

Post 7

SAXON CEMETERY

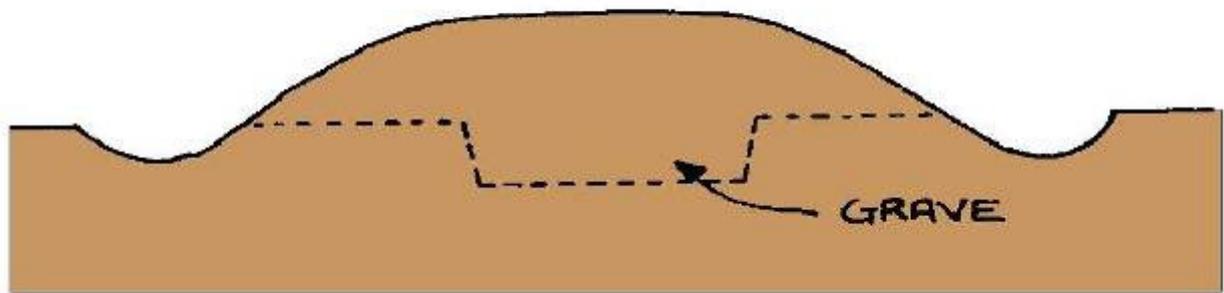
Looking to your left, you may notice a large hump on either side of the path. These are Saxon burial mounds. As we have already seen, by Saxon times this area had become a cemetery. The bodies were covered with a low mound



Excavations of Saxon graves on Farthing Downs during 2005/6 by the Museum of London.

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or barrow, similar to those of prehistoric times. The graves were cut into the solid chalk and were less than three feet deep. The bodies were laid with their heads towards the west, showing the beginnings of Christian influence in East Surrey.



A Cross section of a Saxon Barrow

It is believed that the original Saxon cemetery contained some sixteen barrows dating from the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. These were excavated between 1770 and 1949, revealing skeletons, weapons and ornaments. More recent excavations were carried out in 2005 and 2006.



SAXON DRINKING VESSEL FOUND
IN A GRAVE ON FARTHING DOWNS

One of the most interesting finds was a drinking vessel made of staves of wood, bound together and decorated with serpents of bronze gilt.

It is believed that one of the skeletons may have been that of a chief called "Cuthraed", after whom it is thought the area was called "Cuthraed's Down". In 967AD Farthing Downs was known as "Cudredesdune". By 1086 this is thought to have been pronounced "Colesdone", which is believed to be the origin of the name 'Coulsdon'.

Turn right and follow the path towards the beech trees on the horizon until you reach a finger post, this is post 8 (see map below).

NATURE TRAIL MAP

