

Hidden Heritage

Exploring Farnham's buried past



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Miniature pots and silver unit from the 1st-2nd century ritual site at Frensham Common, where further finds including a possible head-dress were uncovered (Photo by D Graham)



Bath building from the Six Bells Roman villa (Photo by A W G Lowther) and sample of painted plaster (Photo D Graham)



Alice Holt kiln excavation from Country Market, Sleaford (Photo by D Graham)



Early Alice Holt jar from Snailslynch kiln © Surrey Archaeological Society (SyAS)



Excavation of well in Neatham (Photo D Graham)

Roman AD 43-410

Although the Roman period is often equated with sophisticated villas, bustling towns and fortified frontiers, much of the countryside was likely unchanged from that in the preceding Iron Age. However, Surrey is crossed by a number of roads, including the east-west one which connected Winchester with London, passing through nearby Neatham and likely continuing north of Farnham towards the Hog's Back.

Pottery was a particular key industry in the area, and a major production centre at Alice Holt Forest manufactured coarse, grey pottery from the 1st to the 5th centuries, supplying London and beyond. Temples were also important features in the landscape, with many ritual sites developing from religious systems which existed before the arrival of the Roman gods.



Loom weight and Saxon sherd from Farnham © SyAS



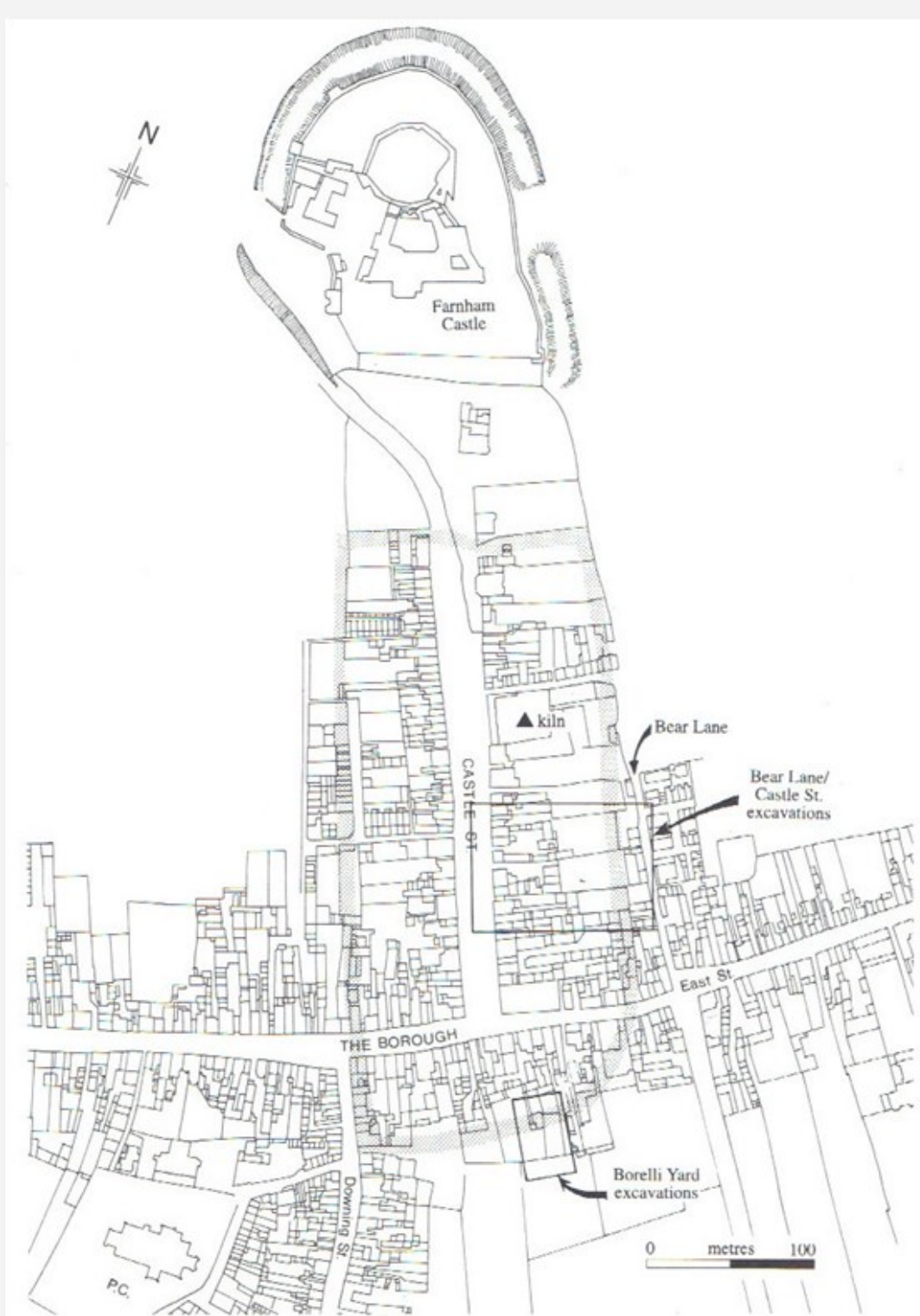
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Saxon hut under excavation during gravel-digging at the Firgrove pit (Photo by E Borelli)



Floor and chalk footing of earlier – likely late Saxon – church in St Andrews' north aisle © Surrey County Archaeological Unit



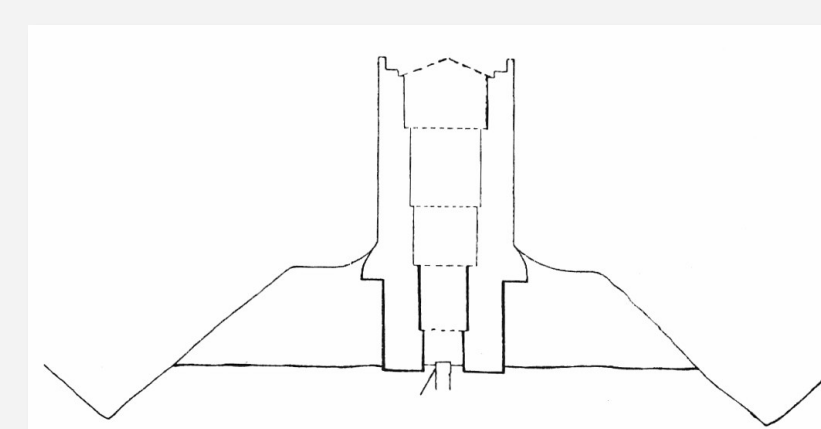
Plan of Farnham, showing inferred course of town ditch (Plan by D Graham)



Section of town ditch at Bear Lane (Photo D Graham)

Medieval AD 1066-1485

Following the invasion of William of Normandy in October 1066, the gradual takeover of territory by the Normans ensued, and the Domesday Book – completed in 1086 – was compiled to assess the taxable land, which included six mills in Farnham. One obvious change in the landscape was the rise in both castle and church building, as well as great abbeys and priories – such as Waverley – which were often pinnacles of architectural achievement. Market towns such as Guildford, Godlaming and Farnham also sprang up in the 12th and 13th centuries, while the countryside was equally productive with industries including glass-making, pottery and tile production.



Reconstruction of Farnham Castle keep set within its mound and well shaft cut into the masonry foundations (Photo and section by M W Thompson)



Tiles from kiln at Borelli Yard and excavation of kiln at Farnham Park (Photo D Graham)



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13th-14th century 'Surrey whiteware' from Farnham Castle keep excavations (Photo D Graham) and Badshot Lea moated manor (Photo by T Wilcock)



13th century encaustic tile patterns from Waverley © SyAS

Waverley Abbey seal c.1310 © SyAS