

# Country Organisations — 2

## SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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THE SURREY Archaeological Society was founded in 1854 "for the investigation of subjects connected with the history and antiquities of the County of Surrey". Since 1854 the administrative boundaries of Surrey have changed — the County of London has come and gone, the G.L.C. area has been created, part of Middlesex has been transferred to Surrey, and so on — and yet further change seems likely. Nevertheless the Surrey Archaeological Society continues to pursue its interest throughout the whole of the historic county including the London Boroughs from Southwark to Kingston and to Croydon. For example, the Society was one of the prime movers in establishing the present Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee and previously (in 1945) the Society had given a lead by carrying out a three-year programme of excavation on bombed sites in the Borough under the direction of Miss (now Dame) Kathleen Kenyon.

The objects of the Society remain substantially the same as they were in 1854, although the methods used in achieving them have changed dramatically and the Society's activities have grown to match the challenge that faces modern archaeology. Our headquarters are at Castle Arch, Guildford, in the same building as the Guildford Museum and Archive Room where the Society's collection of archaeological objects and archives are housed.

### Library

At Castle Arch, the Society has a library which is not only an excellent collection of books on archaeology and local history but is the only specialist lending library on these subjects in the County. Books, pamphlets and periodicals which can normally only be consulted in reference libraries, can be borrowed from the Society's library by members. There is also a large collection of research material — prints, maps, photographs, press cuttings, card indexes, etc., which is available for study on the premises. No one seriously interested in any part of Surrey or any aspect of its history can afford to neglect these collections.

### Fieldwork and Excavation

A principal feature of the Society's work is a continuous programme of fieldwork and excavation. Recent excavations have been carried out at such notable sites at the Late Bronze Age settlement at Albury, the Romano-British villa at Ewhurst, the

Iron Age and medieval site at Brooklands, Weybridge, and the Iron Age hillfort at Anstiebury. Inevitably most of our energies are directed towards the recovery of evidence in advance of the modern developments that are sweeping away the traces of our past and the major excavations at Albury and Brooklands were rescue excavations of this type. The Society's support of the work in Southwark has been part of the same policy.

As part of the policy of encouraging fieldwork and rescue excavation, regular liaison meetings are held at Epsom and Guildford which are attended by representatives from the many local societies in the historic county. Problems are discussed and resources are frequently pooled to meet emergencies. The S.A.S. is often able to help local societies by making grants or loans of equipment, while an umbrella insurance scheme is also operated. Training scholarships, which are granted by the Society each year, help nominees of local societies and groups to attend courses for site supervisors and directors. This year the Society is also planning to mount its own training excavation at a site in Mitcham.

The Society is now sponsoring a comprehensive programme of observation and rescue on the routes of the M23 and M25 motorways. This project has been greatly assisted by substantial grants from the Department of the Environment and the British Academy which have enabled us to employ full and part-time professional archaeologists on the work.

This work is linked with the Society's constant vigilance on behalf of the conservation of old buildings and archaeological sites of known importance. Field work that we have undertaken or encouraged includes recording buildings of historic interest and the monuments of our industrial past, the Society is currently assisting the Surrey County Council in revising its published *Antiquities of Surrey*.

In 1972 the Society was greatly encouraged by a substantial grant from the Surrey County Council to cover the financial cost of employing a full time professional officer. Mr. David Bird took up his duties in October 1972 and his main work consists of determining the archaeological implications of planning proposals and decisions and initiating appropriate action. This is thought to be the first time that an officer with these terms of reference

has been appointed by a County archaeological society.

### Publication

Publication is an essential part of archaeological and local history activities because any research or field work that remains unpublished, represents wasted effort. The Society publishes regularly, and distributes free to its members, a journal of reports, articles and notes on a wide range of subjects known as the *Surrey Archaeological Collections*. This is the only journal of an acceptable standard that covers the archaeology and history of the whole historic county and remains the principal medium of archaeological publication for the South London Boroughs as well as for the Administrative County.

In addition, special volumes and research reports are published by the Society from time to time when appropriate.

### Other Benefits

Members benefit from contact with people outside their own neighbourhood whose interests are similar and whose discoveries might throw light on their own field of study. This contact is maintained through a programme of visits and lectures and by twice yearly symposia. Every spring a symposium is held — at different centres each year — on topics that are principally concerned with “dirt” archaeology. In the autumn the Society joins the Surrey

Local History Council at a symposium on more general topics, normally held at Dorking.

Further contact is maintained through the Society's *Bulletin* which gives members the latest news of archaeological discoveries and local history research throughout Surrey. The *Bulletin* is distributed free to members (and on subscription to non-members) ten times a year. It contains notices of discoveries, brief notes on current and recent excavations and other research, lists of publications, and notices of forthcoming excavations and archaeological meetings in the Society's area.

The Society is growing steadily, and this is a cause for some satisfaction since we share with all other archaeological and local history societies the need to grow in order to keep pace with the accelerating threat to our historic past. The subscription list of RESCUE, the popularity of TV programmes such as *Chronicle*, and the number of visitors to the Dover or Baynards Castle excavations, shows the extent of the public interest in archaeology but if this interest is not translated into the membership rolls of the active local and county archaeological societies, then major opportunities for protecting and investigating our historic past will be lost. In particular, the national and county societies which shoulder a large proportion of the costly burden of publishing to an acceptably scholarly standard, are particularly vulnerable and in need of support.

## Excavations and Processing

### EXCAVATIONS

*The Council for British Archaeology produces a monthly Calendar of Excavations from March to September, with a final issue in January summarising the main results of fieldwork. The Calendar gives details of extra-mural courses, summer schools, training excavations and sites where volunteers are needed. The annual subscription is 80p post free, which should be made payable to C.B.A., 8 St. Andrew's Place, N.W.1.*

**CITY**, by Guildhall Museum, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term rescue excavations. Enquiries to Brian Holey, Chief Urban Archaeologist, Guildhall Museum, 55 Basinghall Street, EC2V 5DT (01-606 3030, ext. 2747).

**PUTNEY**, by Wandsworth Historical Society. Corner of Malbrook Road and Upper Richmond Road directed by Pamela Greenwood. Extension of alignment of (?) Roman road found 150 metres to the east. Alternate week-ends from 10 am to dusk. Enquiries to 20 Cromer Villas Road, SW 18. (01-874 9588).

**SOUTHWARK**, by Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee. Several sites from the Roman period onwards. Enquiries to Harvey Sheldon, S.A.E.C., Montague Chambers, Montague Close, SE1. (01-407 1989).

### PROCESSING

**CITY**, by Guildhall Museum, Department of Urban Archaeology. Help on weekdays with processing important Roman and early medieval finds of all types from New Fresh Wharf and Angel Court. Enquiries to Brian Holey (as above).

**EWELL**, by Nonsuch Antiquarian Society. Roman and medieval material from Ewell and a kiln at Cheam. Thursdays at 8.00 pm at Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell. Enquiries to Frank Pemberton, 16 Ross Road, Wallington, Surrey. (01-669 5621).

**PUTNEY**, by Wandsworth Historical Society. Work on the prehistoric and Roman material from Bemish Road, Putney takes place 7.30-9.30 pm on Friday nights (except the last one of the month) during term times at Hotham School (top floor), Hotham Road, Putney, SW15. Enquiries to Jim Slade, 20 Bendemeer Road, SW15 (01-789 3797).

**SOUTHWARK**, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society and Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee. Mondays and Thursdays 6.30-9 p.m. at Montague Chambers, Montague Close (adjoining Southwark Cathedral near London Bridge); Tuesdays 6.30-9 p.m. at Archaeological Workshop, Archbishop Temple School Annexe, Westminster Bridge Road (near Lambeth North Underground Station). General enquiries to Graham Dawson, Cuming Museum, Walworth Road, S.E.17 (01-703 6514).