

Forum Seminars

21 January 2015

Our meeting on 21st March 2015 will be something of a departure from previous meetings of the Forum, more akin to a Members' Day than to a Study Day. The meeting will take the form of two seminars. The chosen subjects of Moated Sites and Churches in the Landscape should be of interest to all of our members. To be successful we are relying on contributions from members, whether short presentations or table-top displays. Do you have a favourite or interesting moated site or medieval church in your locality? If so, please offer to share that interest with other members of the Forum. Presentations or displays can pose questions rather than report answers as there will be time for discussions on issues raised during the day. Issues of more than local interest can be considered for inclusion in our contributions to the Surrey Heritage Environment Research Framework. The programme for the day will be issued shortly by separate e-mail.

Moated Sites

Although moats have often been recorded on OS maps around the country and in historic documents, moated sites received little attention from historians and archaeologists until the early 1970s, with the Moated Sites Research Group being set up in around 1972. There was then a flurry of interest and activity until the late 1980s, since when comparatively little new work has been done. Contrary to the view of some that "we know all about moated sites" the fact is that we know relatively little. Our late member Dennis Turner was the foremost researcher on moated sites in Surrey and Richard Savage will review his work. A provisional list was published by Dennis in SAC 71 (1977), a copy of this list is being circulated with this note. Some further sites were added when the distribution map was published in "Surrey to 1584". Dennis continued to amass material on sites until his death; he has left 12 files, densely packed with research notes, to the Society. Among other matters Richard will review the distribution of sites in the County, including the location of sites relative to settlements, and the differences between those of royal, noble and more prosaic foundation. As commented on by Dennis, very little attention has been paid to ancillary areas outside the moats themselves and this remains an important area of research. The provisional list, first published in 1977 and updated in 1987, together with Dennis' later notes will form the basis for a revised list to be published in the near future. In the meantime our first step is to update this list and we would be grateful to hear from all members of any moated sites in their area (whether existing today or known only from documents) that are not included in the current list. Short

presentations on excavated or surveyed sites or on new documentary evidence collected would be particularly welcome.

Churches in the Landscape

Churches have long been a major interest in medieval studies, but in recent years their position in the landscape, both physical and human, has attracted attention alongside the more longstanding interest in their fabric, showing recognition that these two aspects of study can often illuminate each other. The subject has seen a particular rise since the publication of Richard Morris's book *Churches in the Landscape* in 1989. Some of Surrey's churches have locations comparable to those frequently found elsewhere, such as on the terraces along broader river valleys – the Wey below Guildford is a classic example – and along spring lines north and south of the Downs. Other patterns are perhaps more unusual, such as all east Surrey's North Downs churches being on the plateau rather than in the dry valleys. The human aspects of the landscape of churches include relationship to settlements, co-locations with manorial centres, and relationships between churches (especially "mothers" and "daughters"). Other themes include church orientations, direction of slope on church sites, church dedications (especially their distribution and their relationship to different types of sites), the location of glebe lands, whether some place names tell us about earlier pagan sites, and possible continuity in church siting from various pre-Christian uses. In looking at church sites care needs to be taken where churches of medieval parishes have been rebuilt on different sites from their predecessors or on different orientations. Account also needs to be taken of churches and chapels (at least when the latter had a pastoral role) that have disappeared. Peter Balmer will introduce discussion of these themes, mainly based on Surrey, but also with some Sussex and other examples where they provide helpful comparisons.

Members Contributions

All offers of presentations or table-top displays, whether on particular sites or general theories, will be very welcome and should be made to Brian Creese:

e-mail: bjc@briancreese.co.uk

or Tel: 07860 104012.

Richard Savage