

EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY
of
SURREY

CHOBHAM



EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY
of
SURREY

CHOBHAM

Surrey County Archaeological Unit
Surrey History Centre
130 Goldsworth Road
Woking GU21 6ND

Telephone 01483 518 777 Facsimile 01483 518 780

Project Manager	Rob Poulton
Author	Jane Robertson
Date of report	September 2001 (revised June 2003)
Client	English Heritage



The material contained herein is and remains the sole property of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit and is not for publication to third parties, without the prior written consent of Surrey County Council, otherwise than in pursuance of the specific purpose for which it was prepared

EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY CHOBHAM

INTRODUCTION

Extensive Urban Surveys have been undertaken or are presently being undertaken in a number of English counties as part of a wide ranging English Heritage initiative (English Heritage 1992). Surrey, in common with many other counties, had a survey of its historic towns carried out almost thirty years ago (O'Connell 1977), as a result of an initiative by the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments (then part of the Department of the Environment). This survey has formed a basis and background for archaeological work in towns throughout the ensuing period, but is now in urgent need of replacement to reflect current knowledge and planning concerns (Poulton & Bird 1998).

The present survey is intended to provide an up-to-date view of the archaeological resource in each of the towns studied and consists of three phases: data collection, data assessment and strategy. The first stage, data collection, incorporates the acquisition of new data and its amalgamation with existing knowledge of the history and archaeology of the town. The data is acquired in a form suitable for its incorporation into the Surrey Sites and Monuments Record. The data assessment phase of the survey leads to the production of this report which presents a history of the town, an analysis of the plan of the town, an assessment of the archaeological and buildings data and the state of modern development resulting in the identification of areas of archaeological importance. Information about the development of the town through the ages, including analysis of its plan and the identified areas of archaeological importance, is also presented in a series of maps at the end of the report. The Strategy phase of the survey, uses the information presented in the Data Assessment combined with current statutory and non-statutory constraints, and present and future planning policy to make recommendations for policies regarding the historic environment. The policies may be incorporated into Local and Unitary Development Plans, non-statutory policies, supplementary guidance and for use within development control (Hampshire County Council 1997, 1).

The project faced a clear difficulty in knowing which towns to include, as there seems to be no agreed definition. Historically, towns in Surrey have always been small because of the proximity of London and the generally poor quality of the County's land for agriculture. This fact is masked now by the considerable expansion of many towns and villages following the coming of the railway in the later 19th century. The main problem, in the absence of an absolute measure, is in deciding where to draw the line. This ought, in principle, to be established by comparing the evidence from towns, as defined by O'Connell (1977), and that from other large settlements or villages.

Unfortunately archaeological investigation of Surrey's towns has been relatively limited in scope, and villages have been even less well served. In these circumstances comparisons are rather hard to draw. The evidence from the villages is consistent with that of the towns in suggesting that their development belongs to the period from the 12/13th century onwards. Surrey's towns are not, generally, greatly different from the villages in the quantity of evidence they produce and this is undoubtedly because they differ little in size. The town, with its market, had an economic status denied to the village, but in Surrey all the inhabitants of both lived in immediate proximity to their fields. There was probably the same lack of distinction between town and village in the medieval period as there is in their excavated evidence or plans revealed today.

In these circumstances it seemed best to adopt an inclusive approach and deal with all the more substantial medieval settlements which have indications of nucleation ('nucleated' settlements have houses run together and signs of developed backlands). Chobham is small, but nucleated on the Rocque map of c1768; the medieval village also had strong links with Chertsey Abbey (Poulton & Bird 1998, 14). Chobham qualified for inclusion in the survey on the basis of these factors.

The study area is that of the medieval town as defined by fig 4. The area so defined corresponds fairly closely with the extent of the built-up area as indicated by the earliest large scale maps, such as that of Rocque (c1768) (fig 2) and the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of 1871 (fig 3).

General note on maps and mapping

A standard set of historic maps was consulted in compiling all reports for the Surrey EUS. The Senex and Rocque maps were consulted in Ravenhill 1974, while all enclosure, tithe, and historic Ordnance Survey maps were examined in the map collections of the Surrey History Centre, Woking. Further references are not given for these maps where they are mentioned below. Where other maps are referred to a reference is given.

All map bases for the maps used in the figures are those of the modern Ordnance Survey, unless otherwise stated, and the data forms a GIS overlay to the Ordnance Survey maps.

Abbreviations used

EUS	Extensive Urban Survey
GIS	Geographic Information systems
OS	Ordnance Survey
SCAU	Surrey County Archaeological Unit
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SHS	Surrey History Service
SyAC	<i>Surrey Archaeological Collections</i>
SyAS Bull	<i>Surrey Archaeological Society's Bulletin</i>
VCH	<i>Victoria County History of Surrey</i>

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY (fig 1)

Chobham (NGR 973 617) lies in the north-west part of the county of Surrey, in a relatively isolated position c3km to the east of the north-south route (the A322) which runs between Guildford and Bagshot, continuing northwards onto Windsor. The central, historic part of the village is situated on an east-west belt of floodplain gravel that is higher than the surrounding alluvial deposits and overlies the Bagshot Beds. The northern and southern parts of the village overlie the alluvial deposits of two different streams, both flowing west to east on either side of the village: the Mill Bourne to the north and The Bourne to the south. The rest of the parish lies on the extensive heathlands of the Bagshot Sands. Chobham was established along the north-south Windsor to Guildford road, the present B383, and is located c9km south-west of Chertsey, 12km north of Guildford and c4.5km north-west of Woking.

PAST WORK AND THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

Chobham is a small town for which there is a relatively small body of archaeological and historical information. The purpose of the present section of the report is to provide a summary of the scope and character of that evidence, and to indicate something of its strengths and weaknesses, prior to the attempt in the ensuing section to use this data to create an account of the development of Chobham. The detailed information is confined to that directly relevant to the study area of the settlement (fig 4), but material from the general vicinity is referred to as necessary.

Archaeology

Very little archaeological work appears to have been undertaken within the study area itself. The only known archaeological interventions in the village included a watching brief undertaken at 36-42 High Street in 1994, which revealed the remains of a kiln of 18th or 19th century date close to the street frontage (Jackson *et al* 1997, 213; SMR A); and a survey in 1966 which attempted (but failed) to locate two possible 14th century ditches (SMR No 1870) which were recorded as running across Chobham. A number of stray finds have been

recovered from the Chobham area. These range through prehistoric flintwork, Bronze Age urn fragments, a Roman coin hoard, a medieval bronze bowl, and a carved column capital which was said to have been found at Chobham Mill during 20th century rebuilding work (Mason 1984, 11).

Documents

The first documentary reference to Chobham dates from the later 7th century when Chobham (*Chebeham*) was granted to Chertsey Abbey (along with much of Godley Hundred) by Frithwold, a sub-King of Mercia, to extend its lands. The grant was confirmed in 967 by King Edgar (*VCH 3*, 414). The Chertsey Cartulary provides information about the day to day running of the Abbey and its lands during its c900 year ownership of the manor of Chobham, including works undertaken at Chobham by Abbot John Rutherwyk, Abbot from 1307 to 1346, who was noted for the many improvements that he carried out (*VCH 3*, 415).

The manor of Chobham (*Cebeham*) is recorded in Domesday Book (1086), with a church and chapel, in the possession of the Abbey. The Victoria County History (*VCH 3*, 413-9) account of Chobham is a useful summary of the village and its development since Domesday. Schueller (1989) has undertaken a comprehensive study of the records relating to Chobham, including the parish records which are almost complete from 1600, and produced a very useful volume *The history of Chobham* charting its growth and development. Blair's (1991) treatment of a number of issues in a wider context is also worthy of note. Useful local publications include historical summaries of Chobham by Mason (1984) and The Chobham Society (1986).

Cartography

The cartographic evidence, which steadily becomes more detailed through the post-medieval period, suggests that there was little expansion outside of the medieval extent of the town until the early 20th century. Even then the historic centre of the village largely escaped redevelopment. The Rocque map of c1768 (fig 2) reveals the basic plan of the village, a small but nucleated settlement. There was still very little new development by the time of the large scale OS maps of 1869-70. Subsequent maps reveal the core of the village, little altered in its basic topography, with new areas of residential development springing up on its fringe areas along Station Road and Castle Grove Road to the south of the village, and along Bagshot Road and Chertsey Road at its northern end.

Buildings

Chobham has a number of buildings of historic interest dating from the 16th to 19th centuries (excluding the parish church) in the nucleus of the old village. They are located mainly along the High Street which extends from its junction with Chertsey Road at the northern end of the village, to its junction with Station Road and Castle Grove Road at the southern end of the village a distance of c450m. A few buildings were demolished during redevelopment work and road widening schemes in the village.

THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHOBHAM

The scope of the resources available for an account of the history of Chobham has been indicated by the preceding section. The following narrative should be read with the limitations of those resources in mind. It is concerned essentially with the area of the medieval village and its immediate surrounds. The more detailed analysis of the town plan and its development is reserved for the next section.

Prehistoric and Roman

A number of prehistoric flints dating from the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods have been recovered from the area of Chobham, and a mid-Bronze Age cinerary urn and fragments of eight or nine Late Bronze Age urns were recovered from Chobham Park Farm to the east of the village. There are a number of Bronze Age barrows in the local area. These include a dispersed group of ten barrows in the Flutters Hill area of Chobham Common to the north-east of Chobham village. A quadruple line of barrows lie on West End Common (SMR No 1851), on the heath west of Gordon's Boys School c4km west of Chobham, adjacent to a scheduled bowl barrow (SMR No 3228); and there is an important dispersed group of three Scheduled Early Bronze Age barrows on Horsell Common, c3km south-east of Chobham village. Two of the Horsell Common barrows are bell barrows (SMR No 461) and the third a disc barrow (SMR No 455); these forms are characteristic of Early Bronze Age Wessex, and are particularly associated with the 'Wessex culture'. Such barrows are not common outside Wessex itself and Surrey examples are limited to the west of the county (Needham 1987, 106).

No trace of Roman settlement has been found in the parish, but the Herestreet or *Via Militaris* of the Chertsey Charters ran through Chobham parish, and roads so named are often regarded as of Roman origin (Gover *et al* 1934, 105-6). In 1772 a coin hoard with silver coins of Gratian and Valentinian, and copper coins of Theodosius, Honorius and Valentinian (SMR No 1871), a spear-head and a gold ring were found near Chobham Park (VCH 3, 413; Schueller 1989, 1).

Chobham would have been attractive to early settlers with its two streams and raised band of gravel between them.

Saxon and Norman

The manor of Chobham was first mentioned in the 7th century when it was granted to Chertsey Abbey (who held it for the next c900 years), and appears to have been self-sufficient with an agriculturally based economy. Although documentary evidence in the form of the Chertsey Cartularies provides information about the properties belonging to Chertsey Abbey (including the manor of Chobham) during the Saxon and Norman periods, no archaeological evidence has so far been recovered for settlement of this date within the study area. It is not known whether St Lawrence's Church, founded in c1080 on the raised gravel area between the two streams, was built on the site of an earlier, Saxon church, and if so whether there was any sort of Saxon settlement in the vicinity at the time. Domesday Book (1086) records Chobham as *Cebeham*, the first element probably representing a personal name *Ceabba* (Gover *et al* 1934, 115). This provides the place-name with the probable meaning of 'Ceabba's village', indicating the existence of a settlement in the vicinity. The Domesday Survey assessed Chobham at 10 hides and recorded a church and chapel (VCH 3, 414); the church referred to is probably St Lawrence's, and Blair has suggested that the chapel may refer to an early church in Bisley (see Chapel below). It therefore seems probable that there was some sort of settlement around St Lawrence's church from an early date; its precise location is, however, not clear until the post-medieval period.

Medieval

The manor of Chobham was owned by Chertsey Abbey throughout the medieval period and beyond. Chobham was the largest in area of the four demesne manors of Chertsey Abbey, and the furthest away from the mother house (Schueller 1990, 7); St Lawrence's Church served distant regions in the main Chertsey Abbey estate (Blair 1991, 114). The sandy soils in the area of north-west Surrey are very poor and hindered the early establishment of settlement in the area, as did its inclusion within Windsor Forest during the early medieval period. Even though the western half of Chobham provides no evidence for settlement before the 13th century, the presence of more fertile alluvial soils and the Bourne streams in the eastern part, and the association of Chobham manor with Chertsey Abbey, would have been factors providing an incentive for the establishment of settlement in the area of Chobham village. The settlement was probably established by the 13th century, as Abbot Rutherwyck

of Chertsey Abbey was making improvements, for which he was noted, in his domain from 1307 to 1346. These included surrounding the manor house of Chobham (SMR No 1869-1870) with running water in the first year of his rule as abbot (SMR No 1870; *VCH* 3, 415), building a new mill at Chobham in 1308, and having the chapel at Chobham repaired in 1318 (*VCH* 3, 418-9). The moated site of the former manor house is located c1.5km north-east of the village centre at what is now Chobham Park Farm. Chobham Park was mentioned in 1344 as 'Le Parrok' (Chobham Society 1986, 37). The site of the first vicarage in Chobham (SMR No 3332), a moated site, is located on the north side of the present Bagshot Road. Noted in the Chertsey Cartularies in 1331 as a site of 6 acres (Blair 1991, 140), the vicarage was ordained in 1330 by Abbot Rutherwyck and augmented in 1427 (*VCH* 3, 419). It remained the official vicarage until c1800 when it was replaced by a new one built on the opposite side of the road (see Vicarage, below). All of the above lend weight to the suggestion that the site of Chobham had been developed by the end of the 13th century (Schueller 1990, 7). How much earlier this had occurred is a matter for speculation. At present, it can only be suggested, from comparative evidence (Poulton 1998, 242; Blair 1991, 161), that nucleated settlement at Chobham is likely to have replaced an earlier dispersed pattern in or around the 12th century. This probability is made the greater by it being a possession of Chertsey Abbey, which seems to have engaged in a campaign of improvement, involving the creation of regular two-row village plans, on its manors (Blair 1991, 58) of which Chobham is an excellent illustration. The Abbey held the manor until the Dissolution in 1537 when it reverted to the Crown.

Chobham remained quite isolated lying as it did within the Royal Forest of Windsor at various times from the 11th to the 14th century, and was subject to forest law. The village was largely self-sufficient, and grew very slowly. It has been estimated that the population density of North West Surrey during that period was less than 2.5 persons per square mile, far below that of surrounding areas (The Chobham Society 1986, 4).

Post Medieval

Henry VIII took possession of the manor house of Chobham, Chobham Park, in 1535, two years before the surrender of the entire manor to the Crown during the Dissolution, having previously realised the potential of the area for hunting. Henry found Chobham to be the perfect spot for a hunting lodge and created a deer park in 500 acres surrounding the manor house. His royal successors did not share his interest in Chobham and the house and park changed hands until finally the whole manor became part of the Onslow Estate in 1752; the family currently provides the lords of the manor of Chobham (Schueller 1989, 156). The manor house had fallen into disrepair by the seventeenth century when it was largely demolished (SMR No 1869). The present buildings on site date from the 17th/18th century (Mason 1984, 5).

Chobham possesses a number of buildings dating from the 16th century which may mark a time of increasing prosperity for the village. The village appears to have continued as a relatively isolated, self-sufficient agricultural community surrounded by large areas of heathland, including Chobham Common to the north. Chobham Common was the site of the Great Camp of 1853, the first large military camp of exercise in England since the Napoleonic Wars (*VCH* 3, 414). It was the precursor of Aldershot and was where troops assembled before their departure for the Crimean War, and were reviewed by Queen Victoria (Chobham Society 1986, 23).

Chobham had a weekly market which continued until at least 1844, and a fair on Ascension Day, but it is not known when they were first established (Mason 1984, 7). The market served the local area including Old Woking, and the Chobham Corn Exchange was famous for miles around (Schueller 1989, 43). With the establishment of the new town of Woking around Woking Station in the 1850s, Chobham probably lost some of its trade as the new town developed. Chobham had escaped the upheaval of the Transport and Industrial Revolutions, and unlike so many other agricultural communities it was spared the turnpikes, canals and railways which brought new industries, new people and new buildings (Schueller

1990, 1). However, rather than sinking further into isolation as a result of not being located on a major road or on a railway line, Chobham became a dormitory settlement, resulting in an increase in land values and further residential development (Mason 1984, 8). Today the village is within easy reach of the M3 motorway 6km to the north at Lightwater. Most of the relatively recent redevelopment has occurred in the area to the north of the historic village centre, around Burrowhill, the site of the parish of Chobham's first council estate, established in the 1920s on the site of the former 18th century workhouse, thus preserving the historic character of Chobham village.

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN PLAN

Topographic divisions

The detailed analysis of the topographic development of Chobham is presented in the sections of the report following this one. The analysis has enabled the definition of a number of distinct elements within the plan, which are shown on fig 4, and summarised below. Cross-reference to them is given as TD1 etc in the text that follows. It should be stressed that the precise extent of a number of these elements is not known.

- 1 The church and graveyard must have occupied their present sites by the time of Domesday Book, but there is no evidence as to how much earlier church provision was made here.
- 2a The early settlement of Chobham was established along the High Street in the early medieval period by Chertsey Abbey.
- 2b The town mill was established in the early 14th century by Abbot Rutherwyck on the northern side of the village on the Millbourne stream.
- 2c The early vicarage was located outside the area of the early village and occupied this site from 1330-1800.
- 3 Expansion along the northern end of the High Street, east of the mill, is probably of early post-medieval date.
- 4 Expansion took place in the 19th and 20th centuries along the roads leaving Chobham village: Station Road, Castle Grove Road, Chertsey Road, Bagshot Road and Windsor Road.

Chobham before the late 12th century

Chobham lies on a band of gravel raised above the surrounding alluvial deposits of the two streams running to the north and south of the village; the drift deposits overlie the Bagshot Beds. It is located in the area of the North-West Surrey Heathlands in a relatively isolated position c3km away from the north-south route which runs between Guildford and Bagshot, and on towards Windsor. The manor of Chobham developed as a demesne manor of Chertsey Abbey from the 7th century and appears to have been self-sufficient with an agriculturally based economy. The church of St Lawrence was founded in c1080 on the raised gravel area between the streams, but it is not known whether a settlement existed at that time or developed at a later date. Although documentary evidence in the form of the Chertsey Cartularies provides information about the properties belonging to Chertsey Abbey (including the manor of Chobham) during the Saxon and Norman periods, no archaeological evidence has so far been recovered for settlement of this date within the study area.

Medieval and post-medieval topography of Chobham town

The medieval and modern village of Chobham can be shown, by archaeological and documentary evidence, to have its origins as a settlement in the early medieval period. The

village of Chobham was established by Chertsey Abbey, probably by the 13th century, as a two row settlement along either side of the curving line of the High Street (TD2a). The focus of the settlement is the 11th century church of St Lawrence (TD1) which is set back from the eastern side of the High Street. The cartographic evidence shows Chobham as a small, compact settlement.

PARISH CHURCH (TD1)

The Domesday Survey (1086) records the existence of a church in the manor of Chobham which belonged to Chertsey Abbey (*VCH 3*, 418-9). It most probably refers to the Church of St Lawrence which was founded in the 11th century as part of the Chertsey Abbey estate, and served distant regions in the main Chertsey Abbey estate (Blair 1991, 114). The parish church is located half way along the High Street, slightly set back, and was built on the raised river gravels at what is now the centre of the village between the two streams. The early church was cut through in c1170 by the present south arcade; the south chapel is also of 12th century date. The tower and windows are of 15th century date, the north aisle dates to 1866, and the chancel and south transept date to 1898 (Nairn & Pevsner 1971, 157-60). The church is the oldest building in the village, is Grade I listed and still in normal use.

THE CHAPEL

Domesday Book records the existence of a chapel at Chobham, in addition to a church, in the possession of Chertsey Abbey (*VCH 3*, 418-9). The chapel is referred to in documents of 1217 when Chertsey Abbey disputed the vicar of Chobham's right to a cemetery. The monks feared the loss of their ancient dues from Chobham chapel and the vicar complained about the problems the people of Chobham had in transporting corpses along the bad roads to Chertsey. The cemetery was permitted in return for an annual pension payable to the Abbey and the detailed agreement defined the chapel's status (Blair 1991, 155). The Abbot of Chertsey had the chapel repaired in 1318, but there is no further information regarding it after this date (*VCH 3*, 418-419). Blair has suggested that the chapel referred to in Domesday Book was probably a little church at Bisley which was an enclave on the edge of the great Chertsey Abbey estate (Blair 1987, 111).

LIMITS OF THE EARLY VILLAGE (TD2a)

There are a few factors which may have helped to influence the development of Chobham. They include the raised gravel area upon which the 11th century church of St Lawrence was built and where the historic centre of the village is situated; and the presence of the two streams which lie to the north and south of the village centre. The evidence suggests that the medieval settlement at Chobham was focused on St Lawrence's church. Some of the oldest domestic properties in Chobham, dating from the 16th century, lie along the High Street. The presence of the Domesday church of St Lawrence and the town mill which was established in the early 14th century (see Mill below) provide indicators for the early establishment of settlement at Chobham.

BURGAGE PLOTS

Blair has noted that Chobham is an excellent illustration of a settlement with a regular two-row plan, a regularity which is particularly evident on manors held by Chertsey Abbey, making it probable that Chobham was deliberately planned and laid out in the medieval period (Blair 1991, 58). The 1st edition 25 inch OS map of 1871 (fig 3) clearly shows the single row of building plots, lying along either side of the High Street. Their irregular width may be due to later combining and splitting of plots. The plots on the western side of the street share a common rear boundary line along their entire length; the northern plots becoming longer due to the sinuous line taken by the High Street. The plots along the eastern side of the High Street are not as regular in shape due to the location of St Lawrence's Church in the middle and the fact that they are located on a corner at the northern end. The eastern plots do not have a regular rear boundary, but all back onto a field which now forms the

village cricket field. The plots along the eastern side of the High Street in the area of Cannon Corner, at the northern end of the village, were probably laid out at a later date: the houses in this area (Cannon Cottage and Laurel Cottage) date from the 16th century. A number of plots line the northern side of Station Road at the southern end of the village; these probably represent a 19th century expansion phase extending the village eastwards along the road. The earlier maps of Senex (1729) and Rocque (1768) show a similar layout of buildings along the village roads despite not being as detailed as the later maps. This highlights the fact that the village plan did not undergo any great changes from the early 18th to late 19th century. Even today the original row plan remains clearly visible along the High Street.

STREETS

The 1st edition 25 inch OS map of 1871 (fig 3) appears to preserve the medieval street pattern in Chobham. The High Street forms the nucleus of the village and is lined by a single row of plots of varying width on either side. It is aligned roughly north-south and follows a curving line over the raised ground in the centre of the village upon which St Lawrence's Church was built.

Bagshot Road (formerly known as Vicar's Lane and Vicarage Road on the early OS maps) runs westwards from its junction with the High Street at Benham's Corner, at the northern end of the historic centre. Bagshot Road (the present A319) connects the village with the north-south route of the A322 which runs from Guildford up towards Bagshot and Windsor (and the M3). A little further north at Millbourne Bridge, the northern end of the High Street meets the Chertsey Road which heads eastwards towards Chertsey; an important ancient route linking Chobham with Chertsey Abbey. The road that continues northwards out of the village is the Windsor Road. At the southern end of the village the High Street joins Station Road and Castle Grove Road. Station Road heads eastwards towards Woking and Castle Grove Road heads southwards towards Bisley, another settlement formerly associated with Chertsey Abbey.

There appear to have been some changes to the road network of the village since the 18th century. Study of the Rocque map (1768) shows a road running around the eastern boundary of the present cricket field to the east of St Lawrence's Church. Its route follows the line of a present day footpath which runs from Cannon Corner at the northern end of the village, heading east then south down past Flexlands Farmhouse to join Station Road to the south-east of the village, east of the Village Hall. The route of this 18th century road appears to have become disused by the late 19th century (if not earlier) as it is shown only as a track/footpath on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map (1871; fig 3).

Road widening occurred at both ends of the High Street in the early 20th century. At the northern end of the village the junction between the High Street and Bagshot Road, at Benhams Corner, was widened resulting in the demolition of a number of properties adjacent to Frogpool House. At the southern end of the village, the entrance to Station Road was widened by truncating the southern-most plot on the east side of the High Street. Station Road was also widened along its stretch past the Village Hall.

THE MILL (TD2b)

Chobham Mill (SMR No 4088) was located on the north-west side of the village on the Mill Bourne which was dammed to form a mill pond. The site was established by Chertsey Abbey; the Chertsey Cartulary makes reference to Abbot Rutherwyk constructing a new mill at Chobham in 1308 which was called 'Hurstmyll' (Schueller 1989, 5). The last mill, erected here in 1790, was brick built. The Water Resources Survey of 1851 reported that the mill contained two pairs of stones and produced, on average, 55 sacks of flour per week. The demise of neighbouring watermills led to this mill being extended in 1897 and the OS reveals that this was the only working watermill in this part of Surrey at the time. The iron waterwheel continued to power the mill until 1932 when a turbine was installed. The mill stopped working in 1950, after which it remained derelict, devoid of machinery, until it was

destroyed by fire in 1967. A modern bungalow now occupies the site (Stidder 1990, 111). The mill is marked, with its mill pond, on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map as a corn mill.

The mill leat which runs alongside the Windsor Road originally served as an overflow for the watermill. After the loss of the mill, the leat tended to dry out and was in danger of being filled in to widen the road. The Chobham Society devised a way of tapping water from the Bourne stream to run along the leat channel thereby safeguarding its future (The Chobham Society 1986, 12-13).

THE VICARAGE (TD2c)

There is no evidence to date to show that any of the vicars of St Lawrence's Church, Chobham lived near the church. It appears that they always had their houses west of the village along what is now known as Bagshot Road (the present A319). The presence of the vicarage gave the road its earlier names of Vicar's Lane and Vicarage Lane. A moated site of possible medieval date (SMR No 3332) marks the site of the original vicarage in Chobham on the northern side of the Bagshot Road. The Chertsey Cartulary records the first vicar whose name is known as William Dagelynworth who 'obtained a house with a close adjoining containing six acres of wood and land, from a tenant called La Breche for two shillings a year rent'. It also describes the house as lying beside a meadow called "Mull Mead" and gives the exact acreage of Mill Meadow today where the site is located (Mason 1984, 13). The vicarage was ordained in 1330 by Abbot Rutherwyck and remained the official vicarage until c1800 when it was declared to be in a ruinous state by the new vicar, Mr Jerram who was then running a school for young gentlemen, and a new one was built on the opposite, southern side of the road (Mason 1984, 13). The moat is clearly marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map (1871), but later maps show how it has gradually become filled in over time. The present day map shows only a very small section of the moat surviving as a linear pond in the grounds of a property known as Clappers Corner. The second vicarage, built in c1800, is now known as 'The Old Vicarage' as it was itself superseded by a new vicarage built in the early 20th century further east along Bagshot Road, on the edge of the village next to the Police Station.

THE MARKET AND MARKET PLACE

A weekly market and an annual fair on Ascension Day were once held in Chobham. The market was held in the street by the church and continued until at least 1844; its start and end date is not known (Mason 1984, 7). Schueller refers to an article in the Woking Review of 1848 which notes that in the days before the modern town of Woking was established, Chobham was the shopping centre for people who lived at Old Woking. The Chobham Corn Exchange was famous for miles around and its weekend market, reputed to have been far better than that at Guildford, attracted people from a wide area (Schueller 1989, 43).

Lord Teignmouth, who was once a student in Chobham, noted in his memoirs that in the early 19th century the small triangular plot between the churchyard and the White Hart Inn was the scene of a pig auction on Sunday mornings before service, the farmers adjourning to church (*VCH 3*, 414).

SCHOOLS

St Lawrence's School was built along the Bagshot Road as the National School in 1814 and rebuilt in 1860 (*VCH 3*, 414) and is marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of 1871. The Infant School was built in the early 20th century and is marked on the 1916 edition of the 25 inch OS map south of St Lawrence's School and west of the High Street. The present St Lawrence Church of England First and Middle School is now situated on a large plot behind properties fronting the Bagshot Road and High Street, adjacent to the graveyard.

OTHER BUILDINGS

Chobham village still possesses a number of old buildings, mainly along the High Street, dating from the 16th to 19th centuries. Some of the earlier buildings were refaced with brick during the 18th century in order to update them. Of the listed buildings in Chobham, the

oldest include the White Hart public house, Cannon Cottage, Laurel Cottage and Nos 69-71 High Street, all of which have 16th century origins. Buildings of 17th century date include Nos. 14-22, 24-32, 25-31, 40 and 42 High Street. The house and shop at No 42 High Street, on the south side of the churchyard, stand on the site of Maud Makeles' cottage, bought by Abbot Rutherwyck in 1344. It is possible that the existing house, which is of late 17th century date, may contain remnants of the earlier building. The shop was used as a butcher's shop with a slaughter house at the rear (Mason 1984, 7). The site has been recently redeveloped with the construction of a number of properties, Nos 34a-b and 36a-c, to the rear of the original plot (SMR No A). Buildings of 18th century date include The Sun Inn, Nos 45-47, 49, 51 and 53 High Street, Frogpool House, Grants Cottage and Myrtle Cottage. Buildings of 19th century date include Chobham Village Hall built in 1888 along Station Road and Chobham House, a large late 19th century house lying on the northern side of the village adjacent to the site of Chobham Mill. It replaced Old Chobham House which was demolished in 1870.

The village had a number of smoke houses including one in a small cottage next to Frogpool house, only re-discovered during building works in 1960. The 'Old Lock Up', a stone prison, once stood adjacent to Cannon Cottage at the northern end of the village and is marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map (1871).

A couple of buildings on historical sites lying outside of the study area include: Chobham Park Farm and Chobham Place. Chobham Park Farm is the site of the former manor house. The medieval moated site (SMR No 1869) was used by the Abbots of Chertsey until 1535 when the manor house was sold to Henry VIII who created a deer park around it. The manor house was demolished in the 17th century and new buildings erected. Chobham Place lies c2km north of the village centre and was built on an old site recorded by the Chertsey Cartulary as 'La Ruden', where the Abbot built his rabbit house in 1335. The house is marked on the Senex map of 1729 and labelled 'Lady Abdys', denoting the name of the family who owned it at that time.

BRIDGES

There are two main bridges in Chobham, one at either end of the village: Grant's Bridge at its southern end crossing the Bourne Stream, and Millbourne Bridge to the north crossing the Mill Bourne. Records of 1573 (amongst the Loseley papers) mention two bridges at Chobham, one of which is named as Mill Bridge, both being in a ruinous state and in need of repair. Notes written in the margin of the paper indicate that the Queen, as Lord of the Manor, would have to repair the bridges (Mason 1984, 5). The second bridge was most probably Grant's Bridge which was first mentioned by name as *Grauntbridge* in 1605 (Gover *et al* 1934, 118), but no doubt had medieval predecessors. The OS map of 1811 shows this as 'Grant's Ford' and yet shows a bridge (Jones 1994).

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Throughout its history Chobham's economy was mainly agriculturally based. The isolated position of the village and its agricultural community acted to exclude the village from all influences of the transport and industrial revolutions, which enabled the preservation of many of the village's old established customs and traditions well into the 19th century (Schueller 1989, 1). A number of trades were carried out within the parish including milling, weaving, brickmaking, sand mining, gas production and printing. Chobham was largely self-sufficient, each family growing enough corn for their flour that was ground at the Town Mill. Flax was also ground in Chobham, giving the name Flex or Flax to some of the fields. It was already being woven in the village in 1664, as three weavers were recorded in a register for fire hearths (Mason 1984, 4).

Brickmaking took place around Chobham from the 1600s (or possibly earlier) when clay suitable for brick making was found around Brickhill to the north-west of Chobham, on the edge of Chobham Common. The site is marked as 'Brickfield' on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of 1871 with its brick kiln. Bricks continued to be made until c1880 when the yards

were run down following a dispute between some of the parishioners and the Lord of the Manor, Lord Onslow (Mason 1984, 6). A second brickmaking site, Millbrook brick and tile works, is recorded in the late 19th/early 20th century to the south of Chobham, and is shown on the early 20th century OS maps; and large quarried areas are still apparent here.

A small family printing business was started by the Medhurst family in 1800, housed in a small building at the rear of what is now a chemist next to the White Hart public house in Chobham High Street. The firm printed small leaflets, booklets, posters and picture postcards (Mason 1984, 7).

Gas was produced at Chobham in the 19th century at Chobham's own gas works, situated at the northern end of the village at the beginning of what is now Leslie Road. The gas works are marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of 1871. All that remains of it is a small cottage attached to a larger house. In 1869 Old Chobham House, The Grange, the village street and other houses were all gas lit. However, as gas for cooking was not available until later on, and electricity had arrived, the old gas works closed soon after (Mason 1984, 8).

Silica sand used in glass making was mined at Burrow Hill, on the north side of Chobham village. The exact date at which the mining began or where the product was sent afterwards is uncertain. It is known that by the 1920s it was only a very small concern, the sand being used in the manufacture of early scouring powders. The site is now the Metco Works, and has always been known locally as the treacle mines (Mason 1984, 6).

For a short time in the 18th century spring water was sold from wells to the north of Chobham village. The wells were mentioned by C. MacFarlane (1853) who noted that they were of the same quality as those at Tunbridge. These wells are thought to lie just below Round Pond adjacent to Chobham Place, in a field called Pumphouse Field (Mason 1984, 8).

POST-MEDIEVAL TOPOGRAPHY AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In the late 19th century Chobham was still a fairly small, compact settlement centred on the High Street and parish church. There are a number of post-medieval properties dating from the 16th to 19th centuries, but Chobham does not appear to have undergone any major expansion, even in the 20th century. Most of the redevelopment has occurred on the fringes of the historic village centre and beyond, preserving the historic shape and character of the village. The OS maps show the gradual infilling of fields along Bagshot Road, Chertsey Road, Station Road and Castle Grove Road with new residential developments, the school, its swimming pool and the extension of the graveyard. Although these developments have increased the built up area of the village, they have not encroached upon the original row plan of the village. The majority of the local residential growth and development has occurred to the north of the village in the Burrowhill area of the parish and along Chertsey Road, to the north of the Millbourne stream, leaving the historic village as a separate entity.

There has been some redevelopment along the High Street. At the southern end, both sides of the street have seen demolition of older buildings (including the King's Head public house) and the construction of new ones for commercial properties on the west side (Nos 9, 11, 21 and 23) and a few new houses on the eastern side (Nos 6 and 8). A group of new houses were also constructed to the rear of Nos 30-42 High Street on the southern side of the churchyard. A few old properties were demolished at both ends of the village for road widening in the early 20th century.

SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

Prehistoric and Roman finds are recorded from the area of Chobham, but developments in these periods had no discernible effect on the origins or character of Chobham village.

The manor of Chobham was in the possession of Chertsey Abbey from the 7th century, but to date, nothing of Saxon date has been recovered from the study area or its immediate surroundings. The parish church of St Lawrence was founded in the late 11th century and it is possible that there was some settlement around it in the Saxo-Norman period, but this has yet to be proven one way or the other. The settlement at Chobham was probably

established by the 13th century, and Abbot Rutherwyck of Chertsey Abbey was making improvements to the manor in the early 14th century. The extent of the medieval village is probably very similar to that indicated by the earliest large scale maps (eg fig 2), concentrated around the parish church and the High Street. The small amount of archaeological work that has been undertaken within the study area has not produced any below ground evidence for activity earlier than the 18th/19th century.

Chobham village continued to develop during the post-medieval period as the number of historic buildings of 16th to 19th century date can testify, but does not appear to have undergone any great expansion, retaining its earlier row plan.

Chobham does not appear to have been greatly affected by Industrial and Transport Revolutions and continued as a relatively isolated agricultural community, with a weekly market, until the mid 19th century. Following the arrival of the railway at Woking to the south-east in the 1850s, rather than become even more isolated, Chobham became a dormitory settlement with residential development taking place on its outskirts, as a result of which Chobham managed to retain its historic character. One unfortunate consequence of the residential growth in the area, and its location within the commuter belt, is that the narrow High Street of Chobham has become a busy cut through for local traffic.

EXISTING PROTECTION (fig 6)

- 1 The Chobham Conservation Area covers the area of the original medieval settlement along the High Street and around the parish church. A large proportion of the area designated as of High Archaeological Potential also falls within the Conservation Area.
- 2 There are a number of listed buildings within the study area.
- 3 The area around Chobham has been designated as part of London's Green Belt.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL POTENTIAL

General comment

The central, historic part of the village has undergone some piecemeal development in the last century. As very little archaeological work has been carried out within the study area we do not have much archaeological evidence or any clear indication of its potential for this village. It would be unwise to assume that all archaeological evidence has been destroyed in areas where redevelopment has occurred, except where deep excavation from basements, foundations or such-like has taken place. The areas most affected by redevelopment are both sides of the southern end of the High Street where a number of properties were demolished, including the listed Horse and Groom public house, and new buildings erected. A number of new houses were also constructed on the south side of the churchyard to the rear of 30-42 High Street.

Chobham has seen an increase in road traffic passing through the High Street in recent years and has become somewhat of a bottleneck. The construction of the M3 to the north has probably helped to increase the amount of traffic passing through the village, but also put pressure on the village as a desirable place to live, with an increase in the pressure for development and expansion. A substantial proportion of the area of greatest archaeological interest falls within the Chobham Conservation area, within which large-scale redevelopment is relatively unlikely. Any opportunities for small-scale work should, however, be grasped wherever possible, since this may provide further information and detail. It will be of some importance that adequate arrangements are made for the publication of any such work.

Investigation and publication of research into the historical sources such as the Chertsey Cartularies and Chobham parish records has been useful (the latter by Schueller 1989). It may be, however, that the original sources would repay further examination in the light of archaeological evidence, especially of medieval date, which may emerge in future years. A number of historic buildings have survived within Chobham village, some of which may possess remnants of earlier buildings. A historical building survey of the surviving

buildings as and when the opportunity arises would be useful in providing further information about the development of the village.

Specific Issues

It remains, then, for various reasons, difficult to formulate detailed research questions which future investigations might hope to answer. The issues indicated in the following section are, therefore, largely addressing broad themes of urban development:

- St Lawrence's church was founded c1080 and was mentioned in Domesday Book. Did it replace an earlier, Saxon church in the manor that had belonged to Chertsey Abbey since the 7th century? If so was it located on the same site as St Lawrence's, if not, where?
- What was the extent and character of Saxon and Saxon-Norman settlement around the parish church?
- When exactly was medieval nucleated settlement established?
- What was the precise extent of the medieval planned village?
- Was Chobham a completely planned medieval village or was there an element of organic medieval development?
- Did the house plots in such a village have backlands, like those in towns?
- If so, what was the intensity and character (industrial or otherwise) of such use?
- When was the market first established and was it held on the High Street outside the churchyard?
- More generally, in what ways does the archaeological evidence for a village such as this differ from that for the towns?

APPENDIX 1

SMR AND SITES LISTING

A number of sites recorded on the SMR lie within the study area at Old Woking (fig 3). However, a number of records which lie outside the study area are also referred to in the report and are included below. The records are summarised below in chronological order. They have been assigned a code to denote which section they are located in:

P	Prehistoric
R	Roman
SM	Saxon and medieval
PM	Post-medieval
NF	No features or finds
UD	Features of unknown date

1855	P	1871	R	2389	P	4313	SM
1858	P	1873	SM	3183	P	A	PM
1869	SM	2310	P	3332	SM		
1870	SM	2378	P	4088	SM		

Prehistoric:			
1855	SU 9700 6100 Marginal	Neolithic flints were recovered from the area of Chobham	Out of EUS study area - info only
1858	SU 987 627 Marginal	Fragments of eight or nine Late Bronze Age “pail-shaped” urns were dug up at Chobham Park Farm in 1902.	Out of EUS study area - info only
2310	SU 97 62 Marginal	A Palaeolithic handaxe was recovered from the area of Chobham.	Out of EUS study area - info only
2378	SU 9790 6080	?Neolithic flint material, including a broken flint ?awl with retouch and a burnt blade fragment, was recovered from the Chobham/Horsell area (south-east of Chobham village).	Out of EUS study area - info only
2389	SU 980 620 Marginal	The upper portion of a large mid-Bronze Age cinerary urn was recovered from ‘moat field, Chobham Park’ on the east side of Chobham village.	Out of EUS study area - info only
3183	SU 97 62	A ?Mesolithic flint waste flake with retouch was recovered from the area of Chobham.	Out of EUS study area - info only
Roman:			
1871	SU 97 62 Marginal	An earthen pot containing a Roman coin hoard was ploughed up in 1772 at Chobham. It consisted of silver coins of Gratian and Valentinian and copper coins of Valentinian, Theodosius and Honorius.	Out of EUS study area - info only
Saxon and Medieval:			
1869	SU 9863 6278	Chobham Park Farm is a 17th century property on the site of the moated mansion (extant in 1578), where Nicholas Heath, Archbishop of York, died 1578.	Out of EUS study area - info only
1870	SU 9700 6100 Marginal	Two ?14th century ditches, embanked on both sides and over 3m deep extend across Chobham in an east-west or north-south direction. One reference refers to the Abbot of Chertsey who “caused running water to flow round the manor house of Chobham in 1307 and had an earthen wall made about it” in 1322. The ditches could not be traced c1966.	Out of EUS study area - info only
1873	SU 9737 6179	The parish church of St Lawrence, Chobham is of 11th-16th century date and has undergone restoration.	
3332	SU 9678 6185	A ?medieval moated site (a sub-rectangular enclosure) is located at the Old Vicarage, Chobham.	Out of EUS study area - info only
4088	SU 9730 6198	Site of Chobham Mill lies on the north side of the village. The site was established by Chertsey Abbey when it was known as ‘Hurst Mill’. The	

last mill was erected on the site in 1790, and was built of brick with a tiled roof. The Water Resources Survey of 1851 reported that the mill contained two pairs of stones. Fred Benham was the miller in 1878 and it remained in his family until its closure in 1950. The mill was enlarged in 1897 and the OS reveals that it was the only working watermill in Surrey at the time. A "Marshall" semi-portable oil engine was installed in the early years of the 20th century, but the engine was later found to be unsatisfactory and was removed in 1916. The iron waterwheel continued to power the mill until 1932, when a Gilkes turbine was installed. After the mill stopped working it remained derelict, devoid of machinery, until it was destroyed by fire in 1967. A modern bungalow now occupies the site.

4313 SU 97 61
Marginal

Part of a 14th-15th century bronze bowl was found in Chobham by a mechanical digger.

Out of EUS
study area -
info only

Post-medieval:

A SU 973 617

A watching brief was undertaken at 36-42 High Street, Chobham in 1994 by SCAU for Curchod & Co. The remains of a kiln of unknown purpose were identified close to the street frontage. The upper part of the kiln contained bricks of 18th or 19th century date (Jackson *et al* 1997, 213).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bird, J, & Bird, D G, 1987 *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540*
- Blair, J, 1991 *Early medieval Surrey: landholding, church and settlement before 1300*
- English Heritage 1992 *Managing the urban archaeological resource*
- Gover, J E B, Mawer, A, & Stenton, F M, 1934 The Place-names of Surrey, XI, 105-106, 114-115
- Hampshire County Council 1997 *Extensive Urban Survey: a project design for the survey of the towns of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, Hampshire County Council
- Jackson, G, Maloney, C, & Saich, D, 1997 Archaeology in Surrey 1994-5, *SyAC*, **84**, 195-243
- Jones, P, 1994 *North-West Surrey Heathlands Survey*, unpublished report deposited with Surrey County Council Sites and Monuments Record
- Mason, J, 1984 *Cebba's Ham, the story of Chobham*
- MacFarlane, C, 1853 *Notes about Chobham from the camp of 1853*
- Nairn, I, & Pevsner, N, 1971 *The buildings of England - Surrey*
- Needham, S, 1987 The Bronze Age, in Bird & Bird, 1987, 97-138
- O'Connell, M, 1977 Historic towns in Surrey, *SyAS Res Vol*, **5**
- Poulton, R, 1998 Chapter 7: Historic Towns in Surrey - some general considerations, in *SyAC*, **85**, 239-42
- Poulton, R, & Bird, D G, 1998 *A project design for the extensive urban survey of Surrey*, report to English Heritage
- Ravenhill, W, 1974 *Two hundred and fifty years of map-making in the County of Surrey: A collection of reproductions of printed maps published between the years 1579-1823*
- Schueller, R, 1989 *A history of Chobham*
- Stidder, D, 1990 *The Watermills of Surrey*
- The Chobham Society, 1986 *Chobham, a heathland village*
- VCH *The Victoria history of the county of Surrey*, ed H E Malden, 1902-12, 4 vols

FIGURES

- 1 Extensive Urban Survey of Surrey. **Top:** Chobham, showing the area of the parish and manor. The principal routeways, as shown on 18th century maps, are also shown. **Bottom:** parishes (about 1823) and drift geology.

Fig 2 The Rocque map of c1768, showing the area of Chobham.

Fig 3 Chobham: 1st Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1871

Fig 4 Chobham: Topographic development map

Fig 5 Sites and Monuments Records and other archaeological information for Chobham.

Fig 6 Chobham: constraints map showing the Conservation Area and the AHAP