

Sarratt Local History Society – ‘After the Romans’

On 9 March, Brian Adams, an archaeologist at Verulamium and their Director of Education, explained that 410 was an over simplification. Following usurpation by Constantine, a common soldier, the Emperor Honorus stated the armies would not return. Coins prolific in Roman times became progressively rare from 350 and dating from coinage became more difficult and tended to use 50 years intervals, except when writing or other defined events.

Roman influence was not wholly removed in 410. A previous general Germanus was created Bishop of Auxerre and had missions in 429 and 447 to combat the Pelagian heresy and to inspire the final conversion to a Christian Britain.

As the Roman legions finally left, numbers of primarily Romano British settlements continued their lives with little change. The Romano British included natural Britons, discharged soldiers, and remnants of mercenary armies, many of whom had ‘married-in’. A sizeable Romano British area ran from the east of St Albans and Welwyn through Sarratt and Chesham to near Aylesbury. In 410 to 500/550 the Anglo Saxons seem only to have settled on the less ‘profitable’ land around this zone and with local indents.

Brian Adams then showed us slides of excavations in and around St Albans and many exhibits from Verulamium. We are already aware of a lack of metal work from the Anglo Saxons but he thrilled us with an attractive dolphin buckle, coins of Alfred and his brother Aethelred, very attractive silver brooches and pottery. Latterly each village contained a weavers hut, used for storage and weaving woollen cloth, much of which was exported to the continent. Little of Saxon building is found except in some parish churches but among the best Norman rebuild of St Albans Abbey are Saxon columns in the triforium.

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