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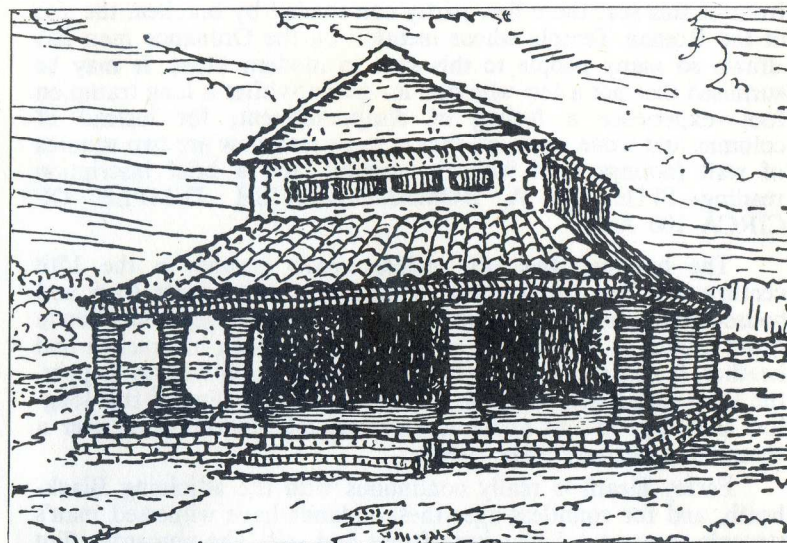
## SHERE AND DISTRICT RURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

To all who visit this lovely countryside  
WE APPEAL

Please help to keep its natural beauty unspoilt by litter.  
Tissues and tins, cigarette packets, bottles, sweet-papers  
and the like—thoughtlessly thrown down or left behind  
on the ground—disfigure the paths and glades and spoil  
the enjoyment of others.

Friend when you stray  
Or sit and take your ease  
On down or heath  
Or under spreading trees,  
Pray leave no traces  
Of your wayside meal :  
No paper bag  
Or scattered orange peel.  
Let no one say,  
And say it to your shame,  
That all was beauty here  
Until *you* came.

Any enquiries about these pamphlets will be forwarded to the  
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Probable appearance of the Romano-British Temple on Farley Heath.

## THE STORY OF FARLEY HEATH AND THE ROMAN TEMPLE

*"When Holmbury-height had its beacon-light,  
And Cantii held old Leith,  
And Rome stood then with his iron men  
On ancient Farley Heath!"*

It was in 1847 that Martin Tupper, the author and antiquarian who lived at Albury in the valley below, wrote some exuberant verses on the joys of delving for Roman remains on Farley Heath. Though his and subsequent "digs" have yielded the answers to most of the questions posed by his re-discovery of this site—so that in a sense that chapter is now closed—the beauty around, which gave him so much delight, is as fully to be enjoyed today as it was then.

Of the various approaches to the Heath the most attractive is that from the south-west. By taking the narrow winding Woodhill Road up from Shamley Green and then along the wooded stretch at the top one comes suddenly out into the full light and spacious sweep of open country, with the wide arc of heathland sloping away in front.



Where this view opens out there is a seat on the left, placed there in memory of Bryan Donkin of nearby Winterfold who was a life-long lover of this countryside. Two hundred yards or so in front of this seat there lies, partly surrounded by bracken, the site of the Roman Temple whose mention on the Ordnance map has drawn so many people to this spot in modern times. It may be surmised that not a few who find it—perhaps after a long tramp on foot—experience a feeling of disappointment; for instead of columns and stone walls, all that is to be seen now are two squares of wall footings level with the ground, and a brief inscription reading—SITE OF A ROMANO-BRITISH TEMPLE OF CIRCA 100 A.D.

The building was still visible above ground in the 17th century, but few cared about our ancient monuments then and house-builders and road-menders saw in the crumbling ruin a handy quarry, until at last all that remained was hidden in bracken and heather. It was not until the mid-19th century that Martin Tupper, the local enthusiast, was able to announce the finding of this long-lost site—and in and about it a remarkable collection of over a thousand coins and other objects.

Farley Heath is really continuous with the adjoining Blackheath, and for countless ages these uplands have witnessed man's struggle to wrest a living from forest and soil. The numerous flint and other implements which have been found testify to occupation going back for more than 6,000 years. A fine selection of these and many other objects can be seen in the Guildford Museum, which no one interested in the history of Surrey should fail to visit.

The site was excavated by the Surrey Archaeological Society in 1939, when the building foundations were fully exposed and sealed over in their present form. It is now in the care of the Ministry of Works. As a result of this and previous excavations the temple is recognized as a Romano-Celtic structure of a well-known type. It consisted of an inner sanctuary, 18 feet square, with a 9 foot ambulatory between it and the outer colonnade, which was 46 feet square. The temple stood in a large enclosure covering about 10 acres, bounded by shallow banks and ditches. These however were simply boundaries as, despite the inference from Tupper's verse, there was never a Roman camp here. Although the "iron men" were doubtless seen on the Heath it would have been only as visitors to the shrine or on route marches along the Roman road that in those days passed beside it. This road, which has largely disappeared, seems to have been little more than a sandy track in parts, which has led to the belief that it may have been adapted by the Romans from a still earlier way. It branched off Stane Street at Rowfoot near Horsham and after passing the temple continued northwestward over the Downs near Guildford. It has now been traced in stretches as far as Bagshot where it is thought to have joined the Roman road from Staines to Silchester in Berkshire.

The extensive "grounds" of the temple would probably have contained a priest's house and other structures, but it was not a village. The large number of coins found may have been votive offerings by the pilgrims, or possibly from some form of trading having developed round the temple. That is conjectural, but it is interesting to record a local belief that centuries later the site was the rendezvous of smugglers from the coast and agents from London who disposed of their contraband. Such clandestine dealings could have taken place here as one of the reputed old smuggling routes crossed this area, and mothers in the district may well have had cause from time to time to admonish their children as in Kipling's poem—"Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!"

Although the enclosure formed a square, with sides 220 yards long, the temple was not built centrally but towards the southern boundary. The modern road crosses part of the enclosure; and it was in the south-eastern corner—across the road—that a paved pond or spring (now filled in) was discovered. Whether it was connected with the temple rites or was an ordinary water source is not known. Not far away outside the south-west end of the enclosure the 1939 excavators found a 4th century oven, and there was a pottery kiln near it. Whether this was the Roman or Celtic version of a snack bar, dispensing cakes and mulled ale to the pilgrims, will also never be known!

The Celtic religion had numerous deities and the Romans brought their own which they encouraged the natives to adopt; so that both Roman and Celtic names appear on some inscriptions. A light on the gods worshipped at this shrine is thrown by the most important of Martin Tupper's finds—a bronze metal strip decorated with designs and figures, thought to have been part of a priest's sceptre or staff. The original is in the British Museum but a drawing of it can be seen in the Guildford Museum. On this band the symbols of three Celtic deities appear—the gods Taranis and Sucellus, roughly corresponding to the Roman Jupiter and Vulcan, and the mother-goddess Nantosvelte. It therefore seems likely that these three, a trio found also at some other similar sites, were the presiding divinities at Farley Heath.

Tupper suggests that the temple was finally destroyed by fire in the 5th century; and it may well have been about that time, as with the withdrawal of the Roman garrisons early in that century the building might soon have succumbed to pillage and arson. Whatever the exact date may have been, the time came when Rome departed and suppliants worshipped at the lonely shrine no more.

But Farley Heath can claim its pilgrims still—and not only to the temple site. Set as it is in the heart of an area of outstanding beauty, of open going and few main roads, it is a magnet for the country-lover, on foot or on horseback, where the ancient trackways link present and far-distant users in the long sequence of our Country's story.