

Surrey Archaeological Society

Medieval Studies Forum

Newsletter No. 4

April 2008

Welcome to the fourth in our series of occasional Newsletters. We are very pleased to be able to let you know that Peter Balmer has now joined the Committee.

Forthcoming meetings of the Forum:

Aspects of medieval Churches in Surrey - 14th June 2008

Please find attached the application form for the meeting to be held at St Mary's in Guildford on 14th June. This promises to be a very interesting day, held in one of the most historic buildings in Surrey where the central tower predates the Norman Conquest. Mary Alexander, who is a churchwarden of St Mary's as well as curator of archaeology at Guildford Museum, will be demonstrating the development of this fascinating building during her presentation. The day will also include informative and stimulating presentations by Sabrina Harcourt-Smith, Alan Bott, Rob Briggs and Peter Balmer.

Medieval towns in Surrey – 15th November 2008

Please put the date for this meeting (to be held in Reigate) in your diary now. We have an excellent line up of speakers which includes:

Patrick Molyneux - Implications from Domesday Book
Chris Constable - Aspects of 15th/16th century Southwark
Helen Carrel - Governance in medieval towns
Mary Alexander - Medieval Guildford
David Williams - The urban excavations in Reigate
Rob Poulton – Issues arising from recent work in towns, with suggestions for research objectives.

Anglo-Saxon Surrey – 28th March 2009

Mary Alexander and Peter Youngs are putting together the programme for this meeting, which will be the first Forum meeting devoted to the pre-Conquest period; if you would like to make a presentation (of whatever length) please contact them.

Reports on meetings of the Forum:

Bagshot meeting – 8 March 2008

The joint meeting with the Village Studies Group at Bagshot on 8 March was attended by 29 people. Peter Tipton spoke in the morning on the value of documentary research by local historians in driving forward a better understanding of the important local Borderware pottery industry and its connections with the London market in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His work has admirably backed up Jacqui Pearce's Borderware researches in showing the influence of German émigré potters and the inter-connection of local potter families. Phil Stevens then gave a presentation on the development of Bagshot Park and village through the centuries, from the time of the Forest Law following the Norman Conquest through to the coming of the turnpikes and beyond. Bagshot has the rare distinction of being one of the places shown on the fourteenth century Gough map of the Britain, essentially the first 'road map' of Britain. The manorial links between Bagshot with Woking and Brookwood, both lying on the southern fringes of Windsor Forest, were mentioned in the discussion session. These presentations were followed first by a tour of the Archaeology Centre of the Surrey Heath Archaeological and Heritage Trust, including the museum, library and processing rooms (all located in the early 20th century Police Station – its three cells now provide storage for archaeological material) and then by a tour of the more important medieval timber-framed buildings in the centre of Bagshot, including a visit to see the rare wall-paintings dated to 1537-47AD at 44 High Street. The day finished with a presentation by Peter Tipton on the development and use of the interactive HeathHist website of the Berkshire Hampshire Surrey Heathlands Local History and Archaeology Research Forum. All members with an interest in any aspect of the history and archaeology of the Surrey Heaths are warmly invited to register their interest at <http://heathhist.pbwiki.com>

Our thanks are due to Phil Stevens, Peter Tipton and Gary James for hosting this day.

Identification and Dating of Medieval Pottery

We are in the process of arranging a full day training workshop on the identification and dating of medieval pottery in Surrey, to be led by Surrey's acknowledged pottery expert, Phil Jones, and to be held at the SCC Heritage Enterprises (SCAU) unit at the Surrey History Centre in Woking. The day will enable participants to learn to recognise pre-Conquest pottery as well as identify and date the main types of later medieval wares produced in Surrey. Training will cover form and fabric, and will include much hands-on work. Numbers will be limited to twenty participants and the indicative cost of the day will be £20 per person (depending on final numbers interested). The date is not yet finally fixed but is likely to be Saturday 18th October. As the training day will only go ahead if there is sufficient demand, **would all those interested please let Richard and Pamela know in order that a place may be reserved for them.**

This training day will also be offered in the first instance to members of the Villages Study Group and to members of the Artefacts and Archives Research Group, before being offered more widely to other members of the Society. It is hoped that the knowledge gained will prove useful in a proposed programme of test-pitting around some of Surrey's settlements and in working on the medieval pottery from the backlog of unpublished excavations.

Symposium on the Vikings – 26th April 2008

Rose Hooker has notified us of a one-day symposium presenting the latest research in Viking Studies and organised by the Universities of Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham, which will take place at Nottingham on Saturday the 26th April. The symposium is open to all, and non-academics are particularly welcome. For further details and registration information, please see either of the following websites:

<http://nottingham.ac.uk/english>

<http://viking.nottingham.ac.uk/english/csua/outreach>

or contact christina.lee@nottingham.ac.uk

LHC visit to Send and Ripley – 20th July 2008

Members of the Forum will be very welcome to attend the Surrey Local History Committee Summer Meeting, starting with coffee at the Manor House, Send Marsh Green and followed by guided tours around Send Marsh Green and Ripley. Details are in the flyer with the SyAS Bulletin issued recently (number 407, April 2008).

The Victoria County History Seminars 2008

A number of us attended one or more of the seminars held in February and March to mark 75 years of the Victoria County History at the Institute of Historical Research. Three were of particular relevance to the medieval period. Firstly, Dr Carenza Lewis talked on 'Historic village investigation at the dawn of the 21st century – new opportunities, new directions and new knowledge'. Those of us of an archaeological bent were enthused by the work being carried out in East Anglian villages over the past three years on an extensive programme of test-pitting which is indicating forms of settlement development in the medieval period rather different from those found in the Whittlewood project in the Midlands. Carenza described the innovative funding of the project (based heavily on monies from the EU to encourage more teenagers to consider tertiary education) and also the archaeological techniques and statistical analysis that produces the results. We hope to be able to recommence test-pitting in suitable locations in the Society's Village Studies Project. A fortnight later, Professor Chris Dyer spoke on 'Medieval villages: new approaches' in a talk which majored on archaeological aspects, including the social inferences that could be drawn from individual house plans as well as from analyses of the patterns of buildings within settlements. The final seminar was given by Professor Tom Williamson on 'Regional landscapes and regional societies: the environmental dimension'. This reminded us (if we had forgotten) that archaeologists and medieval historians ought to pay much more attention to soil types (and the very rapid changes in soil types, sometimes even within a single field) and geomorphological features, such as river catchment areas and watersheds. His examples were, perhaps not surprisingly, largely drawn from East Anglia but we were struck by how little work has been published along these lines for Surrey.

The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England (PASE)

Peter Youngs has drawn our attention to this project, run by Kings College, London and the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at Cambridge. It is a resource which is intended to “ultimately contain everything that is known about everyone known to have been alive in England between 597 and 1066”. The first phase is freely available at www.pase.ac.uk . The second phase was due to have been released in 2007 but seems to have been delayed.

Contributions to the Newsletter

We would welcome contributions from members of the Forum for inclusion in the Newsletter. It is not intended that the Newsletter should become a formal vehicle for publication but notes on ongoing research, queries or requests for assistance could be included. These can be sent to Richard and Pamela by e-mail or post.

Membership List

As there have been no objections to publishing contact details of all Forum members, a list including research interests is now enclosed with this Newsletter. Please read and check your own entry and notify Richard and Pamela of any changes required in the contact details, or any amplifications or amendments of interests including any specific geographical areas of research.

A reminder

Where members have e-mail addresses, communications will be sent only by e-mail (unless they request otherwise) in order to minimise the administration costs of running the Forum.

Committee Members

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