

12,000 years of Surrey history to spring to life

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Fetcham Springs, Surrey - One of Surrey's most important archaeological sites has secured £250,000 in National Lottery Heritage Fund backing to launch a groundbreaking five-year community archaeology initiative.

The Communities at the River: The Fetcham Springs Archaeology Project, led by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU), will uncover over 12,000 years of human history while offering local people opportunities to get involved through volunteering, open days, and educational events.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the funding will expand on discoveries made in 2009 at the site, which revealed evidence of a prehistoric hunting camp dating from the end of the last Ice Age and a high-status Roman building. The new phase of work will explore periods ranging from the Ice Age to the Saxon era.

Hands-on history for all

The project, developed by SCAU's Community Archaeologist Hannah Potter, includes:

- **Volunteering on live archaeological digs**
- **Public open days** showcasing findings
- **Workshops** including **flintknapping** and even **gladiator training**
- **Visits from Stone Age and Roman reenactors**
- **Free school visits and loan boxes** for educational use

Fetcham Springs, which also holds the Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Benchmark, is owned by SES Water, who are a key project partner and will help support landscape conservation alongside the archaeological work.

A legacy for the future

Findings will be shared through a pop-up museum, exhibitions, talks, and online resources, ensuring a lasting educational impact.

Cllr Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader of Surrey County Council and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, said:

"Surrey has a rich and diverse history, and projects like Fetcham Springs help us preserve and share our heritage with future generations. This initiative will provide valuable educational and volunteering opportunities, allowing residents to actively engage with archaeology and deepen their understanding of our county's past."

Stuart McLeod, Director for England (London & South) at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, added:

"Projects like this inspire people of all ages to connect with their local heritage. We're proud to support Fetcham Springs, thanks to National Lottery players."

Grace Wood-Lofthouse, Sustainability Manager at SES Water, commented:

"Water at Fetcham Springs has supported life for millennia. This project will help us better understand how to protect our landscapes for the future."

For further details, visit the Surrey County Archaeological Unit website.

Image: Archaeologists at work - Cleaning a Roman wall at Fetcham Springs in 2009