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## SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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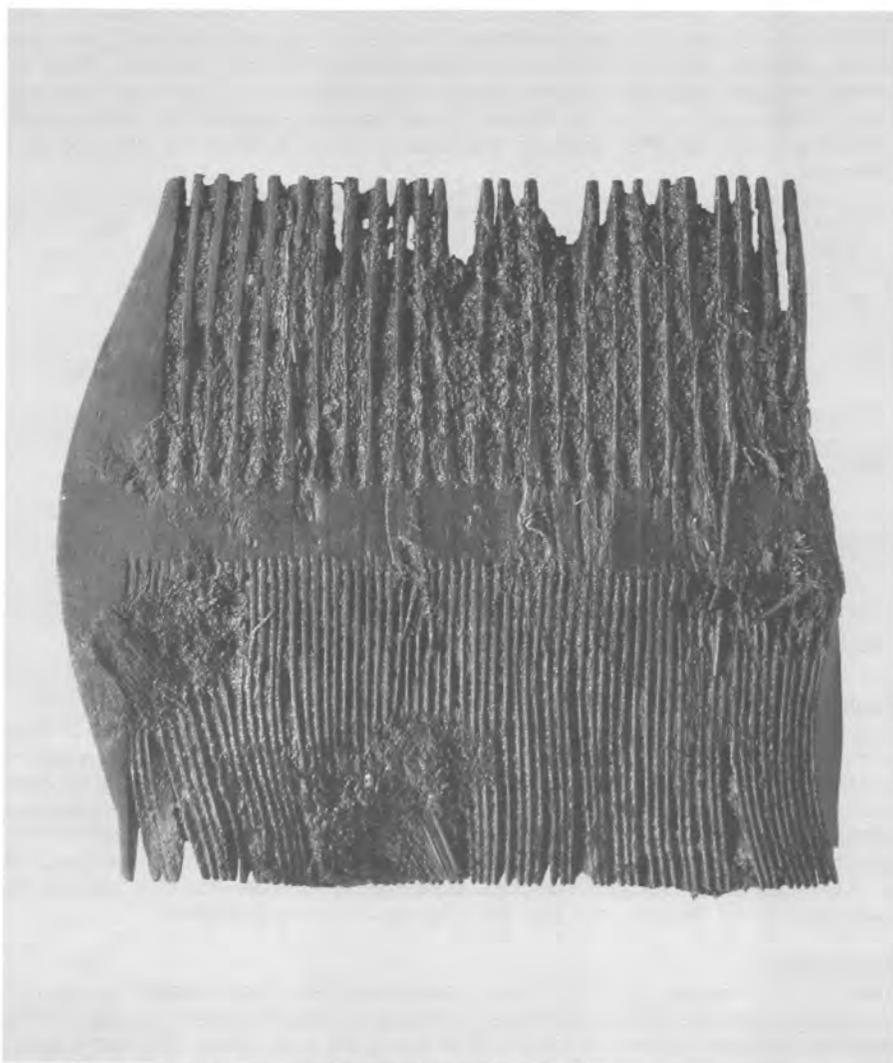
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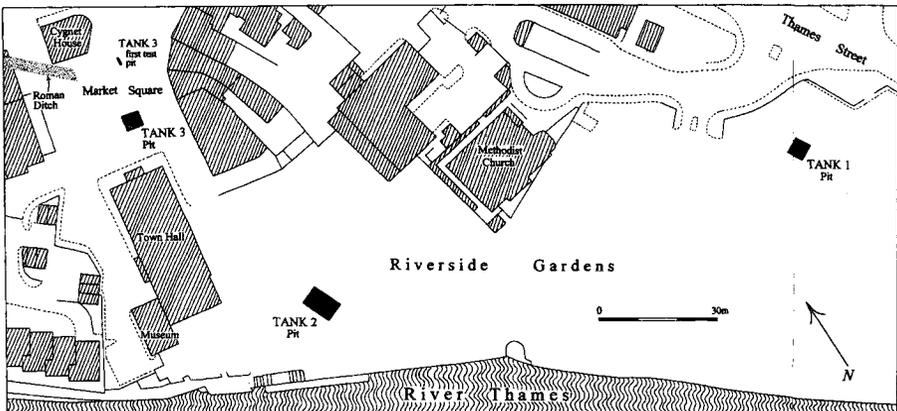
**A ROMAN WOODEN COMB FROM STAINES**

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF THE RIVERSIDE GARDENS AND MARKET SQUARE, STAINES

Phil Jones

## Introduction

Spelthorne Borough Council were responsible for creating the new Riverside Gardens and enhancing the Market Square at the west end of Staines High Street in 2001/2002, and although most groundworks were superficial, four large pits were machine-dug to 3.5m or deeper below ground level. An archaeological intervention was necessary because of the proximity of the pits to the Roman and medieval town of Staines, the core of which had straddled a narrow island lying on both sides of the High Street. Although dug a little way off-shore from the original island, this was where waterfront features might have been expected, such as timber revetments, wharves, jetties, groynes or even boats. One pit was opened towards the north end of the Market Square, but was abandoned in favour of a position further south in the square. Another was dug further south in the Victorian Memorial Gardens where an enclave of slums was known as 'the Stews' in the 19th century. The fourth was dug 120m further east and close to Thames Street, and was expected to confirm some conclusions reached after previous excavations further north at the Johnson and Clark site.



*The three Tank Pits of the Riverside Gardens/Market Square Enhancement*

## Tank 1 Pit

This 3 × 3m pit was opened-up in the Thames Street car park, and below the tarmac and relatively shallow 'made ground' was a band of clean gravel and then a buried soil that contained a few fragments of medieval or post-medieval tiles. This lay over a deep deposit of buff river clay, which, with increasing depth, became more flecked with both comminuted and whole freshwater shells. Below that were bands of mid grey/buff clay and shingly gravel and sand, before *in situ* terrace gravel was reached at 2.5m below the surface. No finds were recovered from the buff clay or its underlying fluvial deposits, but they are suspected of being prehistoric.

## Tank 2 Pit

This was the largest pit, 7.5 × 3m in area and 3.8m deep, and its uppermost stratigraphy showed that the Memorial Gardens of 1880 had been laid out directly over the truncated remains of the buildings along the west side of Blackboys Lane. 18th and 19th century brick rubble and the remnants of a tiled floor survived below the garden soil, and below lay dark grey loams that became increasingly darker,

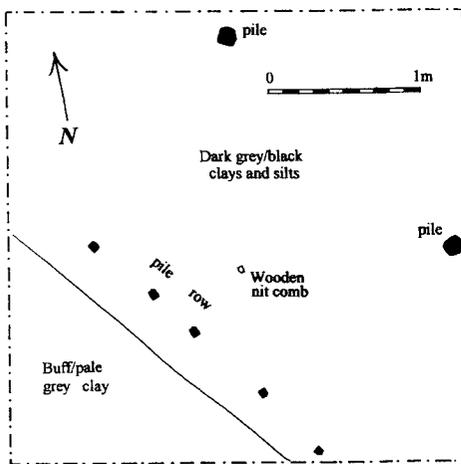
more organic and clay-rich with depth. Finds of late Roman date were recovered from this formation, which was not bottomed, including sherds of pottery, large fragments of roof and floor tiles, part of a sandal and other fragments of worked leather and many animal bones including a horse skull.

### Tank 3 First Pit

This small pit was dug towards the north end of the Market Square close to Cygnet House, where a succession of gravel road metalling horizons that extended to c1.5m below the surface contained half and quarter fragments of 18th century type bricks. The gravels lay over dark grey/black organic deposits that extended to c2.3m below the surface, and which contained some leather off-cuts but no closely dateable finds. Below them was a sterile deposit of buff/pale grey river clay not bottomed at 3.5m below ground level. As very many live services were exposed in the removal of the metalling layers, the contractors abandoned further work in favour of a position further south in the square.

### Tank 3 Second Pit

This was to house a 3 × 3m tank, and the removal of the tarmac revealed a sequence of gravel metalling horizons from which several fragments of 18th century clay tobacco pipes were recovered at a relatively deep level. Part of the external brick wall and foundations of a building was also exposed in the south-east corner, against which the uppermost layers of the road gravels had abutted; and mid-way along the western edge of the pit a large sarsen boulder was found buried within them. The metalling layers lay directly over a deep accumulation of dark grey/black organic clays and silts, but with an occasional, intervening band of clean sandy gravel that probably represents a point bar deposit laid down during a temporarily more active phase of river activity in the early Roman period. The organic formation was largely comprised of multiple interleavings of organic clays and silts over a metre deep, and represents part of the mud-flats, near-shore fringe of the town island.



Tank 3 Second Pit: Roman features and finds 4.2m below ground level

silts over a metre deep, and represents part of the mud-flats, near-shore fringe of the town island.

At c4.2m below ground level, the deepest parts of the formation were found to lie within a large, seemingly, linear feature that occupied all of the pit area except the south-west corner, where an *in situ* buff/pale grey clay was reached at the same depth, with a north-west/south-east cut line that demarcated it from the organic deposits. The feature has a steeply inclined western cut-line, and within its fill the decayed tops of four wooden piles roughly parallel with its western edge were exposed. Two larger pile tops of rounded further north-east within the fill also lay roughly parallel with the cut-line. The lower parts of the linear feature and its piles and other, hitherto, well-preserved organic contents, remain *in situ*.

Finds from the feature include Roman pottery sherds of 2nd century date, tile and animal bone fragments, leather off-cuts and discarded shoe parts from a much larger

quantity that had been present, a copper alloy brooch of Hod Hill type, a bone pin and, remarkably, a double-sided wooden comb (see frontispiece).

## Pottery and Dating

### Tank 2 Pit

44 sherds (1.60kg) were collected from the fluvial deposit that was not bottomed. Late Roman Alice Holt/Farnham greyware dominates, and represents 34% by count. Sherds of other coarsewares include a late Roman rim of a hook-rimmed jar in a south Midlands shell-tempered ware, the full profile of a BB1 Black-burnished Ware bowl and five very coarse sandy greyware sherds that are similar to, but not the same as Tilford/Overwey-type sandy ware. One of three orangeware sherds is mica-slipped and probably of 2nd century date, as might also be the ring base of a flagon. Both Samian and Oxford red-slipped fineware are present, although there is only one sherd of the former - the rim of a Central Gaulish Dr. 33 cup. At least six vessels are represented amongst the fifteen sherds of the Oxford fineware, however, including three from *mortaria*. Since the evidence from London and elsewhere suggests that the red-slipped fineware was not traded out of the Oxford region until the last third of the 3rd century, the organic deposits can only have been laid down after AD c270, and the absence of coarse sandy Tilford/Overwey sherds, which became current during the later 4th century, suggests that its deposition had been during the late 3rd or early 4th century.

### Tank 3 Second Pit

134 sherds (6.97kg) were recovered from the organic deposits, of which 43% by count is of Alice Holt/Farnham greyware of earlier Roman types. There are also sixteen sherds of Highgate-type grog-tempered ware, fourteen of Verulamium region buff sandy ware, seven of orangeware that might also be from the Verulamium region, and a few finer orangeware sherds including one from a mica-slipped beaker with roundels impressed from the inside of the body, and another that is glazed and from a closed form, probably a beaker. Three sherds of fine greyware with *en barbotine* dotted panels are from poppy beakers, and part of a hemispherical bowl is of fine, black surfaced London Ware. Continental imports include six sherds from south Spanish *amphorae* and a relatively large collection of twenty-three sherds of Samian (4.99kg), representing 18% of the collection by count, although the proportion by EVEs (estimated vessel equivalents) is closer to 25%. All vessel forms are of earlier Roman types, but there are a few sherds of Black Burnished ware that suggest a 2nd century date, since these are very rarely found in Staines and London deposits that pre-date AD c120. It is conceivable, however, that the deposit had begun to accumulate earlier in the century or even in the late 1st century, but since the feature was not bottomed, this remains uncertain. The collection may represent the dumping of household debris a little way off-shore when the mud flats were temporarily exposed. There is nothing to suggest other activities, such as the loading and unloading of pottery, unless the quantity of Samian reflects more than just its better visibility during the collection of sherds.

## Discussion

The *in situ* buff/pale grey clay in the south-west corner of the Tank 3 pit and in the abandoned test trench further north, was observed previously during archaeological work along the west side of the square at the Mackay Securities site (MSS). There, it lay thickest around the centre of the site, but was reduced to nothing in the north-east where it lapped the shore of the original town island and had been truncated by later activities. It was also largely absent in the south of MSS as a result of having been massively eroded by medieval floods, which seem not to have destroyed much, if any, of the same deposit in Tank pit 3, although a large part of it was dug away in

the creation of the Roman ditch. This sterile river clay is suspected of being prehistoric in origin.

A peat formation was found below the buff/grey clay across all of the MSS site, and to such a depth in its south-west corner that much still lies below the basement carpark floor, where it was never bottomed. It may also lie below the buff/pale grey clay in the area of the Tank 3 pit.

The stratigraphy of Tank 1 pit was a surprise. North from it, between the Thames Street car park and the High Street, the Johnson and Clarks (J&C) department store site had been re-developed with a basement car park in 1989/90, and all of its southern half was found to be comprised of near-shore, deeply-lying organic muds of Roman and medieval date. Since these increased in depth towards the southern end of J&C, a wide palaeochannel that defined the southern edge of the High Street island had been surmised. More of the same organic deposits were expected in pit 1, but instead, the buff river clay was revealed below a buried soil at 1m below the ground surface. This is suspected of being prehistoric, and its absence in the J&C site is probably due to its later destruction by flooding. An important implication from this, is that, because the watercourse south of the High Street island in the Roman and medieval periods was narrower than previously thought, there may be extensive tracts of prehistoric fluvial deposits further south from it.

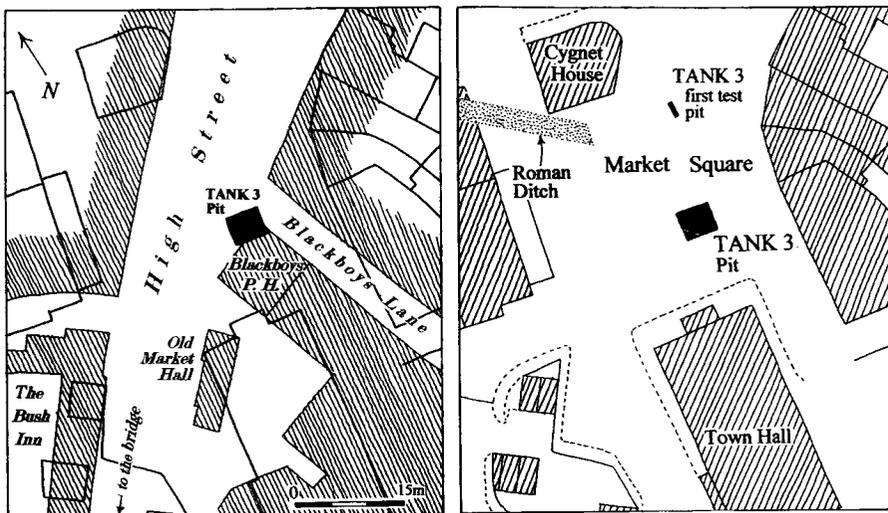
Although the exposure of the Roman cut feature and piles at such great depth in the Tank 3 pit had been another surprise, the continued absence in the Market Square area of any Roman metallurgy, side ditches or pile bases confirms a previous deduction that the London to Silchester highway had not continued its straight alignment from Brentford to cross the Thames at a bridge here. Like many Roman bridge approaches, it may have been re-aligned, perhaps up Church Street, towards a more expedient crossing point.

The earliest Roman deposit of the Tank 3 pit filled the feature that may have been a ditch, and overflowed its south-west bank of buff/pale grey clay. All finds from it are of early to mid 2nd century date, but it could have been first dug at a much earlier date in the Roman period. Its alignment is almost the same as that of a ditch at MSS, which, although truncated, was still over 2m wide and 3m deep, and remains the largest Roman linear feature so far found in Staines. It also ran parallel with Church Street, the alternative route for the Roman bridge approach road.

Although almost parallel with the MSS ditch, the western edge of the Tank 3 pit feature would have run c6m distant from it, if the same alignments continued below the Market Square. It is possible, therefore, that there were at least two large, and parallel early Roman ditches in the area, but although the Tank pit 3 feature would have been deep enough to survive the later erosion and truncation that afflicted the MSS site it did not extend as far. Another possibility is that there is only one ditch, which widens considerably through the Market Square area, and the nature of the fills and the similar finds from both supports this possibility. The pottery from both was of the same few Roman decades and they both contained similar collections of cordwainers waste. One difference, however, was that no internal piles were present along the MSS length of ditch.

Although the MSS ditch and Tank 3 linear feature may have served as drains or land divisions or both, their sizes suggest some greater importance. This western area of the town would have been constantly at risk of flooding and erosion, and they might, therefore, have been engineered as river defences to channel floodwaters away from the west end of the early Roman settlement.

The dark grey/black muds and silts of the Tank 3 pit were very similar to those found in the Tank 2 pit, 60m further south and closer to the modern bank of the Thames, but all pottery sherds from there are, at least, one and a half centuries later than those of Tank 3. The absence of later Roman horizons in the more northerly



**Tank 3 Pits in the Market Square, Staines**

*Left: Present-day buildings overlain over the 1st edition OS map*

*Right: Modern layout showing the Tank Pits and the Roman ditch of the MSS site*

exposure suggests that the littoral fringe of the Thames/Colne had migrated further south in the intervening period, with a corresponding increase of land. Very similar deeply-lying deposits of late Roman date were found below the Old Town Hall when it was under-pinned, where archaeological work provided a cross section through the Roman near-shore deposits that must also exist between Tanks 2 and 3. It demonstrated the absence of any formal waterfront structures during the Roman period.

Medieval deposits were not positively identified in any of the Tank pits, and no sherds of the period were found. The buried soil that directly overlay the fluvial deposit in the Tank 1 pit contained a few fragments of roof tile that could be medieval, but are more likely to be post-medieval in date, and a similar soil beneath 18th century floors and rubble in the Tank 2 pit is also more likely to have been of earlier post-medieval date, even though the original tilling may have been earlier.

The post-medieval archaeology of the Tank 3 pit was as remarkable as that of the early Roman period, since it included part of the frontage of a building that had once stood on the edge of the Market Square until its demolition in the late 1870's. That was when a comprehensive re-development of the area included the destruction of the old Market Hall, several buildings along the east side of the square and all buildings along both sides of Blackboys Lane. In their place the Town Hall was built, as well as nos 3-7 in the square, and the Memorial Gardens were laid out over the demolished slum squalour of Blackboys Lane.

The wall found along the southern edge of the Tank 3 pit can only have belonged to the Blackboys ale house, and the several brick courses that survived of it were of 18th century type without frogs. They survived demolition in the 19th century re-development because of their burial by later gravel metallings that were laid directly against the building itself. The sarsen boulder found in the western baulk may have been deliberately emplaced to prevent carriage traffic damaging the walls. There is a contemporary painting of the Market Square that shows all its main buildings. From



*Market Square and Bridge shown on a watercolour of c1828*

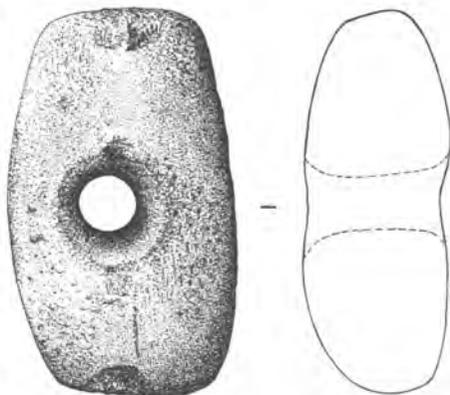
left to right, this shows a thatched building with an external brick chimney, the Georgian-style frontage of the Blackboys ale house, the old Market Hall, the bridge, The Bush Inn, various smaller ale houses and hostelries and The Red Lion Inn far right. All were demolished in the 1870s.

### THREE PREHISTORIC IMPLEMENTS FROM THE SURREY WEALD

*Gaby Rapson*

#### A Macehead From Burstow Park Farm, Outwood

This piece was found several years ago by the late John Nicholson in a field east of the farm (TQ 323 474). It has not been formally identified, but appears to be a 'granite' or some other igneous rock type. It has suffered some damage to both ends, probably from being used as a hammer, and has some slight plough damage. There are several areas of polish on the piece, which may indicate a use as a rubber at some point during its history. Although such maceheads were often hung in barns to deter malevolent spirits (Jon Cotton, pers. comm.), the field in which it was found has produced further evidence of multi-period prehistoric activity, including core tools and a large quantity of struck flint waste with some associated artefacts, so it is likely that it belongs with this assemblage.



*Macehead from Burstow Park Farm.  
Scale 1:3*

## Two Ground Axes From Hope Farm, Nutfield

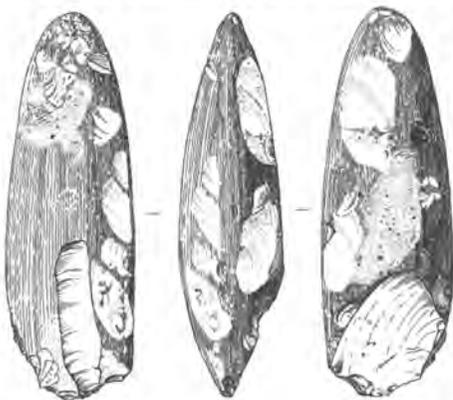
Two Neolithic axes were found here (TQ 314 475) in the 1970s by the children of Jack and Laurie Renault. The site lies a quarter of a mile west of Burstow Park Farm.

The stone one is a Type 4a Cornish Greenstone axe with a ground cutting edge, and was found by Andrew Renault whilst footings were being dug for a house extension. It was examined by staff of the British Museum in the 1970s, and suggested dates were '3150-2750 BC +/-150 years, probably earlier than later'.



*Ground axe from Hope Farm, Nutfield. Scale 1:3*

The unusual polished flint axe was found in the bank of a ditch several metres north-west of the house by Suzanne Renault. It is of mixed brown and grey colouration, and somewhat resembles polished horn. Roger Ellaby has tentatively suggested that the flint may not be local. It has suffered extensive loss of one face of the cutting edge and slight damage to the other, both of which may have been caused by use or plough damage.

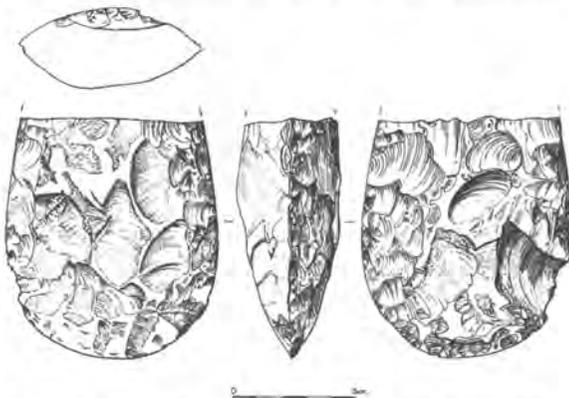


*Flint axe from Hope Farm, Nutfield. Scale 1:3*

These axes were loaned to Robin Tanner for recording, and provide some evidence that non-local goods were being brought into the area during the Neolithic period. Such artefacts, and others from the many sites discovered by Robin, continue to show that this part of the Weald was utilised during the Lower Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Ages. Evidence for Roman and medieval occupation may suggest that this occupation was more or less continuous up to the present day.

## Ground Axe from Newdigate, Kingsland

This splendid, well-made half of a partially ground axe was discovered in a garden in a clay soil at a depth of c15cms below the surface (TQ 193 421), by Fliiss and Haydn Paul. It



*Ground axe from Newdigate, Kingsland. Scale 1:3*

was recognised as a Neolithic artefact by Sam Stuart and loaned to the author for recording.

Minor investigation of the find spot revealed only 19th and 20th century detritus. Its original provenance, and how it came to be deposited in the garden is as yet unclear, but in the light of discoveries made by Robin Tanner in the Weald, it may be premature to assume that the piece was discarded by a collector, and prudent to carry out a preliminary field-walking programme in the area should the opportunity occur.

Many thanks to all the finders and their families, and to Robin Tanner.

## THE ROAD TO CALLEVA

*Jim Goddard*

The Roman road from London to the city of *Calleva Atrebatum* at Silchester in Hampshire runs through Surrey, and its first stretch is clearly visible on the OS maps, as this part is still used as a road today. From the City, it runs along the northern border of Hyde Park, passes through Hammersmith, running beside the river briefly at Brentford, past the grounds of Syon House and Hounslow Heath, before finally crossing the river at Staines, the Roman bridging settlement of *Ad Pontes*<sup>1</sup>.

Here, however, it seems to disappear as it meets the floodplain of Egham, and there is some disagreement as to where it is thought to have run. One likely contender is the Egham Causeway, which runs westwards from Staines Bridge to the Glanty, the present position of Runnymede Bridge. The banking visible today was built in the 13th century, but there is evidence that the Roman road could have taken this route.

In 1964 David Barker found some late Bronze Age potsherds in a bank at the bottom of his garden at the time<sup>2</sup>, and when this was investigated it was found to be another stretch of causeway, 18m in width, at an angle to the known one, going in a south-westerly direction, towards the Virginia Water lake and lining up with the known stretch of road where it reappears at Sunningdale.

The Surrey Sites and Monuments Record says of it: "To the northeast it is fragmentary but can still be traced along the back of Grange Road where the fences are aligned along it, to the junction of Station and High Street (Egham). It reappears briefly in the corner of the football field at Glanty, as a bank 14 metres in width. It is significant that in the vicinity of Egham Church (Saxon in origin) the High Street is on its apparent alignment.

"Although such evidence as there is points to a medieval origin for the Egham causeway, there can be no doubt that if this portion is a continuation, it effectively bridges two accepted portions of Roman Road 4a, Staines Bridge and Bakeham House, avoiding low ground to the north and south, and taking advantage of a slight natural ridge through Egham. It may be that the Egham causeway represents the line of the Roman road re-made in medieval times."

The Virginia Water area was also low-lying marshy land before it was landscaped by William, Duke of Cumberland in the 1740s<sup>3</sup>, (known as "The Butcher of Culloden" after his campaign in Scotland in 1746), so this, and the subsequent building of the lake and park, and Fort Belvedere to the south, is probably the reason for the disappearance of the road here. Cumberland was a brother of George III and Ranger of Windsor Great Park. It was also close to the possible site of an even greater butchery in AD60 - that being the final battle between the Roman 14th Legion and Queen Boudicca's army of Britons in rebellion<sup>4</sup>. The London Archaeologist, dated Autumn 1983 gave sound reasons for believing the site to have been somewhere between Callow Hill and Knowl Hill, and it certainly fulfils Tacitus' description of the

Roman position being approached by a narrow defile with a wood at the back and a plain in the front.

It is strange that the Virginia Water Roman temple should have been placed exactly on the line of the road<sup>2</sup>. This is a genuine temple, about 2,000 years old, however it was not built here but at Leptis Magna near Tripoli in Libya. It was brought to England and presented to the Prince Regent in 1816. A proposal was made to use it for the portico of the British Museum but this never materialised and the stones were set up at Virginia Water as an ornamental feature in 1826 by George IV "to beautify his garden".

Fort Belvedere to the south-west is also immediately adjacent to the line of the road. This was a folly that became a royal residence<sup>5</sup>. The Duke of Cumberland built it as a lavish summer-house, from the roof of which seven counties can be seen. It was enlarged by George IV in 1828 and converted into the appearance of a fort. Edward VIII lived at Fort Belvedere from 1928 until his abdication in 1936, and his abdication broadcast was made from here.

South-west of Fort Belvedere, a walk revealed a stretch of private road and a field boundary in the other direction, following the line of the road, near Cowarth Farm. A little further on the line of the road crosses Bedford Lane, Sunningdale - it is just beyond this that it appears on the street map as "The Devil's Highway", the name it has been known by from here all the way to Silchester. At Bedford Lane there did not seem to be any sign of it - a local resident was surprised that the course of a Roman road ran through his house - then a gap in the hedge on the other side of the road revealed a short path followed by a property boundary following the road line. This is clearly visible on the aerial photograph from Multimap, going down to the next road junction it crosses, at Broomhall Lane.

From here the road crosses Wardour Lodge and Hillhampton - both are private land and inaccessible, but a fence line can be seen following it from Dry Arch Road to Broomhall Lane. It then runs along a stretch of road at Fireball Hill, and at the end of this can be seen going into the distance as a track.

It continues from here to Windlesham, where it is clearly visible on the aerial photograph as a line of trees, then at Swinley Road turns westward and goes across Swinley Forest to the Roman Star Post as a wide track, clearly present on the ground and from the air<sup>6</sup>. It then it goes through Crowthorne, passing just north of Broadmoor Hospital - this is clear from the air. There are two estates there that are on the line of the road - Roman Ride and Devil's Highway. Finally it goes through the Stratfield Saye area and runs to the East Gate of the city of Calleva at Silchester - visible as a track and then a cropmark as it approaches the gate.

## References

- 1 Surrey Sites and Monuments Record No.3727 - London-Silchester Road
- 2 Surrey Sites and Monuments Record No.794 - Causeway-branch of 13th century
- 3 Virginia Water - <http://www.thamesweb.co.uk/windsor/info/grtpk.html#anchor445739>
- 4 Virginia Water - [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~villages/Surreyvirginia\\_water.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~villages/Surreyvirginia_water.htm)
- 5 Some Notes on Fort Belvedere - <http://www.lof-heatherwood.fsnet.co.uk/fort1.htm>
- 6 Aerial pictures from <http://www.multimap.com>

*From the April 2003 Newsletter (no 75) of the Addlestone Historical Society, with many thanks.*

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## SURREY LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

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### SUMMER MEETING AT THORPE

*Sunday 20th July*

- 2.30 pm Short talk on Thorpe in Thorpe Hall by Jill Williams, author of *Thorpe: a Surrey Village in Maps*, published by the Society in December 2002.  
3.00 Walk around Thorpe led by Jill Williams and colleagues.  
4.00 Refreshments in Thorpe Hall where there will be displays and a bookstall.  
4.45 Depart.

A charge of £2 will be made, payable on arrival.

Thorpe Hall is near the church in Coldharbour Lane (NGR 025687). From the M25, take exit 11 and then the A317 and the A320 to Chertsey. Continue on the A320 north-west for 750m and then, at a roundabout go straight ahead along Thorpe Road (B388). After crossing a bridge over the M3 turn right at a roundabout along Green Road into Thorpe Village. Coldharbour Lane is on the right after 500m and Thorpe Hall is then on the right after 250m. It will be possible to park at the roadside but **do not park in Church Approach** (if you do you are likely to be clamped).

### SYMPOSIUM

**Surrey Historians: Advance Notice**  
**Saturday 8th November 2003**

**Chertsey Hall, 10.30am to 5.30pm.**

Lectures and displays.

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## MISCELLANY

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### COCKS FARM ROMAN VILLA, ABINGER HAMMER

Following reports that a dispersed hoard of more than 300 Roman coins had been found c1970 in topsoil on land adjoining the scheduled site, a metal detector survey and trial excavation took place in May 2003. No coins were found by either method, and it was concluded that no hoard had indeed existed.

The 1.5m<sup>2</sup> trench, however, located undisturbed Roman levels at a depth of c0.4m in the form of a thin spread of tile and stone debris. Along the southern edge of the trench ran a vertical-sided feature more than 0.6m deep, which contained Roman pottery, including Samian, as well as stone, mortar and other debris. This was interpreted as a robber trench of a building demolished in the Roman period, and extends our knowledge of the known villa buildings into an area where remains were hitherto assumed but not proven.

*David Williams, Finds Liaison Officer*

### COBHAM PARK

*David Taylor*

Since writing the article that appeared in *Bulletin 366*, I have looked at a deed at the Surrey History Centre (K176/9/6), which is a lease for one year by George Smyther of Cobham, Gent. to Thomas Baldewyn of Guildford, Gent. and Richard Hunt of Wotton, Gent. of the Manor and Capital Messuage called Downe Hall alias Downe Place in Cobham. It is dated 3rd May 1671 and specifically refers to Downe Hall alias

Downe Place and surrounding land holdings. Someone at a later date, however, probably the 18th century, has written on the reverse of the deed *1671 Downe Farm, Cobham*. This seems to prove conclusively that Downe Hall alias Downe Place stood on the site of the present Downside Farm.

This shows the importance of looking on the other side of deeds!

## **SENSATIONAL FIND FROM SOUTHWARK**

On-going excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology of a large site at the corner of Tabard Street and Long Lane in Southwark have revealed the ground plan of an important Roman masonry building, measuring c24m X 10m, and with its west wall supplemented by square buttresses. Not content with that, however, during the excavation of a nearby pit, Dougie Killock and his team also discovered part of an official inscription on a fragment of white marble. Roughly translated, it reads:

*To the spirits of the emperors (and) the god Mars Camulos,  
Tiberinius Celerianus, ranking moritex of the (traders) of London, set this up.*

The inscription will be on temporary display at the Cuming Museum in the near future and thereafter at the Museum of London. I hope we hear more about this site very soon.

## **FELTMAKERS IN SOUTHWARK:**

### **A 16th century felt hat from Fastolph's Place sparks enquiry**

*Rosemary Weinstein*

In the 16th century fashion changed from caps to hats, mostly of felt. The Feltmakers' Company were incorporated in 1604, and by the 1680s were operating largely from Southwark, as their quarterage payments (trade subscriptions) show. This was unusual for a City Company at this time. Southwark, with its good water supplies, especially around the Maze Pond, provided an ideal base for this noxious industry. Its product was the fashionable beaver felt hat (or cheaper 'castor' - mixed for variety). Everyday versions were made of fine or coarse wool felts. Everybody always wore a hat until after World War 2, so the Feltmakers' fortunes were made.

Highly prosperous by the 1730s, as export figures, Sun Alliance Fire Insurance records and probate inventories show, the Feltmakers were elevated to a Livery Company in 1733. Many hatter entrepreneurs flouted the rules, especially regarding employment of 'foreigners' and 'piece-work' - putting work out. The Company lost control of the trade as a result of this, and the great increase in hatters outside their jurisdiction, and repealed their bye-laws in 1755. From then on it was legal to employ cheaper hatters in Lancashire and elsewhere. Southwark hatters began this move as early as 1761.

The 19th century saw famous manufacturers appear on the scene - Christy of Bermondsey Street, the Bowlers (later Victor Joy) of Southwark Bridge Road, Tress of Stamford Street, Lincoln Bennett of Nelson Square and many smaller firms. When they dwindled in the 20th century the hatters' furriers, like Richard Bennett, a later Master of the Company, hung on. After the heyday of the silk top hat (also made by feltmakers) the hard felt bowler and the soft felt trilby and homburg - all local to Southwark, the hattery story passes to Luton, Beds, where women's felts ousted the straw hats after WW1.

Hats are still made in Southwark, but alas, not of felt!

*Reprinted from the March 2003 Newsletter of the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society (no 93), with many thanks.*

## BOX HILL

Marion Pevy

Box Hill is one of the best-known beauty spots on the North Downs. At 193m above sea level it is a prominent feature of the landscape, standing at the corner of one of the breaks in the line of chalk ridge that runs through Surrey and Kent to the Straits of Dover. Since Roman times all lines of communication have had to pass through the gap caused by the River Mole below the Hill; the Roman Stane or 'Stone' Street, which linked the then seaport of Chichester with London, crossed the Mole by a ford. The old road from Winchester to Canterbury winds along the foot of the hill, its route being marked in some sections by ancient yew trees. Later came the carriageways, the stagecoach routes, the railway in 1849 and the roads.

Box Hill was not always known as such. William Camden referred to it in 1586 as White Hill, a term that described the chalk soil on the escarpment and sides of the valley where characteristic downland plants have flourished. The 394 feet sheer chalk escarpment is still known as The Whites and is the finest natural river cliff in the county. On it grows the ancient box woodland that has survived since the end of the ice age and probably even before then. It is believed that the plantations of box - which for several hundred years until the beginning of the 19th century produced an immensely lucrative crop of timber - led to the renaming of the Hill. The diarist John Evelyn who lived at Wootton, wrote in 1655, said: "*I went ... to see those rare natural boxes. Here are such goodly walks and hills, shaded with yew and box, as to render the place extremely agreeable, it seeming for those evergreens to be summer all winter.*"

For centuries the Hill has been regarded as one of the loveliest places among the Surrey Hills, and has attracted and inspired many writers, novelists and poets, including Jane Austen, John Keats, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Daniel Defoe, who spent a few months in West Humble, provided a vivid description of the *alfresco* parties enjoyed on Box Hill by the *bon vivants* of his day. In 1876, Robert Louis Stevenson was staying at the Burford Bridge Hotel when he met Box Hill's most famous resident, George Meredith, who lived at Flint Cottage, a house set among the trees near the bottom of the zig-zag road, from 1867 until his death in 1909. George Meredith's lyric "Love in the Valley" was directly inspired by Happy Valley, also known as Juniper Bottom, his favourite evening walk. Meredith's grave in Dorking Cemetery is marked with an open book bearing the words from *Vittoria*: "Life is but a little holding/Lent to do a mighty labour".

Another distinguished name associated with Box Hill is John Logie Baird who, in 1930, took up residence in Swiss Cottage, a mid-19th century flint house on the summit of the Hill, near the old fort. It was here that the TV pioneer conducted some of his early experiments sending signals to the valley below.

It was not only famous people who frequented Box Hill. Its natural beauty, its proximity to London and easy accessibility from the surrounding area have attracted countless numbers of people for centuries. To the Victorians and Edwardians it was literally a breath of fresh air and was described both as "an outer and more refined Hampstead Heath" and "the playground of Londoners". At weekends thousands of day-trippers would arrive at Box Hill station or travel by bus or coach to the Burford Bridge Hotel and make their way to the summit to picnic and enjoy the view. It was also a popular destination for cyclists and walkers.

Until 1912 Box Hill was in private ownership. The main hill, with an area of 230 acres, was offered for sale on the open market by the then Lord Francis Hope (later the Duke of Newcastle) and was bought by Mr Leopold Salomons of Norbury Park, who gave it to the National Trust. In 1922 Miss Alice Warburg gave the Trust an adjacent area of land to the north of the summit known as Juniper Bottom (and Happy Valley). This gift was a thanks offering for the termination of the First World War. In 1923 a

further 248 acres were purchased for the Trust by public subscription, and 4 acres near the stepping stones were given by Sir William Lawrence, Bart, and Mr E Macintosh. In 1925 the Box Hill Management Committee purchased 11 acres of Oakwood and 85 acres of White Hill and Cockshot Wood (the area on the north of Headley Lane overlooking Juniper Bottom). In 1971 Box Hill was designated an official Country Park, a measure intended to preserve the countryside near cities for recreational use.

Mr L Salomon's gift of the main part of the hill is commemorated by a memorial to him on the summit, 600 feet above sea level. This vantage point provides one of the finest panoramic views across southern England. On the top of the memorial are inscribed directional lines and the distance of places which may be seen on a clear day, including Crowborough Beacon (24 miles), Mount Harry, Lewes (30 miles), the Devil's Dyke (26 miles), Shoreham Gap (26 miles), Chanctonbury Ring (26 miles) and Hindhead (20 miles).

*From the Spring 2003 Newsletter (no. 45) of the Walton on the Hill & District Local History Society, with many thanks.*

## **MITCHAM WINDMILL**

**Tony Scott**

Mitcham windmill was built on the common waste of the parish in 1806, after permission was given by James Moore to John Blake Parker, on condition that the villagers' grain was ground on two days each week. It was a hollow post mill, which is fairly unusual, but was the same form of construction as the Wimbledon windmill.

The windmill was struck by lightning in the mid-1850s and partly destroyed, but was presumably repaired. It ceased working in 1860, in 1879 two sails were destroyed by lightning and in 1908 the mill was dismantled, leaving only the main post and the roundhouse. The remains have had no roof since then and were slowly deteriorating. In 1988 the remains were included on the Statutory List of buildings of architectural or historic interest (*ie* Listed Grade II).

The miller's house was rebuilt in 1861 and survives today as the Mill House restaurant/pub in Windmill Road. When a planning application to alter it was received in May 2001 the Council sought to extend the scope of the proposals to include consolidation and preservation of the surviving mill structure. The applicants agreed to commission a specialist condition survey report, and as a result planning permission was granted on 15th August 2002, subject to the following conditions:

- \* Works on the mill structure are completed before the new extension is occupied.
- \* Timber repairs are carried out in accordance with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings guidelines, and agreed in advance.
- \* Specialist biennial inspection of the mill structure takes place and also regular local inspections.

We wait to see how effective will be the preservation work.

*From the March 2003 Bulletin (no. 195) of the Merton Historical Society, with many thanks*

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## **REVIEWS**

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### **“The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalen, Ripley”**

**by Ken Bourne, with notes by Les Bowerman and published by the Send and Ripley History Society**

In 1963 R N Bloxam published a 24-page booklet, *The Church and Parish of Ripley, Surrey*. Only ten pages related specifically to the church and there were inevitably

some mistakes, eg describing the Augustinian canons who founded Newark Priory as white instead of black, the colour of their robes/habits and giving Herbert Liddell Curtis's second initial as 'S'.

The booklet had been out of print for some time prior to 1975 when the Society was formed, and I have never succeeded in obtaining an original copy. It had been the intention to produce a new guide ever since Ripley was added to the name of the Society in 1982, but there always seemed to be something else to do. To fill the gap our former Treasurer, the late Janet Hill, in 1993 produced a duplicated 8-page *Illustrated History of the Church and Parish of Ripley* consisting of 2 sheets of A4. It has served well as a stop-gap for ten years, but repeated the error of Cortis's initial and compounded the error by stating that he was the first person to exceed 30 mph on a bicycle. In fact he was the first to ride 20 miles in an hour (in 1882).

The wonderful news is that the church now has the book it deserves. As well as carrying out the duties of President and producing this bi-monthly Journal to a standard that is probably unsurpassed among local history societies, Ken Bourne has now published in the name of the Society a comprehensive 68-page book devoted solely to the church. It is Perfect-bound with a semi-stiff cover and pages sized 6" x 8 1/4". The cover has a pen and ink illustration of the church drawn in about 1900 which most will not have seen before. Inside are two colour illustrations, plus some 30 in monochrome. By printing in dark brown on ivory paper a pleasant sepia effect is achieved.

Without doubt St Mary Magdalen, with its quality chancel dating from 1160, is a delightful and very interesting church. Ken has looked at every aspect of its history and architecture and produced a scholarly book, which will appeal to academics, local residents and outside visitors alike. Most church histories have hitherto tended to deal with Victorian work only superficially and usually in a somewhat disparaging way. A century on, and the Victorians are beginning to look more interesting. Ken has embraced this aspect of Ripley church enthusiastically and found much that is worth describing and discussing.

For such a comprehensive book of this size, there are remarkably few errors, and most of those are typographical. Unfortunately but not too drastically, the artist Charles E Shaw has been given the initial 'R L' and in one place the word 'emigrated' has become 'immigrated'. Apart from that I have found nothing worth mentioning. Even H L Cortis appears faultlessly!

I imagine most will agree that this new book, the Send and Ripley Society's eleventh publication, is as good as any we have produced. It can only enhance our reputation. For the amount of research involved, the number of illustrations and the quantity of information contained, it has to be remarkable value at £5.

The book is available from Send and Ripley History Society's Museum on Saturday mornings and the third Sunday in the month, also from the Ripley and Send Post Offices and the RHS bookshop at Wisley Gardens. It may also be ordered by post from John Slatford, St George's Farmhouse, High Street, Ripley, Surrey GU23 6AF for £6 to include post and packing.

*From the Jan/Feb 2003 Journal (Volume 5 no. 168) of the Send & Ripley History Society, with many thanks.*

**"Ashted in Focus"**. Photographs by Albert C Pruden; compiled by K Combeer; published by Mole Valley Press with Ashted Residents' Association. ISBN 0-9540649-1-7. 2003. 96p. Paperback. £8.99.

This collection of some 170 photographs, a modern pictorial history, emanates from a Millennium project of the Ashted Residents' Association to record the face of

Ashtead in the year 2000, and provides a time capsule of the parish at the turn of the century. Generous sponsorship by local firms has resulted in high quality colour reproduction at an attractive cover price.

The photographs are arranged under six headings: Serving the Community, Hidden Corners, Churches and Schools, Shops and Shopkeepers, The Changing face of Ashtead, Houses, Roads and Lanes, and contain many unexpected shots of Ashtead. A numbered sketch map would have been helpful in locating some of these.

The photographs have captions that, where relevant, relate the subject to their historic context, although these vary in detail. In some instances, the captions summarise developments up to the year of publication. It is unfortunate that the caption (p29) refers to the railway built in the 1840s...". The line was opened in 1859. Errors such as this cause one to doubt the veracity of other facts in the book. Mention of "access to Crampshaw Brickworks" (p73) is of interest. One normally thinks of such features being associated with the heavier clay areas further north; such as the Roman tileworks on Ashtead Common, or brickworks which functioned at one time in Lower Ashtead. Certain facts could have increased interest if they had been added to the captions. For instance, one of the row of cottages (foot of p76) served as Ashtead's first telephone exchange. Or again, at one time during the 19th century, Woodfield Lane (p80) was known as Station Road - for obvious reasons!

Some of the photographs are of historic interest, such as those of Dobbe's Nursery (p57) where the site is being developed for housing. The photograph of flooding in Farm Lane (p71) records an historic fact. Photographs such as those of the office block and subsequent development of its site as Clarendon Mews (p63) demonstrate the changing face of Ashtead during recent years.

There is an index and a short bibliography.

*Alan Gillies*

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## CONFERENCES

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### DISCOVERING OUR SAXON PAST

*Council for Kentish Archaeology*

**Christ Church University College, North Holmes Road, Canterbury**

**Saturday 1st November 2003**

**2pm-5.30pm**

**New Work from Sutton Hoo**

**The Discovery of Saxon Dover**

**Investigating Dark Age London**

*Angela Care Evans* (British Museum).

*Brian Phelp* (Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit).

*Bob Cowie* (London Museum and Birkbeck College).

**Tickets:** £3, available from CKA, 7, Sandy Ridge, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8HP. Cheques payable to CKA; s.a.e. please.

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## LECTURES, SYMPOSIA and VISITS COMMITTEE

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### HERSTMONCEUX CASTLE

**Thursday 25th to Sunday 28th July 2003**

An extended weekend, by popular demand. For this our fourth visit, there is still more to see and do whilst staying at, and enjoying the benefits of, Herstmonceux Castle.

*Visits to include:*

Firle Place and Charleston

Rye and Camber Castle

Bodiam Castle and the Kent and East Sussex Railway to Tenterden

Bexhill Museum and the de la Warr Pavilion

Dinosaur fossil hunting on Pett Level

Herstmonceux Castle is a 15th Century brick built moated castle, set in beautiful parkland and superb Elizabethan gardens. It has a purpose built Hall of Residence in the grounds of the estate, which provides excellent and high standard accommodation. Breakfast and Dinner are taken in the Great Hall and in the evenings we have a private room for talks, slides and videos, together with the use of 'The Headless Drummer', the Castle's own personal pub. Also within the grounds lies the former home of the world-famous Greenwich Observatory. This is now open to the public and has been converted into a Science Centre and Discovery Park. In addition, there is an excavation taking place in the grounds and there will be the opportunity to have a guided tour.

Prices: from £45 per person per night, inclusive of dinner, bed and breakfast.

	En Suite		Standard	
	3 nights	per night	3 nights	per night
Single Room	£205	£69	£140	£47
Twin Room	£180	£60	£135	£45
Double Room	£165	£55	—	—

If you are interested or want to know more, Tel: 01483 420575 or email [liz.whitbourn@btinternet.com](mailto:liz.whitbourn@btinternet.com)

**BARCOMBE ROMAN VILLA and LEWES ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOUR**

*Sunday 20th July 2003*

**In conjunction with the Roman Studies Group**

**Barcombe Roman Villa:** A guided tour of the ongoing excavations in the morning, by kind invitation from David Rudling, director of UCL Field Archaeology Unit, before moving on to Lewes.

**Lewes,** the county town of Sussex holds many delights, amongst which are Lewes Castle, Barbican House Museum and Anne of Cleves House.

**Lunch:** Sandwiches at the excavation, or there are plenty of places to eat in Lewes.

Our coach leaves Farncombe Railway Station, near Godalming at 9.30am (Parking available nearby). We leave Lewes at around 5pm. There are a limited number of spaces as we are restricted to a small coach due to the narrow country lanes around Barcombe, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Cost: £10 per person. Please send cheque made out to 'Mrs E Whitbourn' to 65 Binscombe Crescent, Binscombe, Surrey, GU7 3RA

For more information, or to book a space please contact Elizabeth Whitbourn, Tel: 01483 420575 or e-mail [liz.whitbourn@btinternet.com](mailto:liz.whitbourn@btinternet.com)

**HERITAGE WALKS**

Heritage walks led by Iain Wakeford take place every Sunday afternoon throughout the year somewhere in north-west Surrey, with extra walks during the summer on Friday evenings (from now until the end of August) and on Tuesday evenings during June and July. The evening walks all start at 7pm and the Sunday afternoon walks start at 2pm. All walks last for about two hours and are suitable for all ages.

They are not rambles - more like ambles - with plenty of stops to look and learn about the history of the area. There is no need to book, just turn up and walk in a small friendly group of all ages. Children and dogs welcome - latter on leads please.

### **Sunday afternoon walks**

- 13th July Wood Street, meet on the village green under the Maypole.
- 20th July Ash Vale, meet at the entrance to Ash Vale station.
- 27th July Gracious Pond, Chobham, meet at the car park by the pond.
- 3rd August Addestone, meet in the car park, Garfield Road.
- 10th August Englefield Green, meet on the green, St Judes Road.
- 17th August Egham, meet outside the Institute and Museum, The Precinct.
- 31st August East Horsley, meet outside the Post Office, Ockham Road South.

### **Tuesday evening walks**

- 15th July Ripley, meet on the village green by playground.
- 22nd July Pyrford, meet at Pyrford Lock, Lock Lane.
- 29th July Byfleet, meet on the old Parvis Bridge over the Wey Navigation.

### **Friday evening walks**

- 11th July Goldsworth Park, meet at Goldwater Lodge, Wishbone Way.
- 18th July Whitmoor Common, meet by the Jolly Farmer, Burdenshot Hill.
- 25th July Bisley, meet under the Millennium Clock, Bisley Green.
- 1st August Brookwood, meet outside the Post Office, Connaught Road.
- 8th August Pirbright, meet on the village green by the pond.
- 15th August Bagshot, meet in the Square, Bagshot.
- 29th August The Ghosts of Woking Prison, meet in the car park, St Johns Lye.

Over August Bank Holiday weekend there will be special *War of the Worlds* walks. Every Thursday evening until the end of August there will be visits to Woking Palace: meet at 7pm opposite the Post Office, Old Woking.

Leaflets giving details of the walks are available at the Information Centre in Crown Square, Woking. All walks are free though donations are welcome and booklets with notes and illustrations on the places of interest are often available priced from £1.50 to £2. For a copy of the programme or further information contact Iain Wakeford at 166 High Street, Old Woking, GU22 9JH or Tel: 01483 722591.

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## **COURSES**

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### **THE HISTORY OF COBHAM**

#### **SIX EVENINGS OF ILLUSTRATED LECTURES AND DISCUSSION**

*David Taylor*

COBHAM METHODIST CHURCH HALL, CEDAR ROAD

Wednesdays 8th October to 12th November, 8-9.30 pm

David Taylor is a well-known and respected local historian. He has written many books and articles on the history of Cobham and the surrounding area. The course will coincide with the publication of "*Cobham – A History*", which is a complete revision and enlargement of his first book "*The Book of Cobham*" published twenty-one years ago and now out of print.

Course Fee: £40

For further information and to book a place on the course Tel: 01932 863128

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## TRAINING EXCAVATION

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### BARCOMBE ROMAN VILLA, EAST SUSSEX

#### University College London Field Archaeology Unit

Practical archaeology training courses as part of a research excavation on the site of a Roman villa at Barcombe, near Lewes. If you have never done any archaeological fieldwork before, this is a very good opportunity to get involved! There will be a range of 5-, 2- and 1-day courses, including Excavation Techniques, Surveying for Archaeologists, Geophysical Prospecting (yes, the 'zimmer frame' technique – soil resistivity – and others), Archaeological Conservation and Planning and Section Drawing.

Those that attend one of the UCLFAU summer schools at Barcombe, or have done so at Bignor, will be eligible to apply for volunteer work (Monday–Friday only) at Barcombe (such opportunities consist of blocks of 5-days).

For further details about all the UCL Field Archaeology Unit courses and also a linked University of Sussex accreditation facility, please contact Helen Dixey at 1 West Street, Ditchling, Nr Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8TS; Tel: 01273 845497; Fax: 01273 844187; e-mail: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk) or see website: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk)

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## LECTURE SERIES

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### SURREY INDUSTRIAL HISTORY GROUP

#### 28th Series of Industrial Archaeology Lectures

*September 2003 to March 2004*

*Lecture Theatre F, University of Surrey, Guildford*

- 30th September** **Rockets, Rains and Roman Candles: A History of Fireworks** *Gerry Moss*, Chairman of SIHG.
- 14th October** **Submarine Cables** *Glyn Wrench*, National Maritime Museum.
- 28th October** **The Home Guard** *Lt Col John Sainsbury*.
- 11th November** **Mills, Millers and the Mills Archive** *Mildred and Ron Cookson*, Mills Archive Trust.
- 9th December** **Members Evening**
- 13th January** **Isambard Kingdom Brunel - How Great?** *Angus Buchanan*, University of Bath.
- 27th January** **New Rope for Old** *Howard Denyer*, International Guild of Knot Tyers.
- 10th February** **Sundials and Meridian Line Dials** *Doug Bateman*, Secretary of British Sundial Society.
- 24th February** **The Work of an English Heritage Inspector** *Judith Roebuck*, English Heritage.
- 9th March** **The Brookwood Necropolis Railway** *John Clark*, The Brookwood Cemetery Society.

Fees: SyAS/SIHG members £35 (£30 if paid before 30th June) for full series.  
Non-members £40 (£35 if paid before 30th June).  
Single lectures £5 payable on the night.

Enquires and enrolment forms from Bob Bryson, Programme Co-ordinator, Tel: 01483 302389.

## SURREY'S COUNTRYSIDE AND HERITAGE

The 2003 series of illustrated talks by leading specialists from Surrey County Council's Countryside and Heritage Division, looking at current issues and conservation projects.

- 23rd October**     **Surrey's Countryside and Heritage 2003 Review** *Mike Dawson*, Head of Countryside and Heritage. An overview of the current state of play in conserving Surrey's countryside and heritage.
- 30th October**     **Our Heritage of Buildings and Landscapes** *Martin Higgins*, Historic Buildings Officer, and *Brenda Lewis*, Historic Countryside Officer. Huge pressures for development and change - keeping and looking after the best of the past.
- 6th November**     **Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** *Gail Sperrin*, Surrey Hills Project Manager. Covering one quarter of the county, stretching from Tatsfield to Haslemere - current projects to conserve the landscape and increase people's enjoyment.
- 13th November**     **Important Habitats in Surrey** *John Edwards*, Countryside Ecologist, and *Alex Baxter-Brown*, Downlands Project Officer. The problems and successes of managing Surrey's rich habitats - wonderful but fragile.
- 20th November**     **Digging up the Past** *Rob Poulton*, Manager Surrey County Archaeological Unit. Current work of Surrey's own Time Team.
- 27th November**     **Rights of Way and Countryside Access** *Steve Mitchell*, Principal Rights of Way Officer. The most important means of accessing the countryside - but requiring constant vigilance to keep them open and available.

All talks will be held at Dorking Halls, Reigate Road, Dorking, at 7.30pm.

There are no charges and all are welcome.

Enquiries: Bernice Hall, Tel: 020 8541 9433.

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## LECTURE MEETINGS

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### 31st July

"Stand and Deliver!" by Judith Hunter to the Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society in the Main Hall, Literary Institute, Egham High Street at 8pm. Non-members £1.

### 3rd September

"Coins, Tokens and Medals of Kingston upon Thames" by Norman Clarkson to the Woking History Society in Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane, Mayford at 8 pm.

### 3rd September

"Pubs and Pub Signs" by David Roe to the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society at St Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell at 8 pm.

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The Council of the Surrey Archaeological Society desires it to be known that it is not responsible for the statements or opinions expressed in the *Bulletin*.

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**Next Issue:** Copy required by 1st August for the August/September issue.

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