

## Erbridge and the Merstham dennis in Horley

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*Document and map studies have led to what are thought to be the precise locations and boundaries of the Wealden dennis of Merstham, later to become the tithing of Erbridge in Horley. Their identities allow a new translation for the appendix to the Merstham charter-bounds of AD947 and an interpretation that suggests enclosure of much of the Low Weald around Horley had long been complete when the charter was written. The enclosure, into discrete administered dennis, is argued to have been largely the work of Chertsey Abbey to better control the resources of a communal pasture previously belonging to a 'federation' of settlements on the Downs and greensand to the north. Of the communal pasture that remained unenclosed (until the 19th century) the largest area became known as Thunderfield. Its relationship to the dennis is explored and locations suggested for King Alfred's 'royal vill' and a pagan 'shrine' dedicated to Thunor.*

### Introduction

*þis synt þa den to mearsætham. pedan hrycg and et lace þæt forræpe on þunres feld norþan an hid.*

So runs the list of woodland pastures (dennis) in the Weald attached to the estate of Merstham in the year AD947. The list is appended to the boundary clause of an original charter<sup>1</sup> which recorded a grant of 20 hides of land *æt Mearsæt ham* by King Eadred of Wessex to his thegn (*fidelis minister*) Oswig. The pastures have always been assumed to be located in what became the ancient parish of Horley as the place-names in the appendix all appear there (fig 1) viz *pedan hrycg* (Petridgewood Common), *lace* (Great and Little Lake Farms) and *þunres feld* (Thunderfield Castle and Thunderfield, or Horley Common, before enclosure in the early 19th century).<sup>2</sup>

The precise locations of these dennis were however unknown and it must be partly for this reason that a definitive translation of the appendix has proved elusive. The printed versions remain confusing, somewhat meaningless and in conflict regarding the number of dennis involved, their status as hidated or non-hidated entities and their relationship to Thunderfield. It is the object of this paper to seek an acceptable translation of the appendix as its text is clearly trying to tell us something about the development of at least this part of the Low Weald in the mid-10th century.

### The translations

The main obstacle to a satisfactory translation of the appendix has been the meaning of the rare Old English (OE) word *forræpe*. In 1943/4 Ekwall concluded that it was a noun and may have been derived from a hypothetical verb *forripan*, 'to tear up or to pieces', as in the sense to tear up roots in preparation for agriculture.<sup>3</sup> He was persuaded in this direction by modern dialect *forrepland*, 'assart land', ie forest land that has been converted to arable. He was also tempted this way by his own assumption that the *an hid* (one hide) indicated cultivated land rather than pasture but which was still reckoned, by tradition, as a denn. Thus the *an hid* he associated with the *forræpe* and placed it to the north or north-west of Thunderfield Castle in the vicinity of the stream (*lace*) which gave its name to Great and Little Lake Farms. While

<sup>1</sup> BL *Cott.* Augustus II 83; BCS 820; S 528 (see also Brooks & Kelly, forthcoming, which will include a detailed discussion of S 528). A copy of the Latin text of S 528 can be found on the internet by searching for 'Electronic Sawyer' or 'Anglo-Saxon charters'.

<sup>2</sup> Gover *et al* 1934, 293–5

<sup>3</sup> Ekwall 1943/4, 37–8; see also Coates 1988 for further discussion on this difficult word.

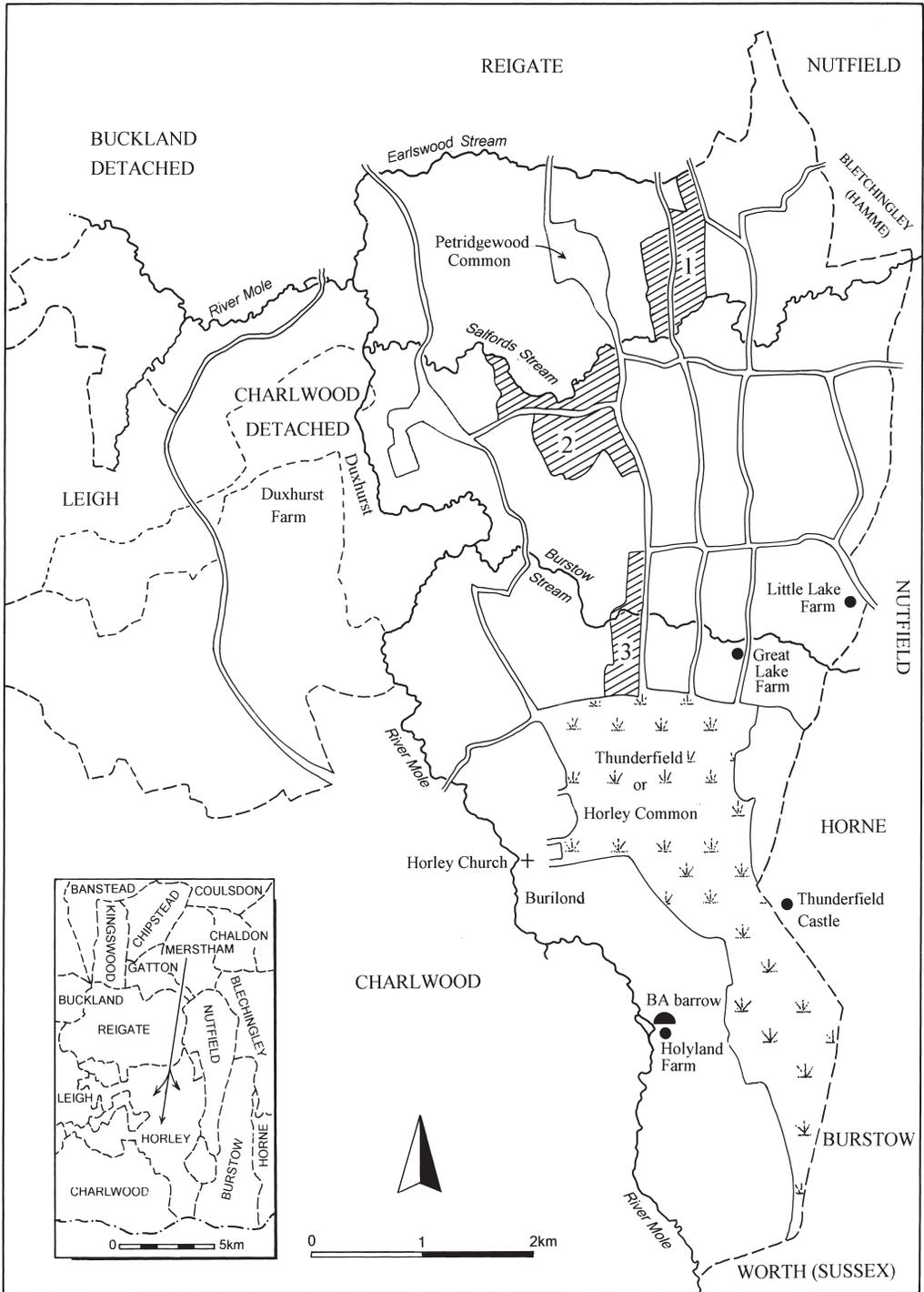


Fig 1 Ancient Horley parish and the three blocks of Erbridge tithing, formerly the Wealden dens of Merstham. For each block in detail see figures 2–4. Boundaries and roads are based on the Horley tithe map, 1848. Inset: Merstham and its links with Horley (parish boundaries, 1823; after Blair 1991, 3)

Ekwall did not offer a full translation of the appendix one may be concocted from the conclusions he reached: ‘These are the [2] denns of Merstham. Petridge (*pedan hrycg*) and at the stream (*lace*), the one hide of assart land (*forraepe*) north of Thunderfield’.

In 1970/1 Rumble followed his own translation of the Merstham charter-bounds with that of the appendix<sup>4</sup>: ‘These are the [2] woodland pastures to Merstham. Peda’s ridge and at the watercourse which detaches one hide to the north in Thunor’s field’.

Like Ekwall he cites two denns, Petridge and Lake, but employs *forraepe* as a verb, ‘to detach’, similar to Ekwall’s *forripan*, ‘to tear up’ but used in a different sense. In 1976 he went further<sup>5</sup> to claim that the denns, rated at one hide, were said to have been detached (*forraepe*) by the grant from the north part of Thunderfield: *þæt forraepe on þunres feld norþan an hid*. That is to say before being granted as specifically appurtenant to Merstham, in 947, these denns had been part of a larger area, probably a communal pasture, known by the name of Thunor’s *feld*, ‘the open country associated with the god Thunor’. By this token Rumble deduced that ‘a once communal pasture belonging originally to a federation of Surrey settlements is shown by the charter to be in the process of dismemberment’. Following Rumble’s ideas some local opinion<sup>6</sup> has in the past suggested that 10th century Thunderfield must therefore have included much of Horley, Charlwood and Leigh (but see below p 86), a territory once held by estates in the Sutton–Coulsdon–Banstead area and all of which are included in Rumble’s postulated ‘federation’.<sup>7</sup>

In 1991, Blair, with a further translation,<sup>8</sup> rejected Rumble’s versions by declaring that *þæt* can scarcely be a relative pronoun and *forraepe* can scarcely be a verb. He also disagreed with Ekwall and placed the hide in the north part of Thunderfield and referred the *forraepe* to both Petridge and Lake resulting in three denns: ‘These are the [3] denns of Merstham. Petridge and at Lake the *forraepe*; in the north part of Thunderfield a hide’.

Following evidence from Sussex that *forraepe* supports the translation ‘land outside the rape’<sup>9</sup> and following Jolliffe that ‘the rape [...] is the hidated area only’, Blair proposed that the old hidage assessment in Surrey extended to territory near Thunderfield royal vill, but not to the surrounding commons as a whole; thus Petridge and Lake remained as *forraepe*.<sup>10</sup>

## A new approach

These wildly differing translations, and interpretations thereof, would suggest that only one, or none, can be anywhere near correct. If a definitive version cannot be arrived at by conventional means then it is proposed that a new approach must be adopted, an approach based on a search for the precise locations of the denns within the contemporary landscape of the Merstham charter.

## Merstham in Horley

The ancient parish of Horley is known to have once comprised a mosaic of interlocking holdings that, from Anglo-Saxon, medieval and later sources, once belonged to extra-Wealden estates on the greensand and chalk to the north. The bounded properties, which in some cases appear to have retained their integrity until at least the time of the tithe map (1848),<sup>11</sup> originated as Anglo-Saxon swine pastures (denns) that at some time, it is believed,

<sup>4</sup> Rumble 1970/1, 8

<sup>5</sup> Rumble 1976, 172

<sup>6</sup> J Greenwood, G Moss and D Turner, pers comm.

<sup>7</sup> Rumble 1976, 172–5.

<sup>8</sup> Blair 1991, 182: note 62.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 182: note 61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–2.

<sup>11</sup> SHC: 863/1/41–2 Horley tithe map and apportionment, 1848.

had been parcelled out from communally held woodland and annexed to their respective settled estates. While research into the precise locations and boundaries of these dennis is still in its infancy it can be shown that, *inter alia*, the land was divided between the estates of Banstead, Beddington, Coulsdon, Ewell, Reigate, Sutton and Woodmansterne. To this list must of course be added Merstham which, from the evidence of the charter, appeared to hold lands in the Weald in 947 as part of the estate as opposed to rights within a communal pasture. With the possibility then that the Merstham holdings can still be identified there may be a way in which their relative positions on the map can help in the translation and interpretation of the charter appendix.

While, perhaps temporarily, in the hands of the king and then Oswig in 947, Merstham, together with Cheam, was granted by Archbishop Lyfing (Æthelstan) to the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury between 1013 and 1020.<sup>12</sup> Presumably their Wealden dennis were part of this grant.<sup>13</sup> By the 13th century Cheam and a further Christ Church member, Charlwood in the Weald, had become subordinate to Merstham<sup>14</sup> and appear as tithings in the Court Rolls of the head manor until the Dissolution.<sup>15</sup> From 1378 a third tithing, Erbrugge (Erbridge), appears in the Rolls,<sup>16</sup> perhaps at a time when its land had become settled by the requisite number of households, nominally ten, to warrant tithing status. Manning & Bray confirm Erbridge as a possession of Christ Church, Canterbury and as a borough or tithing in the parish of Horley for which a headborough and three tithingmen were appointed in the time of Henry IV (1399–1413).<sup>17</sup> In 1664 the householders of Horley parish assessed for the Hearth Tax were listed according to the districts in which they lived. One of these districts was ‘Errbridge Burrough’, thus offering further confirmation that the original Merstham tithing was wholly in Horley.<sup>18</sup> *Prima facie* then, the tithing of Erbridge in the parish Horley was land held by Merstham from at least the 14th century and therefore, by extrapolation, is probably identical with the dennis of the mid-10th century as documented in the Merstham charter. It remains then to discover the whereabouts of Erbridge in Horley.

### The tithing of Erbridge

As members of Christ Church, Canterbury, Merstham and its tithings of Charlwood and Erbridge in the Weald were surrendered to Henry VIII in 1539. The lands were granted to Sir Robert Southwell, a prominent receiver of church lands, in the same year but Charlwood was apparently held in the possession of Sir Henry de la Haye until quitclaimed to Southwell in 1542.<sup>19</sup> In 1547 Southwell conveyed Charlwood and the lands in Horley called ‘the Borough or Boroughs of Erbage, otherwise Erbryg’ to Henry Lechford of Charlwood.<sup>20</sup> From that moment Erbridge became a tithing or borough of Charlwood and is so recorded in the Court Rolls of the manor.<sup>21</sup>

To complicate matters, however, there is a series of Court Rolls of the manor of Lodge in Horley, between 1554 and 1575,<sup>22</sup> that refer to three of its properties as being ‘in the tithing of Erbridge’. The courts were held at the capital messuage (Lodge, or Horley Lodge; fig 3) which in 1575 was described as being ‘*infra* the tithing of Erbridge’, ie the manor house itself was within the tithing. The inference here could be that before the Dissolution Erbridge had

<sup>12</sup> Gelling, 1979, 341.

<sup>13</sup> see Appendix: CHEAM DENN.

<sup>14</sup> CLC: U15/22/3.

<sup>15</sup> CLC: U15/22–3; PRO SC2/204/66–8; SoRO: DD/HY Box 27.

<sup>16</sup> CLC: U15/23/4.

<sup>17</sup> Manning & Bray, 2, 199.

<sup>18</sup> Meekings 1940, xcvi.

<sup>19</sup> *VCH*, 3, 184.

<sup>20</sup> Manning & Bray, 2, 199; Meekings 1948, 538.

<sup>21</sup> CS: Court Rolls.

<sup>22</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22.

been held of Merstham as part of the manor of Lodge but afterwards, while remaining with Lodge, was taken into the overlordship of Charlwood manor. From extremely confused and sketchy evidence, however, the manor of Lodge appears to have become a manor in its own right shortly after the Dissolution. Previously its lands seemingly formed part of the poorly documented manor of Burstow Lodge (in Burstow and also known as the manor of Lodge) which held property in Burstow, Horley and elsewhere from at least the 14th century.<sup>23</sup> The Horley lands, most or all of which were held of monasteries, were probably accrued by the de Burstowes and at the Dissolution passed to Robert Burstowe but held of Sir Robert Southwell. Burstowe died in 1545 holding these properties as ‘the manor of Lodge’. He also held ‘the manor of Horley’ formerly the lands in Horley held directly by Chertsey Abbey and sold to Burstowe by Southwell in 1543.<sup>24</sup>

The descent of the manor of Lodge in Horley from the mid-16th century<sup>25</sup> is quite distinct from that of Burstow Lodge,<sup>26</sup> again suggestive of a newly formed manor. It comprised a manor house, court, demesne and mill and, from the evidence of 16th–18th century Court Rolls,<sup>27</sup> about 30 freehold lands scattered over the parish of Horley, many of which can be identified. Included in these lands are the three properties, together with the manor house, ‘in the tithing of Erbridge’ as mentioned above, but an intimate knowledge of Horley would suggest that their whereabouts were so described simply to distinguish them from farmsteads of the same name elsewhere in the parish. In other words Erbridge, in its entirety, could comprise more than those four components. Indeed this can now be demonstrated through extensive document studies, especially of the Court Rolls of Merstham, Charlwood and Lodge, and the Hearth Tax Accounts of 1664 when seven houses were assessed in ‘Errbridge Borough’.<sup>28</sup>

Using the Horley tithe map all the properties identified as Erbridge members can be located with considerable accuracy and be revealed as the divisions or subdivisions of three distinct blocks of land that seemingly explain the ‘Borough or Boroughs of Erbage’ in 1547 and the three denns of Merstham 600 years earlier (fig 1). The three blocks form a north–south archipelago and correspond not only with the whereabouts of the denns as described in the charter-bounds appendix but also in the same order, indeed as they would have been approached from Merstham:

#### BLOCK 1 *pedan hrycg* (figs 1 and 2)

The location of this Erbridge portion has already been identified in an earlier paper by the author.<sup>29</sup> The following is a summary and is referenced only where an item is critical to the discussion or where new material has been recovered. From the 16th century, and presumably for some time earlier, Block 1 comprised two properties:

SALFORDS is clearly defined as ‘a messuage and certain lands called Salfads Land in the tithing of Erebridge’ in 1575 when held freely of the manor of Lodge by the Howards of Reigate Priory.<sup>30</sup> The land was auctioned in 1766 as part of the priory’s estate called Allens Farm and comprised plots 596, 629–39, 644 and 647–51 when translated to the Horley tithe map (fig 2). The area amounts to about 89 acres, derived from the individual field acreages of the tithe apportionment (TA) together with an estimated 11 acres lost to the London–Brighton railway which appears to have destroyed part of the western boundary.

<sup>23</sup> *VCH*, 3, 178.

<sup>24</sup> Lane 1960, 34.

<sup>25</sup> *VCH*, 3, 204.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>27</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> Meekings 1940, xcvi.

<sup>29</sup> Ellaby 2000.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*; ERO: D/D4 565/22.

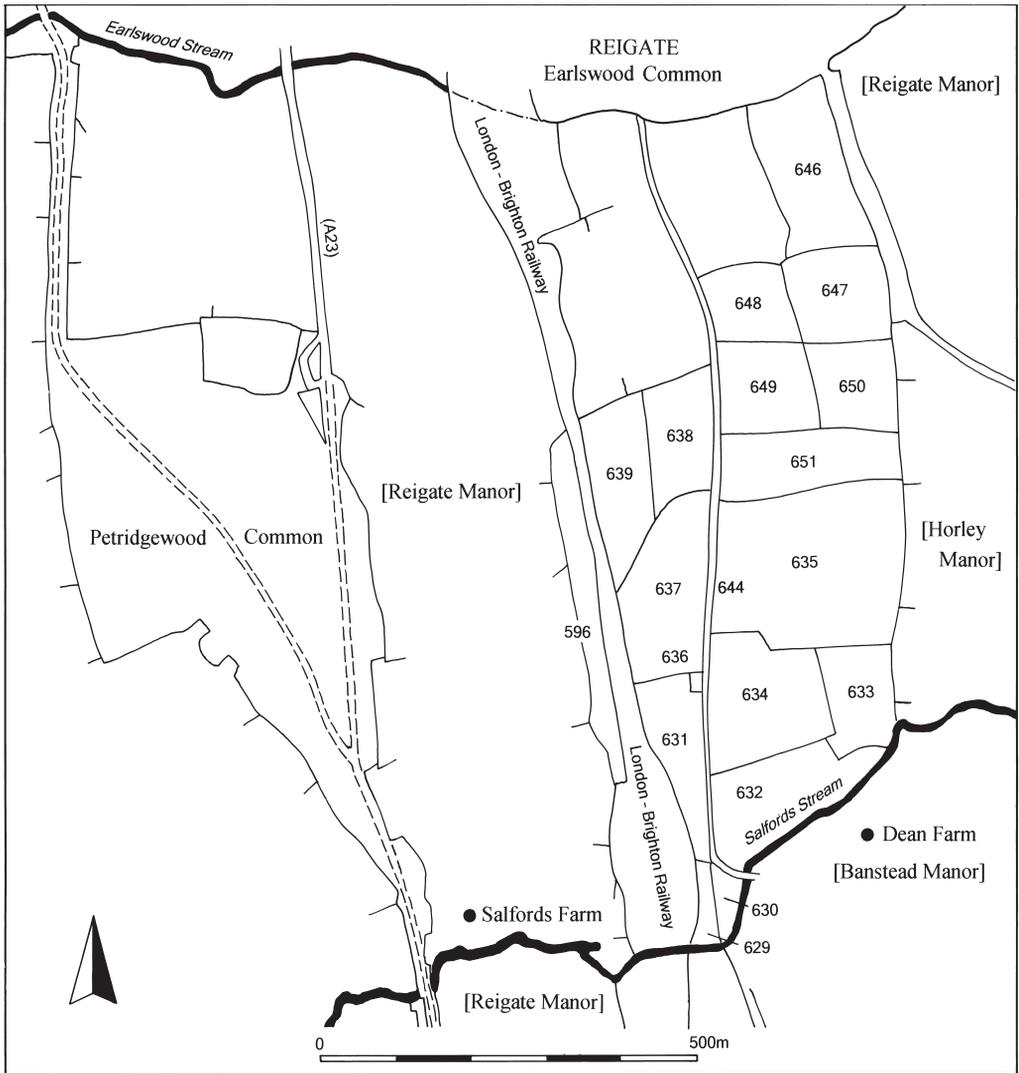


Fig 2 Block 1 of Erbridge tithing in Horley, formerly the Merstham denn *pedan hrycg*. Based on the Horley tithe map, 1848.

Its whereabouts 'in the tithing of Erebridge', was almost certainly given to distinguish the property from adjacent Salfords Farm, a copyhold of Reigate manor. The house of 1575 as above was probably the home of a branch of the Hever family. A William Hever 'of Petteridge Wood' held a seat in Horley church in 1634,<sup>31</sup> while 'the widow Hever' was assessed for two hearths in 'Errbridge Borough' in 1664.<sup>32</sup> The dwelling had disappeared before 1766 as there was no mention of it in the auction lot and no houses on Salfords appear on the tithe map in 1848 although the barn on plot 636 (fig 2) may be speculated to have been a remnant of the Hevers' farmstead.

<sup>31</sup> Bax 1888, 249.

<sup>32</sup> Meekings 1940, 77.

NORTH FIELD appears in a 1791 Charlwood Court Roll as ‘North Field containing about 7 acres abutting south upon Salvers land [Salfords] lying within this manor’ and was presented as part of the demesne of the manor of Lodge on the death of its lord, John Shove.<sup>33</sup> Being a member of both Charlwood and Lodge manors North Field is, by inference, a component of Erbridge. North Field can be located on the tithe map (fig 2, plot 646) and abuts south on Salfords as described in the above document. The TA gives about 6 acres for this field and if added to the 89 acres of Salfords results in a total area of about 95 acres for Block 1.

Bounded on all sides by properties attached to other manors there can be little doubt that Block 1 of Erbridge tithing was once the Merstham denn called, or at, *pedan hrycg* (Peda’s ridge, later Petridge). As the name suggests it spans the watershed between two streams and appears to have included part of Petteridge Wood when the Hevers lived there in the 16th century. Fields adjacent, on the west, were called Petterich in 1623<sup>34</sup> which in turn abutted ancient Pettridge Wood Common, all once part of Reigate manor.

## BLOCK 2 *at lace* (figs 1 and 3)

From mainly post-Dissolution records the area under discussion comprised two distinct holdings:

LODGE. The capital message of the manor of Lodge, recently Horley Lodge (fig 3), was earlier known *inter alia* as Lodge Farm, Lodge Manor or Manor of Lodge. As previously mentioned the house was situated within the tithing of Erbridge and corroborated in 1664 when Henry Bonwick, lord of the manor of Lodge, was assessed for six hearths in ‘Errbridge Borough’.<sup>35</sup> Its status as a manor house cannot be verified until the first recorded court was held there in 1554<sup>36</sup> while any earlier houses on the site appear to have been called simply ‘Lodge’. Its status as a moated site<sup>37</sup> is based largely on the presence of a rectangular pond immediately to the south of the recent house and an assumption that there was a manor house there in medieval times. A comparison of figures 3A and 3B would suggest however that the ‘moat’ was formerly a field pit incorporated as a feature into the curtilage of the manor house when apparently re-sited some time after 1602. That a house on the site existed in medieval times is not in doubt but there is nothing to suggest that it was anything more than a modest isolated farmstead working a Merstham holding. Few medieval occupiers can be identified but a William at *Logge* appears in 1408 among inhabitants of Erbridge tithing<sup>38</sup> while John Bristow (Burstowe) of *Logge*, who held land nearby of Beddington manor in 1519,<sup>39</sup> could be the same John Burstowe who appears as an Erbridge resident in 1503.<sup>40</sup>

At a Court View of Merstham in 1388<sup>41</sup> William Roy of Erbridge tithing was ordered to cleanse his ditches against ‘the tenement called *Logge*’ to improve the drainage of the highway ‘between *Stalford* and *Dondresfelde*’ (Salfords Bridge and Thunderfield, or Horley Common). While clearly identifiable with the Lodge under discussion, and that Roy was probably the occupier at the time, it is apparent from the text that ‘the tenement called *Logge*’ referred not only to a house but also to the land in which it stood, ie of Erbridge tithing. This becomes more than apparent in post-1547 records when the house and its lands adjacent became known as the ‘Manor of Lodge’ and held of Charlwood, as demesne, by the lords of the manor of Lodge. For instance items in Charlwood Court Rolls of 1670, 1681 and 1791 present

<sup>33</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 145.

<sup>34</sup> SHC: 371/2/5/1.

<sup>35</sup> Meekings 1940, 20.

<sup>36</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22.

<sup>37</sup> Turner 1977, 91.

<sup>38</sup> SoRO: DD/HY Box 27 Merstham Roll 1.

<sup>39</sup> Gowans *et al* 1983, 38 and 59.

<sup>40</sup> SoRO: DD/HY Box 27 Merstham Roll 3.

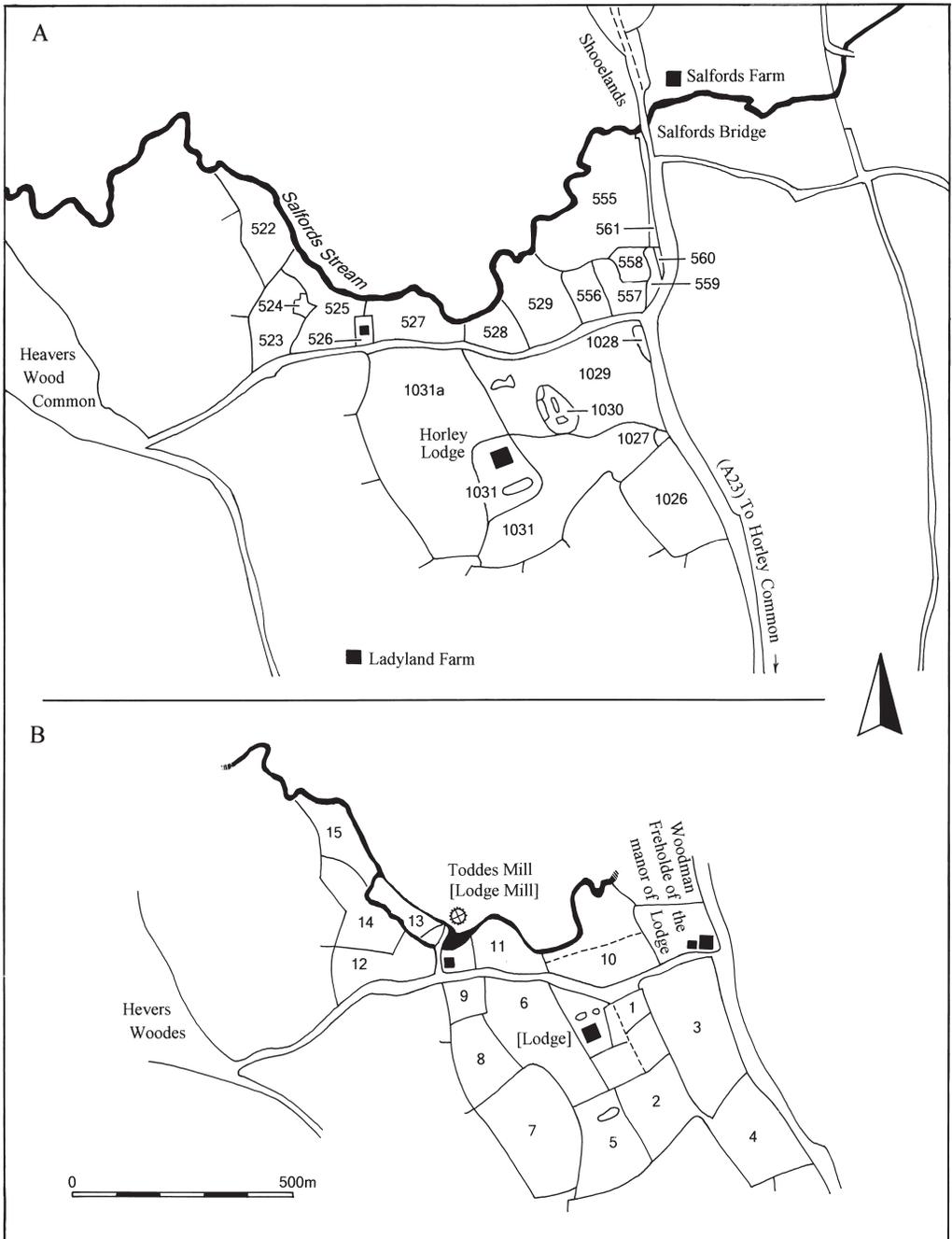


Fig 3 Block 2 of Erbridge tithing in Horley, formerly the Merstham denn *et lacc*. A: based on the Horley tithe map, 1848. B: the same area based on the Christ's Hospital map of Horley, 1602.

TABLE 1 The demesne fields of the Manor of Lodge in 1602 and 1618

Field no	1602 map	1618 deed	1618 acreage		
			acres	rods	perches
1	Farham	Farham	3	1	7
2	–	Barn Field	7	3	4
3	Rydinges	Ridings	11	3	0
4	Bushe Felde	Bushey Pit Field	8	1	0
5	Pitt Felde	Pit Field	6	3	13
6	Lodge Field	Lodge Field	9	0	31
7	Baye Felde	Bay Field	9	0	12
8	Winterabers	Winteroats	4	1	10
9	Side Gardens	Little Old Gardens	1	0	0
10	Shawcrofte	Stockcroft	8	0	39
11	–	Bridgeham Meadow	2	3	8
12	Surshams Meadow	Sershams Mead	4	0	36
13	Stevens Meade	Stevens Mead	2	0	10
14	Hocke Crofte	Hook Croft	4	2	11
15	Hooke Meade	Hook Mead	3	3	11
Total acreage			87	0	32

respectively the deaths of Henry Bonwick, John Shove and another John Shove, lords of the manor of Lodge, when holding freely of Charlwood ‘the Manor of Lodge containing 100 acres or thereabouts’.<sup>42</sup> The 1791 item is the most revealing in that it gives the approximate location of the 100 acres ie ‘abutting on the east part upon the highway leading from Horley Heath [Horley Common] to Salvers [Salfords] Bridge and on the south upon the lane leading from Heavers Wood to the said highway and bridge and on the north upon the great common stream’. The rent of 13s 2d included that derived from the 7 acres of isolated North Field, also held as demesne, discussed under Block 1 above.

By even greater fortune a deed of 1618,<sup>43</sup> whereby Henry Bonwick received the manor of Lodge, provides a list of the demesne fields which in turn match those depicted on the 1602 map of Horley<sup>44</sup> (table 1 and fig 3B), the whole corresponding precisely with the whereabouts of the demesne as described in the 1791 Court Roll. The total area from the deed is about 87 acres but no acreage is given for the curtilage of the manor house or the lands of Lodge Mill (Todde’s Mill) which were in private ownership at the time.<sup>45</sup> Conveniently, however, the boundary of the 17th century demesne appears unchanged at the time of the tithe map (fig 3A) and from the TA the aggregated contemporary acreage within this boundary (plots 522–9, 555–61 and 1026–31a) amounts to 99a 3r 18p, an area neatly tying with the ‘100 acres or thereabouts’ held of Charlwood in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In summary, the Manor of Lodge comprised 100 acres of Erbridge tithing and was held of Charlwood manor after 1547. Before the Dissolution the land was held of Merstham and called *Logge*, possibly in origin the site of a hunting lodge appurtenant to the owners of the manor.

ESTRICH with TANNERS and RYEFIELD. In 1533 every highway bridge in Horley parish was assessed of its state of repair.<sup>46</sup> The bridge called Salford, ie Salfords Bridge (fig 3A) was

<sup>41</sup> PRO: SC2/204/67.

<sup>42</sup> CS: Court Rolls; SHC: Zs207/1/3, 145–6.

<sup>43</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 56–60.

<sup>44</sup> SHC: Z22.

<sup>45</sup> see Appendix: LODGE MILL.

<sup>46</sup> SHC: P30/18/16.

presented as being ‘in great decay and the borough of Woodhatch and the borough of Earbridge ought to make new the way’. In other words the repair of the bridge was to be carried out by inhabitants of the tithings on which the bridge abutments rested. The north-west, north-east and south-east abutments rested on Reigate manor land (north-west on Shooelands, north-east and south-east on Salfords Farm)<sup>47</sup> and as such fell within the administrative tithing of Woodhatch. The south-west abutment must therefore have been founded on land in the tithing of Erbridge. In theory this land should comprise the 19a 1r 12p TA (plots 555–61) extending from the 100 acres of the Manor of Lodge into the apex of the triangle formed by the Salfords stream and the road to Horley Common (modern A23).

A glance at the 1602 map (fig 3B) reveals that this land, although incompletely illustrated, was held freely of the manor of Lodge by Woodman. The only tenants of the manor with this surname, and around this time, were Robert Woodman from a Court Roll of 1576<sup>48</sup> and Francis Woodman from a Roll and rental of 1659.<sup>49</sup> Significantly Francis Woodman was taxed for three hearths in 1664 in ‘Errbridge Borough’.<sup>50</sup> Presumably the house was that shown on the 1602 map. Thus it would appear the Erbridge land did indeed extend from Woodman’s house to Salfords Bridge. Court Rolls and rentals from 1659 onwards<sup>51</sup> show that the house, and its garden, was called Estrich at a rent of 6d while the rest of the land was divided into two crofts called Tanners<sup>52</sup> and Ryefield at a rent of 12d. Estrich and the then two unnamed crofts were in the hands of Robert Woodman in 1576<sup>53</sup> having recently purchased from John Shoo (Shove) of Wood by 1575 as ‘a messuage and one acre of land called Estriche 6d and two crofts of land called Little Stockcroft and le Hill 12d’.<sup>54</sup> Shove had purchased the property from John Willett and John Evershed in 1558 when it was described as a messuage, garden and barn, 10 acres land, 4 acres meadow and 6 acres pasture called Estrige, Stokcroft, le Hyll, Bartlottes and le Smythmede.<sup>55</sup> No earlier references to the property are known.

With an apparent absence of other Erbridge lands in the locality, Block 2 comprised the properties called Lodge and Estrich with Tanners and Ryefield, the former with an area of 100 acres (99a 3r 18p TA) and the latter 20 acres (19a 1r 12p TA), giving a total of 119a 0r 30p TA. The land is bounded by the Salfords stream along its entire northern edge and there seems little doubt that this was originally the Merstham denn *at lace*, ‘at the stream’. This pasture had always been assumed to be near the Burstow stream further south where several properties are documented as Lake or Lakelond from the 13th century onwards and there still exist Great and Little Lake Farms (fig 1). Indeed the third block of Erbridge tithing (see Block 3, below) is bisected by this stream and it also could have been designated *at lace* in 947 but the writer of the Merstham charter was forced to give an alternative description to distinguish it from the denn to the north.

### BLOCK 3 *þæt forræpe on þunres feld norþan* (figs 1 and 4)

It was a duty of the inhabitants of manorial tithings to maintain the highway ditches that ran beside their tenements. When residents neglected this duty they were ordered at a Court Leet or View of Frankpledge to complete the work by a certain time on penalty of a fine. Erbridge

<sup>47</sup> Hooper 1945, 207–8.

<sup>48</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 28.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 65 and 67.

<sup>50</sup> Meekings 1940, 170.

<sup>51</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 64–97.

<sup>52</sup> Tanners may be preserved in the field name Turners (fig 2A, title map, plot 555) adjoining the south-west abutment of Salfords Bridge.

<sup>53</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 28.

<sup>54</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22. Little Stockcroft presumably abutted the field called Stockcroft (fig 2B and table 1, field 10), the north-easternmost of the Manor of Lodge.

<sup>55</sup> Meekings 1948, 956.

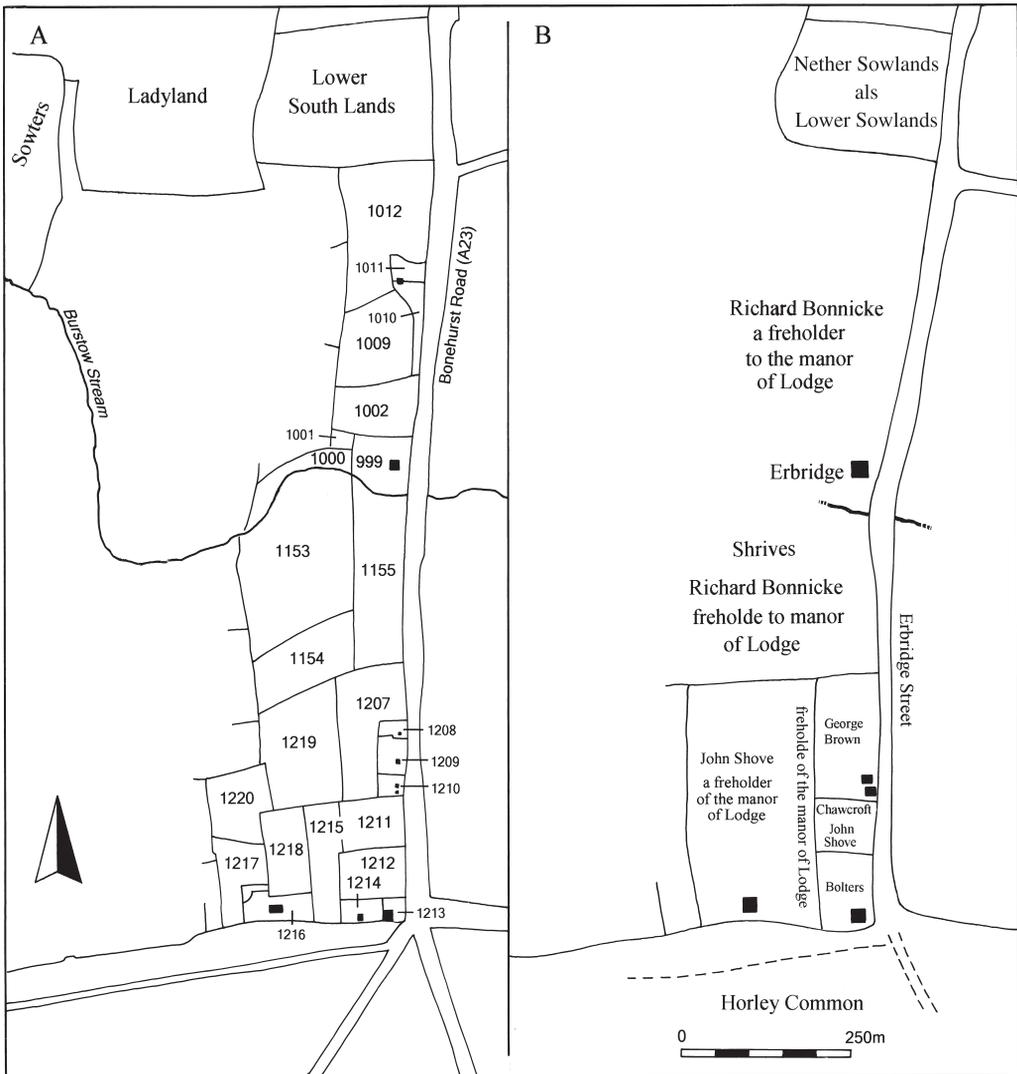


Fig 4 Block 3 of Erbridge tithing in Horley, formerly the Merstham denn *þæt foræpe on þunres feld norþan*. A: based on the Horley tithe map, 1848. B: the same area based on the Christ's Hospital map of Horley, 1602.

tithing was no exception and at Merstham Court Views of 1512 and 1516<sup>56</sup> residents were ordered to scour their ditches 'between Erbridge and Horley Heath' and in 1523 were given the same task 'from Bolterscross to Erbridge'.<sup>57</sup> The 1602 map (fig 4B) depicts a block of tenements, held freely of the manor of Lodge, that abut Erbridge Street (modern A23) on the east and extend south from Erbridge tenement to the crosspaths by Bolters on the edge of Horley Heath (Common). These tenements are surely those of the Court Views above and must therefore be part at least of a block of Erbridge tithing. The map is, however, somewhat diagrammatic and also incomplete in this area, thus to recover the bounds and acreage of

<sup>56</sup> SoRO: DD/HY Box 27 Merstham Roll 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

the original block it is necessary to trace its component properties through use of the tithe map and apportionment together with relevant documents. Eight tenements can be identified and are listed below:

ERBRIDGE. The tenement called Erbridge (fig 4B) first appears in the records as the home of John de Erthbrug' who was assessed for 8d tax in Horley in 1332.<sup>58</sup> The name presumably relates to the bridge over the adjacent Burstow stream, but why 'Earth Bridge' is not known. Possibly it described in some way its method of construction or simply its muddy appearance! The tenement was clearly part of Erbridge tithing, but differentiated from it, when presented as 'Erbridge in the tithing of Erbridge' in Court Rolls of the manor of Lodge in the mid-16th century.<sup>59</sup> However it was probably the 'Earth Bridge' itself that lent its name to the tithing as a whole when established in the late 14th century, arguably because the great majority of its residents lived within a short distance of what was a landmark in featureless countryside.

For the sake of continuity the tenement was always called Erbridge in the courts of the manor of Lodge but outside became alternatively known as Borners or Bourners from the 16th century<sup>60</sup> and then Bournehurst or Bonehurst Farm from the 18th century.<sup>61</sup> The same names were also given to the bridge<sup>62</sup> and the lane over it,<sup>63</sup> now called Bonehurst Road, part of the A23. These appellations must derive from John Bornere (1408), Thomas Bonere (1425) and Thomas Bornere and John Bonnere (1438) who, from Merstham Court records, were all residents of Erbridge tithing.<sup>64</sup> From the 1520s the property was in the ownership and occupation of the Bonwicks<sup>65</sup> but from the early 17th century descended, with the neighbouring tenements of Shrives and The Harpe (see below), through a succession of absentee landlords.<sup>66</sup> The house site appears to have survived from at least the time of John de Erthbrug' and in the early 19th century was occupied by the Kings Head public house until allegedly burned down *c* 1860. A new house was built soon afterwards and in the late 19th century was owned by the duke of Cambridge and stands today as the Cambridge Hotel.

The bounds of the original Erbridge tenement are incompletely depicted on the 1602 map (fig 4B) and no deeds, from which they might be recovered, are known. The eastern and southern boundaries clearly abut Erbridge Street (A23/Bonehurst Road) and the Burstow stream respectively while the northern boundary appears to abut the field called 'Nether Sowlands alias Lower Sowlands' (fig 4A: Lower South Lands). South Lands originally formed part of adjacent Ladyland Farm, a Horley manor estate, and was held freely by Henry Drake in 1606 as '30 acres, South Land alias Lady Land'<sup>67</sup> and was among the lands of John Moore in 1569, 'Lady Lands, South Lands and Kinnersley'.<sup>68</sup> The western boundary is more difficult to establish but is most likely to be consistent with the only straight hedge-line that extends from the Burstow stream to Lower South Lands (fig 4A), a boundary which remained intact

<sup>58</sup> SR: 42.

<sup>59</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22.

<sup>60</sup> Ingram & Carter (nd): John Burstowe of 'Bourners' fined for unlawful use of Horley Common in 1571.

<sup>61</sup> Rocque's map 1768.

<sup>62</sup> Gover *et al* 1934, 292.

<sup>63</sup> SoRO: DD/HY Box 27, Merstham Roll 3 (1503). Ditches unscoured between tenements 'in Bornerslane'. Also called Erbridge Street according to the 1602 map (fig 4B).

<sup>64</sup> CLC: U15/23/39 (1425); SoRO DD/HY Box 27 (1408 and 1438).

<sup>65</sup> SoRO: DD/HY Box 27 Merstham Roll 4; CS: Court Rolls; ERO: D/D4 565/22.

<sup>66</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 67–97. While the owners are well documented the occupiers are not. This makes it especially difficult to decide who was living there in 1664 when the occupier was assessed for the Hearth Tax. A Joseph Letchford was the occupier in 1695 and 1723 (SHC: Zs207/1/3, 76 and 81) and it may be that it was a member of this family who lived there thirty years earlier. If that was so then it was Peter Letchford who was assessed for four hearths 'in Errbridge Borough' (Meekings 1940, 96).

<sup>67</sup> Ingram & Carter (nd).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

during large-scale hedge removal from fields to its west *c.* 1870.<sup>69</sup> If these bounds can be accepted then the area within them amounts to 12a 0r 9p TA (fig 4A: plots 999–1002, 1009 and 1012). This acreage, if correlated with the rent of 15d to the manor of Lodge in 1659, yields 1¼d/acre, a figure not incompatible with the mean of 1½d/acre for all tenements of Block 3 of Erbridge tithing in the same year.

Depicted on the tithe map (fig 4A: plots 1010–11) and occupying 1a 1r 20p TA is a harp-shaped piece of land, with a cottage, inserted into the eastern edge of the former Erbridge tenement. This is almost certainly the property once called THE HARPE, which descended in common ownership with the tenements of Erbridge and Shrives from the early 17th century and was held freely of the manor of Lodge at 1d rent.<sup>70</sup> The land first appears in the records in 1575<sup>71</sup> when Richard Bonwick sold to John Dewdney ‘one croft of land called le Harpe’. Dewdney was holding in the following year<sup>72</sup> but the next reference is from a rental of 1659 when it was held, along with Erbridge and Shrives, by William Spence of South Malling, Sussex.<sup>73</sup> It was therein described as ‘a tenement and garden called The Harpe now in the occupation of John Pope heretofore John Dewdneys at 1d rent’. Five years later<sup>74</sup> a John Poope was assessed for one hearth ‘in Errbridge burrough’ and this is perhaps the clinching evidence that The Harpe was a component of Erbridge tithing. In the late 19th century the cottage appears as Bonehurst Farm<sup>75</sup> presumably having taken the title previously attached to the house on the Erbridge tenement. The present house, formerly ‘The Oaks’, superseded Bonehurst Farm early in the 20th century.<sup>76</sup>

SHRIVES. On the 1602 map (fig 4B), immediately south of Erbridge tenement and the Burstow stream, is an undefined piece of land called Shrives held freely of the manor of Lodge by Richard Bonwick. On the tithe map (fig 4A: plots 1153–5) this name corresponds with three fields called Great Sherves, Further Sherves and Long Sherves with a total area of 14a 1r 16p TA. These appellations are probably derived from older names for the wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*: *serve* from OE *syfre*. Plot 1147, some 0.5km to the west, is called Sherve Tree Field). The three fields in turn seemingly correspond with ‘a messuage and 15 acres of land, ‘Shereffs’ or ‘Shreaves’, held jointly of the manor of Lodge by John Hubbard and John Shove in 1575/6.<sup>77</sup> An earlier John Shove had purchased half of ‘Shreeves’ from John Willett and John Evershed in 1558<sup>78</sup> while at a court of the manor of Lodge in 1554 it was presented that John Hubbard held half of Walter Staplehurst’s tenement and 15 acres of land following an enquiry by Shove.<sup>79</sup> The significance of this last item is that Walter Staplehurst, who was clearly the occupier of Shrives, can be shown from Charlwood Court Rolls of 1548 and 1553 to be resident in the tithing of Erbridge and holding the duty of tithingman at the earlier

<sup>69</sup> OS map: Surrey 25-inch sheet XXXIV.16, 1870 edn. The land to the west of this boundary, lying between Ladyland to the north, Burstow stream to the south and the Lodge property called Sowters on the west, was probably the Lakeland held of Beddington manor in the 16th century. Peter Bonwick held ‘Lakeland late Borners’ of Beddington in 1528 (Gowans *et al* 1983, 59) at an annual rent of 5s 3d while a Richard Bonwick was ordered to pay the same rent, presumably for the same property, to the lord of the manor of Beddington in 1598 (BL Add Ch 23515).

<sup>70</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 64–97.

<sup>71</sup> ERO: D/D4 575/22.

<sup>72</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 28.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>74</sup> Meekings 1940, 122.

<sup>75</sup> OS maps: Surrey 25-inch sheet XXXIV.16, 1870, 1895 edns. Various 18th–20th century maps depict another farm called Bournehurst on the opposite side of the road to Erbridge and the Harpe. There is no evidence that this farm was ever held by the Borners or was part of Erbridge tithing (Sewill & Lane 1951, 200). Indeed the land was part of Reigate manor (SHC: 371/2/5/1). Probably the farm was so called because of its proximity to Bournehurst Bridge and is named as such on the OS map 1895 edn.

<sup>76</sup> OS map: Surrey 25-inch sheet XXXIV.16, 1913 edn.

<sup>77</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22; SHC: Zs207/1/3, 29.

<sup>78</sup> Meekings 1948, 956.

<sup>79</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22.

date.<sup>80</sup> This surely confirms that the 15 acres of land he worked was a component of the tithing. The house in which Staplehurst lived had apparently disappeared by the time of the 1602 map and is perhaps confirmed in 1659 when William Spence held ‘certain lands called Shreaves’ at a rent of 11d.<sup>81</sup> From then the property descended in common ownership with the tenements of Erbridge and The Harpe and by the time of the TA in 1848 all had been absorbed into the extensive local holdings of the Amhersts.<sup>82</sup>

HITCHURST. On the 1602 map (fig 4B) immediately south of Shrides and abutting the highway is a tenement with a house and outbuilding held freely of the manor of Lodge by George Brown. The tenement survives on the tithe map (fig 4A: plots 1207–10) with an area of 4a 1r 27p TA together with two buildings listed as a cottage and a smith’s shop (plot 1210). The house, of 17th century origin, is there today as Forge Cottage formerly known as Hitchurst.<sup>83</sup> The latter name is first mentioned as such in 1634 when Henry Shove held seats in Horley church as owner of Benhams, Hitchurst and Methgrene.<sup>84</sup> Henry evidently gave Hitchurst to his son John Shove<sup>85</sup> who was holding the property in 1659 as ‘a messuage and certain lands sometime David Evans, before that John Scott’s and before that Hychesters’.<sup>86</sup> The earliest evidence for the tenement supporting a smithy is the will of the said John Shove in 1680 wherein he bequeathed to his second son, Robert Shove, ‘all that my messuage and tenement called by the name of Benhams and one house and a smith’s shop with all the land thereunto belonging abutting upon the said land called Benhams’.<sup>87</sup> Robert was holding Benhams and ‘a certain tenement and lands heretofore John Scott’s’ in 1686.<sup>88</sup>

Returning to the earlier history of Hitchurst there is a long gap in the records between 1634 and 1576 during which time the property was held for a while by George Brown as indicated on the 1602 map. In 1576 however the thread of continuity is picked up again when David Evans was in ownership of the tenement ‘sometime Hychesters’<sup>89</sup> having purchased from Edward Scott before 1575.<sup>90</sup> Edward had inherited the property, ‘one messuage and land late Hychester at a rent of 12d’ from John Scott who had died before a court of the manor of Lodge in 1561.<sup>91</sup>

In none of the above documents is there any mention of Hitchurst being a member of Erbridge tithing. However, it is the 1561 item – the earliest reference to the property – that provides circumstantial evidence for its inclusion. First, John Scott appears among the homage at Charlwood Court Barons of 1548, 1552 and 1553<sup>92</sup> and it is implicit from this that he held Hitchhurst of the manor of Lodge but of the overlordship of Charlwood manor, a criterion for membership of Erbridge. There is no evidence that Scott held any other lands of either manor. Secondly, ‘Hychester’ or ‘Hitchhurst’ appears to derive from a sometime owner or occupier of the property and it is claimed here that this was probably Thomas Hechhurst who was recorded as a resident of Erbridge tithing in 1378.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>80</sup> CS: Court Rolls.

<sup>81</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 64.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 64–97.

<sup>83</sup> ‘A talk with Mr George Edwards at Forge Cottage, 4 October 1952’, typescript notes by D McLeod. Horley Local History Society.

<sup>84</sup> Bax 1888, 248–9.

<sup>85</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, 35.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 42 ‘Benhams’, in this instance, appears to have included the tenements called Duckhurst and Muster Haw (see BENHAMS).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>90</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> CS: Court Rolls.

<sup>93</sup> CLC: U15/23/4.

BOLTERS. Depicted on the 1602 map (fig 4B) a little to the south of Hitchurst and abutting Horley Common and the highway is a small tenement with a house called Bolters held freely of the manor of Lodge. Fragments of that house, which appear to date from about 1500, survive within the Chequers Hotel.<sup>94</sup> 'Bolters' is presumably derived from the name of an early owner or occupier,<sup>95</sup> certainly before 1523 when it first appears in the Court View of Merstham previously mentioned when tenants of Erbridge tithing were ordered to cleanse their ditches 'from Bolterscross to Erbridge'. The earliest recorded owner is a John Leigh of Stockwell who had sold to John Watson, 'citizen and inholder of London', before 1537.<sup>96</sup> Watson, in his will of that date, bequeathed the property to the Inholders Company but his wife Joan was to have the option of retaining it in exchange for a house in London of similar value. Joan clearly kept the tenement and held it freely not only of Lodge but also of Charlwood manor, as shown in Court Rolls of both between 1548 and 1554, with a 1553 Charlwood court recording her death while holding 'a tenement with two small crofts called Bolters lying in Horley, rent 4d'.<sup>97</sup>

That Bolters was held of both Lodge and Charlwood manors is a clear indication that the tenement was a member of the tithing of Erbridge and this is confirmed in the Hearth Tax records of 1664 when the then owner/occupier, Robert Palmer,<sup>98</sup> was assessed for three hearths in 'Errbridge Burrough'.<sup>99</sup> While optimistically estimated at 3 acres in 1554<sup>100</sup> the TA gives 2a 1r 20 p (fig 4A: plots 1212–14) for what appears to be the same piece of ground as depicted on the 1602 map.

BENHAMS. A little to the west of the Chequers Hotel (formerly Bolters) is an old house, of part 15th century construction, called Benhams. A house in the same position on the 1602 map (fig 4B) is shown to be within a piece of land held freely of the manor of Lodge by John Shove. At a court of the manor in 1575<sup>101</sup> it was presented that John Shove had recently received, on the death of his father Henry, 'a messuage and two crofts of land called Benhams in the tithing of Erbridge at 7d rent, two crofts called Duxhurst near unto Thunderfield at 6d and one garden called Muster Haw at 1d'.

Benhams, as documented above, was a member of Erbridge tithing<sup>102</sup> and its whereabouts so described presumably to distinguish it from 'Benhams in Sutton', a Horley manor property held of Sutton and formerly of Chertsey Abbey, located 0.7 km to the west and identifiable with the late Tackle Farm, otherwise Edmondsbury (TQ 275 439),<sup>103</sup> 'Benhams in Sutton' acquired its name from a John Benham, arguably the abbot of Chertsey himself (1347–61) who, like his predecessor John de Rutherford, purchased back freehold lands in Horley to the use of the abbey with subsequent tenants holding the properties as copyhold.<sup>104</sup> Benhams in Erbridge, however, appears to derive its name from a former occupier, William Benham,

<sup>94</sup> Information from Mrs Jean Shelley.

<sup>95</sup> Probably to be identified with William Bolthod who was named as one of the brewers of Merstham manor in 1374 (PRO: SC2/204/66). It may be no coincidence that Bolthod was listed in sequence with Thomas Hechhurst and John Duxhurst both of whom were recorded as residents of the tithing of Erbridge four years later (CLC: U15/23/4). There is a suggestion here of course that prior to 1378 the residents of the Merstham holdings in Horley were administered as members of Merstham itself, ie before the establishment of its Erbridge tithing. In 1602 Arthur Fenner inherited the property 'Bowltewoodes alias Bowlters' from his father (Brown *et al* 1997, 24). Bowltewoodes appears, like Bolters, to be a possessive name and, in the absence of recorded 'woods' on this small site, again supports the derivation from Bolthod.

<sup>96</sup> Brown *et al* 1997, 21.

<sup>97</sup> CS: Court Rolls; ERO: D/D4 565/22.

<sup>98</sup> Brown *et al* 1997, 24–7.

<sup>99</sup> Meekings 1940, 116.

<sup>100</sup> ERO: D/D4 565/22.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Corroborated in 1664 when John Shove, the owner occupier, was assessed for four hearths in 'Errbridge Burrough' (Meekings 1940, 135).

<sup>103</sup> Ellaby 1997.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

who was presented as a resident of Erbridge tithing in 1408 and tithingman in 1438.<sup>105</sup> The presence of a Moat Field and possible fragment of a moat adjacent to the house as depicted on the tithe map (fig 4A: plot 1217) suggest earlier occupation by a person or persons unknown in the 13th/14th century.

John Shove's estate of 1575 as above descended through the Shove family into the 18th century but by 1791 was in the hands of Richard Blundell<sup>106</sup> and in 1848, Mary Blundell.<sup>107</sup> By plotting Mary Blundell's holdings (13a 1r 9p TA) onto the tithe map (fig 4A: plots 1211 and 1215–20) they clearly tie with those of John Shove on the 1602 map but in both cases are not capable of separation into the original holdings of Benhams, Duxhurst and Muster Haw. All that can be said is that Benhams must have been in the vicinity of the present house (fig 4A: perhaps approximating to plots 1216–18 and 1220).

DUXHURST, 'lying near unto Thunderfield', may have occupied a position between Benhams and Bolters extending north to Shrivs (?plots 1215 and 1219). A John Duxhurst is recorded as a resident of Erbridge tithing in 1378 and 1381.<sup>108</sup>

MUSTER HAW. The origin of the name is unknown<sup>109</sup> but this penny plot can hardly be denied inclusion in Erbridge tithing, lying as it must amid seven other members. For the sake of completeness it is suggested that this enclosure is synonymous with Chawcroft, the small field depicted on the 1602 map to the north of Bolters (fig 4B) and occupying the 1a 2r 20p TA of plot 1211 on the tithe map (fig 4A).

In the absence of contrary evidence the above completes the list of tenements that go to make up Block 3 of Erbridge tithing, the total area amounting to 47a 3r 32p TA. It is immediately obvious from the maps (figs 1 and 4) that Block 3 abuts the northern edge of Horley Common (Thunderfield) and it is this feature that appears to have been used by the writer of the Merstham charter to describe precisely the location of the estate's most southerly denn, *þæt forræpe on þunresfeld norþan* – 'the *forræpe* to the north of Thunderfield'.<sup>110</sup> If correct then '*forræpe*', it might be suggested, is a noun that means a piece of land that lies outside, or rather fronts upon (OE *fore*),<sup>111</sup> a 'place enclosed with ropes' or 'rape' (OE *raþ*, rope),<sup>112</sup> a term which appears to have been applied to bounded land of a statutory or administrative nature, in this case Thunderfield.

It should perhaps be emphasized at this juncture that there is no evidence from the documents that 'Thunderfield' was a name given to anything other than the large common in the southern part of Horley parish before its enclosure in the early 19th century.<sup>113</sup> Numerous deeds in the Chertsey cartularies from the 13th to 15th centuries refer to 'the common pasture called Thundresfeld', or the like,<sup>114</sup> and there seems no reason to question that it existed, under the same name, in the 10th century. After the Dissolution the common was in the lordship of Horley manor,<sup>115</sup> implying of course that it was originally held, and

<sup>105</sup> SoRO: DD/HY Box 27 Merstham Rolls 1–2.

<sup>106</sup> SHC: Zs207/1/3, *passim*.

<sup>107</sup> Horley tithe map and apportionment.

<sup>108</sup> CLC: U15/23/4 and U15/23/14.

<sup>109</sup> Sometimes known as Mustard Haw suggestive of meaning 'enclosure where mustard was once grown'.

<sup>110</sup> Ekwall 1943/4, 34.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>113</sup> There are no accurate maps of the common before enclosure. Its depiction in fig 1 is an approximation based on information gathered from the 1602 map of Horley, Rocque's map (1768), Horley manor enclosure map, 1812 (SHC: CC 700/1) and the Horley tithe map. A number of encroachments that occurred over the centuries are not shown. The very straight edges of the common on its south-east side appear to have resulted from a 'tidying-up' of the parish boundary separating the common (Horley) from Horne and Burstow. This was possibly carried out at the time of enclosure.

<sup>114</sup> *Cartularies*, II (1): 1115, 1119, 1147–54, 1158, 1171, 1173–4, 1178–9, 1186.

<sup>115</sup> Ingram & Carter (nd), *passim*.

indeed created, by Chertsey Abbey (see *Discussion*, below). It was in such administration that Thunderfield presumably warranted its status as a ‘rape’.

### A new translation

The three blocks of land identified in the above paragraphs have been demonstrated to make up the tithing of Erbridge in Horley<sup>116</sup> and to be identical with the Merstham dennis of AD947. Like the boundary clause of the charter, which guides the reader to locate the bounds of Merstham by following a succession of points in the landscape, the appendix is a simple but precise instruction as to the whereabouts of the estate’s dennis in order of approach. It would seem probable then that the only part of the appendix not yet considered, the *an hid*, is again a straightforward and simple statement – noting the total 1 hide assessment of the dennis as annexed to the 20 hides of Merstham itself.

Both Hooper<sup>117</sup> and Blair<sup>118</sup> comment on the variability of the virgate (nominally a quarter of a hide) in the Wealden district of Horley and Reigate in the late and post-medieval periods. From personal studies also such virgates did indeed vary from about 45 acres to 80 acres with the most common unit being around 60 acres. Thus the local hide, probably the earliest unit of Anglo-Saxon land allocation, would appear to represent a round figure assessment of a relatively large area, not necessarily in a compact block, which might fall within the range of 180–320 acres. The Merstham dennis, the aggregate area of which is approximately 262 acres, fall comfortably within this range and this further supports the contention that the 1 hide assessment relates not to an individual denn but to all of them combined. It is of interest to note that the *æt lace* denn (119a 0r 30p TA) might have been originally allocated as two 60-acre units while *þæt forræpe on þunres feld norþan* (47a 3r 32p TA) and *pedan hrycg* (approx 95a) were allocated in 48-acre units.

With the whereabouts and assessment of the dennis now established, and that *forræpe* is suggested as meaning, in the simplest of terms, ‘land fronting on a statutory boundary’, a new translation of the appendix to the boundary clause of the Merstham charter can now be offered:

*þis synt þa den to mearsetham. pedan hrycg and æt lace þæt forræpe on þunres feld norþan an hid.*

These are the [3] dennis of Merstham. Peda’s ridge and at the stream; land fronting on the northern boundary of Thunderfield. Total assessment – 1 hide.

### Discussion

Derived from the precise locations of the Merstham dennis in Horley the translation above raises a number of questions and tentative answers with regard to the local development of the Low Weald from common woodland pasture to a bounded denn system and eventual settlement. In the first instance however the translation appears to resolve the conflict between earlier versions as outlined in the introduction. In other words it now seems that in the mid-10th century Merstham held three dennis, that they were hidated as a whole and that all of them were located north of a common pasture called Thunderfield, the *forræpe* abutting its northern boundary. Rumble’s suggestion that *þæt forræpe on þunres feld norþan* meant that the dennis were ‘detached’ by the grant, in 947, from a large common pasture called Thunderfield cannot be vindicated as the new meaning, ‘land fronting on the northern boundary of Thunderfield’ precludes this. Such a meaning must also negate Ekwall’s conclusion that the

<sup>116</sup> Lane (1958, 33) claimed that Erbridge extended from Bournehurst to west of the Mole to include lands in Charlwood. There is no evidence to support this and appears to result from a misinterpretation of the Charlwood Court Rolls.

<sup>117</sup> Hooper 1945, 41, 198.

<sup>118</sup> Blair 1991, 74.

denns were assarted and under the plough in the mid-10th century. Similarly, Blair's argument that the Pettridge and Lake denns represented an unhidated *forrepe*, and that a hidated denn lay *within* Thunderfield, can now be shown to be false.

Rumble has demonstrated the probable existence of a federation of Surrey settlements on the Downs in the Banstead–Coulsdon district that held land in the Low Weald to the south as a communal woodland pasture.<sup>119</sup> This summer grazing in the Anglo-Saxon period may well have been a continuation of a practice going back into prehistory,<sup>120</sup> the herders' north–south droving tracks partly surviving today as modern roads, green lanes and long unbroken hedge-lines. How, why and when did this long history of common pasturage come to an end, the woodland split up and parcelled out as bounded denns to settled communities to the north? The new translation of the Merstham charter-bounds appendix would suggest that the process had for some time been complete in the mid-10th century.

For clues it may be pertinent to examine further Rumble's 'federation', an idea enhanced by his observation that a block of fifteen settlements in the Banstead–Coulsdon district,<sup>121</sup> including Merstham, was granted to Chertsey Abbey apparently in AD727.<sup>122</sup> Presumably their common pasturage in the Weald was part of this grant and probably embraced most of medieval Horley and parts at least of Charlwood and Leigh, a territory known to have been held by estates included in these fifteen settlements. It may be argued then that it was the abbey itself that was responsible for splitting the federation's communal pasture into bounded denns, probably an act to secure tighter control of an important resource.<sup>123</sup> In turn it may be advanced that this enclosure of the pasture was concomitant with the break-up of the federation into individual estates, the very bodies that then administered their allotted denns within the overlordship of Chertsey.

There is in this proposed mechanism of change a suggestion that enclosure of the communal pasture was carried out *en bloc* but it would appear however that some woodland, presumably the poorest, was left as common in respect of the herders' previous customary rights.<sup>124</sup> By far the largest remnant, and held directly by Chertsey Abbey, became known as Thunderfield, 'the common pasture associated with the god Thunor'<sup>125</sup> and was probably bounded in some way as soon as established. A glance at figure 1 impresses that its formation must have immediately severed the north–south droving tracks that once continued to the southern limits of the old communal pasture at the Sussex border. If correct, then the establishment of Thunderfield and its surrounding denns must have occurred after the foundation charter of Chertsey Abbey (672 x 674) and at a time, or within the memory of, a local enclave of paganism.<sup>126</sup> If there is any truth in the statement that Chertsey acquired the federation in 727 then that date provides a *terminus post quem* for enclosure. The latest possible date must be that of King Alfred's will (872 x 888) when, among other Surrey properties, he bequeathed his *ham* at *þunresfelda*, arguably the *þunresfelda* where a royal council met in the 930s.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Rumble 1976, 171–7.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 171; Poulton 1987, 215.

<sup>121</sup> Rumble 1976, 174. The settlements listed were Sutton, Carshalton, Beddington, Waddington (in Coulsdon), Coulsdon, Merstham, Chipstead with Chaldon, Banstead with *subemeresfelda* (Canons Farm), Tadworth (in Banstead), Epsom, Ewell with Cuddington, and Cheam.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*; Gelling 1979, 152. While the date appears to be fictitious Rumble concludes that the charter, which was 'copied' into a 13th century Chertsey cartulary, does contain elements of historical value and was probably formulated at some time in the Anglo-Saxon period.

<sup>123</sup> Drewett *et al.* 1988, 292.

<sup>124</sup> While possible survivals are restricted to patches of roadside waste, considerable areas such as Horley Common, Heaverswood Common and Meath Green were enclosed as late as the 19th century.

<sup>125</sup> see Appendix: THUNDERFIELD.

<sup>126</sup> Gelling (1977, 104–5) suggests that where and when paganism was the norm places were not named for their religious associations (Poulton 1987, 217). The very remoteness of Thunderfield, not only from areas of settlement but also from Chertsey, would have made it an ideal location for late followers of the old religion.

<sup>127</sup> see Appendix: THUNDERFIELD 'ROYAL VILL'.

Thus, from limited documentary evidence and hypothetical reasoning, the common pasture called Thunderfield and its adjacent bounded denn system were, together, a construction of the 8th or 9th centuries and instigated largely by Chertsey Abbey. Whether this reasoning and dating is correct is perhaps however of less importance than the appearance of the denns themselves. This was clearly a new landscape, probably the first formal enclosure of the local woodland and, with the elucidation of the bounds of the Merstham denns, still visible in part today. But by the late 11th century the pastures were doomed. The apparent Domesday church of Horley, sited on a denn of Chertsey Abbey's manor of Sutton,<sup>128</sup> suggests that herders were now in year-round occupation of at least some of the local woodland and possibly practising a mixed-farming economy. Within probably little more than a century most of the Horley denns had been assarted and further enclosed into a patchwork of meadows, copses and arable fields. Settlers worked the lands from scattered farmsteads, like that revealed on Merstham's Petridge denn,<sup>129</sup> but in advantageous areas, such as around the perimeter of Thunderfield, division and subdivision of the denns into individual properties was common as proprietors encouraged settlement for the procurement of rents. In this respect Merstham appears to have been particularly active on its old *forraþe* which not only abutted Thunderfield but also an old drove road that was rapidly becoming a source of trade as the principal north-south highway through the district. By the 14th century this former denn arguably carried the highest density of households in Horley parish, a density not exceeded until modern times.

## APPENDIX

### CHEAM DENN

The long-held view that the Cheam denn 'at Duxhurst' (cf Blair 1991, 52, 54) was in Horley arises from its usual identification with Duxhurst Farm (fig 1). This holding was apparently however a Chertsey Abbey property (Lane 1958, 22), the freehold of which was surrendered to the abbey in 1316 by Peter de Duxhurst who was then re-admitted as tenant-at-will by indenture (*Cartularies*, II (1), 1136/7). Peter was a prominent landholder in the district and as well as land of Chertsey Abbey he also held nearby a messuage and virgate of Banstead manor in 1325 (Lambert 1912, 68). The Cheam/Canterbury denn can possibly be identified, not surprisingly, within the detached portion of Charlwood adjacent to Duxhurst Farm: '60 acres land formerly called Matchins alias Duxhurst North Lodgers abutting on an old highway, on the River and Wick east, upon Barnlands south and Lingfield Lands north' (SHC: 843/3/2 1799; Charlwood title apportionment and map, under Christ's Hospital, 1842). Both Duxhurst Farm in Horley and Duxhurst in Charlwood were purchased by Christ's Hospital in 1620 and formed part of the so-called manor of Duxhurst.

Lingfield Lands was arguably the denn attached to the manor of Linkfield, part of Reigate (*Cherchefelle*) at the Conquest but probably an independent estate when bequeathed by Ealdorman Alfred in his will of 871 x 889 (Blair 1991, 51). Linkfield's denn being in Charlwood is perhaps confirmation of Blair's suggestion (*ibid.*, 31) that the holdings (and presumably

their denns) mentioned in Ealdorman Alfred's will were probably the *disjecta membra* of a recently dismantled archiepiscopal estate. Charlwood Detached itself may indeed represent a former complex of Canterbury denns separated from the main body of Charlwood by lands of Chertsey Abbey.

### LODGE MILL

Lodge Mill (Toddes Mill on the 1602 map) appears to have had a short life. Shove (SHC: Zs 207/1/3, *passim*) transcribes several deeds from 1564 onwards whereby the mill was sold away from the demesne of the manor of Lodge into shared and, later, individual private ownership. The venture was seemingly unsuccessful in the long term and the mill, described as a corn mill and a malt mill, was apparently pulled down in 1659 and the land, together with the cottage, or millhouse, returned to the demesne in the lordship of Henry Bonwick. There are no positive references to a mill on the site before 1564 and when Robert Burstowe died in 1545 holding the manors of Horley and Lodge his will mentioned only one watermill, presumably Horley Mill (previously of Chertsey Abbey), as part of his estate (Lane 1960, 34). Similarly Sidlow Mill (Robert de Sydelouemulle) and Horley Mill (Thomas at Mulle) are inferred as the only cereal mills in the parish in 1332 (*SR*: 41-2). The 1263 grant of a watermill and carucate of land to Mary, daughter of William de Dammartin, to be held of Roger de Loges for the annual rent of a pair of gold spurs, or 6d and foreign service, seems unlikely to refer to a mill at Lodge (*VCH*,

<sup>128</sup> Blair 1991, 114.

<sup>129</sup> Ellaby 1984; 2000, 153.

3, 203) and perhaps should be sought elsewhere (? in Burstow).

#### THUNDERFIELD

Margaret Gelling's suggestion (1976, 836) that *feld* can have the meaning 'common pasture' is not, in the case of Thunderfield, incompatible with an alternative 'open land near woodland' (*ibid.*). As Turner notes (1997, 9), the extremely flat countryside around southern Horley and Gatwick may not have supported a rich climax woodland in Anglo-Saxon times but a predominant acid-loving vegetation of 'heath' or 'moorland' type growing on soils poorly drained in winter and iron-hard in summer. Such scenery may have been particularly marked in the Thunderfield area where the Weald Clay sandwiches a hard deposit of iron-cemented gravel a little below the surface (Dines & Edmunds 1933, 5 and 162–3).

It was in woodland adjacent to this hypothesized open space, and remote from areas of settlement, that pagan Anglo-Saxons may be assumed to have worshipped their Germanic god Thunor. It can be speculated that their 'shrine' was established on an earlier Romano-British religious site supported by an apparent Bronze Age barrow that was destroyed during the construction of the London–Brighton railway c1840 (fig 1; *VCH*, 3, 200; Needham 1987, 126). Finds from this destruction included 'a British sepulchral urn, flint arrowheads and bronze Roman coins'. There is a similar association of Roman coins with a Beaker-period barrow at Lower Beeding, Sussex (Beckensall 1967) while a Romano-British shrine was located on the flanks of an early Bronze Age barrow in the Cambridgeshire fenland (Evans 1984).

It is perhaps more than coincidence that hard by the Thunderfield barrow was Holyland Farm (fig 1), a name first recorded before 1289 (*Cartularies*, II (1), 1162; Gover *et al* 1934, 294) and possibly handed down through folk memory of a religious site nearby.

#### THUNDERFIELD 'ROYAL VILL'

Blair (1991, 19–20) hints that Alfred's 'royal vill' at Thunderfield was established there because of the locality's traditional importance as a former [pagan] religious centre. For a devoutly Christian king this seems unlikely. It may be argued that Alfred's interest in the area was military – the siting of a fort as one of many constructed throughout Wessex for defence against the Danes. To the south-east of Horley church and abutting Thunderfield there is depicted on the 1602 map a number of scattered and adjoining fields with the names 'Berey Lande' or 'Bereygrove'. These names can be related to a Chertsey Abbey deed of 1314 (*Cartularies*, II (1), 1119) where land in this vicinity is called Buri lond, 'land with a stronghold'. It is perhaps wishful thinking that these fields (fig 1) were once part of Alfred's *ham* and that earthworks in the immediate vicinity of Horley church are the remains of the fortification. It is of interest that both the *ham* at Thunderfield and that at Eashing were bequeathed as a pair to Alfred's nephew Æthelhelm. As Blair stated later (1991, 21), referring to the 'royal vills' at Southwark, Eashing and Guildford: 'These "royal vills" may in fact represent nothing older than the defensive requirements of Alfredian Wessex'. To this list can possibly be added the 'royal vill' at Thunderfield.

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