Surrey Archaeological Society
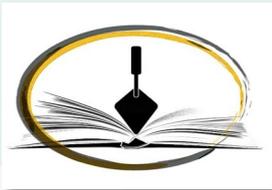
E-newsletter

No 6   June 2021

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 Hannah (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) for group and event updates.

Anne Sassin (*SyAS Projects and Outreach Officer*)

Dig4Archaeology campaign

In light of the multiple threats currently facing the sector, including the worrying cuts to top university departments at Sheffield and Chester universities, UK archaeologists have launched a campaign urging action to safeguard the profession in both the academic and commercial sectors. Headed by Dr Chloe Duckworth of Newcastle University and David Connolly (director of British Archaeological Jobs and Resources), with the support of major industry stakeholders including University Archaeology UK, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Council for British Archaeology, the campaign highlights the many financial and cultural contributions of the sector, as well as the vital need to ensure the protection of the historic environment for the public's benefit. To find out more about the campaign and how to get involved, see dig4arch.co.uk.

Middle Bronze Age research seminar

On **Thursday 17 June** Oxford Archaeology will be hosting a research seminar discussing recent excavations of middle Bronze Age settlement sites from across southern Britain. This is a period often regarded as a key period of change in later prehistory, as settlements and field systems become more visible in the archaeological record, in what has been characterised as a time of 'settling down', or even a 'second agricultural revolution'. Exciting new results will be presented from sites that shed light on this important period, including Clay Farm near Cambridge; the Norwich Northern Distributor Road, Norfolk; Wallingford in the Thames Valley; Bridgwater Gateway, Somerset; and Eastbourne in Sussex. There will be the opportunity to submit your own questions during the seminar (registration required), which will also be available on YouTube, after the event.

Follow us on

Association for Roman Archaeology talks

The Association for Roman Archaeology is organising a series of online lectures. All talks begin at 18:30 and are free, though donations are welcome. Please note these talks will not be recorded, and that registration is required.

Wednesday 14 July – Sam Moorhead, 'Why the Romans Needed Britain'

Thursday 19 August – Mike Stone, 'Roman Trade and Industry in North Wiltshire'

Thursday 16 September – Tony King, 'Roman villas in Italy from Imperial palace to humble farm'

Monday 21 June, 14:00-15.45 – Exploring Magna Carta

As part of the Runnymede Explored project, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, this afternoon of two free talks offers an introduction to the Magna Carta and what life was like in Surrey at the time. The first talk, which will be given by Mike Page, the County Archivist, is titled 'Runnymede, Magna Carta and All That' and will consider the background to the events of 1215 and the subsequent history of Magna Carta, briefly examining the place where it happened, as reflected in records at Surrey History Centre. The second talk will be given by Rob Poulton, Senior Archaeological Advisor for SCAU, and will focus on the Surrey landscape and society in the 13th century.

A video of the recording from the talk on Tuesday 16 June will be played on Monday 21 June at 14:00, with National Trust archaeologists on hand live, to answer any questions. Tickets are free, but booking is required online.

Living Standards and Material Culture in English Rural Households digital archive

The digital archive for the Leverhulme-funded project examining archaeological and historical evidence for the material culture of non-elite rural households from AD 1300-1600 is now available online via the Archaeology Data Service. A joint endeavour between historians and archaeologists, the aim was to reconstruct and interpret the range of goods possessed by agriculturalists, craftsmen and traders, and labourers, utilising evidence collected from 15 different counties. A key outcome of this research has also been the assembly of new datasets by bringing together scattered evidence on small finds from excavations, and by exploiting hither-to neglected records that detail the forfeited chattels of felons (including suicides), fugitives and outlaws. The work is also characterised by regional differences and chronological change.

Runnymede Explored

Thanks to funding from the NLHF, Runnymede Explored will be carrying out fieldwork and archaeological events at the site throughout the project, including this summer.

The first of these events will be a free training course on geophysics, run by The National Trust, Berkshire Archaeological Society and Surrey County Archaeological Unit. This course includes an evening virtual talk explaining the basics of geophysics, one day at the site using a gradiometer and earth resistance meter, and a second evening of virtual presentation to discuss the results. You will need to attend both Zoom sessions and one day on site during the week of the survey. No previous experience is necessary to sign up to this course, but in order to take part in the gradiometer sessions you will need to be metal free (including clothing and any medical inserts).

Introductory Zoom Session – **Thursday 15 July**, 17:30

On site geophysics – **Monday 19 - Friday 23 July**, 10:00-16:00)

Zoom session sharing results – **Wednesday 28 July**, 17:30

(A blog post discussing the results from a recent survey at the site can also be read here.)

From **Monday 2 - Friday 6 August** and **Monday 9 - Saturday 14 August**, you can join professional archaeologists as they carry out excavations at Runnymede, to learn more about this fascinating multi-period site. All training and equipment is provided, and no previous experience is necessary. Join for a day, or for the whole excavation!

Throughout both the geophysics and excavations, there will be a display about the archaeology and history of the site. Volunteers are needed who would also like to help speak to visitors. No prior knowledge of the site or archaeology is needed; all training is provided. Minimum commitment is one day.

For more information or to book on any of these volunteering opportunities, please email the National Trust Project Archaeologist: Hannah.potter@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Festival of Archaeology event at the Devil's Punch Bowl, Hindhead

Thursday 29 July marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Hindhead Tunnel. The National Trust will be running an archaeology-themed day to mark the occasion, partnering with the Society to run a number of activities and guided walks. This is a call out for any volunteers who might be interested in helping lead a guided walk around Hindhead (focusing on your own interests), or with some of the activities and promotion of the local heritage while on site. If you are interested and available to assist on this day, please contact outreach@surreyarchaeology.org.uk.

Guildford Museum finds photography

Guildford Museum have been hard at work over the recent closure, taking the opportunity to photograph as many objects as possible currently on display, including some of the artefacts on loan from the Society. These have since been shared as posts on their social media pages (@VisitGuildford and @Gfdheritage). This month we focus on a few of the Saxon objects highlighted.

To find one complete Saxon beaker is rare, and to find two is even more so. This glass cone-beaker (was part of a set found within 6th and 7th century burials at Guildown Cemetery on the Mount in Guildford, during excavations which began in 1929. It was found near a male burial who was accompanied by a spear. For more on this site and its finds, see Lowther 1931.

Other grave goods include these colourful glass beads and bone comb, which were discovered during excavations at the Saxon cemetery at Farthing Down, Coulsdon (see Flower 1874).

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This Saxo-Norman 'ice skate' is made from the toe-bone of a red deer, and was assembled from several fragments found during an excavation in Reigate. The hole near the top was for a cord, or leather thong, which allowed the skate to be attached to the foot. In parts of Northern Europe, skates were an important form of transport during winter months, though in Britain, people were more likely to use them for fun. The image to the left shows both the front and back of the same skate. For more on this site, see Poulton 1980.

#FindsFriday posts from the FLO

Simon Maslin, the Surrey Finds Liaison Officer, shares some interesting pieces recently uncovered by detectorists who recorded their finds with the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Sometimes the humblest finds tell the most interesting stories. This worn copper-alloy follis coin (SUR-A720E8) is from the Byzantine Empire, probably brought here by trade in the late 7th century AD. It was found through mudlarking on the Thames foreshore, and recorded properly with the PAS.

Last month saw the wedding anniversary of merry monarch Charles II and Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza in 1662. As good an opportunity as any to post this damaged and slightly crushed silver cufflink button (SUR-F1FE3F), one of the many silver buttons recorded with the PAS which commemorated this union!

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