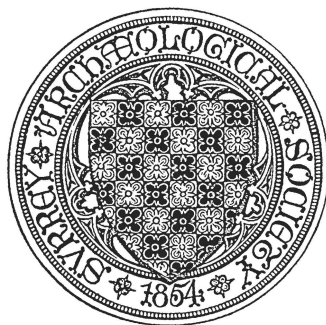


Surrey Archaeological Collections

Relating to the
History and Antiquities of the County

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Farley Heath and Wanborough Roman temples



SURREY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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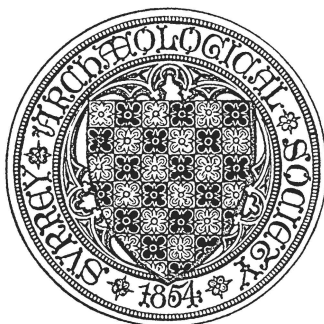
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Back cover: Brooches from Farley Heath Roman temple. See R Poulton, 1–147.

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MoLAS	Museum of London Archaeology Service
OD	Ordnance Datum
OS	Ordnance Survey
SCAU	Surrey County Archaeological Unit
SCC	Surrey County Council
SHC	Surrey History Centre, Woking
SMR	Sites and Monuments Records (now Historic Environment Record, Woking)
SyAS	Surrey Archaeological Society
<i>SyAC</i>	<i>Surrey Archaeological Collections</i>
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria County History</i>

Conventions

Context numbers are shown in square brackets.

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Foreword

The publication of these reports on the Farley Heath and Wanborough temples marks an important step in the understanding of the Roman period in Surrey and indeed nationally. The two sites are part of the rapidly growing evidence for Roman-period religion in the county, much of it highlighted by recent work (for summary and discussion see Bird 2007). There is now sufficient evidence for us to be able to engage in meaningful consideration of the role of temples and the existence and purpose of sites of ritual significance that apparently did not have temples.

Both Farley Heath and Wanborough have produced many significant finds, some of them unique. The publication of all the known evidence from Farley Heath for the first time is particularly important and it is very good to see Benjamin Nightingale's superb drawings of finds from Martin Tupper's excavations made available to a wider audience. Sadly, Farley Heath is the only Roman site in the county that can be visited. Although what can be seen on site was faked out of genuine material earlier in the 20th century, it does at least provide a sense of the location of the temple in a rural setting that would come as a surprise to those whose impression of Surrey is formed from the usual misleading references in the media.

There remains much more to learn about the position of both sites in the contemporary landscape. In particular, were they really isolated? No northern continuation of the road to Farley Heath from near Alfoldean on Stane Street has yet been certainly located, and we do not yet know if Wanborough was on or near a major road (from London to Winchester perhaps?). There are hints of nearby occupation at the latter site that could mean that it was actually part of a larger settlement, and burials and other evidence near Farley Heath also suggest some sort of nearby occupation.

It is a tragedy that both of these recent excavations had to be undertaken because the sites were under threat from treasure hunters. The activities of this very small greedy and mindless minority not only cause serious damage to archaeological sites but also deprive the general public of knowledge about our common past and have made co-operation between archaeologists and responsible metal detectorists more difficult to achieve than it needs to be. Fortunately the workings of the Portable Antiquities Scheme have been very successful in building bridges and it is now routine for Surrey excavations to include metal detectorists among the workforce, and for detectorists to report the finds made in their own fieldwork, with important results. It remains very difficult to prevent the activities of the few unprincipled looters who still visit Wanborough from time to time, even though the site is legally protected as a Scheduled Monument. There is a strong case for a final archaeological excavation of the sacred site before it is too late.

The Society has a proud record in making sure that much of the information from Wanborough has been rescued and published, and has a long involvement with the site at Farley Heath. It would be appropriate also to acknowledge the support of English Heritage in recognising the importance of both sites and providing funding, particularly for post-excavation work (including making it possible to achieve the publication of the full catalogue of all the finds from Farley Heath).

David Bird

