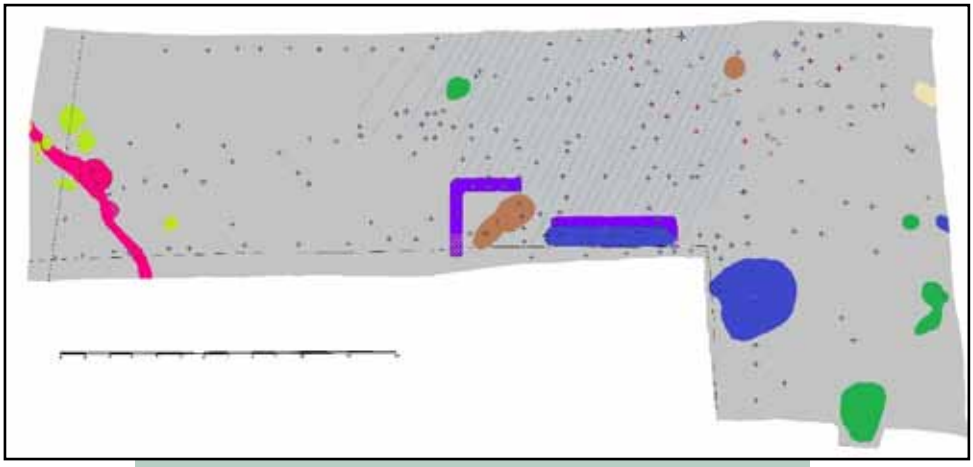


Figure 6: T25 interpretation. The black lines mark the edges of earlier trenches.

T25 exposed 207 postholes, three dwarf walls, parts of three (possibly four) Roman buildings, part of a roundhouse, twelve pits, a quarry, and seven bovid burials.

To start with the most modern: seven burials of young bovids were excavated in the far western area, to add to the ones found in T6/11. One of those was C14 dated, and it is thought that these are calves that died in a post-Mediaeval epidemic of rinderpest. Mediaeval activity certainly took place – quite a lot of pottery was found – but there is nothing to suggest anything other than manuring or casual losses. Interestingly, tree-throws or roots have only been found either in or near the lynchet, or in clearly pre-RB contexts, suggesting that the field has been in constant cultivation or pasture since the Iron Age.

Figure 7: Bovid burials (one is under the piece of terram, one in the top - SE - right of the picture)

Roman activity was very extensive, and in many phases. The majority of postholes are thought to be Roman: the function of a large number of them is unknown;

probably many belonged to small buildings such as field shelters or were simply a post to tie an animal to.

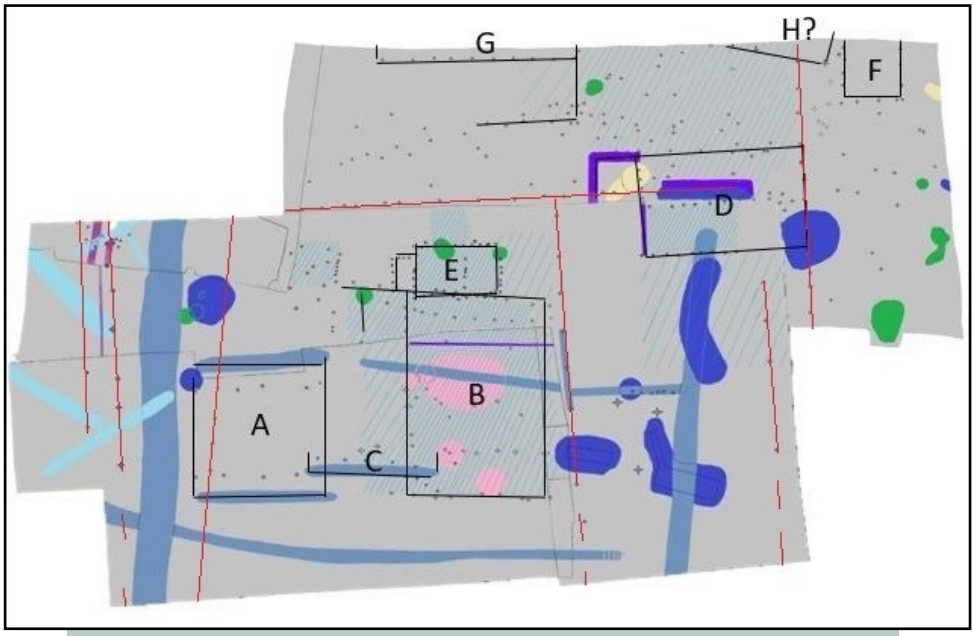


Figure 8: *Roman activity was very extensive, and in many phases. The majority of the postholes are thought to be Roman: the function of a large number of them is unknown; probably many belonged to small buildings such as field shelters or were simply a post to tie an animal to.*

In T25, the area to the east of the north-south fenceline had been a Roman ploughed field (shown by very abraded RB pottery) during earlier RB occupation. (This is the same RB field seen in T27 of course). Note that the ploughing did not reach the fence: there was a field margin of at least 1.5m. Later on, this area was taken out of cultivation and postholes, building F and a small pit (blue, on the eastern edge of the trench) were dug into the old ploughsoil. This ploughsoil was 15-25cms in depth, and of course lay below the modern ploughsoil, so in this area of the field (unlike T26), the modern ground level is (30+ cms) higher than RB. This was confirmed by finding (north of building D) a Roman surface of laid ironpan. The laid surface filled in gaps and added to a natural horizontal surface of solid ironpan. This very good natural surface may be one reason why people were originally attracted to the site (and is certainly the reason why the hillock exists at all). The ironpan surface apparently once continued eastwards, under the site of building F. Here the RB ploughsoil was thinner (10-15cm), and there were cuts and scrapes made by ploughshares in the ironpan. Both here and within the top of the RB ploughsoil further south there were (relatively unabraded) Mediaeval and early post-Mediaeval finds. It cannot be completely ruled out that building F is mediaeval; however its alignment agrees so well with the general RB one that it is more likely to be RB. It seems that the rise in ground level was gradual, Mediaeval being c15cms higher than RB, modern c15cms above Mediaeval. This suggests that meadow build-up may be the cause of the rise: the field may have been used for pasture with (very?) occasional episodes of ploughing rather than being constantly ploughed. It should perhaps be noted though that the farm map of 1772 marks the field (then two) as arable.

The small (blue) pit mentioned above was part of a bigger, curving magnetometry anomaly. The small part within T25 contained PORD (Porchester D, a late RB grey ware)

sherds, several sherds of a large Oxfordshire ware rouletted bowl, fragments of a small fine glass vessel and part of a greyware bowl with possible graffiti (fig 9). If it is graffiti, it would be unusual in being on the interior of the bowl. The possible letters would read MAR, MAP or MAD.

Figure 9: are the markings on this bowl intentional or an accident?

Fig 8 shows that buildings D, E, F and G, together with the fences near them, all lie on one alignment. This may be part of a quite major re-planning of the area, possibly coinciding with the building of the late (and much grander) wing of the villa itself. Clearly it was not the final arrangement though; the division of ploughed field from farmyard was clearly re-thought when at least part of the field was taken out of cultivation and the large ditch seen in Ts26 and 27 was dug.

Building D had several phases. The first one may be the little 'annex' to the west. This had a right-angle of dwarf walls, and may have lost a southern part to later phases. It overlay two much earlier pits (2526 and 2527, see part 2). It had no surfacing to its floor, unlike the later parts of the building. The southern part of D (in T23) may be the next part. This had a well-laid 15-20cm floor of ironpan plates and hardcore (greensand, tile, pottery etc), overlying an earlier ditch and a small ironpan quarry-pit (blue, in T25). A narrow steep-sided pit lay to its north, with a dwarf wall on its northern edge. This pit may possibly have been a latrine: it was later filled in with a very dark fill, and a surface (2530) containing the surprising number of 396 white struck or burnt flints was laid (see also part 2). The eastern wall of this second phase coincided with the ploughed field fenceline; whether both were present at the same time is not known, but one posthole had been renewed in a slightly different position. The flooring of the part in T23 contained PORD and other finds showing it to be late. Nevertheless it seems that there was at least one further phase in this area: first the building was extended north (this could be contemporaneous with the part in T23), and later on at least part of the building went out of use and a fence line of posts put in over the latrine/pit: this extended some distance to the west.

Building E was in T23 and was described in Bulletin 474.

The small very late phase building F extended to the north of the trench and had larger posts in its southern side than the eastern and western one. Its ridge was therefore

presumably north/south.

Building G must lie mainly to the north of T25, but a possible annex with a partially floored area and probable open end to the west was identified. It had a number of postholes in its southeast corner; presumably they supported some piece of farming equipment.

Building H is thought to be older, being on a very different alignment. We only saw two (possibly three) postholes, so the building's existence is guesswork, but these were by far the most impressive postholes seen, the packing of one containing pieces of a dressed greensand block (fig 10) as well as two pieces of ironstone (each over 25cms in length).

Part 2 (in the next Bulletin) will describe the prehistoric finds in T25.

Figure 10: the greensand block reconstructed. In the posthole its pieces had been used as packing.

Leatherhead Community Test Pitting – October 2019

Nigel Bond

Test pitting at Rowhurst, Leatherhead, which had started in May 2019, continued with a further 7 days on-site in October. Difficult conditions meant that we were only able to work on one 5 x 1 metre trial trench, reduced to 5 x 0.5m for the second half of the dig. The trench was located on the level 'platform' area south and east of TP5 (see plan in Bulletin 476) and oriented with the long side approximately north-south. As we had in May, we found many Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age potsherds, as well as some Roman. We also found, for the first time at Rowhurst, 47 sherds of a Medieval pot: S2 Shelly Ware date range pre-1050-1250 AD. This therefore predates the 1346 dendro date for timbers from the house, confirming there had been earlier Medieval activity on the site. Other interesting finds include a piece of fired clay daub showing signs of being impressed on a wickerwork frame, which may suggest it formed part of the lining of an oven or furnace, though this is of course only speculation. A thin line of redeposited material running along

our trench contained what was tentatively identified as a post-hole. The suspected lost post was set in flint packing forming a U-shape around the post. A thick Baetican amphora sherd of the late 2nd to 3rd century which may have been at the base of the post-hole had been displaced sideways along the axis of the U. If this interpretation is correct we have of our first evidence of a built structure, although possibly no more than a fencepost, in this part of the site.

S2 Shelly Ware pottery sherds

With the help of pupils from a local special needs school we also started work on a test-pit on the edge of the former pond between the house and orchard. The children took great pleasure in discovering various modern items including a pair of scissors and a large molar. Our team continued down to 30cm but then ran out of time; we will return to this test-pit in a later campaign.

Thank you to all who participated, especially those who helped with the less glamorous tasks of tools collection, site set-up, back-filling, and tools cleaning and return. In all we logged 97 person-days for the team from tools collection to tools return. Work on the finds continued at AARG. Thank you too to Lucy Quinnell and Adam Boydell who, as always, were generous and enthusiastic hosts who had invested considerable time and effort in preparing a covered work space and storage facilities for our team.

Amphora sherd and possible post-hole in situ

Rowhurst, Leatherhead – possibly a Medieval warrener's lodge?

Nigel Bond

As discussed in my Leatherhead Community Test Pitting article in Bulletin 476, the origins of Rowhurst house are something of a mystery. The main brick built part of the house with roof timbers dendro-dated to 1632 sits on a substantial square flint and stone basement of uncertain date. There has been much speculation about this basement: some have suggested a 16th century date, others medieval or much earlier. Recently Rowhurst's owner Lucy Quinnell found a description of Thetford Warren Lodge on English Heritage's web-site which suggested certain similarities to Rowhurst. Lucy's ideas have provided the stimulus for the following research.

Warren lodges as a building type

Thetford Warren Lodge – a particularly fine example of a medieval warrener's lodge. Photo by David Robertson (Creative Commons License)

Thetford Warren Lodge is a particularly impressive and well-preserved example of a 15th century warrener's lodge: a tower-house which may also have served as the Prior of Thetford's hunting lodge (English Heritage web-site; Williamson 2007, 82). However it is not unique. Other surviving examples, as well as documentary and cartographic evidence, suggest that 'many other medieval and early post-medieval lodges were well-built tower houses' (*ibid*, 83). Tower-like warren lodges continued to be built in some places into the 17th century (*ibid*, 84). The Landmark Trust's historian Caroline Stanford's report on the warrener's house at Kimbolton, Cambridgeshire includes the following description of warrener's houses (Stanford 2014, 7):

"Warren houses tend to share a broad typology: tall two-storey, single-chamber structures built in lonely and commanding spots, often south-facing since rabbits prefer warmer slopes. They had one or more fireplaces, a very early date for such features, and were

well provided with windows for surveying the surrounding countryside, with a well nearby. The ground floor was often strengthened or fortified, since it was here that valuable carcasses and pelts were stored. A spiral stair, often in the south-west corner, led to the first floor, where the warrener lived."

Those who have visited Rowhurst will recognise that it shares many of these features: it is a tall, three-story *(excluding the basement)*, single-chamber house at some distance from the main settlements of Leatherhead and medieval Patsom Green. It is located in a commanding position with main windows facing towards the southeast. The substantially built basement has a wide arched niche supporting the fireplace in the room above. That niche may originally have contained a fireplace as the outside chimney has three separate flues but only two connected hearths (Harding 1982, 1). There are two wells close by. This suggests Rowhurst may have been a medieval warrener's lodge that possibly fell out of use for some time but was then rebuilt in brick in the 17th century.

The gabled southeast facing wall of Rowhurst house. Photo by Lucy Quinnell.

Rabbits, rabbit warrens and archaeology

Warreners were responsible for protecting and maintaining the owner's rabbit warrens including breeding, nurturing, catching and killing the rabbits and processing their carcasses. Rabbits are not native to Britain and, until they became hardier in recent centuries, required careful husbandry to flourish. The Normans were the first to introduce them on a large scale, starting in the 12th century. The animals were highly valued for their meat and their fur. Warrens were first established on islands and later on the mainland, spreading as far north as Cramond and Crail in Scotland by the mid-13th century (Williamson 2007, 11-12). Our evidence for early warrens includes place names, documentary sources and, of course, archaeology. There are relatively few warren lodges surviving today although some are maybe waiting to be discovered within the fabric of more recent structures as in the tall central section of The Old Lodge Inn at Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire (*ibid*, 85). The foundations of former lodges are sometimes found by archaeologists. 'Pillow mounds', such as those tentatively identified by David Bird on Ashtead Common (Bird 2019), are found in many, but certainly not all, former warrens. In the past such mounds have often been mistakenly identified as prehistoric earthworks, particularly where they are located close to prehistoric sites and when prehistoric pottery has, by chance, been incorporated within the mound during its construction (Williamson

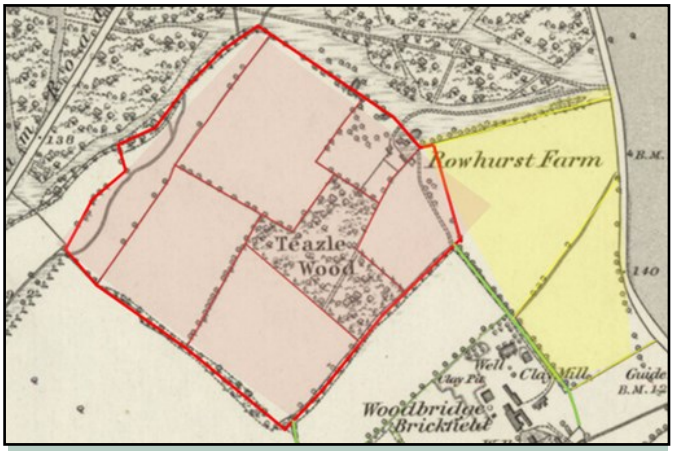
2007, 127*ff*). Pillow mounds were built to encourage the rabbits to settle in what may have been inhospitable ground. Rabbits prefer light, sandy soils where they can burrow easily. They require warm, well-drained ground where their burrows are not at risk of flooding. They prefer to burrow into sloping ground such that the spoil from their digging is more easily removed and the burrow is kept clean (*ibid*, 12). Pillow mounds were constructed with a starting system of burrows embedded within the structure with entrances on the south-facing flank. The rabbits extended the burrow system as they became established (*ibid*, 44-46). Any warren on London Clay, such as on Ashtead Common and further along the same ridge at Rowhurst, would very likely require pillow mounds. Alternatively there are many examples of warreners making use of prehistoric and later earthworks for rabbit burrows (*ibid*, 36, 62-63). Warreners themselves raised other earthworks including boundary banks, internal enclosures and subdivisions (*ibid*, 65-73).

Dorking's Warren

Surrey's earliest documented warren is Henry III's royal *coneygarth* at Guildford Park that existed in 1226. In 1240 Henry III ordered the local bailiffs to assist in catching 100 coneys from warrens at Reigate and Dorking (Ettlinger 2000, 2). Records of this Dorking Warren run from 1240 through to 1513 (*ibid*, 4-10). They include, for example, detailed accounts for 16 years between 1375/6 and 1410/1 showing an average yield of 456 rabbits per year at a net value £3 14s and a maximum of more than £8. In 1433 the warrener was attacked in his lodge and only just escaped with his life. The Dorking warren lodge has not survived but is recorded in the accounts, first for repairs in 1329/30 and again in 1386/7 when 79s. 11d. was spent on replacing the old lodge on the same site. Costs included labour for wattling, daubing and plastering the walls. The roof was of Horsham stone transported from Reigate castle. The lower chamber was fitted with a lock. So this too was a substantial structure, very likely built on the foundations of a 13th century original.

A warren at Pachenesham manor

The only known record of a medieval warren in Pachenesham, the manor which includes Rowhurst, is found in the Victoria County History: "Walter de Thorp … subinfeudated to Eustace de Hacche … He made a warren in Pachevesham (ref. Assize R.892)" (Malden 1911, 293-301). Hacche held the manor from 1286 until his death in 1306. He rebuilt the 13th century moated manor house and established a settlement at nearby Patsom Green by making an enclosure from the waste and realigning roads (Blair 1991, 61). He may also have been the lord who enclosed the 18 acres adjacent to Rowhurst later called Nynhams, Middle English *atten-innam* – 'land taken in or enclosed' (Field 1989). Nynhams fields lie on the top and south to southeast-facing sloping side of the ridge on which



1871 Six Inch OS Map showing Rowhurst Farm northeast of centre, the fields named Nynhams / Mimmins shaded yellow south and east of Rowhurst and Rowhurst's 40 acres shaded pink west of Rowhurst. The 40 acres is bounded by thick wooded shaws on two sides and half of another.

Rowhurst sits. The northern edge of Nynhams now lies within Rowhurst's garden with the edge of the field clearly defined by a bank and ditch. Behind the bank is a level landscaped 'platform' approximately 45m wide by more than 100m long. Leatherhead Community Test Pitting in 2019 found Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age pottery widely distributed across and within the ditch and platform (Bond 2019, 3-4; Bond 2020, 8).

The clay platform immediately southeast of Rowhurst, looking east (above) and boundary bank (left)

Future research at Rowhurst

These considerations generate the following questions to be addressed in future work at Rowhurst:

- Was there a medieval and/or 17th century rabbit warren at Rowhurst in the fields called Nynhams / Mimmins, possibly extending into present day Teazle Wood?
- Did this warren make use of Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age and/or later earthworks for housing rabbits and/or for boundary banks?
- Were there pillow mounds and other purpose-built warren earthworks close to Rowhurst?
- Were these earthworks subsequently levelled to create the 'platform' area with its boundary bank and ditch?
- Is the topography of Rowhurst's grounds and the findings from excavations consistent with the proposed building and levelling of these earthworks?
- Was Rowhurst originally a medieval warren lodge, possibly incorporating parts of an earlier building in its structure?

- Was the 1632 rebuild also used as a warren lodge?
- Was the warren lodge also used as a hunting lodge?

None of the above considerations run counter to the possibility that there may have been earlier buildings on the Rowhurst site. Stray finds of possible Norman or earlier masonry including pieces of egg-and-dart frieze and part of a column indicate there may have been an earlier high status building in the vicinity. The Roman pottery suggests the possible presence of Romano-British building, as does the Roman key and lead curses found in nearby Teazle Wood. John Blair has proposed that the now lost church of Leatherhead *('Leret')* listed in Domesday with 40 acres of land and valued at 20*s*. lay in this general area of Pachenesham manor (Blair 1988, 29-30). Rowhurst would be a suitable site for such a church, being a prominent location, although remote from the later developing centre of Leatherhead. Thorncroft manor's church was more conveniently located for the growing settlement, so the Domesday church went out of use (Blair 1991, 101). Rowhurst is associated with a 40 acre land-holding in later records of Pachenesham manor (e.g. Benger 1961, 148). The square plot highlighted in pink on the extract of the 1871 OS map, plus one acre in the common field, is this 40 acre land-holding (Bond 2015).

Some further notes on Rowhurst house

The Surrey Domestic Buildings Research Group commented on several unusual aspects of Rowhurst's brick-built structure which may be consistent with the warrener's lodge hypothesis. Quoting from their report DBRG No. 2723 Revised (Howard 2006), with additional observations by this author in italics:

"The building is dominated by a fine, almost square, brick building with a very high gabled roof". The gabled south *(actually southeast)* wall has "features that suggest this was the formal front of the house …. This orientation is surprising because it faces neither a near-by road nor the farmyard although it does face a man-made clay platform of unknown origin or purpose." "There is an oriel window in the gable that … has been inserted into an opening that was probably a loading door giving access to the attic although that might seem a little incongruous in that position." *(Alternatively this opening may always have been a high level view-point for surveillance of the warren.)* "The brick house is rather unusual in having a basement, with windows matching those above, under the whole of the ground floor. It is also exceptionally wide and, being only two bays long, its plan is almost square." *(The ground around Rowhurst has been extensively landscaped. It is possible that the basement may originally have been a semi-basement, i.e. partly above ground level.)*

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Annual Symposium 29 February

Martin Rose and Nigel Bond

The meeting was opened by Dr Anne Sassin who explained we had a busy day of speakers ahead and that David Bird was now providing the last talk as the advertised speaker was unwell.

History of the Conservation Awards – Pam Taylor, Vice-Chair of the Surrey Industrial History Group (SIHG), gave examples of the many diverse projects around the county which have received a SIHG Conservation Award since the first of these annual awards was made in 1983. The Award programme originally came from a suggestion by Francis Havilland which was taken-up and developed by Alan and Glenys Crocker. Award plaques have been presented to projects in all Surrey boroughs except Spelthorne and Runnymede. They include a number of mills, a semaphore tower, a pigeon house and a former railway station. The Harris Pottery at Farnham was recognised for its restored bottle kiln. The Rodborough Building in Guildford, despite now being an entertainment centre, has information boards describing its origins as the first purpose-built multi-storey car factory. Several of the exhibits at Tilford's Rural Life Centre have received awards including the granary, Deek's cycle workshop and the Old Kiln Light Railway. SIHG would welcome nominations of recent projects for recognition by a Conservation Award.

The PAS in Surrey – Dr Simon Maslin gave an interesting talk highlighting some of the key Portable Antiquities Scheme finds in the last year. 749 finds were recorded from Surrey covering a great range of items from the Palaeolithic to the post medieval period. Simon focused particularly on those that potentially impact our understanding of prehistory. A Late Bronze Age axe found on the Iron Age Holmbury Hill fort potentially pushes the history of that site back several hundred years. Coins are the only evidence we have of the names and dates of Iron Age tribal leaders so finds are particularly important. An Iron Age master matrix for making moulds for Potins, found in Hampshire, is unique because the matrix is for a coin considered to have been made in France and imported. The finding of this item for making coins in Britain changes our understanding of the relationship between the Atrebates and their neighbours across the channel. Finally, Simon suggested the density of finds in an area could be used as a proxy for where to look for archaeology.

Weston Wood. Albury, further thoughts on Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery – Michael Russell of Historic England presented his reassessment of Middle Neolithic and Late Bronze Age pottery (LBA) from the late Joan Harding's 1961-1968 excavations at Weston Wood. While the Neolithic finds are important, the most significant discovery at

the site was of a LBA settlement. The site produced one of the largest assemblages of LBA pottery from the county. The reassessment addressed function (John Barrett's 5 functional classes), form (20 classes) and fabric (26 types). Pottery manufacture may have been carried out at the site as indicated by raw and fired tempered potting clay, together with altered and deformed sherds. Michael's detailed report is available on the AOC web-site at http://www.aocarchaeology.com/key-projects/report-weston-wood-surrey/. Further work might include (1) cross-joining of sherds across contexts in order to assess dispersion across the site and contemporaneity of features and (2) lipids analysis and radiocarbon dating to determine diet and confirm the chronology of the site.

Recent Excavations by AOC Archaeology Group in Surrey and Beyond – Dr Helen Chittock talked about five sites, four in Surrey and one in Crowthorne just over the border in Hampshire. The last two, Hawley near Blackwater and at Nutfield, are still in early stages so it was not possible to present conclusions. Her theme for the other three was to emphasise they were all long-lived places where later prehistoric peoples returned on a number of occasions, suggesting the importance of memory and place in later prehistory. Crowthorne is a very wet site with Bronze Age wells (including the remains of a wooden ladder) and associated burnt mounds. The wells were in use periodically from the early part of the Middle Bronze Age through to the Early Iron Age and were recut many times. At Chertsey there were pits dating from around 900 to 500 BC, while Charterhouse has a long period of rural settlement into the Roman period (the recently excavated material being from the Middle Iron Age).

After lunch Simon Maslin took over chairing the meeting and presented the annual **Margary award** for the best display. This was won by Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeology Society, with Leatherhead and District Local History Society second.

Presentation of the Margary Award to the Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeology Society

Sustainable Impact Project update – Anne Sassin gave a brief update on the success of this project and future plans. She particularly highlighted that the level of participation in the training and test pitting results had exceeded that forecast.

Test pitting results – Following Anne's introduction there were three short talks on last year's test pitting. Nikki Cowlard talked about test pitting at **Bourne Hall** where there was a successful open day, but later ground disturbance when building the Georgian House meant finds were limited. Secondly there was test pitting at **Nonsuch Park** over the Elizabethan stables build in 1599. Some 72 sherds of pottery were recovered but they covered a wide date range. Nigel Bond talked about two digs in the grounds of medieval house of **Rowhurst, Leatherhead**. Significant amounts of prehistoric material including

Bronze Age pot and Roman material, as well as more modern material, was found in a number of test pits and small trenches. The landscaping of the site makes it difficult to interpret, but what appears to have been a Roman post-hole and an early medieval pot were found in the last small trench opened. Further excavation is planned for 2020. Finally, Richard Savage summarised a test pitting project running in **Old Woking** since 2009. Some 10 test pits/evaluation trenches were opened in 2019 and a resistivity survey conducted. With the help of many local community volunteers, 2019 proved that the previously found brick clamps were inside the boundary of Woking Place (the Woking Park Pale) and therefore used to make bricks for those buildings. The test pitting also demonstrated that there was no evidence that the current churchyard boundaries had a Saxon origin as previously thought, but were laid out between 1110 and 1150. The test pitting also produced a spread of Mesolithic flint and Late Bronze/Early Iron Age pottery.

Palaeogeography in Abinger – Over the past 18 months Catherine Ferguson has been leading a palaeography project at Abinger as part of the Society's outreach programme. She has been teaching fifteen volunteers how to transcribe Early Modern documents, in order to understand their content and to use that information to illuminate the social history of the period. The subject documents are the 270 Surrey wills and inventories held at Hampshire Record Office as part of the probate records of the Winchester Consistory Court. They date from 1603 to 1650. Such wills and inventories tell us about what mattered to individuals: their families, homes and possessions, work, tools, crops and farm animals; and their communities: land transference, trade, debt, agricultural and consumer developments and much more. To date 100 transcripts have been drafted by volunteers and checked for accuracy by Catherine. They are now ready to be uploaded to the web for free public access. When complete the project will fill an important gap in the Surrey probate records readily available to researchers.

A new Norman castle at Alfold – Rob Poulton gave a surprising talk demonstrating that there was once a Norman motte and bailey castle on what is now an entirely flat field. A notable feature was a 7m by 3m ditch and finds included a number of timbers dated to the early 12th century, although the occupation layer has probably been lost. He explained that Norman castles were often symbols of power rather than having significant military value. This one was probably built by Robert de Wateville who held a number of scattered manors in the area. The castle seems to have been relatively short-lived, disappearing before 1250, and was deliberately removed and infilled. This may reflect a change in the nature of agriculture with a move in this part of the Weald from use primarily for transhumance pasture to more settled agriculture reflected in the building of churches at this time.

Mitcham Grove – David Bird described the results of a 1974-5 training excavation on the site of a known 18th century building close to a crossing of the River Wandle. The house was demolished in 1846. The excavators were guided by Robert Adam's 1774 plans for the building with walls being found in the expected locations. It became clear that Mitcham Grove was originally a late 16th-century building which had been re-fronted in the 18th century. The curving Adams entrance porch overlaid an earlier porch. Beneath the early porch there was a foundation deposit of a Nuremburg jetton and a bone stick-bobbin or stick-shuttle. Below the 16th-century building the excavators were surprised to find, on a different alignment, the walls, cobbled surface and pitch-tiled hearth of a 12th-13th century building. David also discussed a possible deviation from the straight route of Stane Street through Mitcham, suggesting that there may have been a posting station located near Mitcham Grove in the area known as Whitford.

A successful meeting closed with Simon thanking all the contributors and those that helped the day run smoothly.

An 11th-century secular masonry building at Wotton?

Rob Briggs

The purpose of this note is to revisit the results of a small yet potentially highly-significant excavation carried out in September 1975 under the direction of D. J. Fowler immediately to the west of the tower of St John the Evangelist's church, Wotton. It was reported in *Bulletin* **127** (Fowler 1976), and later reprinted with accompanying plans in the church guide (Denman and Denman 1978, 13–19). The results are mentioned in a handful of subsequent works (e.g. Poulton 1986, 73; Blair 1991, 113) but have never been subject to the critical reappraisal they warrant. Recent revisions made to a very old Historic Environment Record entry pertaining to Wotton church (Surrey HER Building 56) have completed a set of enhancements that capture the full archaeological record of the church and churchyard (drawing upon knowledge acquired during the preparation of the author's first MA dissertation it should be added), and bring out the uniqueness of the earliest known phase of activity on the site at the administrative county level.

The 1975 excavation results

A single trench was excavated up against the west wall and buttresses of the church tower (Figure 1), in which were revealed the remains of stone walls representing two distinct phases of demolished masonry structures. The earlier phase (Phase 1 = HER Monument 22975) was represented by two parallel mortared walls, each over a metre wide and aligned north-south, associated with a floor surface made of chalk. Approximately 7.5

Figure 1: The site of the 1975 excavation west of the tower. The top of the reconstructed Phase 2 northern wall foundation can be seen at the foot of the nearer of the two west-facing buttresses. The bump to its right marks the Haynes vault. On the extreme left of the photograph, the north-west quoin of the probable pre-Conquest nave is visible, although unfortunately covered in render. (Photograph by Rob Briggs, June 2018)

metre-long sections of both walls were revealed in the excavation, with no surviving evidence for any returns. They were spaced approximately 2 metres apart, with the chalk floor (if equivalent to F20 marked on the Phase 1 plan in Denman and Denman 1978, 17) apparently in between. Evidence was found that the structure (or structures) to which the walls and floor belonged was destroyed by fire. The archaeology indicated that the end of Phase 1 was immediately followed by a new phase of masonry building (Phase 2 = HER Monument 22976): two walls — this time aligned east-west, and spaced approximately 5 metres apart — and mortared floor of a new structure contemporary with the lower stages of the extant west tower of the adjacent church. The construction of a brick-built burial vault for the Haynes family in the 18th century destroyed a significant portion of the Phase 1 western wall foundation, and a much smaller section of its eastern counterpart.

Fowler provided the important information that no Roman-period artefactual evidence was found in the excavation, such as might have pointed to the walls belonging to a villa or agricultural building. The only dating evidence recovered was a single piece of shell-tempered pottery, found in association with the chalk floor. The sherd was tentatively ascribed to the Middle Anglo-Saxon period (*circa* 650-850). Shelly wares of Late Iron Age and Roman dates are known from Surrey, as well as from a large portion of the Middle Ages (Surrey Archaeological Society Medieval Pottery Study Group 2017, 7, 12–14). The late Phil Jones accepted Fowler's chronology and so his suggested dating of this sherd, using it as the basis for analogising some shelly ware sherds from *Cherchefelle* (Reigate) with ones of 8th/9th-century date from sites on the south coast, while also offering the necessary qualification that the *Cherchefelle* material could represent 'a conservative tradition that survived somewhat later on the northern edge of the Weald' (in Poulton 1986, 73). Crucially, aside from Fowler's tentative 'middle Saxon' dating, there is no valid reason for interpreting the Wotton sherd and hence the associated structural remains as being so early.

Reconsidering the evidence

The earliest post-Roman shell-tempered pottery from Surrey (S1 Late Saxon shelly ware) is now understood to date from no earlier than *circa* 900, and it continued to be produced and used until *circa* 1050. Even then, S1 ware is otherwise unknown so far south in Surrey, with the earliest equivalent sherds from this part of the county that have been the subject of specialist identification are 11th-century in date (of the S2 medieval shelly ware tradition of *circa* 1080-1250, and S4 Shelly/Sandy fabric of *circa* 1000-1150: Surrey Archaeological Society Medieval Pottery Study Group 2017, 12–14). It would be of huge significance to have the whereabouts of the Wotton sherd ascertained in order to enable its examination by a specialist with a view to identifying it in terms of the Surrey medieval type series.

A *terminus ante quem* for the Phase 1 foundations can be provided by establishing the date of the Phase 2 walls. This is facilitated by the fact that they are aligned with and bonded to the masonry of the west wall of the standing church tower, demonstrating they were built as part of the same phase of construction. Fowler interpreted the walls as those of the nave of a small stone church, associated with a central axial tower, with the blocked arch in the west wall of the tower being the means of access between the two. Further to the east, he postulated a small apsidal chancel. In his opinion, construction of the entirety of this phase took place before the mid-11th century (see Denman and Denman 1978, 16).

However, more recent analysis of the fabric of the tower has concluded that its lower stages were probably constructed in the late 11th or early 12th century, a re-dating which must apply to the demolished nave (Briggs 2007, in which it is also argued that Fowler's Phase 3 attribution of the heightening of the tower to the mid-11th century is too early by a

century or more). The nave walls are earlier, as the east wall of the tower appears to incorporate the west wall of the nave, preserving its thinness in comparison to the tower's west wall, and may well pre-date the Norman Conquest despite lacking any dateable architectural features of the period (Blair 1991, 113, 201 note 30).

In view of the probable dates of the shell-tempered pottery sherd and lower portions of the church tower, the building/occupation represented by the Phase 1 features is highly likely to belong to the 11th century. A date of origin antecedent to the Norman Conquest of 1066 seems a very real possibility (although caution must be urged before attributing its apparent demise in a fire to the effect of the Norman invasion). Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to contend that the present nave shell may have been in existence at the same time, intimating the collocation and coexistence of two pre-Conquest masonry buildings, marking out Wotton as a place of some importance (Figure 2). The north-south alignment and spacing of the Phase 1 walls is not suggestive of an ecclesiastical building, other than perhaps a projecting transept-like *porticus* of a church, and the length of the walls relative to the intervening gap (a ratio of more than 3:1 based purely upon what was excavated) make this highly dubious. Thus the remains may be those of a secular building, presumably one of high status, which could represent the first recorded remnants of a stone-built Anglo-Saxon-period non-ecclesiastical building in Surrey.

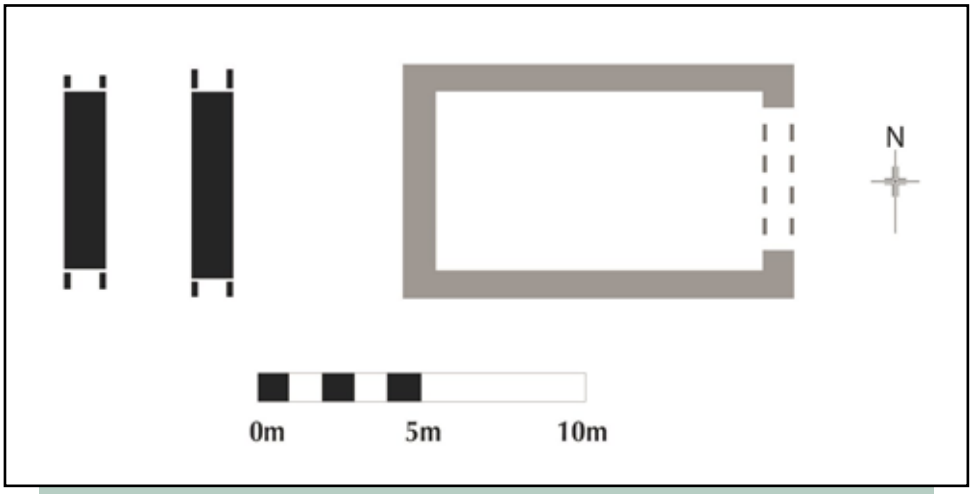

Figure 2: Plan of Phase 1 wall foundations (left) relative to the standing nave shell (right). A partial amalgamation of Fowler's Phase 1 and 3 plans printed in Denman and Denman 1978, 16, which are not drawn very precisely, so thicknesses of walls are not entirely accurate! (Image produced by Katja Alissa Müller)

The purpose of the Phase 1 features

One possible identification of the Phase 1 structure given these characteristics is as a stone-built *burhgeat*, a much-discussed if never entirely satisfactorily explained type of structure known from 10th/11th-century textual sources (see, for example, Williams 1992, Renn 1994 and Reynolds 1999). A new perspective on the *burhgeat* has been proffered by John Blair, who prefers to identify them with timber gatehouse-type structures controlling access to ditched enclosures that were likely to have contained elite residences. Only a handful are known from excavations, but the plans of two examples reproduced by Blair (including one at Steyning in Sussex) have post-hole arrangements that would indicate passages no more than 3 metres in width — comparing favourably with the 2-metre gap between the Phase 1 wall foundations at Wotton (Blair 2018, 372–75; of no less interest is

his comment about the stone-built gate tower of the 1070s at Rougemont Castle in Exeter as 'a giant masonry skeuomorph of a typical late Anglo-Saxon *burhgeat*').

Difficulties arise, however, in trying to square this interpretation with what might be discerned about the 11th-century topographical context. Wotton church and churchyard occupy a dramatic position on the lip of a northward-facing valley, precluding easy access from the east (Figure 3). Access from the north or south would correspond to the orientation of the Phase 1 wall foundations. It may not necessarily be the case that access was always from the south as it is today with St John's Church Road connecting to Guildford Road (the A25); a route north, perhaps in the direction of modern-day Vale House and Farm (on the site of Wotton rectory), would have given quicker access to Milton and then Dorking. The route of the footpath between Guildford Road and Vale Farm along the valley floor, bypassing the church, need not be an early one.

Figure 3: The site of Wotton church seen from the north-east on the footpath in the valley towards Vale Farm, showing the steepness of the slope immediately east of the churchyard. (Photograph by Rob Briggs, June 2018)

The Wotton parish tithe map of 1839 shows the churchyard at Wotton (prior to its two northward extensions) had an unusual shape, like an uneven pentagon with five slightly curving sections of boundary (Figure 4). In its non-rectilinear shape and to a lesser degree size, Wotton exhibited similarities to the loose group of early 11th-century fortified enclosures (identified by Blair 2018, 388–97). It would be unusual but by no means unique to have an ecclesiastical building inside rather than (just) outside the enclosure (e.g. Pontefract in Yorkshire: Blair 2018, 393, 394 Fig. 146). Rather more problematic is the suggested *burhgeat* lying towards its centre rather than on its perimeter — a decidedly non-optimal location for a gatehouse! This near-central position is more akin to the post-1000 masonry building excavated at Eynsford in Kent, but it was keep-like, sub-square in shape and with an average width of over 11 metres (Horsman 1988; Blair 2018, 388, 389 Fig. 143). The thickness of the Phase 1 walls at Wotton could well be commensurate with a structure of far greater size than the glimpse afforded by the 1975 excavation, but it is impossible to say anything beyond this.

It must be stressed that there is no upstanding earthwork evidence (at least none seen by the author) to back up the idea of Wotton churchyard originating as a fortified enclosure. An additional note of caution is provided by evidence pertaining to Oxted churchyard. It too appears as strikingly curvilinear in plan on 19th-century maps, but manorial records of the 1360s record 'ditching and fencing were carried out to separate the house [i.e. the demesne centre, perhaps on the site of Court Farm] from the cemetery' (Mumford 1966,

74). While this may have been to redefine an existing boundary, it could also be that the curvilinear outline of the churchyard at Oxted was wholly or partly a creation of the later 14th century. Therefore, in the absence of any archaeological corroboration, it seems best to keep separate the matters of the historic shape of Wotton churchyard from the function of the structure represented by the excavated Phase 1 remains.

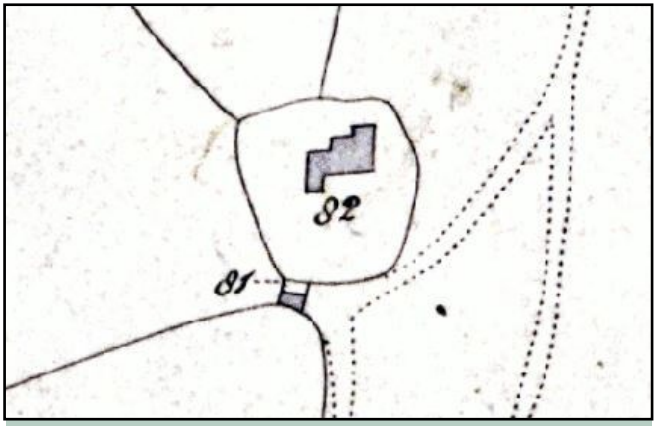

Figure 4: Wotton church and churchyard as depicted on the 1839 tithe map, showing irregular churchyard boundary, the southernmost sections of which survive. (Surrey HER digitised copy of Wotton parish tithe map in Surrey History Centre, ref. 864/1/75/1/1)

Possible patrons

Who might have been the patron of the Phase 1 masonry structure — and conceivably the adjacent church? The earliest historical source for Wotton is Domesday Book, and its entry reveals connections with some important and thus wealthy men in the later 11th century (Morris 1975, 36,4). Harold Godwineson, briefly King Harold II, held Wotton before 1066, although the Domesday entry goes on to record that 'the men of the Hundred state that they do not know how Harold held it' so it is not possible to know if Wotton was a long-standing comital property. Whatever the basis of his tenure, Wotton had passed into the possession of a man named Oswald by 1086. It has been suggested that he is to be identified as the sheriff of Surrey attested simply as 'O.' (see Burns 1992, 51), in which case he would have been an individual of considerable standing and means. Interestingly, there is a record of Wotton as 'the sheriff's "toon"', although the source is post-medieval and John Evelyn of Wotton served as sheriff of Surrey in 1633-34, so it may well be irrelevant (English and Turner 2004, 112; Burns 1992, 64).

Another, perhaps more slender, possibility is that the buildings can be connected to *Tedric*, translatable as Theodoric (as per Morris 1975, 36,4), who had held a hide of land in Wotton from Harold. He has been identified as Theodoric the goldsmith, celebrated in a later chronicle as 'the finest craftsman in gold and silverwork in the city of London', whose skills were as in demand after 1066 as before. No doubt as a result of his handiwork and repute, he possessed lands in a number of shires at the time of the Domesday Survey, including Kennington in Surrey (Baxter and Blair 2005, 42; Williams 2008, 118; '*Teodricus aurifab*[*er*]' — Morris 1975, 36,6). If the Wotton Theodoric was one and the same as the famed goldsmith, then, unlike Kennington, he did not hold onto his Wotton estate through to 1086. By the time of the Domesday Survey, the hide had become the property of Richard fitz Gilbert, a leading Surrey landholder and also a noted church-building patron, as was his son and heir Gilbert (Blair 1991, 122). It is not impossible that Richard or Gilbert was the patron of the Phase 2 work at Wotton as well, although why a minority portion of the estate should be the site of the church is by no means clear (Briggs 2007, 19–20, 22, where an argument is made for descent from a former minster/mother church endowed with its own hide of land — it should be noted that Domesday Book fails to mention a church at Wotton).

Conclusions

Anyone who's read John Blair's *Building Anglo-Saxon England* (2018) will know that

Surrey barely features in what is an extraordinarily detailed book packed with examples. This cannot be said to be an unexpected turn of events. Those familiar with the post-600, pre-1100 settlement archaeology of Surrey (including the portions no longer within the administrative county boundary) would be hard-pressed to describe it as anything other than a poor showing. But this does not mean what has been found is devoid of significance — a full review of Surrey's early medieval settlement archaeology in light of the major advances made at regional, national and international levels in recent decades is long overdue (see Briggs 2020 for some further suggestions in this regard). In the case of the Phase 1 structures at Wotton, we have tantalising evidence for something that seems to be not only without parallel at the county level, but also of national rarity and hence significance.

If any reader can shed light on the whereabouts of the archive from Fowler's 1975 excavation and/or the sherd of shell-tempered pottery that was found, please contact the Surrey HER via email at HER@surreycc.gov.uk.

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New members

Hannah Jeffery

I would like to welcome the following new members who have joined the Society. I have included principal interests, where they have been given on the application form. If you have any questions, queries or comments, please do not hesitate to get in contact with me on 01483 532454 or info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk.

Name	Town	Principal Archaeological and Local History Interests
Mark Blackwell	Caterham	
David Brown	Heathfield	The Weald
Adrian Hall	Guildford	Archaeology; Local History; Bronze/Iron Age Surrey
Lawrence Springall	Teddington	Late Iron Age/ Early Roman
David Wilkinson	Fetcham	Palaeolithic Flint Implements; Roman Britain

Surrey History Meetup

Run by SyAS member Simon Ritchie, the group promotes local history by running a series of online lectures. The Leatherhead and Dorking history societies and Dorking Museum currently use it for their events, with members contributing weekly 'lockdown lectures' via Zoom video conferencing. The meetup is free to join and all are welcome (as are offers for more SyAS speakers). See https://www.meetup.com/Surrey-History-Meetup/ for more.

DATES FOR *BULLETIN* CONTRIBUTIONS

There will be three more issues of the *Bulletin* in 2020. To assist contributors relevant dates are as follows:

	Copy date:	Approx. delivery:
481	**29th June**	**1st August**
482	**14th September**	**17th October**
483	**9th November**	**12th December**

Articles and notes on all aspects of fieldwork and research on the history and archaeology of Surrey are very welcome. Contributors are encouraged to discuss their ideas with the editor beforehand, including on the proper format of submitted material (please do supply digital copy when possible) and possible deadline extensions.

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Next issue: Copy required by 29th June for the August issue

Editor: Dr Anne Sassin, 101 St Peter's Gardens, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4QZ. Tel: 01252 492184 and email: asassinallen@gmail.com