

Surrey Archaeological Collections, volume 104, 2022

Abstracts

The saving of Norbury Park: Surrey County Council and the making of Public Open Spaces in wood and vale, 1930–50, by Keith Grieves

The acquisition of Norbury Park Estate by Surrey County Council in 1930 was an emergency measure to save parkland, woods and riverside between Leatherhead and Dorking from long-threatened spoliation by building development on its carriage drives. The dedication and management of Public Open Spaces, the balance of amenity and utility in the well-established woodlands and the issue of recreational access to a farmed landscape were uncharted complexities that the county council, local authorities and voluntary societies encountered, while facilitating public enjoyment on land close to London. Confirmed by the innovatory Surrey County Council Act 1931, this purchase scheme sought to overcome the hindrance of compensation clauses in town planning legislation. The county council expected that a public subscription appeal, and the involvement of the National Trust, would largely repay the capital charge of £85,000, when initiated by Norbury Park's eminence grise, Sir Lawrence Chubb. At the sub-national level of county governance, financial liability for the estate cast a deep shadow over a remarkable political act. Nonetheless, amenity-focused practices in a relatively large park developed and survived the food and forestry imperatives of total war because its 'natural state' mattered. Pragmatic decision-making on the ground valued a landscape of wooded parkland, arable and pastoral fields and sinuous footpaths to viewpoints and riverside walks, albeit without the mansion as the focus of the designed landscape, where Dr Marie Stopes resided from 1932. Its severance from an estate undivided since the Norman Conquest pointed to changes in rural social structure and the coming of large Public Open Spaces for new countrymen and women as a rate-aided social service. The analysis and contextualisation of documentary sources might illuminate the transformation of a landed estate in Surrey into public amenity use, when the council had no other property of this kind. The records of county, district and parish councils, amenity societies and personal papers are used to explore the complex and, sometimes, conflicted meaning of 'Norbury Park for the Public'. This 'tame' cultivated country, 22 miles from London, became a county asset, whereas the nation's interest seemed more intent on safeguarding moors and mountains in 'wild' country.

Excavations at Beddington Sewage Farm 1992–2009: Neolithic pits, later Bronze Age land division and a Tudor deer park, by Laszlo Lichtenstein and Tom Wells

Archaeological remains deriving from several phases of activity were recorded during a staged programme of archaeological works carried out between 1992 and 2009 at Beddington Sewage Farm, in the London Borough of Sutton. The earliest features were a series of palaeochannels, which probably represent the course of a former shallow tributary or subsidiary channel of the river Wandle. The first indications of a human presence were provided by small quantities of Early Neolithic pottery and lithic material found in later features, and a tree-throw hollow that contained chronologically diagnostic flintworking waste of the same period. Peterborough Ware pottery, worked flint and a flint mace-head were also recovered from several small Middle Neolithic pits. Field system ditches, enclosures and droveways were laid out and modified throughout the Middle to Late Bronze Age. Other later Bronze Age features comprised pits, waterholes, and a single unurned cremation grave. Unexpectedly, given the presence of a known villa immediately southeast of the excavated site, there was a distinct paucity of Romano-British remains. Later features included ditches, of uncertain function, which contained medieval pottery. Traces of activity potentially associated with Beddington deer park and the Carew Manor estate included numerous pieces of dressed stone, possibly from the former manor house or a related building, found in a post-medieval ditch, and a pit containing fallow deer bone. Subsequent phases of enclosure were evidenced by numerous ditches representing 18th or

19th century agricultural land divisions, some of which may have fossilised the footprint of a deer course, as had been previously suggested.

Excavations at the Science Gallery, Boland House, Guy's Hospital, Southwark, by Alistair Douglas

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Evidence for multi-period settlement at Benner Lane, West End, Woking, by Sam Wilson

Archaeological excavations by Cotswold Archaeology at Benner Lane, West End, Woking have revealed evidence of Late Bronze Age activity and of a small Middle Iron Age settlement consisting of at least two roundhouses, four-post structures and boundary ditches. The charcoal, charred plants, pottery and animal bone suggest domestic activities. However, the site also produced evidence for iron smelting consistent with contemporary sites in north-west Surrey. Limited activity of the Roman period occurred in the form of a probable double-ditched trackway, while post-medieval ditches, a ditched trackway and a possible hollow-way were also recorded.

The Bronze Age to Iron Age transition in Chertsey: excavations at Guildford Road, by Helen Chittock, Jon Cotton and Jaime Levell

This article details the results of archaeological investigations carried out by AOC Archaeology Group between March and April 2019 at Guildford Road, Chertsey. Excavations identified evidence for occupation at the site dating from the Late Bronze Age to the post-medieval period, providing new information on past activity in its locality. The archaeology was characterised by pits belonging to the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age transition, dated through pottery and containing distinctive burnt deposits. A number of undated later prehistoric features are interpreted as being contemporary in date, and included a probable well or waterhole and adjacent postholes, perhaps representing a structure. Later activity was dated to the post-medieval period, with residual Roman finds also present and an Early Neolithic notched flake suggesting much earlier occupation. This article summarises findings from the site, drawing on the post-excavation assessment (Levell 2019) and with a focus on the analysis of the pottery assemblage, contextualising the results from the site within existing knowledge of the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age transition in the area.

Earlier Neolithic pits and another early date for Peterborough ware at Ockford Wood Farm, Aaron's Hill, Godalming, by Andy Taylor and Richard Tabor

Evaluation trenching followed by two small area excavations revealed a pit and posthole of Early Neolithic date and two pits containing pottery usually considered to be of Middle Neolithic date. The dating of the two early features is supported by radiocarbon dates of 3518–3392 cal BC (UBA42635) and 3942–3709 cal BC (UBA42636).

Analytical survey and landscape contextualisation of Dry Hill Camp, Lingfield, by Jenny Newell and Judie English

A survey of the undated hilltop enclosure known as Dry Hill Camp, together with a consideration of its location within the local landscape, leads to the suggestion that it may be of Middle Iron Age date. The previous finding of evidence of iron production, and the greater modern understanding of Middle Iron Age activity in the Weald, enables a position within its local economic network to be discussed.