

EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY
of
SURREY

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EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY BLETCHINGLEY

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 12th/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). Bletchingley, a borough by the early 13th century, granted an annual fair in 1283 and a successful market during the 13th century, clearly qualified for inclusion in the survey.

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 (1768), the c1840 Tithe map and the 1st edition 25 Inch OS map of c1870.

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 OS, unless otherwise stated, and the data forms a GIS overlay to the OS 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)

The village of Bletchingley (NGR TQ 325 507) is situated on the eastern side of the county of Surrey, and lies on a ridge of Greensand south of the chalk of the North Downs. The gault clay of the Vale of Holmesdale lies to the north of the village and wealden clay lies to the south. The main road (A25) through Bletchingley is wide and curving, running downhill from west to east. The nearest watercourse is a minor stream which runs to the east of the village.

Bletchingley lies c5km east of Redhill, c5km north-west of Godstone station and straddles the A25, the main east-west road from Godstone to Redhill.

PAST WORK AND THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

Bletchingley, formerly a medieval borough, is now a village for which there is a 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 Bletchingley. 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

Archaeological work undertaken in an around Bletchingley has produced a variety of archaeological finds, the majority of which are from excavations undertaken since the 1980s, in advance of redevelopment or local quarrying. This work includes excavations at Bletchingley Castle in the 1980s (Turner 1986 and 1996) which have provided information about its short lived existence, from its late 11th century construction to its dismantling in the mid-13th century. A few other archaeological interventions in the form of watching briefs and an archaeological evaluation have also taken place within the village. Excavations outside the village include those undertaken at a long-established sand quarry at North Park Farm c1.5km north of the village. This work includes the 1980s excavations by SCAU at Little Pickle (SMR No 1222) (Poulton 1998), excavations at Place Farm (SMR No 1226), and ongoing work by SCAU at North Park Farm quarry which has revealed a Mesolithic site of

national importance in addition to later features (Poulton *et al* 2002). In addition to these sites a number of stray finds have been recovered from in and around Bletchingley.

Most of this work took place following the preparation of the review of Bletchingley by O'Connell (1977) which provided both a series of research aims, especially those relating to the origins and early development of the village, and a concise summary of existing knowledge. The finds recovered from archaeological interventions span a wide date range from the Mesolithic through to the post-medieval period.

Documents

The history of Bletchingley can be pieced together from a number of written sources. The earliest surviving reference to Bletchingley is in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Martin O'Connell has provided a valuable review of Bletchingley's history and archaeological potential in *Historic Towns* (1977, 7), establishing a sound foundation for further work. The history of the village and parish have also been studied by U Lambert (1921), U H H Lambert (1975), and more recently by Peter Gray (1991). Gray's publication also includes detailed information and illustrations of a number of the historic buildings in and around the village. The Victoria County History account of Bletchingley (*VCH 4*, 253-65) provides a useful summary of the village and its development since Domesday, and Blair (1991) makes a number of references to Bletchingley in the early medieval period. Turner provides a review of the Norman owners of Bletchingley Castle (1996), and also makes reference to Bletchingley's development in the medieval period (1987, 245).

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 village until the late 19th century/20th century. The Clayton Estate Map of 1761 (SHS K61/3/2; fig 2) provides an early view of the layout of the village. Much of Bletchingley was sold at a public auction in 1835 from which surviving documentation includes a plan (SHS 3924/8/1; fig 3) and sales catalogue (*TDC* 2002, 3). These detail the lots, and the buildings, land and other features that they contain providing a clear layout of the village at this time. The auction plan also shows the change in the route of the Godstone Road to that of the line of the present A25 at the east end of the village. The Tithe Map of 1841 shows the village of Bletchingley clearly, and the Apportionment provides useful additional information. There was still only a trickle of new development by the time of the large scale OS maps of c1870 and this, together with their high quality and accuracy, makes these the most generally useful maps to aid study of the early town. The 1st edition 25 inch OS map of c1870 shows a very similar plan to that of the Tithe Map of 1841 with only a few additions. The plan of the modern village is very similar to that of the 1870s with the addition of some new housing.

Buildings

Bletchingley has a range of historic buildings, many of which are listed, which date from the 14th to 19th century. A large number of the village's historic buildings are of 16th century date, suggesting a period of revival in the fortunes of the Bletchingley.

THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BLETCHINGLEY

The scope of the resources available for an account of the history of Bletchingley 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

The only prehistoric artefact to be recovered from within the study area itself is a Late Bronze Age socketed axe (SMR No 1219) recovered as a stray find from Bletchingley Castle during excavation work in the 1980s. In recent years evidence for prehistoric activity within the surrounding area has increased, particularly with the excavations undertaken in the 1980s at Little Pickle and Place Farm, and the 1990s (and still ongoing) at North Park Farm sand quarry, all of which lie c1.5km to the north of the Bletchingley village. The most recent work at North Park Farm has identified a Mesolithic hollow, containing a large amount of Mesolithic flintwork, and a number of Mesolithic pits. The identification of the hollow has confirmed the high archaeological potential of the site and its national significance. The Lower Greensand has long been recognised as a most productive area for the recovery of Mesolithic flintwork (Poulton 1995, 10). Later prehistoric material of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age date has also been discovered during the recent work at North Park Farm sand quarry with each period being represented by features (Poulton *et al* 2002, 2). Excavations at Little Pickle, the site of a medieval manor subsequently quarried, produced Mesolithic flintwork (SMR No 3092), and sherds of Bronze Age pottery (SMR No 3093) from medieval and later features. A small hoard of Later Bronze Age metalwork was later found in the same field as the excavation. These finds suggest Bronze Age activity in the immediate area of Little Pickle (Poulton 1998, 176). Evidence for Late Bronze Age activity was also identified at Place Farm (SMR No 3090). War Coppice Iron Age hill fort, c3km north of Bletchingley village on the parish boundary between Bletchingley and Caterham, also provides evidence for prehistoric settlement in the area.

The only recorded evidence for Roman activity within the village itself is the recovery of a Roman coin hoard (SMR No 1220) at the western end of the village. However, as mentioned in Appendix 1, the location for this discovery may be erroneous as the SMR entry states that it was found in the parish of Nutfield which lies to the west. The nearest evidence for Roman settlement in Bletchingley parish is the discovery of remains of a probable Roman villa (SMR No 1218) in 1813 at Pendell c1km to the north-west of the village (now destroyed). During the excavations at Little Pickle in the 1980s 83 sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. Their worn appearance probably indicates that they are not derived from occupation in or immediately adjacent to the excavated area. The number of sherds does however suggest that there is a Roman settlement nearer to Little Pickle than the one at Pendell to the west (Poulton 1998, 176). Stray Roman finds have been recovered within the parish by metal detectors including a denarius of Carausius in 1992-3 (Bird *et al* 1996, 202), two Romano-British Brooches, a decorative stud of 1st or 2nd century date and an armlet fragment (Williams 1996, 167-8).

Saxon and Norman

The earliest surviving reference to Bletchingley (*Blachingeley*) is in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but there is no mention of a church. The earliest masonry of the parish church of St Mary is of late 11th century date, but there is a possibility that the church overlies an earlier foundation. It has been suggested that the late Saxon settlement of Bletchingley was located near to the parish church at the eastern end of the village (O'Connell 1977, 7). The place-name Bletchingley contains the elements *-ley* (leah) an Old English word meaning forest, wood, glade or clearing, and *-ingas* ('people of') which probably mean 'leah of the people of Blaecce' (Gover *et al* 1934, 308). This suggests an origin in the 7th or 8th century (Dodgson 1966). Gelling (1984, 206) notes that the compound of *-inga* with *leah* referring to groups of people is rare so this could indicate a slightly different or more distinguished Saxon element.

During the time of Edward the Confessor there were three manors in Bletchingley held by Aelfech, Alwin and Elnod. By 1086 there was only one, held by the de Clare family (VCH 4, 256); the estates of Bletchingley and Chivington had been united into one manor by Richard fitz Gilbert shortly before.

The archaeological evidence for Saxon occupation in the area is limited. No Saxon finds have been recovered within the vicinity of the village itself, but evidence for activity of this period has been identified in the surrounding area. During the recent excavations at

North Park Farm sand quarry c1.5km to the north of the village, a small number of Saxon and/or early medieval features, which consisted of small pits, post holes and a substantial pit producing preserved organic material, were identified (Poulton *et al* 2002, 2). At Tilburstowhill Plantation c2km east of Bletchingley a possible Saxon cremation cemetery was identified in the late 19th century (SMR No 1231), and a Saxon bronze armet and accessory vessel (probably grave goods) were recovered. Sixteen sherds of early-middle Saxon pottery were recovered during the excavations at Little Pickle which suggested settlement in the immediate vicinity (SMR No 2614). At Pendell Farm c2km north-west of the village, a late Saxon disc brooch (SMR No 3855) was recovered by metal detector. Other recent finds from the parish include a couple of Late Saxon stirrup mounts (Williams 1996, 170-2).

Medieval

By 1086 the manor of Bletchingley was held by the de Clares, and was centred on Bletchingley castle, one of the main feudal and military centres of 12th century Surrey. The presence of such a powerful family as the de Clares provided the impetus for the growth of the settlement. By the early 13th century Bletchingley was a borough. Reference was made to it in 1225 and references to burgage tenure within the manor are found in the 13th century Assize Rolls. In the late 13th century Bletchingley was represented in Edward I's parliaments, but this was because of its baronial rather than urban importance (Blair 1991, 9). John Blair (1991, 58) tells of the emergence of these small market towns. He speaks of Bletchingley and Leatherhead as 'both on Clare manors, both with pre-existing churches as their foci and both based on road systems at estate boundaries..... Bletchingley town lies on a boundary between the Domesday estates of Bletchingley and Chivington.....The quasi-urban layout, which almost certainly existed in 1225, is based on an earlier crossing of the north-south boundary road with the road between Reigate and Godstone, its funnel-shaped market place occupying the site of an arable croft mentioned in 1138 x 52. As well as creating new foci for local trade, both acts of replanning suggest internal changes: an economic coalescence ofBletchingley and Chivington.....around a new main settlement. These deliberately planned 'market villages' blur the dividing line between towns and purely rural settlements' (Blair 1991, 58). It seems probable that this implies the existence of a settlement, predating the new borough, with houses that are likely to have clustered in the area between the church and the crossroads.

Bletchingley possessed a market before 1262 and an annual fair was granted to Gilbert de Clare in 1283. The town was thus a successful market centre in the 13th century where fulling and perhaps weaving were developing industries (Lambert 1975, 13). The fortunes of the town and that of its ruling family, the de Clares, appear to have been closely linked. The death of the last male heir of the de Clares at Bannockburn in 1314 probably contributed to the subsequent decline of the economy of the town (Lambert 1921, 1, 173). No further mention of a market has been found after 1325 (*VCH* 4, 255). There is also evidence that before the middle of the 14th century some of the population of Bletchingley had moved south to the growing hamlet of Horne, where iron ore was being extracted in large quantities (Lambert 1921, 1, 190). Bletchingley appears in the tax returns of 1336 as a small medieval borough.

Post-medieval

In 1640 there were only 46 voters for two members of Parliament. The borough of Bletchingley continued to be represented in Parliament until it was disfranchised by the Reform Act of 1832 as a result of it being a 'Rotten Borough' (Lambert 1975, 14). Shortly after this abolition much of Bletchingley was sold at public auction in 1835. The Hearth Tax Roll of 1664 records the names of only 70 households within the borough (Meekings 1940, xcvi) making it then the least populous of the Surrey towns. Since its decline during the 14th century, Bletchingley has remained as a village with significant growth only in the 20th century.

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN PLAN

Topographic divisions

The detailed analysis of the topographic development of Bletchingley 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 5, 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 St Mary's church and churchyard must have occupied their present sites since the late 11th century, the date of the earliest surviving masonry. The church may overlie an earlier foundation, but this is by no means certain.

2 Bletchingley Castle was first constructed in the late 11th century, soon after the Conquest, and was probably rebuilt in masonry in the 12th century. It was dismantled in 1264.

3 Medieval village extent. The early settlement of Bletchingley was established along the High Street in the early medieval period. It was a borough by the early 13th century and a successful market centre up to the mid-14th century, after which its fortunes declined.

3A The Market. The market place, which lies on the south side of Middle Row, is funnel-shaped and is the most likely location for the 13th century market. One of the buildings in Middle Row may once have been a market house.

4 Expansion took place in the 20th century along the High Street and Outwood Lane. Generally most new development has taken place outside of the historic village centre.

Medieval and post-medieval topography of Bletchingley

The town of Bletchingley was probably established in the 12th or 13th century as a planned small market town along the High Street, the main east-west Reigate to Sevenoaks route (the present A25). Its location here was most likely due to the presence of Bletchingley Castle (TD2) belonging to the de Clare family, which is strategically placed on the greensand ridge c0.5km west of the church. The medieval settlement (TD3) was focussed on the main crossroads by St Mary's church (TD1), at the junction of the main east-west road with the former north-south boundary road of the Domesday estates of Bletchingley and Chivington. It would have provided a focus for the scattered settlement within the manor, servicing both the local population and travellers passing along the road, providing accommodation and services, as well as serving the needs of the castle. The planned town may have succeeded an earlier settlement in the vicinity of St Mary's church and the crossroads, but there is no direct evidence for its location and extent.

PARISH CHURCH (TD1)

The parish church of St Mary (SMR No 1221) is situated at the eastern end of Bletchingley village on the northern side of the original main street near to the old crossroads. The earliest surviving masonry in the church dates to the late 11th century, but it may overlie an earlier foundation. It has been suggested that the late Saxon settlement at Bletchingley was located near to the parish church (O'Connell 1977, 7). There is no mention of a church in Domesday Book (1086) so its position on the boundary of the two manors of Chivington and Bletchingley makes a Norman foundation seem likely (Gray 1991, 9).

The church was given by Roger de Clare, Lord of Blechingley (1152-1173) to the Cluniac priory of St Pancras at Lewes, but was restored to the manor of Bletchingley at some time in the 13th century. The church was in the possession of a number of different hands until in 1882-3 when it became the property of Emmanuel College, Cambridge in whose gift it still is (*VCH* 4, 264).

THE CASTLE (TD2)

Bletchingley Castle (SMR No 2149) was built on a strategic site about half a kilometre west of the church (see above) and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 12786). The castle was originally a ringwork-and-bailey castle built soon after the Conquest by the de Clares. There is reason to believe that the primary earthwork was erected soon after 1066 (Turner 1986). Archaeological excavations in the 1980s have shown that the massive earthworks around the inner ward at Bletchingley were never equipped with stone defences (Turner 1986), and that a two-storey stone structure was built within the earthwork defences. This probably indicates that the de Clares soon came to regard Bletchingley as more a house than a castle (Turner 1987, 226-7). The life of the castle was short as it was demolished by Henry III in 1264 when the de Clares sided with Simon de Montfort against the crown. The castle was not rebuilt and subsequently fell into decay (*VCH* 4, 254-5). The Court House mentioned in 1262, which has been tentatively identified with Place Farm (SMR Nos 1226 & 3091, TQ 3264 5211), probably replaced the castle as the chief residence of the de Clare family in Bletchingley (Lambert 1921, 1, 162).

BUILDING PLOTS

The regularity of the plot boundaries on either side of the High Street suggests a formal laying out of the first burgage plots. These can be traced on early maps such as Clayton's estate map of 1761 (fig 2) and the Tithe map of 1841. Due to the lack of development in Bletchingley the boundaries of the main burgage plots have been preserved and can also be seen on modern maps.

On the northern side of the High Street the long narrow burgage plots extend eastwards from Stychens Lane to Church Walk; on the southern side the plots lie at the eastern end of the High Street and the pattern is not as regular.

The burgage plots on the northern side of the village are typically about 15.5m wide and 92.5m long. A lane called 'Back Path' extends along the full length of these burgage plots from the church to Stychens Lane at the rear of the plots. The siting of the majority of the burgage plots on the northern side may be related to the supposed location of the common fields associated with the village. If such a system did exist in Bletchingley the common fields are likely to have lain on the land immediately north of Back Path, but if so they disappeared at an early date (Gray 1991, 9). Regular plots are apparent on the south side of the High Street at its eastern end, but there is no corresponding back lane. There are four possible explanations for this difference, with little evidence to enable a choice to be made between them. The southern plots may belong to an earlier phase of development; they may be contemporary and show the intended extent of the town; they may be contemporary and form the only portions built on an original full complement of southern plots; they may be the surviving rump of a more extensive settled area, with the deserted plots subsequently amalgamated or redrawn; or they may be 13th century or later expansion subsequent to planned settlement north of the High Street. The plot boundaries east and west of these do not seem to form part of the same pattern. The small-scale Senex map of 1729 does not seem to mark any buildings to the west of Stychen's Lane, and the plot boundaries on the Clayton map of 1761 have the appearance of being relatively new, perhaps created from strips of the former open fields. In contrast the shorter plots east of Outwood Lane/Church Lane might have an earlier origin as part of 11th/12th century settlement around the crossroads. Court Lodge Farm forms part of this area.

STREETS

Bletchingley has a relatively simple plan developed at the crossroads of the main east-west Redhill to Godstone road (the A25), which forms the High Street, and the smaller Church Lane to the north and Outwood Lane to the south. The north-south road once formed the boundary between the estates of Bletchingley and Chivington prior to their merger in the 11th century. The original line of the main east-west road through the village is now blocked. It

originally ran down Church Walk, past the church and continued along what is now St Mary's Walk, the narrow path next to (and to the south of) Court Lodge Farm; it then continued on past the Plough Inn. The line of the present High Street was cut through next to the Prince Albert public house (now on the north-east corner of Outwood Lane and A25) in about 1800.

Back Path is the path running from the north-west corner of the churchyard, along the back of the burgage plots that front the northern side of the High Street, to Stychens Lane. It has a virtually continuous wall running along its south side which preserves the outline of the original burgage plots on the northern side of the High Street. The burgage plots on the southern side of the High Street do not have a back path to their rear, but a pathway does exist further south forming a boundary around the fields lying on the southern side of the village leading from the eastern side of Blechingley Castle to Outwood Lane. It has been suggested that this path, running along the crest of a ridge, was originally part of the early road to Godstone and beyond. The road would have gone out of use with the development of the medieval village to the north and the fall of the castle (Gray 1991, 30). The line of the path does however create a more regular, balanced shape for the area of the village.

The level of the High Street in the western part of the village has probably been reduced at some time to make the gradient easier. Before this the slope up from the market place at the eastern end of the village must have been very steep and was probably a factor in the location of the market place and a reason why the village does not appear to have developed too far up the slope. The depth of the road is notable along the northern part of the High Street adjacent to buildings such as Brittens Cottages (Nos 120-132).

A second set of crossroads exists at Blechingley at the western end of the village: the junction of Castle Street (the main east-west road) with Stychens Lane to the north and Castle Square to the south. This junction may have been important at one time as Lambert notes that Stychens Lane was once the old road to London (Lambert 1975, 20-1) and the southern road leads to the site of the castle. There is no direct road connection between the castle and the village which probably reflects the fact that the castle lost its importance at around the time that the town was emerging in the 13th century. Stychens Lane has been reduced to a pathway c400m north of the junction heading northwards to meet the road at Brewer Street, and, following the demolition of the castle in the 13th century, the southern route is no more than an access road to various properties. Significant changes were made to this part of the village in the late 1960s when highway improvements to the A25 necessitated the demolition of a terrace of cottages (Castle Cottages) which fronted the main road.

THE MARKET (TD3A)

Blechingley possessed a market before 1262 when the profits from stallage and shops were rated at £2 (Lambert 1921, 1, 161). An annual fair was granted to Gilbert de Clare in 1283 and was held in the High Street. It remained an annual function until World War II after which it was moved to Plough Meadow, but has since been discontinued

The market-place at Blechingley is funnel shaped and now partly encroached upon, and is most probably the site of the 13th century market (O'Connell 1977, 7). The road layout has been altered in this area of the village. The original main east-west road once ran along Church Walk on the south side of the church. In 1800 the new High Street was created and now runs along the southern side of the buildings of Middle Row. There is a possibility that these buildings represent the house plots that lay on the southern side of the original High Street with the market developing to the south of them. In medieval times the market place was sometimes an area completely separated from the main street of the town (Harris c1990, 39). However, the most likely possibility, indicated by the c1500 date of the White Hart on the south side of the present High Street, is that this whole area was once a market place open up to the church yard, and that the buildings of Middle Row themselves represent market stalls that have been consolidated into permanent buildings, one of which may have been a market house (Gray 1991, 9).

The war memorial now stands where the town well once stood, now represented by an iron pump. The well had been the sole water supply in the village until 1835 (Lambert 1975, 20).

BUILDINGS

Bletchingley has largely escaped the pressures of development over the years, as a result it still possesses a large number of its historic buildings dating from the 14th century onwards many of which are listed, and have been the subject of study by Gray (1991), on which much of the following is based. Probably the oldest building in Bletchingley, apart from the church, is 'Obberds' in Church Walk, the only complete building end on to its plot. It appears to have roof features (an inserted crown post and collar purlin) characteristic of the early part of the 14th century. The fact that it is end on to the road may be characteristic of an early date when the frontage was not as critical commercially. The jettied bay nearest to the road was rebuilt in the 16th century as a shop. Church Walk, the original route of the High Street, possesses many of the earliest buildings (of 15th/16th century date) in the village, most of which are recognisably domestic in plan occupying the full frontage. Nos 4 and 5 Church Walk have 18th century brickwork obscuring earlier buildings. Only the buildings in Church Walk retain something of their appearance in about 1500. In the 18th and 19th centuries much of the timber framing of other buildings in the village was hidden or replaced by brick or stone and about half of the buildings in the village were replaced almost entirely.

Court Lodge Farm opposite the church may date from the last quarter of the 17th century and the manor court may well have been held here. It is brick fronted but has traditional timber framing.

On the east side of the old market place at the northern end of Outwood Lane buildings of interest include The Prince Albert public house a 15th/16th century hall house, 17th/18th century Oxstall House, and parts of an early 17th century building hidden within Old Cottage next door (Gray 1991, 13).

The south side of the High Street possesses buildings of a variety of styles and dates. The White Hart Inn has been altered and rebuilt; the east wing is the oldest part possibly dated to c1500, whilst the main range is of 17th century origin. The inn was used for Parliamentary elections from 1733 when it was known as 'The Swan'. Buildings of 16th century include The Cobbles (Nos 23-27) and Tower House Cottages (Nos 33-37). Tower Cottages (Nos 43-47) stand at the broad part of the street next to the steeper ground and may have marked the end of the street on the south side as they lie at the western end of burgage plots laid out on the southern side of the High Street. They were originally a timber-framed pair of c1700 to which a further cottage of single bay width was added to the west. There are a number of houses of 18th century date including Glenfield House (No 29) an imposing house on the south side of the High Street.

The north side of the street between Stychens Lane and Church Walk probably marks the full extent of the medieval burgage plots on this side (TD3). The Manse stands on the corner of Stychens Lane and High Street. A timber framed house of c1600, its name comes from its association with the Methodist Chapel which stood just to the south and was demolished in recent years for road widening. The Adult Education Centre, by Stychens Lane, stands on the site of the old Grammar school founded by John Whatman in 1566. Poplar House (No 114 High Street) originated in the 16th/17th century, but now has a Victorian frontage and slate roof. Clive House and the adjoining shop (Nos 94-96 High Street) are of 17th century date, but in the party wall between the two remains the open truss of an old hall house. The Clerks House (No 48) is another house with an 18th century front hiding an earlier structure. It was a Wealden style house with jettied ends. The next building to the east, at the top (west) end of Church Walk, has an early 19th century shop front which hides another 16th century building with Jacobean panelling.

Middle Row located between Church Walk and the present High Street possesses a number of early buildings. It has been suggested that these building plots either originated for buildings on the south side of the original High Street along their northern face, or that they

were market stalls which developed into permanent buildings in the middle of the market place. Nos 36-40 are timber-framed of 15th century date with a 19th century extension. Nos 42-44 are of 16th century date, timber-framed with an 18th century front. Nos 32-34 have been dated to the late 17th century. Nos 26-28 in another separate block of buildings on the east side of Middle Row are of 16th century date, timber-framed and have been restored and altered.

All of these historic buildings lie within the Conservation Area designated for Bletchingley which takes in the area of the medieval town with its burgage plots.

ALMSHOUSES

There were ten almshouses in the parish in 1668 and another added by the rector, the Rev. Charles Hampton, who in his will of 1667 also left land to provide firing for poor inhabitants. They were located to the south of Court Lodge Farm having been built alongside the original main road and are marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of c1870. The almshouses were condemned by the sanitary authority as unfit for habitation and pulled down in 1890 and the site subsequently laid out as allotments (Lambert 1921, 2, 448). This site in St Marys Walk was redeveloped for housing in 1994. Four almshouses for widows were built in 1860 by Miss Clara Matilda Perkins of Pendell Court (*VCH 4*, 265), and are also marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map. These were built on the site of the old Hall House which was pulled down in 1834, at what is now Nos 64-72 High Street. The Hall House was the place where two members of Parliament were elected until 1733 after which the elections were held at the White Hart Inn. The Perkins almshouses were sold to the Godstone RDC who built new old peoples dwellings on the site in 1964 (Lambert 1975, 21). A new almshouse was also built by the Clara Matilda Perkins Almshouse Trust in 1973 on the south side of St Mary's Churchyard.

SCHOOLS

Two schools are marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map: one lies adjacent to the Godstone Union Workhouse to the north of St Mary's Church and the other, the Grammar School, lies at the western end of the village. The site of the school and workhouse near the church was later used by Clerks Croft Hospital, a site which has been redeveloped for housing. Blechingley Grammar School at the western end of the village was founded by deed of John Whatman on 8th September 1564, who granted a house and 5¹/₂ 'burgages' for a Free School. However, in a deed of 1631 it is stated that the house and property had been misapplied for the purposes of an almshouse for the poor. The heirs of the original grantees by this deed conveyed the property to a John Evans of London who paid £400 to buy another 33 acres of land and started the school under the Rev. Robert Blackwell. Statutes were made on 22nd April 1656 for a Free Grammar School where the master should teach 'without gift or reward 20 male children of the poorest inhabitants of Bletchingley and born in the parish'. The income was too small to maintain a proper grammar school. In 1820 a Mr Heaseman, who had been master for many years, died leaving the house in a dilapidated state. The next master, Mr George Quilton, ruined himself restoring it to a fit state using timber from the school land. By a scheme under the Endowed Schools Acts, 7th July 1874, the bulk of the endowment was legally appropriated for elementary school purposes (*VCH 2*, 187). The school was reopened by the Council in 1874 for 266 pupils. The school is the only one marked on the 2nd edition 6 inch OS map of 1897 on the site of the old Grammar School at the corner of Stychens Lane and the High Street. The site, having been used for 400 years as the parish school, is now used as the Adult Education Centre serving the population of the surrounding villages.

Evans's school charity is now in the hands of Surrey County Council and is used to provide scholarships for Bletchingley boys and girls at Reigate Grammar School and elsewhere (*VCH 4*, 265).

RELIGIOUS HOUSES

Bletchingley parish possessed a number of religious houses including Wesleyan and Methodist chapels and a Friends' meeting house. A Methodist Chapel is marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of c1870 at the corner of Stychens Lane and High Street; it was demolished in recent years to make way for road widening (Gray 1991, 15). This chapel and a second Methodist Chapel further west on the north side of the main road on the edge of the village are marked on the 2nd edition 6 inch OS map of 1897.

WORKHOUSE

Godstone Union Workhouse once stood to the north of St Mary's Church on Clerks Croft and is marked on the 1st edition 25 inch OS map of c1870. Clerks Croft is one of the oldest endowments in Bletchingley and the workhouse was built on it in 1753-4 (Lambert 1975). The site was later occupied by Clerks Croft Hospital, but was redeveloped for new housing in the 1980s.

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

In the medieval period Bletchingley was a thriving market town and a centre for fulling and weaving of woollen cloth. A good source of Fullers Earth, which was used in the fulling process, was found at Nutfield the neighbouring parish to the west. Firestone was dug at Bletchingley in the 19th century and was exported to be used in glass-making by the principal manufacturers (*VCH 2*, 278). The South-Eastern Railway line runs c2km to the south of Bletchingley. A major feat of engineering was undertaken in 1840-1842 when the Blechingley Tunnel was built. Most of the rail workers lived on the side of the railroad, but some were accommodated within Bletchingley itself (Parton 1980, 226). In the present day Bletchingley supports a number of local businesses including specialist shops and restaurants.

POST MEDIEVAL TOPOGRAPHY AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The medieval borough of Bletchingley has received virtually no archaeological investigation apart from the few known interventions mentioned above. Past development has not been extensive, as a result the layout of the historic village has been preserved.

SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

A few finds of prehistoric and Roman date have been recovered from the vicinity of Bletchingley, but there is no evidence to suggest that village itself has origins as early as this. The identification of prehistoric activity c1.5km to the north of the village dating back to the Mesolithic period suggests that the Greensand may have been favoured by the hunter-gatherer communities of the Mesolithic. Finds and features of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age date provide evidence for later prehistoric activity in the area. The current evidence for the nearest Roman settlement in the parish of Bletchingley is the location of a probable Roman villa (now destroyed) at Pendell c1km away. However, the recovery of Roman pottery during the excavations at Little Pickle, c1.5km north of the village, suggest that a Roman settlement exists nearer to Little Pickle than the one at Pendell.

The place-name Bletchingley is thought to have 7th or 8th century origins, but there is currently no archaeological evidence for the existence of a Saxon settlement in the area of the village. Following the construction of Bletchingley Castle by the de Clare family in the late 11th century and the 11th century foundation of the parish church on the boundary between the Domesday estates of Bletchingley and Chivington, the village of Bletchingley was probably established. It was the result of the late 11th century merger of these two estates to create a new focus for local trade at the crossroads forming the junction of the earlier north-south estate boundary road with the east-west Reigate to Godstone Road. The settlement was probably focused on the area to the south and east of the church, but its extent is largely guesswork, although there are hints in the limits of property boundaries. The church itself was probably established at the same time, and these events are also intimately connected with the foundation of the castle a short distance to the west.

In the early 13th century Bletchingley is referred to as a borough, and there seems no doubt that it was a planned town, perhaps relatively new at that period, founded by the de Clares in the area between the church and the castle. The key elements of formal planning may be clearly traced through early maps and survive quite well to the present day. The Senex map of 1729 shows the regular layout of plots on either side of the High Street with the church, market house in the middle of the market place and the castle to the west. The Clayton Map of 1761 (fig 2) and the Rocque map of 1768 show a similar plan with no real change, but show more detail than the Senex map. They show the distinctive block of Middle Row just south of the church and the original line of the High Street (along Castle Walk and St Mary's Walk) with a slightly staggered crossroads.

For a short period Bletchingley was a thriving market town and a centre for fulling and weaving of woollen cloth. However, the fortunes of the village appeared to mirror that of the ruling de Clare family. Following the death of the last of the family in 1314 the economy of the town went into decline. Its fortunes appear to have been revived for a short period in the late 15th and early 16th century, but the town appears to have stagnated until at least the late 19th century when there is some evidence of redevelopment and slight expansion. This is apparent in the evidence of building (Gray 1991, 10) and seems to be confirmed by the map evidence. The Tithe map for Bletchingley of 1841 shows some interesting details: the High Street has by now been re-routed to the south of Middle Row leaving St Mary's Church slightly distanced from the main highway through the village. The burgage plots are clearly marked on either side of the High Street and the village does not appear to have grown any larger since the 18th century. The 1st edition 25 inch OS map of c1870 shows a very similar plan to that on the Tithe Map with only a few additions, including the building of Castle Hill on the site of Bletchingley Castle. The plan of the modern village is very similar to that of the 1870s with the addition of some new housing and the loss of a few buildings on the High Street for road widening. The village can therefore be seen to have retained its earlier form without having suffered from major redevelopment.

EXISTING PROTECTION (FIG 6)

- 1 Bletchingley Castle (TD2) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 12786).
- 2 The historic core of Bletchingley centred on the High Street is designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP). The area also lies within the Bletchingley Conservation Area. Bletchingley village is located within the Green Belt.
- 3 There are a number of listed buildings within the village of Bletchingley mainly located in the High Street and Church Walk.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL POTENTIAL

General comment

The historic centre of Bletchingley appears to have retained its basic form and is designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP). The listed status of many of the buildings, particularly along the High Street, and the establishment of the Conservation Area have served to protect the historic core of the village from major redevelopment. There are, however, a couple of sites near the centre that have witnessed change. One lies to the north of St Mary's Church where a 1980s housing development at Clerks Croft has replaced the former Clerks Croft Hospital (originally the site of the former Godstone Union workhouse). The other site is the area to the south of Court Lodge Farm where new houses have also been constructed on both sides of St Mary's Walk, the line of the former main road. By using a familiar street pattern, this new development has been effectively integrated into an historic setting. Generally, change in Bletchingley has been of a piecemeal nature. Rather than undergoing wholesale change, many of the buildings in the historic centre have been successively adapted and extended. The medieval origins of some of the buildings are still visible, but it is also the continued use of the plots created when the borough was formed that has ensured the survival of this historic character (TDC 2002, 12). There has been some excellent research into the buildings of Bletchingley (eg Gray 1991) and this should be built

on wherever possible, especially where internal details are revealed in the course of alteration and extensions. Historical sources have also been studied in considerable detail, and it seems relatively unlikely that important new information, at least for the early development of the town, will emerge from this area of study.

The AHAP lies within the Bletchingley Conservation Area within which large-scale redevelopment is relatively unlikely. Very little archaeological work has been undertaken within the village itself, therefore it is important to undertake archaeological investigations wherever possible as this would provide us with further knowledge about the development of the settlement. O'Connell (1977) noted in *Historic Towns* that the planning authorities are very conscious of the quality of the main street and future development is likely to consist only of small extensions to existing properties and this remains very much the case. Consequently there should be no call for large-scale excavations, only small scale work. Any further archaeological work within Bletchingley may yield useful information about the origins and early development of the town. The following are specific items which need to be addressed:

Specific issues

- What was the origin and extent of the Saxon occupation suggested by the place-name evidence?
- Was the earliest settlement in the vicinity of the church? What was its extent?
- By what date was the present street pattern established?
- What was the economic history of the borough in the middle ages? Did it stop growing in the 14th century?
- Was the extent of the built-up area on the south side of the High Street ever greater than that evident on the earliest maps?
- Was the area west of Stychen's Lane/Castle Square settled in the medieval period (as shown on fig 5) or does it represent an area of later expansion?
- What was the density of occupation and degree of backland utilisation at different periods? What evidence is there for backyard industries?
- What was the layout and extent of the castle?

APPENDIX 1

BLETCHINGLEY SMR AND SITES LISTING

A number of sites recorded on the SMR lie within the study area at Bletchingley (fig 4). 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

1219	P	1226	SM	3774	SM	3092	P
1220	R	2149	SM	3775	SM	3093	P
1221	SM	2614	SM	3776	UD	A	SM
1222	SM	3759	SM	3777	SM	B	SM
1224	SM	3763	SM	3090	P	C	NF
1225	SM	3764	PM	3091	SM	D	NF

Prehistoric:			
1219	TQ 3200 5000	A late Bronze Age socketed axe was recovered as a stray find from Bletchingley Castle.	
3090	TQ 3260 5210	Place Farm – Evidence for Late Bronze Age occupation excavated by M Russell 1984-87 for the Bourne Society (see SMR 1226 and 3091).	Out of EUS study Area – info only
3092	TQ 3346 5205	Excavations at Little Pickle by R Poulton for SCC in 1983-5 recovered Mesolithic flint implements (see SMR 3093).	Out of EUS study Area – info only
3093	TQ 3346 5205	Excavations of the medieval manor at Little Pickle by R Poulton for SCC in 1983-5 recovered Bronze Age pottery (see SMR 3092).	Out of EUS study Area – info only
Roman:			
1220	TQ 3195 5080	A Roman coin hoard of between 800 and 900 Roman coins, chiefly of the Lower Empire and contained in an urn, was ploughed up in a field in c1756. However, the source for the SMR entry clearly states that the hoard was found in the parish of Nutfield, therefore the siting here must be erroneous.	Out of EUS study Area – info only
Saxon & Medieval:			
1221	TQ 3276 5085	St Mary's Church, Bletchingley has a large west tower of late 12th century date, a chancel and south and west doors of 13th century date and south arcade and chancel arch of 15th century date. A spire was added later but was never replaced after destruction by lightning in 1606. There is evidence of Norman work in the tower which is probably part of the first church built about 1100. The church has undergone modern additions and alterations.	
1222	TQ 3347 5213	Little Pickle. Remains of a square earthwork. A roughly square moat, now dry, lies in a little copse to the east of Place Farm, in North Park. Foundations of a 16th century wall were found in the south bank and foundations of a building were discovered adjoining the moat on the south. At the south-east corner of the	Out of EUS study Area – info only

		moat an overflow to the south was walled to form a fish-pond. The excavations at this site between 1984 and 1990 demonstrated that it was not a moat (since it would never have been regularly waterfilled), but it did form an enclosure, probably of 15th century origin, that may have been a deer pound, used in connection with culling and management of deer in the North Park. A large fish-pond was identified to the south-east, but the two did not appear to be linked.	
1224	TQ 3319 5072	St Catherine's Cross (possible site of) in Bletchingley is first mentioned in 1785. It was subsequently called Whitepost and stood east of the village where the road forks to Godstone and Tilburstow Plantation. It was no doubt the crossways of St. Catherine with a crucifix or shrine. There are no remains of the cross and the general area in the close vicinity of the road fork is known as White Cross and the cottages at TQ 3322 5075 are called White Cross Cottages and Catherine's Cottages.	Out of EUS study Area – info only
1225	TQ 3195 5072	Botery's Cross (possible site of) was first mentioned in 1527 and situated where the West Lodge of Castle Hill now stands. There are no remains of this cross and no further information about its exact site. A new road centred at TQ 3190 5080 has been called Botery's Cross.	Out of EUS study Area – info only
1266	TQ 3264 5211	Place Farm is an 18th century building formed out of the 16th century gatehouse of Bletchingley Place. A large barn is to the south-west, mainly of 17th century date, made from re-used Tudor bricks. The meadow on the west side of the house contains a number of terraces probably the remains of ornamental gardens. Place Farm was excavated in 1984-87 by M Russell and uncovered evidence of a medieval/post-medieval manor house. Excavations continued from 1987 on a small scale.	Out of EUS study Area – info only
2149	TQ 3233 5055	Bletchingley Castle, comprising the remains of a motte and bailey and 12th century keep, was first mentioned in 1160. The castle occupies the very flat top of a brow which terminates to the south in a very steep slope. The plan consists of outer and inner wards, the latter containing remains of a stone keep which probably replaced an earlier timber structure. The precise date for the construction of the masonry buildings is not known for certain, but excavations carried out between 1982-6 by DJ Turner (Turner 1996) yielded some evidence to suggest that it might be as early as the late 11th century. Foundations only were visible in the early 19th century; the keep has subsequently been cleared of earth and an attempt to rebuild the walls has been made. The outworks have been further destroyed by the building of a modern house (Castle Place) upon the western part of them.	
2614	TQ 3346 5205	Manor House – field to the south-west of Little Pickle (SMR No 1222) called 'Old House Field' in 1761. Excavation in 1983 and 1984 have revealed stone foundations of 13th/14th century building with later (up to 16th century) additions, and brick walls of the 16th century. Function is uncertain, but the position within the North Park limits possibilities. A few sherds of Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery probably belong to earlier phases of use of the same site. More extensive excavations in 1988-9 and detailed documentary research have demonstrated that this was the site of a major house from the late 13th century down to about 1550. It was, until the mid-15th century, the residence of the masters of the hunt for the two Bletchingley deer parks. After that it became the dwelling of Henry Hextall, one of the leading courtiers to the Duke of Buckingham, who owned Place Farm. It was not a manor house, in the administrative sense. See also SMR Nos 3092-3. The site	Out of EUS study Area – info only

		has also produced limited evidence relating to Iron Age and Roman activity.	
3091	TQ 3260 5210	Excavations at Place Farm by M Russell in 1984-7 for the Bourne Society uncovered evidence of a medieval/post-medieval manor house (see SMR 1226 and 3090).	Out of EUS study Area – info only
3759	TQ 3225 5050	A penny of Stephen, dating to 1135-54, was found by metal detector <i>c</i> 1990 at the base of the slope south of the footpath which runs along the southern slopes of Bletchingley Castle. It is a cross moline (Watford) type and is struck off-centre. It was minted in London and is approximately 19mm in diameter. Two lead tokens have also been found in the same area.	
3763	TQ 3260 5030	A late medieval/16th century shield-shaped decorative stud for wood or leather, with possible floral design. It was found by metal detector at Castlehill Farm, Bletchingley.	
3774	TQ 3200 5000	A 13th/14th century buckle with forked spacer. The pin is attached but the plates are missing. Its provenance is uncertain and it has been suggested that it may be from Castlehill Farm.	
3775	TQ 3280 5050	A late medieval thimble was found by metal detector <i>c</i> 1990 at land east of Outward Lane, Bletchingley.	
3777	TQ 3220 5110	A possible double oval buckle frame, the iron pin of which is missing, was found by metal detector <i>c</i> 1990. It dates from the late medieval period.	Out of EUS study Area – info only
A	TQ 3263 5069	A watching brief was carried out in July 1996 on the site of a new garage to the rear of 39 High Street, Bletchingley. The foundation trenches dug 1m deep did not reveal any evidence of earlier buildings. Sherds of pottery from the 14th century onwards were recovered from the topsoil (Saaler 1996).	
B	TQ 3285 5077	An archaeological evaluation was carried out by SCAU in September 1994 on land at St Mary's Walk, Bletchingley on a site occupied by almshouses in the 19th century. The work was carried out in advance of a new housing development. One small pit containing sherds of 15th century pottery, and fragments of slag and roof tile was identified within one of the four trenches. Two stray sherds of 15th century pottery and fragments of roof tile were also recovered. No trace was found of former buildings (Hayman 1994).	

Post-medieval:			
3764	TQ 3260 5030	A belt hanger, with traces of gilding, was found by metal detector at Castlehill Farm, Bletchingley.	
Finds of unknown date:			
3776	TQ 3280 5050	A harness pendant with traces of tinning, of unknown date, was found by metal detector <i>c</i> 1990. It has a central shield with a red enamel cross.	
No features or finds recovered:			
C	TQ 321 506	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in October 1996 on the excavation of a gas main trench at Cherry Tree Cottage, Castle Hill, Bletchingley by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU). No features or finds of archaeological interest were found (Hembrey 1996).	

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FIGURES

- 1 Extensive Urban Survey of Surrey. **Top:** Bletchingley, 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.
- 2 Bletchingley: The Clayton Estate Map of 1761
- 3 Bletchingley: Auction plan of 1835
- Fig 4 Bletchingley: Sites and Monuments record and other archaeological information
- Fig 5 Bletchingley: Topographic development of the town
- Fig 6 Bletchingley: Constraints map showing the Conservation Area, AHAPs, and scheduled Ancient Monuments