

Shining a light on the transition from Late Iron Age to Early Roman SE England

Saturday 8th May 2021

Surrey Archaeological Society video conference



Surrey Archaeological Society
Online Conference 2021
**Shining a light on the transition
from Late Iron Age to Early
Roman SE England**
Saturday 8 May (10:00-17:00)
www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk





Surrey Archaeological Society promotes the study of the archaeology, pre-history and history of the County of Surrey. We carry out research, excavations and fieldwork and, by arranging events such as this video conference and through training, publications, practical experience and visits to archaeological sites and places of historical interest, we actively encourage people to take part. Anyone can join – find out more at www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk



Welcome to the latest in a series of conferences arranged by the Roman Studies Group of Surrey Archaeological Society. In recent years the Group has carried out or assisted on fieldwork at sites such as Abinger, Ashtead, Chiddingfold, Ewell and Flexford, all of which have added important information to our understanding of the period in the years before and after the time when our part of England became formally a part of the Roman Empire. At the first three sites it has been possible to show a clear link between late prehistoric enclosures and Roman villas. Also across these years several excavations by professional units and the records of the Portable Antiquities Scheme have provided a great deal of relevant information. There are a growing number of sites where later prehistoric landscape features can be shown to continue in use in the Roman period. We aim to set these discoveries in their wider setting in the South-East.

Many questions remain open to debate. How much change had already taken place in the years following Caesar's expeditions in 55 and 54 BC? How much real difference was made in this area by the 'invasion' in AD 43? The Roman Rural Settlement Project has demonstrated that there is widespread evidence for continuity in the landscape, so was there business more or less as usual for most of the population?

How great was the military presence in this early phase? What changes were there in taxation and land ownership? Were there many incomers and what impact did they have? How much effect was there for most Britons with the greater opportunities for trade and the availability of a far wider variety of manufactured objects and foodstuffs? What was the impact of new building methods? Of towns, roads, land management practices? Is there a real difference in religious practices after the conquest? How much did those in the South-East welcome becoming part of the Empire? A well-qualified group of speakers will provide a thorough review of the evidence.

- Delegates are asked to remain muted throughout the day but video participation is optional.
- Each talk will be followed by a discussion and to ask a question you simply type it into the chat box on Zoom.
- We would like to remind everyone that questions will be moderated and we kindly remind attendees to adhere to standard codes of conduct. Any questions deemed inappropriate or irrelevant will not be dealt with by the Chairman.
- The conference will be run strictly to time.

A slideshow will run during the breaks.

Programme

9.30 Registration (Participants are urged to log on well before 10.00)

10.00 Welcome (David Bird, Roman Studies Group, Surrey Archaeological Society)

10.05 Chair, Paul Booth, Research Associate, University of Oxford, *Introductory remarks*

10.15 Thomas Matthews Boehmer, Doctoral Student University of Cambridge, *Between method and theory: the challenges of studying identity in Late Iron Age and early Roman Britain*

10.50 Discussion

11.00 Refreshments

11.15 Tom Brindle, Post-excavation Manager, Cotswold Archaeology, *First (Century) Impressions: appearance, coin-use and communication in south-east Britain beyond the Roman Conquest*

11.50 Discussion

12.00 Anna Doherty, Senior Ceramicist, Archaeology South-East, UCL, (with input from Louise Rayner), *Location, location, location: exploring variability in LIA-Roman pottery assemblages through case studies from SE England*

12.35 Discussion

12.45 Lunch (a programme of slides will run as a display across the break)

13.30 Tony King, Emeritus Professor of Roman Archaeology, University of Winchester, *Celtic to Romano-Celtic? The archaeology of religious sites in SE Britain, 1st century BC to 2nd century AD.*

14.05 Discussion

14.15 Martyn Allen, Senior Project Manager, Oxford Archaeology, *'Two shakes of a lamb's tail': a zoo-archaeological perspective of the Iron Age/Romano-British transition in south-east England*

14.50 Discussion

15.00 Refreshments

15.15 David Rudling, Honorary Research Fellow, University of Roehampton, *'Becoming Roman?' The Late Iron Age to Early Roman transition in Sussex*

15.50 Discussion

16.00 Mike Fulford, Professor of Archaeology, University of Reading, *Silchester: from Iron Age oppidum to Roman City*

16.35 Discussion

16.45 Chair Summing up and final discussion

17.00 Thanks and close

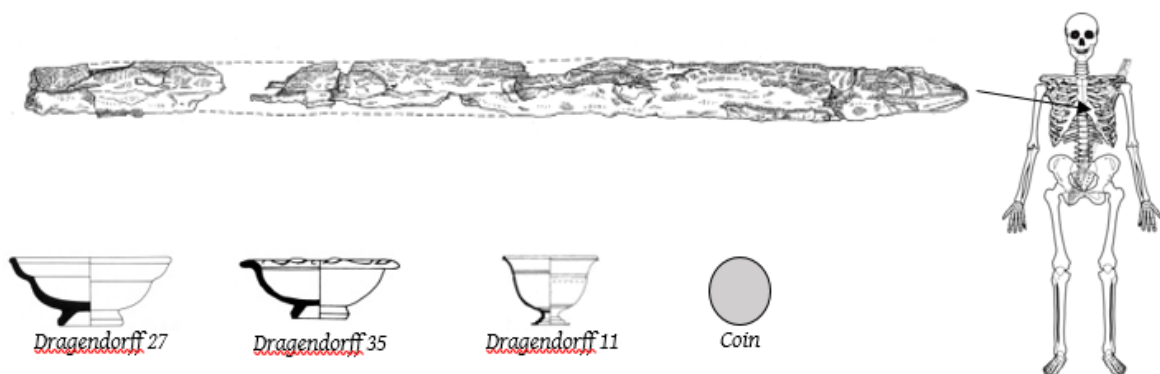
Speaker abstracts

Thomas Matthews Boehmer

Between method and theory: the challenges of studying identity in Late Iron Age and early Roman Britain

Roman-period Britain has been the testing and proving ground of a whole host of different theoretical paradigms. From Romanisation, through to creolisation, and on to the latest surge in interest in globalisation, over the past thirty years Roman-period remains in Britain have been arguably subjected to the densest amount of theoretical interest and debate of any archaeological era anywhere. This angst over –isation, and the debate on the meaning of each, has had a consequent effect on our understanding and thinking about Roman-period identity and its changes.

In this talk, I will focus on the Late Iron Age and early Roman-period burial record from eastern England in order to discuss the degree to which graves are better understood from the perspective of these different theories. This will lead us to think about some of the claims made about the Roman-period material in particular. It will also allow us to reflect on whether Romanisation has truly been left behind, and demolished, or whether its efficacy has meant that it remains largely unchallenged.

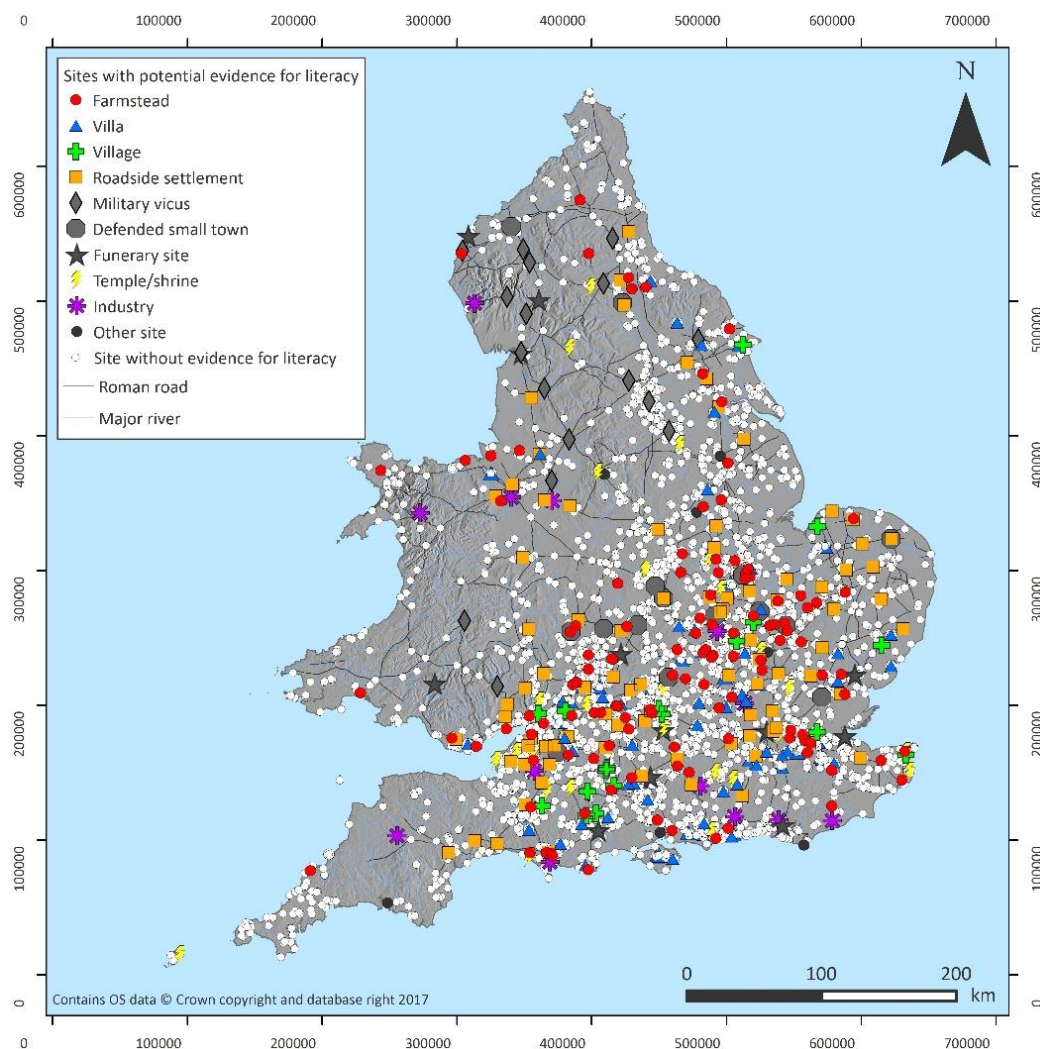


The reconstructed burial assemblage accompanying the inhumation at *Bradfield Farm, Toppesfield*.

Tom Brindle

First (Century) Impressions: appearance, coin-use and communication in south-east Britain beyond the Roman Conquest

Sites of the Roman period in south-east Britain typically produce more 'stuff' than those of Late Iron Age date: coins, dress accessories and other personal objects became far more common. These objects were not distributed evenly across the population, however, and the social context of finds of particular types provides useful insights into the variable ways that Roman rule impacted on different groups. With a particular emphasis on the rural population, this paper will explore how the variable social distribution of objects such as coins, brooches and objects associated with literacy can tell us about the extent to which the Roman Conquest affected how people looked, communicated and interacted.



The social distribution of Roman period sites with possible evidence for literacy.

Anna Doherty (with input from Louise Rayner)

Location, location, location: exploring variability in LIA-Roman pottery assemblages through case studies from SE England

It is well known that AD43 is almost impossible to detect as a clear horizon in the ceramic record. Instead we see a slow transformation of pottery assemblages, beginning as soon as Roman influence began to be felt in Late Iron Age Britain and continuing well after the immediate post-Conquest period in some areas. The societal changes underlying developments in pottery assemblages include technological innovations such as the introduction of the potter's wheel and of complex kiln structures allowing ceramics to be highly fired for the first time. They also reflect changes in practices more deeply embedded in cultural life, including what people ate and drank and how food and beverages were prepared, served and consumed. This paper presents evidence that ceramic change did not occur at a constant rate across the South-East and examines how and why different regions and settlement types may have embraced new technology and styles of consumption to different degrees in the Late Iron Age and earlier Roman periods.



A sparsely flint-tempered, wheel-thrown pottery vessel dating to around the Roman Conquest, deposited in a high-status burial with weapons from Walberton, West Sussex.

Tony King

Celtic to Romano-Celtic? The archaeology of religious sites in SE Britain, 1st century BC to 2nd century AD

Evidence for Late Iron Age religious structures and archaeological remains comes from several sites in SE England, including Wanborough, Hayling Island and Danebury. The problem of the architectural origins of the so-called 'Romano-Celtic' temple form will be discussed in the light of this LIA evidence. Other aspects in the talk will cover topography of temples and shrines, and depositional practice. Lastly, the sacred geography of the Hayling Island/Chichester region will be examined. Was Hayling the western limit of the territorial oppidum, and a focus for pilgrimage and festivals?



The Hayling Island temple complex



Meonstoke hexagonal temple: horse and foal skeletons

Martyn Allen

'Two shakes of a lamb's tail': a zoo-archaeological perspective of the Iron Age/Romano-British transition in south-east England

This paper provides a survey of the now-vast corpus of animal bone data that has been accumulated from archaeological excavations over the past 30–40 years. New insights into the agricultural economy, urban settings, hunting, and religious practices can now be investigated with increasing clarity to examine human-animal relationships across this pivotal period of Britain's past.





Fishbourne: femurs from red deer and bones from cranes

David Rudling

'Becoming Roman?' The Late Iron Age to Early Roman transition in Sussex

Much of the area of the modern counties of East and West Sussex had already been exposed to various elements of 'Roman culture' long before the 'invasion' of the Emperor Claudius in AD 43. Whilst the two 'invasions' of Julius Caesar in Kent and beyond almost a century earlier had not directly impacted on Late Iron Age Sussex, the ramifications of this episode, and increased contact during the intervening years between the south coast and the newly expanded Roman world, resulted in greater exposure to both Roman trade and policy, the latter including possible tribute and client king relationships. The flight of the Atrebatian King Commius, who had previously been a friend of Caesar, from Gaul to Sussex and Hampshire c. 50 BC, whilst being an anti-Roman action will also have increased awareness of Roman ideas amongst the local elite. Commius' successors, Tincomarus and Verica, reverted to pro-Roman approaches, as is reflected by Roman images and lettering on their coins, including the use of the word Rex (King) which may imply a pre-conquest client kingship arrangement for Verica, who finally fled Britain in c AD 40 and sought the help of Rome to restore him in his kingdom. After the Roman 'invasion', the Sussex area thrived officially outside the new province of Britannia as the client kingdom of Togidubnus, with his 'capital' at Chichester, various phases of intense Roman building activity at nearby Fishbourne, culminating in the building of the Flavian Palace, and the construction of various other large early villas. Upon the death of Togidubnus (the date is subject to debate) his possibly quite extensive kingdom is likely to have been incorporated into the Roman province as two or more civitates.

This talk will review some of the archaeological evidence for this transitional time, looking first at the Late Iron Age period which has recently been enriched by the discovery of two 'warrior burials' on the West Sussex coastal plain, and fieldwork which indicates that the system of large dykes or entrenchments is much more extensive than previously thought. We will then examine a range of post-conquest sites to assess in what ways they changed in the 100 or so years after AD 43.



Gold stater of Verica, c AD 10-40



Barcombe Villa c AD 150: Roundhouse and proto-villa (Drawing by Andy Gammon)

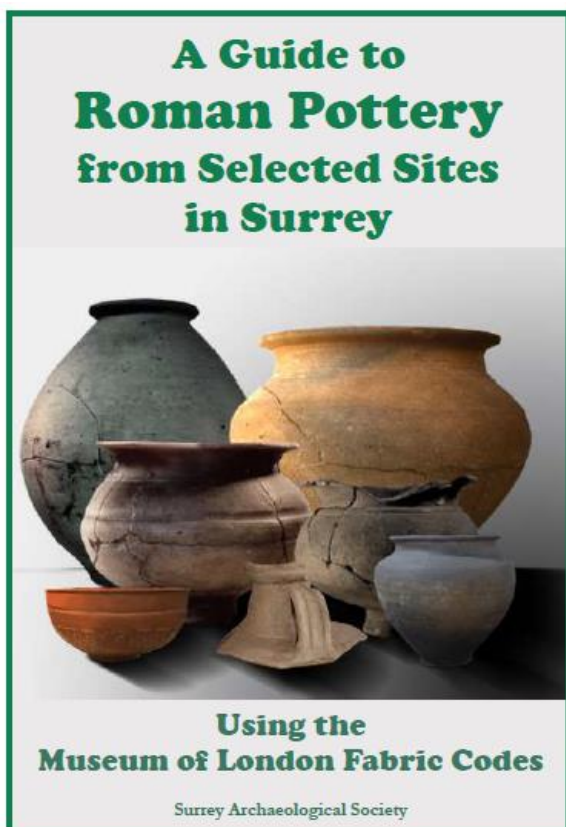
Mike Fulford

Silchester: from Iron Age oppidum to Roman City

Silchester is unusual in that the Roman city and civitas capital develops out of and on top of the late Iron Age oppidum of Calleva. Excavations across the town on both public buildings and domestic occupation have shed valuable light on the transition from one to the other. The paper will examine the period between the early 40s and the Roman conquest of southern Britain, and the mid/late 80s when the Roman city and civitas of the Atrebatas was established. Topics to be considered include the architecture of the town; the inhabitants and their daily life: diet, occupations, ritual and religion; the economic and public life of the town; and the curious question of the contribution of the Emperor Nero to the town's development.



The Silchester baths excavation in 2019 (north at the top)



**A Guide to
Roman Pottery
from Selected Sites in Surrey**

Using the
Museum of London Fabric Codes

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If you are interested in Roman pottery you might like ***A Guide to Roman Pottery*** which was published in 2020. It is written by members of the Artefacts and Archives Research Group of SyAS to provide a standardised structure for the identification of Roman pottery in the County. Whether you have a general interest or need to learn more about studying a pottery assemblage, this is the guide for you. Details can be found at:

<https://www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk/content/publications>

The guide is available for the cost of £7 (including P&P).

Please send a cheque for £7 made payable to Roman Studies Group to:

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Make sure you include your name and postal address