



Fig. 1 This map shows the motorway threat very clearly, particularly the two tentacles stretching into London.

The Motorway Threat in Surrey

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THE PURPOSE of this work is to ensure that any site which is threatened with destruction due to the building of the Motorways is adequately investigated and recorded. The project is being carried out by the Surrey Archaeological Society and is financed by the Department of the Environment.

The Routes (See Figure 1)

The section of the M23 which is at present under construction, runs from Hooley in the north, passing Merstham, Bletchingly, Smallfield, Gatwick Airport

and Crawley before joining the A23 at Pease Pottage.

The M25 will run from Egham via the Thorpe Interchange with the M3, Chertsey and Leatherhead to Reigate Hill. The section from Reigate Hill through the interchange at Merstham with the M23, to the A22 at Godstone, is now under construction. From the A22 the route passes north of Oxted to the Surrey-Kent County Boundary.

The M3 runs from Camberley to Bagshot (a section which has already been completed). It then crosses Chobham Common, past Virginia Water to

the interchange with the M25 at Thorpe, continues north of Chertsey then through Shepperton to Sunbury Cross. This whole route is under construction.

The M23 route at Hooley lies on chalk, but this quickly changes to Upper Greensand and Gault at Merstham Quarry. Just before the A25 the Lower Greensand starts and this continues for three miles before the route moves on to the Weald Clay, which lasts until the Surrey-Sussex county boundary. From this boundary to Pease Pottage the route lies on Tunbridge Wells Sands.

The M25 begins on London Clay, and then crosses Bagshot Sands and Alluvium before returning to London Clay. From Leatherhead there are Reading and Woolwich Beds of clay, sand and gravel as far as Margery Wood. From here to Gatton Bottom is chalk, and from Gatton Bottom to the Kent-Surrey boundary the route lies on Upper Greensand, Gault and Lower Greensand.

The M3 route lies on Bagshot Sands as far as St. Ann's Hill where the London Clay begins. The clay continues for only a short distance and the rest of the route lies on gravels.

METHODS

The work is being done using a central full time group based in London, in conjunction with local societies.

1. The Pre-construction Phase

As soon as the final route of the Motorway is made public, Local History and Archaeological Groups obtain permission from the private Landowners to walk over their property affected by the motorway route. This initial field walk takes place with a representative of the central group, which may itself cover the ground at a later stage. The local groups will already have done a certain amount of documentary research and some sites will in fact be known.

Field walking consists of a group of people spread out across the width of the motorway looking for scatters of pottery, etc., and/or features (see fig. 2). Different types of terrain necessitate different methods of walking. Ploughed fields are most likely to show up pottery scatters, whilst grassland shows up features. In both cases the group is able to spread out and cover the motorway width.

In thinly wooded country, features and pottery scatters can be seen, but walking becomes more difficult. In densely wooded areas, little can be seen and even walking is sometimes impossible.

The next stage is the trial excavation of any sites found by documentary investigation or during the initial field walking. Further research also takes place to identify features which have been noticed in field walking. On the results of the preliminary work decisions will have to be made as to whether or not

a major excavation is needed. Up to this point, work is well in advance of motorway construction.

2. The Construction Phase

When the land on which the motorway route lies passes into the contractors hands, their permission must be obtained before further archaeological work can proceed. There are obvious dangers in motorway construction, and the contractors have to cover themselves against losses or injury to archaeologists.

Once motorway construction starts, there are four factors which help the archaeologist. First the trees are removed along with their roots and the surrounding topsoil. Inspection of tree roots and their holes can reveal archaeological evidence. Second, a vast amount of topsoil is removed over a large area, showing cut-down features and pottery scatters. Third, fencing operations mean that an upright post is placed in the ground every six feet and a hole has to be dug for each upright. Fourth, drainage ditches are cut along each side of the motorway and, often, across the route. These ditches vary from two feet wide V-shaped trenches, to rectangular ditches nine feet wide and four feet deep, to very deep nine inch wide ditches. These of course give free sections along most of the route.

By the time this stage of construction is reached, continual observation is necessary. This entails mobile observers covering as much of the route as possible each week.

The excavation of any sites which come to light at this stage will have to be carried out quickly and it may only be possible to sample sites. In some areas, once the top soil has been removed the ground is left for some time before further construction takes place, and this may leave more time for excavation. The work will have to be done on a full time basis with as much help as possible from local archaeological groups.

A documentary record is kept of all finds, notes are made of all features seen in field walking and subsequently, the information tied up with that from local groups. Finds are numbered and related to their find spot on the maps. Close contact is maintained between the central and local groups with meetings to discuss the work done and what needs to be done in the future.

Sites and Finds

The majority of finds so far have been mounds or depressions and, seen in motorway drainage sections, ditches. These have proved, almost totally, to be modern drainage works.

Beside the A23 at Hooley, the M23 crosses the cutting for the Surrey Iron Railway. Below Rockshawe Road, the site of the terminus of this railway has been excavated by the local archaeological group

Fig. 2. A group of fieldworkers spread out along the route of the M23, north of Pease Pottage, after tree clearance.

(Photo: John Earp)



directed by Jim Shenton. Also in this area were industrial buildings, farms and hearthstone mines, all of which have been recorded. South of the A25 was Werks Farm, a Victorian model farm, photographically recorded by the Surrey County Council.

A date of 10th century has been suggested for Hathersham Lane, a road surfaced by bloomery slag, which has been traced from Cooper's Hill Road to Smallfield Hospital. The Lane was excavated by the Holmesdale Archaeological Group, directed by Frank Harvey.

Mesolithic flints were found at Heathy Ground in 1938, and a few worked flints were found nearby on the motorway route, but there were no associated features.

On the edge of the Cherry Tree Plantation near Pease Pottage, there are circular patches of dark earth showing up in the ploughed field with heavy flint scatters nearby. This appears to be a late prehistoric site and it is hoped that the local group will be able to do a trial excavation before a full scale excavation takes place in the autumn of 1972. Parish Lane off the A23 at Pease Pottage is on the line of one of Margary's Roman Roads.

At the Merstham Interchange there are some houses of interest and a possible 10th century Parish boundary line.

At the roundabout Interchange between the M25 and the A22 at Godstone several sherds of Roman pottery have been found. The A22 itself is on the line of a Roman Road. The Holmesdale Group has done work at Warwick Wold directed by Brian Kirsop and Mary Saaler and on the Merstham Village site by the A23 directed by Margaret Trier and

Jim Shenton where a boundary wall, dumped soil and a floor of large flints was found and a terraced field was investigated.

Excavations have also taken place for the Surrey Archaeological Society under the direction of Jill Harman, in the Jubilee Plantation area and although a few pieces of pottery, some whetstones and metal objects were found, there were no features.

There is a lime kiln area west of the A217 and on the edge of Margery Wood is a possible sunken way. Little has been found on the M3 route, but between the River Ash and Sunbury Cross at the eastern end, features cut into gravel show up in Motorway ditch sections, though none of these features have as yet yielded any dateable evidence.

Future Work

The M25 between Margery Wood at the western side and the A22 at Godstone on the eastern side is under construction as is the M23 between Hooley and Pease Pottage.

The Merstham Village site at Priory Mead will need a full time observer when drain laying operations begin—now expected to be in the summer of 1973. Very deep trenches between nine inches and one foot wide will be cut at forty foot intervals right across the area, an invaluable opportunity to look at the whole site before it is completely destroyed.

The late prehistoric site at Hardriding Farm, Pease Pottage is not threatened until early 1973 although a hard road has been laid through to the London-Brighton railway. This road runs along the south-eastern edge of the Motorway, taking up only about one-quarter of the width and not seriously affecting the site. It is expected to excavate this site

in the autumn of 1972 on a full time basis.

On most of these stretches of motorway, continual observation is all that remains possible, along with the excavation of any new sites found in drain cutting and general earth removal.

The rest of both motorways has not yet been started and much of the land is still in private hands. In some places the route has not yet been finalised. Where the route is known, however, a programme of field walking at an early stage with local groups is being organised. The local groups will trial excavate any sites that are found and will also do documentary work.

Hopefully, then, much of the work will be carried out by the local groups well in advance of

motorway construction. Major sites can be excavated on a full time basis, using the central group, with local help where possible. Once construction work begins, the full time mobile observers will take over and will probably be responsible for the excavation of any sites found at this stage.

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The Stow Commemoration Service

FOR MANY YEARS it has been a tradition to hold this Service in the presence of the Lord Mayor at the Church of St. Andrew Undershaft, St. Mary Axe in the City, in commemoration of John Stow (1525-1605) who was buried in the church on 8th April, 1605. The service is sponsored by the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.

Stow was born in the City of London and earned his meagre living as a tailor, though he was never admitted to the Guild of Merchant Taylors. He dedicated most of his life to the writing of topographical and historical works. Stow is probably best remembered for his *Survey of London* (1598) in which he describes the City of London ward by ward at a time when many of the medieval buildings, especially those belonging to the monasteries, were being pulled down.

In connection with the Service, an essay competition has been held annually since 1939 for pupils attending secondary and grammar schools in London and Middlesex. This now includes such schools in the Inner London Education Authority and those connected with the City of London. The subject of the essay has to deal with some aspect of the City's long and varied history.

This year the winner was Daphne Russell of the Lady Eleanor Holles School for Girls at Hampton, whose essay was called "Londinium." In addition to a book prize she received an Honorary Student Membership of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.



The Lord Mayor, presenting Daphne Russell with her prize in the church of St. Andrew Undershaft.

(Photo: Martin G. Watson)