

The site has yielded large quantities of carbonised seed and charcoal, particularly from some of the middle Iron Age contexts. With the hoped-for additional evidence from the river frontage, it might be possible to gain a good picture of the crops grown and of the surrounding vegetation. Unfortunately, soil conditions on the site are such that bone is rarely preserved. Other evidence for economic activity will be gained from the analysis of the iron slag.

The Camp's defences, even until earlier this century, were massive and its position on the patch of well-drained gravel partly flanked by the Roding and the Loxford water is a good strategic one. It lies on slightly higher ground and is in a dominant position for covering the Barking-Ilford and West Ham areas, with an additional advantage of a view down to the Thames. Such defences may have acted as a status symbol and deterrent. There are indication too that there was some refurbishment of the defences, by adding another ditch, in the later Iron Age or early Roman period. A proper understanding of the internal layout is not feasible as such a small proportion of the interior was excavated; much still lies under modern housing. However, the relatively small portion does show signs of 'street planning' and of concentrations of agricultural activity. There is some mutual exclusivity in the distribution of the pottery and carbonised grain, for example.

There may still be opportunities in the future to investigate the defences. It is extremely unfortunate that the site escaped statutory protection, particularly since Crouch voiced hopes in 1899 for the preservation of the entrance area and surviving section of the defences¹⁸.

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18. Crouch (1899) 53.

Letter

Two felons from Surrey

I READ WITH interest Mr Nail's letter referring to the execution burials at Galley Hills¹ and your response. Lest anyone should now be misled, may I reiterate my comments on the subject²? Execution sites discovered in modern times share a number of common features which would lead one to expect that they share a common period of usage. Dating evidence is limited, but many are stratigraphically later than pagan Saxon burials, and a few have associated artefacts which indicate a late Saxon date. It would be a reasonable deduction from this that the site type has a period of currency centred around the 11th century. Aldsworth has pointed to the likelihood that late Saxon charters refer to these execution sites in Hampshire as "heathen burial places"³.

In contrast to this, there is no certain evidence which puts such sites in the medieval period proper. Executions in association with Hundred Courts may indeed be "well authenticated medieval activities", but I know of no document which refers to such a use for any of the known execution sites. This is unsurprising if they have a late Saxon *floruit*, but quite remarkable if they are medieval, given the quantity of historical sources which survive for the later period. On the specific question of Copthorne Hundred, its meeting place at Nutshambles is well established⁴. The Goblin

Works is about 2km (1¼ miles) distant: maybe "not far", but an awful long way to lug a corpse, and for what reason, given the perfunctory and disrespectful mode of burial? It is unclear whether Mr Nail intended to say that the Galley Hills burials were also "not far" from the Copthorne Hundred meeting place: if so, they are some 5km (3 miles) distant, and in any case were in Wallington Hundred⁵ (and even further from its meeting place) until the 15th century. Burials are, however, known (though undated and of uncertain type) from the immediate vicinity of Copthorne Hundred meeting place, but they might as likely be Saxon as later, especially as the importance of the Hundred was greatest in the earlier period. Finally, "the destruction of the Galley Hills original Saxon burial by the erection of the gallows tree" does not "strongly suggest we are dealing with a period later than Saxon", but simply that executions occurred at some time after around 700 AD.

In sum, I would suggest that it is Mr Nail and not the editor who misleads the readers of *the London Archaeologist*, and the description of the Galley Hills burials as Saxon represents a judicious interpretation of the evidence.

Rob Poulton

Archaeological Field Officer
County Planning Department, County Hall
Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2DT

1. Tony Waldron and Gillian Waldron 'Two felons from Surrey' *London Archaeol* 5 no 16 (1988) 443-5.

2. Rob Poulton 'The former Goblin Works at Leatherhead: Saxons and Sinners' *London Archaeol* 5 no 12 (1987) 311-7.

3. F. Aldsworth 'Droxford Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Soberton,

Hampshire' *Proc Hants Field Club Archaeol Soc* 35 (1979) 93-182.

4. D. Nail 'The Meeting Place of Copthorne Hundred' *Surrey Archaeol Collect* 52 (1965) 44-53.

5. VCH Surrey 3 252.