CHESHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

Bollington

Archaeological Assessment

2003

CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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BOLLINGTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Jo Clark

1 SUMMARY

By the early 19th century, cotton spinning had become focussed upon the northern fringes of Cheshire in Bollington, Rainow, Wilmslow, Styal and Disley. Prior to this industrial boom, Bollington was a small, dispersed, agricultural settlement, consisting of scattered farmhouses and hamlets focussed upon the road from Macclesfield to Pott Shrigley.

1.1 Topography and Geology

Bollington lies c 150m AOD, in and around a deep narrow valley. It is 5.6km north-east of Macclesfield and close to the eastern boundary of the county. The foothills of the Pennines lie to the east and to the west is the Cheshire Plain. The River Dean runs through the town.

The underlying solid geology comprises pebble beds belonging to the Sherwood Sandstone group (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1977). It has a drift geology of glacial sand and gravel and fluvio-glacial gravel. There are also a number of coal outcrops within the area, particularly in the north-east area of the settlement (British Geological Survey 1962).

The soils of the surrounding area comprise mainly brown sands, with some argillic stagnogley soils to the north and to the south. The brown earths are best suited to grass and are graded class 3-4, while the stagnogleys are graded class 3 (Furness 1978, 82 and 123).

The town lies 1km east of the A523, which connects Macclesfield with Stockport. The B5091 runs through Bollington to Pott Shrigley.

1.2 Administrative Unit

Bollington was part of Macclesfield Hundred and the Deanery of Macclesfield (Dunn 1987, 11). Prior to the creation of the ecclesiastical Parish of Bollington in May 1842, the township was a chapelry within the boundaries of the large Parish of Prestbury (Kelly's Directory, 1939, 52). Today, Bollington is a Civil Parish in the Borough of Macclesfield.

1.3 Place Name

The place name first appears in records in the 13th century as *Bolynton* (1270). It later appears in a variety of forms, for example: *Bolington* (1285), *Bulyngton* (1365) and *Balington* (1526). The name suggests a farm on the River Bollin, although the river that flows through the town is called the Dean.

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Ekwall suggested that this principal tributary of the River Bollin must once have shared the name of the main stream (Dodgson, 1970, 187).

2. SOURCES

2.1 Historical

There is very little written about early Bollington. Most attention has been paid to the industrial town and of this material the most useful is the survey of the East Cheshire Textile Mills by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (Calladine and Fricker, 1993). A very short background history can be found in Ormerod's *History of Cheshire* (1882), otherwise information is contained in the county's directories, for example Bagshaw (1850).

The documentary material available for Bollington is limited. There are records available at Chester Record Office regarding, for example Macclesfield Forest (CRO/ D5075), that potentially contain useful information but are beyond the remit of the present survey.

2.2 Cartographic

Bollinton is marked on Saxton's county map of 1577 and Speed's 1610 map of Cheshire (*Bolynton)*. A survey of the lands owned by Edward Dounes of Shrigley in 1686 has proved useful in confirming the location of settlement at the end of the 17th century. However, as it was intended to indicate lands that were of a particular ownership, it cannot be treated as a map representing the true extent of the township. A schematic representation of the layout of the township and the local road network is provided by Burdett's map of Cheshire (1777). More detailed information is provided by the tithe map of 1849 and the Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition 6": 1 mile map, surveyed 1870-71.

2.3 Archaeological

Before the present survey there were 32 sites recorded in the settled area in the County Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR), which are depicted on Figure 1. Where sites and finds have been identified from the CSMR, the relevant reference is provided throughout this report. The present survey has added a further fifteen records to the CSMR.

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY: (Figure 1)

3.1 Prehistoric

Unlike Macclesfield, where there is a concentration of prehistoric monuments, there are just two sites recorded on the CSMR that fall within the environs of Bollington. These include Nab Head, a Bronze Age round barrow sited to the north of the settlement (SAM 22573, CSMR 1585), and

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what was thought to be a round barrow to the south of the town, that has since been shown to be a dump of quarry waste (CSMR 1590).

3.2 Roman

There is no evidence to suggest that there was activity in this area during the Romano-British period. The only recorded find is a coin of Augustus and Agrippa that was found in topsoil at Grimshaw Lane when a house was built in 1952-3 (CSMR 1586).

3.3 Early Medieval

Bollington was surrounded by a number of important estates. Macclesfield (2km to the south) and Adlington (2km to the north-west) were both large estate centres at Domesday, and both belonged to the Earls of Mercia. Also Prestbury, an important ecclesiastical centre, lies 2km west of Bollington (Higham, 1993, 174).

Bollington is not mentioned in the Domesday Book and there is no other evidence to indicate that the settlement existed in the early medieval period. However, it has been suggested that Bollington may have been included in Earl Hugh's demesne manor of Adlington (Archives and Local Studies, 1).

The Domesday Survey records that:

The same earl holds EDULVINTUNE [Adlington in Prestbury]. Edwin held it. There are 2 hides that pay geld. The land is for 10 ploughs. There [are] 2 radmen and 6 villeins and 3 bordars with 3 ploughs. There [are] 21 acres of meadow. Wood 11 leagues long and 2 wide, and there [are] 7 hays and 4 eyries of hawks. T.R.E. it was worth £8, now 20s. He found it waste.

(Harris and Thacker ,1987, 347)

Adlington had vastly reduced in value by 1086, presumably having suffered from William's harrying of the north. It is unclear from this limited information whether Bollington was included in the Domesday Survey as part of Adlington or not.

Prior to the laying out of the shire of Cheshire in the late 9th to 10th centuries it has been argued that the medieval Hundred of Macclesfield (formerly Hamestan) was part of the large territory of the Pecsaete (Peak dwellers), which also covered Hamenstan in Derbyshire and Totmonslow in Staffordshire (Higham, 1993, 175-7).

3.4 Medieval

3.4.1 The Manor

Bollington was included in the manor and forest of Macclesfield 'out of which Forest it appears to have been carved in successive ages, by grants from the

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earl' (Ormerod, 1882, 701-2). The forest dwellers enjoyed customary rights. At the eyre of 1285 a number of townships, including Bollington, successfully defended their right to cut oaks in their demesne woods without view of the foresters (Harris and Thacker, 1987, 184).

The landowners were and continued to be copyholders, holding land from the crown and 'there can be no doubt that as a possession of the crown, the whole district was occasionally farmed out, as was customary' (ibid). Hugh Despenser, one of the favourites of Edward II, became Lord of Bollington, holding lands and tenements in the settlement (Betts, 1934,7-9). By 1478-9 Robert de Legh of Adlyngton held lands in Bollington from the Earl of Chester, including, five messuages, ten acres of land, one of mead, 100 of pasture and half an acre of wood (Ormerod, 1882, 701-2).

3.4.2 Settlement

Very little is known about medieval Bollington. However, one of the few surviving records is a manuscript written in 1269-70, which describes the 'bounds of the Lord of Bolyton' (Betts, 1934, 1-5).

The name Bollington Cross seems to be associated with a cross that once stood at the junction of four routeways. Details about this are very sketchy but it is thought to have last stood in the early 19th century, and was possibly demolished when the Henshall Road was cut (Betts, 1934, 63). Whether this was originally a medieval wayside cross or a later structure is unknown. A written account by a Mr Noel suggest it stood in front of Orchard House, adjacent to St Oswald's School (Longden 2000, pers comm.).

3.4.3 Economy

It is likely that medieval Bollington was a small township based upon agriculture. However, both coal and stone are known to have been exploited since the early post-medieval period and it is possible that this began much earlier. Broster suggests that Kerridge has been worked off and on since the middle ages (1980, 16).

The 'Milne of Bolynton' occurs in the records in 1354-5 when it was granted for life to William Soty. In 1380, a lease was made to Robert de Legh of Adlington and William del Dounes by Joan princess of Wales of 'her part of Bolyton, with a water mill there' (Ormerod, 1882, 701-2; CSMR 1587).

Data for Cheshire towns is rare because in the medieval period the shire was exempt from national taxation, having its own taxation system, the Mize. In the Cheshire Mize of 1405, *Bolynton* was assessed at just 15s 2d. The largest assessment in Macclesfield Hundred was that of *Chedle* at £4 0s 0d (Booth 1985, 22).

3.4.4 Religion

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St John's church was not constructed until 1834, therefore throughout the medieval period Bollington remained dependant upon Prestbury.

3.4.5 The Surrounding Landscape

A number of medieval sites lie in the surrounding area. These include the site of a moated farmhouse at Moat Hall Farm, 1km to the south of Bollington (CSMR 1589), medieval fishponds 50m north of Cold Arbor Farm and 1.5km south-west of Bollington (CSMR 1534/1/3), and 2km south-west is Tytherington Old Hall, which dates back to the early 16th century (CSMR 2209/1/1).

3.5 Post Medieval

3.5.1 The Manor

In the mid-19th century the landowners of Bollington were as follows: 'Charles William Beack, Esq, John Upton Gaskell, Esq, Richard Gaskell, Esq, Miss Martha Antrobus, Mr Barnes, Mr George Brook, Mr Thomas Cook, Mr Joseph Cook, Mr William Gatley, Mr John Holland, Mr James Harrop, Mr Ralph Henshaw, Mr John Mellor, Joseph Brooks Esq, Martin Swindells Esq., Rev. Mr Lowther and William Clayton Esq, the former of whom is lord of the manor' (Bagshaw 1850, 193).

3.5.2 Settlement

In the late 18th century, Bollington began to grow from a small agricultural settlement into an industrial centre, and as the number of cotton mills grew, so the population expanded and the township began to spread east along the valley. 'The houses and the extensive cotton spinning establishments are built of hard white free stone, which abounds in the lofty eminences and embosom the village on all sides except the west, where the Macclesfield Canal crosses the valley on a lofty aqueduct' (Bagshaw 1850, 195).

In 1863, six years before the arrival of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, the town was described as follows:

'…Bollington is an exception without a railway, or even a turnpike road, perfectly isolated, it has thriven, prospered and increased to a marvellous extent. Its mills and mansions are magnificent, and by means of a newly formed local board it has been executing extensive works of sewerage and drainage and other town improvements; and it is now erecting a gas works and extending its mains for a public and private supply. The railway must necessarily render Bollington an important manufacturing town' (Betts 1934, 36).

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A market place was created on the High Street and this is depicted on the OS First Edition map of 1870-1. A school was erected at Bollington Cross in 1845 and rebuilt in 1909. The National School in Church Street was erected in 1838. A school was also attached to the Catholic Church and a Wesleyan School was erected in 1846 in Water Street (Kelly's, 1939, 52). A school was also constructed at Lowerhouse in the 1830s as part of Samuel Greg's provision for his workers (Calladine and Fricker 1993).

3.5.3 Economy

Before industry changed the face of Bollington, it was part of an agricultural landscape and a number of farmhouses survive that have 17th century and earlier origins, for example Sowcar farmhouse just to the east of Bollington (CSMR 2182). Farming continued to be part of the town's economy and in the mid-19th century seventeen farmers were listed by Bagshaw (1850, 195).

3.5.3.1 Textile Industry

A significant development in the cotton industry was the annulment of Arkwright's patent on the water frame in the early 1780s, which consequently saw an unprecedented rise in the output of manufactured cotton as a large number of new cotton spinning mills were erected. Oak Bank Mill in Bollington was built in the mid-late 1780s (Calladine and Fricker 1993, 36), and between 1784 and 1805 five other water mills were built in Bollington.

There are a number of significant industrial family names associated with Bollington. However, of these the one name that has brought the most colour to the history of the town is that of Samuel Greg, son of Samuel Greg Senior, who founded the successful Quarry Bank Mill at Styal. Greg Junior's ownership of Lowerhouse Mill in Bollington from 1832 saw the beginning of his dream of *Goldenthal,* or 'Happy Valley'. Years before Port Sunlight and Saltaire had been thought of, Greg hoped to create a virtuous and happy community, and among the provisions made for his workers were a school, allotments, music lessons and a library. Unfortunately, his efforts ultimately led to a nervous breakdown and financial problems (Ingram 1969, 14).

Bollington was suitable for cotton production for a number of reasons: there was water power to drive the machinery, there was a ready supply of good building stone from the local quarries and there was humidity in the valley which was necessary in order to produce fine cotton (Ingram 1969, 10). Power weaving was introduced to Lowerhouse Mill in 1832 by Samuel Greg and increasingly the process of spinning and weaving became an integrated process. Two weaving sheds were erected at Lowerhouse between 1849 and 1875 and this is one of just two mills in East Cheshire that is known to have constructed these buildings, since by the time of their widespread use, the rest of Cheshire had reverted to spinning (Calladine and Fricker 1993, 127).

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Water power was eventually replaced by steam power and the great steam-powered Adelphi Mill was built by the Swindell brothers in 1856. Their father Martin Swindell had built the Clarence Mill in 1831, the first canalside mill in the town, which had taken advantage of the cheaper transportation of coal and cotton provided by the Macclesfield Canal (Longden 1988, 19).

While cotton spinning was an expanding industry, it was susceptible to boom and bust. The American Civil war, which began in 1861, spelled disaster for most cotton mills, since the trade in cotton was interrupted. However Thomas Oliver, who owned Waterhouse Mill, prepared himself in advance by buying two years supplies when he first heard of the troubles. Consequently this was the only working mill in Bollington (Ingram, 1969, 25). Changing fortunes also saw changing uses; for example the older Higher Mill, which was first built in c.1790, became used as a brewery after 1859. The newer Higher Mill, which had been built by 1832, was used for felt hat making and then for fustian cutting, and by 1936 was used for dyeing (Longden 1988,17).

3.5.3.2 Trades

A wide range of services were available in Bollington in the mid-19th century: including four bakers, ten beerhouses, three blacksmiths, eight boot and shoe makers, eight butchers, six linen and wool drapers, twenty shopkeepers, three tailors and four wheelwrights. Also, there were eight stone merchants in Bollington and one in Kerridge, two cotton manufacturers and two cotton spinners and doublers (Bagshaw 1850, 195). Quarries in the area are numerous and would have helped in the construction of the expanding town. Works (ther than those at Kerridge) oted from the OS Second Edition map of 1898 include Hurst Quarry, which worked Hurst Brow and runs parallel to Water Street and a series of quarries along Beeston Brow to the north.

On the road to Pott Shrigley, was a large steam engine, which in 1795 was part of the workings of a coal pit (Betts 1934, 20). This was just one of a number of small scale coal pits in the area. Burdett's map of 1777 identifies coal pits on Kerridge Hill, and west and east of Pott Shrigley.

3.5.4 Religion

Under direction from the Church Commissioners, the Church of St John the Baptist was constructed in 1834 on Church Street, and the ecclesiastical Parish of Bollington was established on the 10 May 1842 (Kelly's Directory, 1939, 52). A Roman Catholic Chapel dedicated to St Gregory was built a short distance from St John's Church in the same year on Chapel Lane (Bagshaw, 1850, 193).

However, the first place of worship to be built in Bollington was the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Wellington Road, which was built in 1807 and re-built on the same site in 1837 (Morris and Co 1874, 782). Another Wesleyan Chapel was built in Wellington Road in 1886, a Primitive Methodist Chapel in the High Street in 1859, the Congregational Chapel in Palmerston Street in

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1867, the United Methodist Chapel in Grimshaw Lane, and St Oswald's Church at Bollington Cross in 1908 (Kelly's Directory 1939, 52).

3.5.5 Population

Bollington's population in 1664 has been estimated from the Hearth Tax returns as 330 (MacGregor, 1992, 52). This would make it the eighth largest settlement in Macclesfield Hundred, some way behind Macclesfield (2,640), Sutton (810), and Rainow (655). From 1801-1971 population data is available from the census returns printed in the Victoria County History (Harris, 1979, 206-246); and for 1981 and 1991 census data has been reproduced for Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley under Class Licence Number C01W0000125 with the permission of the Controller of the HMSO.

1801	1231	**1901**	5245
1811	1518	**1911**	5224
1821	1723	**1921**	5094
1831	2685	**1941**	5027
1841	4350	**1951**	5313
1851	4655	**1961**	5644
1861	5439	**1971**	6602
1871	5040	**1981**	6957
1881	5464	**1991**	7040
1891	5335		

The census figures indicate the extent of the growth experienced by Bollington during the expansion of the cotton industry. Indeed, between 1811 and 1851 the population trebled.

3.5.6 Transport and Communications

Burdett's Map of 1777 shows a minor road running east through Bollington en route to Pott Shrigley. It also shows a road running south from Bollington Cross towards Cold Harbour, which has since fallen out of use. The local road network increased in complexity as the cotton mills and the local population became larger in number. The turnpike from Macclesfield to Stockport, which runs 1km to the west of Bollington, was opened in 1762 (Longden and Spink, nd, 1)

The Macclesfield Canal, which runs north-south through Bollington was opened in 1831 and two magnificent viaducts carry the canal over Wellington Road (just west of the town centre) and Grimshaw Lane (Ashmore 1982, 30). The canal was not only beneficial to the cotton industry, it was also important for the transportation of stone from the local quarries.

The Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple Railway, a branch of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, opened in 1869 and is now closed. It was carried across the valley of the River Dean on a stone viaduct of 22 arches (CSMR 2531/1/11; Ashmore, 1982, 30).

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3.5.7 The Surrounding Landscape

There are at least fifteen mills situated in the northern part of the county, in Rainow, Bollington and Kettleshulme, which can be seen as a coherent group. All were powered by steam when there was insufficient water power available (Calladine and Fricker, 1993, 46). However, Bollington is part of a broad industrial landscape, not just that of the cotton mill, and it is surrounded by monuments from the industrial past including canals, rail networks, quarries and coal mines.

4. PLAN COMPONENTS : (Figure 2)

The town has been divided into 9 components (prefixed by **COM**). These have been tentatively sub-divided by period, although there is a need for a great deal of further work to define the date of these plan components more closely. Many would have spanned more than one period but are discussed under their earliest likely date of occurrence. In some cases tightly defined plan components can be identified, in others only a general area can be delineated and these should be treated as a model against which future evidence should be tested.

It is unclear from the present level of information whether there was an early medieval settlement at Bollington and certainly there is insufficient evidence to suggest if and where any such settlement might be located. Therefore the plan components commence with the medieval period and a speculative outline of two areas that may have been part of the medieval township.

The post medieval period has been divided into two phases, and the extent of settlement for each of these phases has been identified as a single component. The first has been defined by the 1849 tithe map and the second by the 1870-71 OS First Edition 6": 1 mile map. Although just 21 years separate the two maps, it is during this period that the town underwent significant growth. For example, new mills were established, houses were built and the railway constructed.

MEDIEVAL c 1066 – 1540 (Figure 2)

COM 1 - Settlement?
COM 2 - Settlement?
COM 3 - Corn Mill

POST MEDIEVAL c 1849 (Figure 2)

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COM 4 - St John's Church
COM 5 - Settlement
COM 6 - Macclesfield Canal

POST MEDIEVAL c 1870-71 (Figure 2)

COM 7 - Settlement
COM 8 - MS&L Railway

MODERN c 2000 (Figure 2)

COM 9 - Settlement

4.1 Medieval (Figure 2)

Medieval Bollington was a small settlement, as demonstrated by the Mize taxation of 1405. It is most likely that the settlement had a dispersed pattern, comprising farmsteads scattered throughout the township area, perhaps until the late 18th century when the cotton industry began to change the shape and size of the town. It is impossible to plot the full extent of the township but two settlement components (**COM 1** and **COM 2**) have been plotted from Burdett's map of 1777, and are intended to provide an approximate location of two areas least likely to have undergone very little change and may have been part of the late medieval/ post medieval township. The first cluster of houses is depicted in the area which later became known as Bollington Cross **COM 1**, the second is shown just south of the water powered corn mill at **COM 2**

There was a corn mill at Bollington, which is documented from the 14th century and the site of this is likely to have been that of the later water mill, which is depicted on Burdett's map of 1777, and continued working until c 1914 (**COM 3**). The industrial developments in the environs of Lower House Mill and the general improvements that took place at the corn mill e.g. the creation of reservoirs to the south of the mill, may have removed evidence of the medieval mill.

4.2 Post Medieval (Figure 2)

The extent of the township c 1849 is depicted as **COM 5**. By this time there were a number of cotton mills established in Bollington, for example the large Lowerhouse complex to the north-west of the town. The settlement continued to have a largely dispersed pattern but by now has begun to develop a focus in the area of Palmerston Street and Church Street, where there were a number of cotton mills as well as quarrying nearby. The church of St John the Baptist had also been constructed in this area just fifteen years previously in 1834 (**COM 4**). The Macclesfield Canal (**COM 6**), which had opened in 1831, was having a noticeable affect upon the location of industry, particularly the location of mills, which were sited to take advantage of the improved transportation of incoming goods and outgoing products.

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By 1882 (**COM 7**) the extent of settlement at Bollington Cross had remained unchanged but the existing focus in the Palmerston Street area had clearly expanded, as had the extent of housing and industrial sites built within the vicinity of the Macclesfield Canal and the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (**COM 8**), which was opened in 1870. By 1882, the town also had a market square, which had been created on the High Street.

4.3 Modern (Figure 2)

The modern township of Bollington has expanded beyond recognition. In particular housing estates have been developed in the southern areas of the town, and to the south of Bollington Cross (**COM 9**).

5 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

5.1 Above-Ground Remains

There is a large Conservation Area designated at Bollington that includes the northern area of the town, Kerridge, the route of the Macclesfield Canal and the River Dean. It avoids Bollington Cross and the centre of Bollington, where the majority of modern development has taken place.

There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument in the area: Nabs Head round barrow to the north of the town (SAM 22573, CSMR 1585) but there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within Bollington. There are 58 Listed buildings in the Bollington area, all of which are Grade II. These include a number of buildings originally constructed in the 17th century, for example Hollin Old Hall on Grimshaw Lane and a number of industrial sites, such as Lowerhouse Mill, the canal aqueduct over Palmerston Street and canal bridges. It is important to note that a large number of buildings of historical and archaeological interest survive that are not listed, in particular the former cotton mills that have been adapted for new uses and are most at threat from re-development.

5.2 Below-Ground Remains

No archaeological work has been carried out in Bollington, and therefore the quality and condition of below ground remains have not yet been assessed.

6. PRIORITIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

6.1 General

The study of Bollington would form part of a national research priority to examine the origins and development of medieval small towns and rural markets (Priority H5; English Heritage 1997, 49). In addition it would make a contribution to the study of industrial archaeology (Priority T6; English Heritage 1997, 53) and the following process of change:

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- PC7 Transition from medieval to post medieval traditions (c1300-1700AD)

6.2 Early Medieval

- Establish the nature and extent of settlement during the early medieval period. Was Bollington included in the Adlington Estate at Domesday?

6.3 Medieval

- Establish the precise location of settlement areas and date their phases of expansion and contraction.
- Examine the origins of settlement at Bollington Cross. Can the original site of the cross be located and its function identified?
- Establish the nature and extent of buildings on settlement plots.
- Examine evidence for any medieval trade and industry.

6.4 Post Medieval

- Establish precise location of settlement areas and date their phases of expansion and contraction.
- Examine any evidence for post medieval trade and industry.
- Examine the establishment of the cotton spinning industry in Bollington; examine it phases of expansion and contraction.

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Tithe Award, Bollington, 1849 (CRO EDT 56/2)

8 ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Bollington and the Surrounding Area
Figure 2: The Development of Bollington

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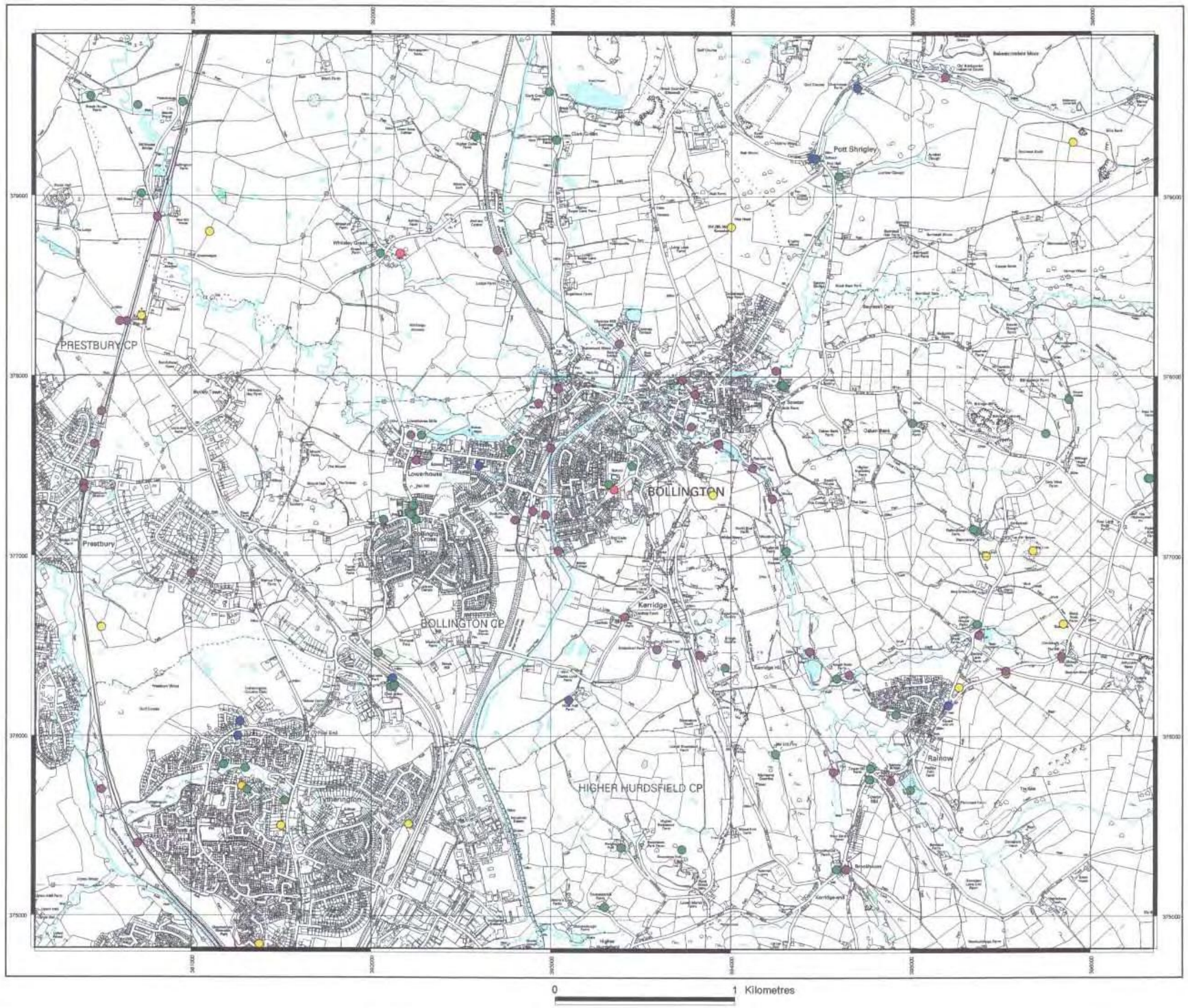

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Figure 1
Bollington and the Surrounding Area

Sites and Monuments
- Prehistoric
- Romano-British
- Early Medieval
- Medieval
- Post Medieval
- Modern

1:20000

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Figure 2: The Development of Bollington

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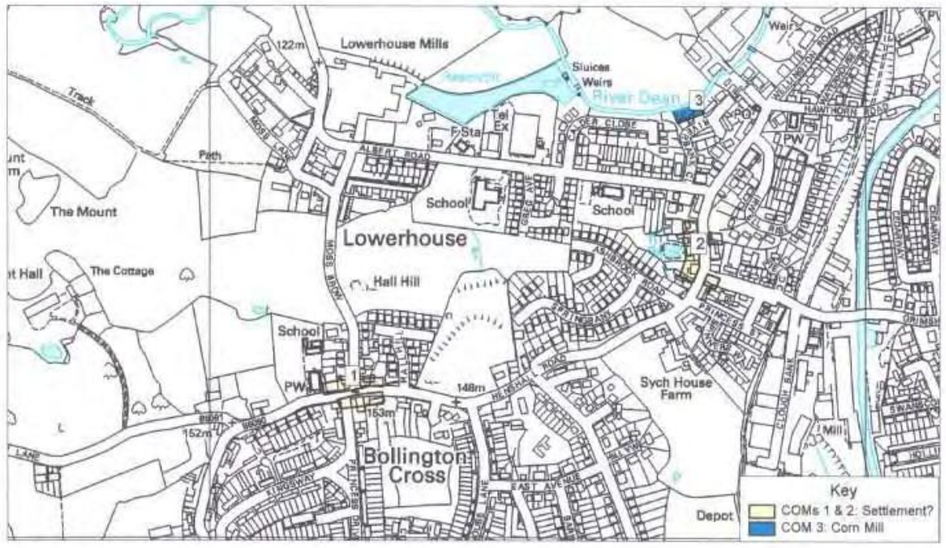

Medieval 0 100 200 Metres 1:8000

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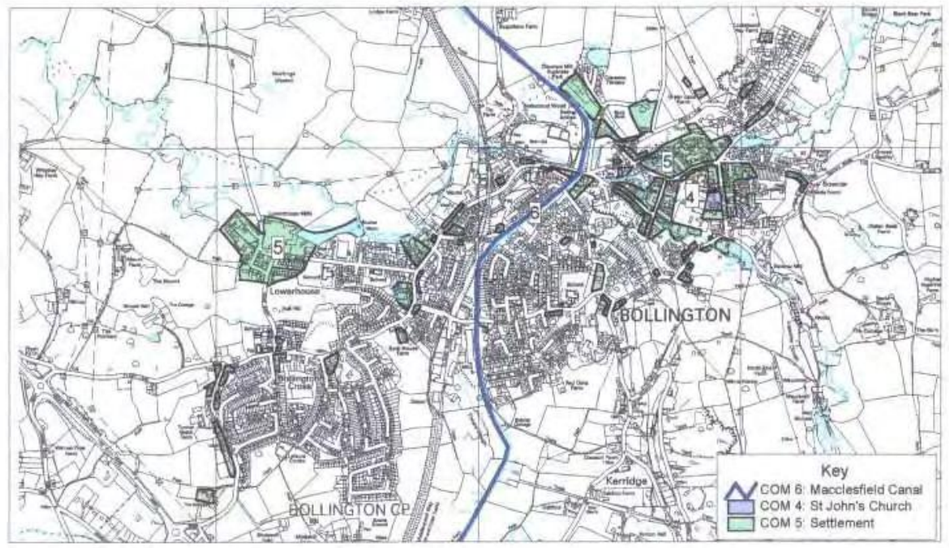
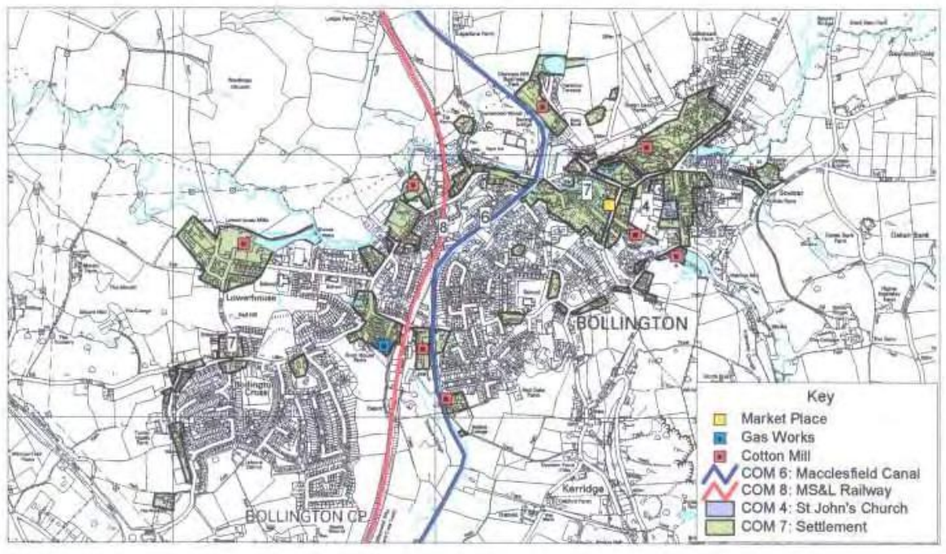


Post Medieval c1849 0 300 600 Metres 1:20000



Post Medieval c 1882 0 200 400 Metres 1:20000

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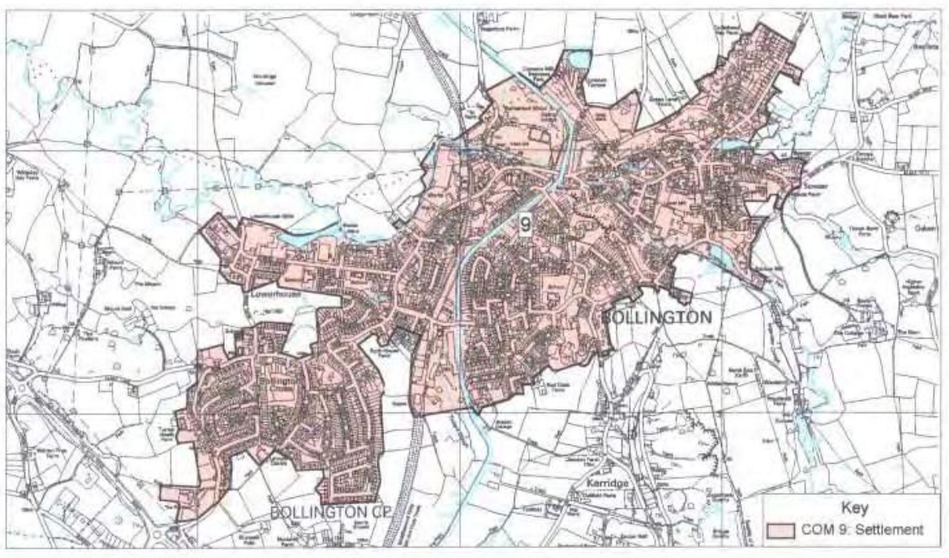

Modern c 2000 0 200 400 Metres 1:20000

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