



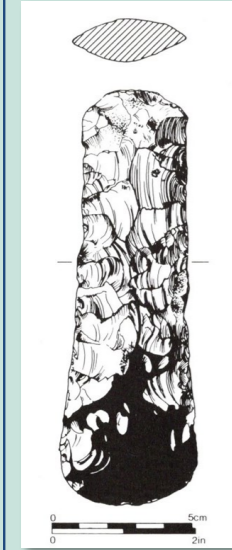
# Neolithic Surrey

4000-2200 BC



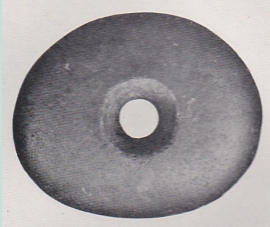
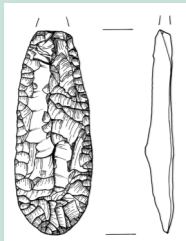
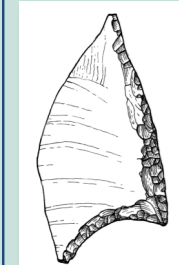
## Flint axe trade

The need to look after crops and livestock in the Neolithic meant both more permanent settlement and larger areas of forest being cleared, for which new types of stone tools were needed. This included polished axes, though they were considered more ceremonial than functional and clearly held a special significance, whether as personal or group identifiers or the ability to exchange gifts. More than half of the axes in the county were concentrated around the Thames (as that from Hampton, *left*), and the majority reflected a range of imported exotic stone, with some assemblages as from Badshot Lea (*below*) comprising both local and imported sources. (Photo: David Graham; Drawing: David Williams)



## Material culture

Overall flint and stone artefacts make up the vast majority of Surrey's Neolithic material culture, with most of the flint either imported or gathered from the surface in areas of clay-with-flints, as along the North Downs. The weapons and tools were varied and included types such as the maul and mace head (*below right*), knife (*centre*) and arrowheads from the Farnham area, which at this period were either leaf-shaped (as in the *below centre* images) or asymmetric forms (*bottom left*). Worked bone was less frequent, though evidence includes signs of antler-working. (Photos: W F Rankine, David Graham, Anne Sassin; Drawings: Audrey Graham)



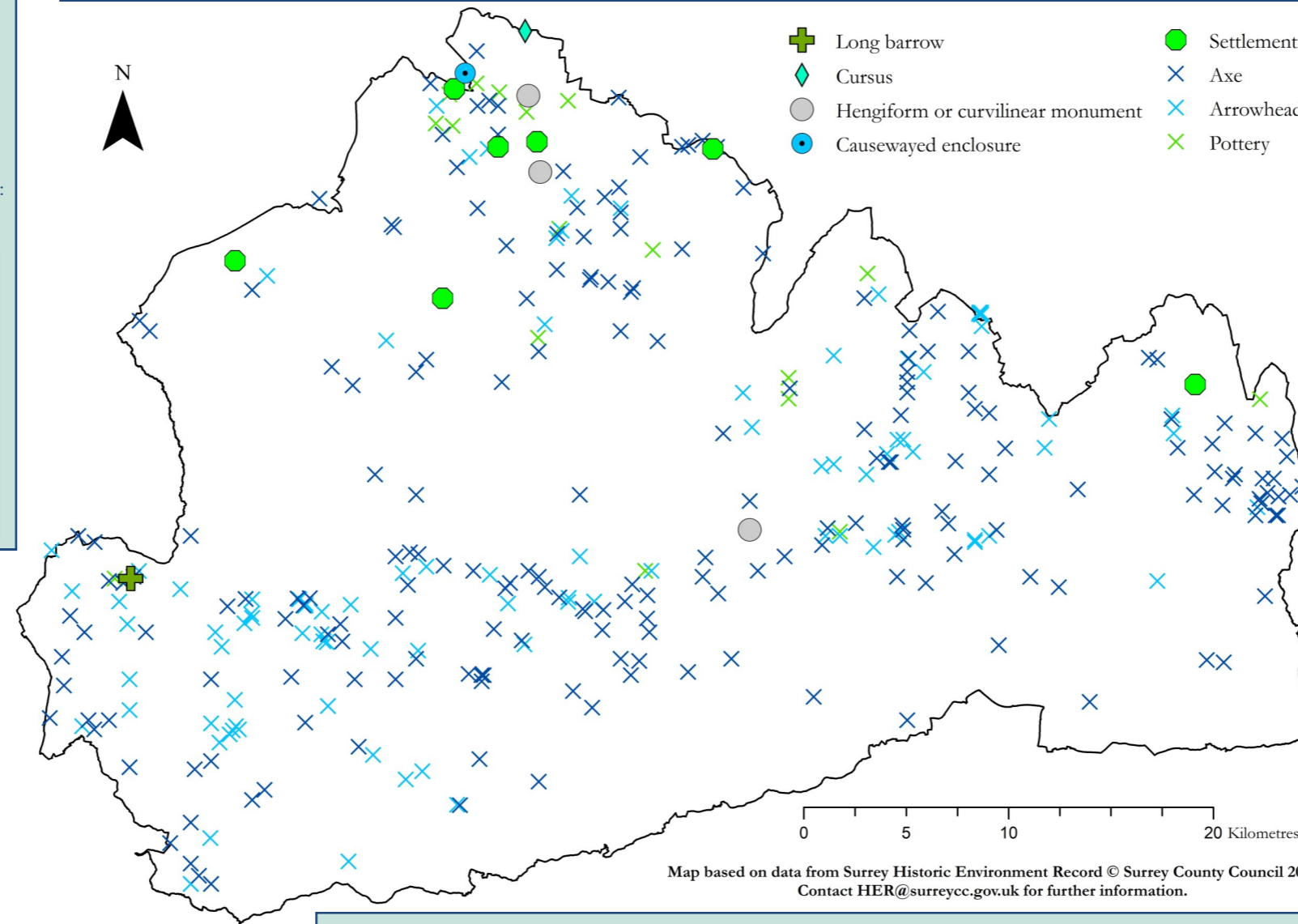
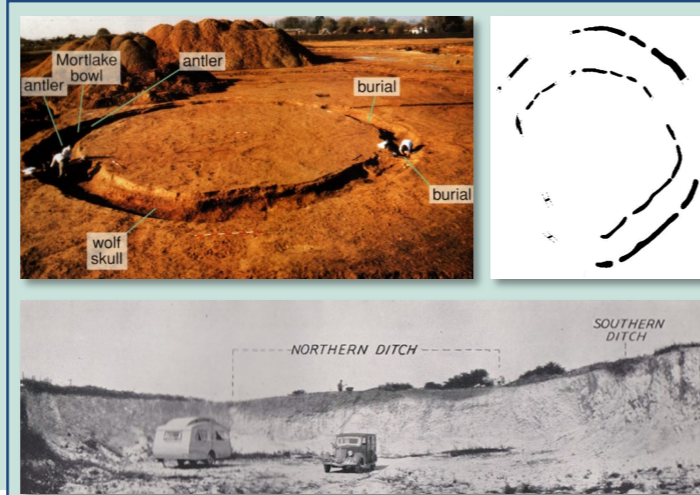
## Metal Detecting

If undertaken responsibly, detecting can make important contributions to archaeological knowledge. Detectorists are reminded that it is illegal to trespass – remember all land has an owner! – and to record finds with their local Finds Liaison Officer and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. For more on the Code of Practice, please see [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk).



## Monumental construction and ceremonial landscapes

The first evidence of ritual practice and monumental activity also dates to the Neolithic. In Surrey, these monuments centred around the gravel terraces of the Thames, both a vital means of transport and object of worship, and their position within the landscape would have served as points of reference. At Shepperton, a henge enclosure, whose entrance was aligned for the summer solstice and was 'guarded' by a female burial (*cover*), had various objects placed within its ditch (*far left*). A causewayed camp with a similarly symbolic layout was excavated at Yeoveney Lodge, Staines (*upper left*), while the cursus at Stanwell – 21 metres wide and over 2.5 miles long (*right*) – would have provided a ceremonial procession-way to the river. Although largely quarried away when first discovered, Badshot Lea (*left*) is the only known long barrow in the county and would have likely contained a chambered tomb. (Images: Surrey County Archaeological Unit, Framework Archaeology, A Keiller and Piggott; Drawings: David Williams)



## Settlement and domestication

The landscape around the Thames basin suggests a successful farming community with an overall well-organized hierarchy. Due to the limited resources of the wild and growing population by the end of the Mesolithic, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle had become increasingly difficult, and with the arrival of continental farming practices, the Neolithic saw experimentation in cultivation, herding and domestication of animals. Once areas of woodland were cleared, static settlements were established which focused on a subsistence economy. Evidence for this includes ards and sickles for the cultivation of crops, as well as saddle querns (such as the one from Staines, *below right*) and possible pestles for grinding barley and emmer into flour (as in the example from Abbey Meads, Chertsey, *middle*). Bones from midden deposits also revealed a great deal about diet at the time, and while cattle and pig were the main animals consumed, bones of red deer, beaver and aurochs (such as the aurochs bone re-worked into a scoop, *bottom*) from Lower Mill Farm, Stanwell suggest a varied diet, with some foods such as hazelnuts still seasonally gathered.

(Images: © The Trustees of the British Museum, Surrey County Archaeological Unit).



## Pottery production

The Neolithic also saw the introduction of pottery as containers for serving and drinking, including for pottages, dairy products and other beverages. The earliest pots were round-bottomed carinated bowls, usually with plain undecorated rims (as with the pot from Kingston, *left*), but later forms had incised decoration and impressions (as in the Badshot Lea vessels, *far left*). By the later period, a geometric, flat-bottomed style known as 'grooved ware' appeared (Betchworth examples, *left*), which possibly served a ritual purpose, as well as functional one. (Drawings: Dave Field, David Williams)

