

ROMAN STUDIES GROUP



Excavations are an important element of the Roman Studies Group research and fieldwork programme. Members and non-members alike are encouraged to join in, in whatever capacity they are able. Volunteers learn and practice excavation techniques, undertake recording, and are encouraged to learn more about finds processing. RSG works with the Artefacts and Archive Recording Group (AARG), many of whom are also RSG members, who carry out finds processing on site and post-excavation identification and cataloguing.

COCKS FARM ROMAN VILLA ABINGER

Between 1995 and 1997 Surrey Archaeological Society carried out excavations under the direction of Steve Dyer to investigate archaeological evidence revealed when a tree blew over at **Cocks Farm**, Abinger. The presence of a villa had been known since the 1870s when Roman walls were found during the expansion of a kitchen garden. When well-preserved remains of an east-west range of a Roman building were discovered, the fieldwork was targeted to provide information for the future management of the site and to indicate a suitable area for scheduling as an ancient monument. The current series of excavations started in 2009 by the Roman Studies Group have been planned to build on the previous work, by examining the setting and function of the villa and aiming to achieve publication of all fieldwork relating to the site.



CFA - in 2013, the condition of the mosaic uncovered in 1996 (on the right) was compared with a section not seen before (on the left). After cleaning no difference could be seen.



CFA - excavation on the hill adjacent to the villa



Metal detectorist, Mairi Sargent

Metal detectorists are an integral part of the team, and without their participation much evidence, in the form of coins (many very small and easy to miss 'by eye'), decorative and functional metal objects would be missed.



Ashtead - evidence for the new building



Ashtead - Room 6 in the foreground with Room 4 beyond showing the parallel underfloor heating channels



Flexford - excavating a cremation

Excavations took place in the Romano-British settlement at **Flexford** between 2009 and 2015. Discovered by David Calow during his search for an E-W Roman road between London and Winchester, the site has revealed evidence for iron smithing, a number of buildings including an aisled 'barn', trackways, a man-made pond, wells, flint surfaces, ditched enclosures, pits and funerary activity. The large number of coins and steelyard weights suggest commercial activity on the site, and the number of querns suggest grain processing.



Flexford - recording a bustum burial



Flexford - digging and recording on a wet day

Ashtead Roman villa was first discovered in the 1920s and excavated by A. W. G. Lowther and A. R. Cotton, when extensive evidence for a tiliery was also noted. Further work was carried out in the 1960s by John Hampton who carried out a site survey; the site had much less vegetation cover than is now the case. Both Lowther's published reports and Hampton's survey left many unanswered questions and so a new research programme was initiated in 2006, directed by Dr. David Bird. Fieldwork was completed in 2013; discoveries included an earlier proto-villa, evidence for the raising of floor levels, a 3rd century tile kiln rebuilt on the remains of an earlier kiln, and evidence for clay pits and ancillary buildings. Excavation of the villa provided clarification of and alterations to Lowther's original 1920s villa plan.

ASHTEAD ROMAN VILLA AND TILEWORKS



Ashtead - Trench 9 - the tile kiln

HATCH FURLONG EWELL

Excavations took place at **Hatch Furlong** 2006-9 under the direction of Jon Cotton and Harvey Sheldon. Although not a RSG -organised event several members took part, some in a supervisory role. Ritual chalk shafts had been discovered close by in the 1840s and further evidence uncovered in the 1970s for Roman activity. The excavations uncovered evidence for late Romano-British activity focused on a SE/NW route of considerable antiquity with a system of ditched enclosures beyond. Ritual deposition took place in reused chalk quarry pits, which included abundant environmental evidence, together with animal and bird bone and pottery.



Hatch Furlong - excavation of a Roman pit

CHIDDINGFOLD



Chiddingfold - excavation of a pot from the Iron Age enclosure ditch

Chiddingfold Roman villa was discovered in 1880 and was the largest Roman building known in Surrey. Although the site was scheduled the actual position of the building was uncertain. Following field walking in 2002, a trial trench and a magnetometry survey an excavation took place in 2010 led by David Graham, RSG Vice-Chairman, and Audrey Graham. This uncovered a D-shaped late Iron Age enclosure ditch, but also showed that the Roman building had been robbed and ploughed out, leaving only building material and pottery in the ploughsoil.

Although excavations in **Church Meadow**, 2012-2014, were part of an independent project, many RSG members took part, and the project was supported in many ways by the expertise they brought with them. The site lies within the NE extent of the Roman settlement and Stane Street, the Roman road between London and Chichester, was known to run through the meadow. Excavation of a 10m by 115m trench revealed evidence for 1st-4th century occupation in the form of wells, rubbish pits, industrial pits, a 2m deep ritual shaft, chalk and flint surfaces. A barren corridor represented all that remained of the ploughed out road but evidence for metallised roadside trackways survived.

CHURCH MEADOW EWELL



Church Meadow - group discussion on industrial pit (319)