

**An archaeological evaluation on
Leatherhead and Mickleham
Downs, Surrey**

NGR: TQ 177 550 & TQ 184 541

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Summary statement

The Surrey Archaeological Society has sponsored archaeological investigation by volunteers, with the aid of funding under the Lottery Heritage Initiative, of selected features on Mickleham and Leatherhead Downs, which were identified during an appraisal for an Area of Special Historic Landscape Value (ASHLV) status (Phase I), a Community Archaeological Project which was undertaken by the author for Surrey County Council in partnership with the Society. The project is being undertaken as part of the Community Archaeology initiative launched by the Society, which seeks to involve members of the community in their surroundings, and enhance their sense of place and social inclusion.

The phase II project is led by Judie English with a team of volunteers, who will be responsible for production of a report together with publicity and display boards for the benefit of visitors and the local community covering all aspects of the project when completed. C K Currie was requested by the Society to oversee investigation and fieldwork of specific areas identified in Phase I as worthy of further examination, together with post-excavation analysis relating thereto and this present report covers only this aspect of the phase II project.

The excavation at Mickleham Down failed to produce a definite date for the faint system of banks noted during the earlier landscape survey work for the ASHLV report. It had been suggested that these represented the remains of a prehistoric field system that had been ploughed damaged in the 1940s. It is possible that one of the apparent banks was a natural feature, while the second, larger bank might have been an early field boundary, though this remains purely an assumption on present evidence. A barrow-like mound overlying one of the postulated banks proved to be a modern rubbish mound thought to have been created during the clearance of a former conifer plantation on the site.

Despite these disappointments, reasonable quantities of largely undiagnostic late prehistoric pottery were recovered from trench 1. This may have been associated with evidence for cross plough marks cutting into the chalk bedrock. Although these were only 0.3m-0.35m below the surface, and ploughing had been undertaken nearby in the Second World War, it was not possible to state with certainty whether or not the plough marks were of recent origin. The evidence was not conclusive, but there was a presence of sufficient prehistoric pottery in the soil in this trench to argue that there had been contemporary activity in the area. With the absence of any later pottery, and the cross-ploughed nature of the linear marks, the possibility of these features being caused by prehistoric ploughing needs to be considered. Smaller quantities of Romano-British pottery might suggest continuing activity into that period.

The Leatherhead Downs trenches revealed a number of larger cuts into the chalk subsoil that might be interpreted as ditches. In trench 3, what has been interpreted as a ditch terminal was located, possibly suggesting a possible entrance to a ditched enclosure. The alignment of the ditches may coincide with what appears to be a double-ditched rectangular cropmark enclosure shown on air photographs. No dating evidence was found in the postulated ditch fills or anywhere else in the trenches excavated. Evidence from air

photographs and documentary sources has been produced to show that there was probably both prehistoric and medieval activity on the downs here. There was not sufficient evidence, however, to make a pronouncement on the date of these conjectured ditches.

An archaeological evaluation on Leatherhead and Mickleham Downs, Surrey (NGR: TQ 177 550 & TQ 184 541)

This report has been written to guidelines laid down by English Heritage, *The management of archaeological projects* (London, revised edition, 1992). Additional guidance was taken from the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations* (Birmingham, 1994). The ordering of information follows the guidelines given in these documents, although alterations may have been made to fit in with the particular requirements of the work.

1.0 Introduction (Figs. 1-3)

The Surrey Archaeological Society has sponsored archaeological investigation by volunteers, with the aid of funding under the Lottery Heritage Initiative, of selected features on Mickleham and Leatherhead Downs, which were identified during for an Area of Special Historic Landscape Value (ASHLV) status (Phase I), a Community Archaeological Project which was undertaken by the author for Surrey County Council in partnership with the Society.

This additional work, Phase II of the project, is being undertaken by volunteers led by Ms Judie English, as part of the Society's Community Archaeology initiative. C K Currie was requested by the Society to oversee investigation and fieldwork of specific areas identified in Phase I as worthy of further examination, together with post-excavation analysis relating thereto and this present report covers only this aspect of the phase II project.

2.0 Historical and archaeological background

2.1 Archaeological background

The Mickleham Downs part of the site (TQ 184 541) is within the area of a recently cleared conifer plantation. This was severely devastated in the storms of 1987 and 1991, and subsequently clear felled. About six months before this project began, the area was harrowed and seeded with wild downland grass seed mix as an attempt to restore the area to its former status. The site was close to an area of suspected prehistoric fields examined during the 1940s by Frere and Hogg (1946). These fields were suspected to extend into the study area. Also within the recently cleared area were a number of mounds. These had the appearance of round barrows. Two of these mounds further north had already been designated as part of a suspected barrow cemetery (Poulton & O'Connell 1984). However, extensive burning within a larger mound in the study area led members of the Community Archaeology Project (Mickleham) team to suspect that they might be clearance mounds from the recent felling operations. The recent landscape appraisal recommended that this mound should be investigated to determine its true status as soon as possible (Currie 2000a).

Ploughing was undertaken to the south and west of the evaluation area in 1943. It is not known if this extended over the area of concern here, but the possibility has to be considered.

The Leatherhead Down part of the site (TQ 177 550) was situated in a ploughed field within a former area of Leatherhead Downs. This area was enclosed in 1865. The Leatherhead Common Fields had previously extended close to this site, which sits on a rough promontory looking out to the north. Air photographs in the National Monuments Record, Swindon, Wiltshire, showed what seemed to be a double-ditched enclosure here. Also seen in the vicinity on air photographs are cropmarks that appeared to be an extension of the Mickleham Downs field system (ibid). However the double-ditched feature did not seem to fit easily into the pattern of the field system. It was proposed to investigate the area to determine the cause of these cropmarks.

The Leatherhead Downs site is currently under plough, and this may be causing some damage to the archaeology. There is also evidence of dumping of hardcore and other materials in the area to the south and east. It is not thought that this activity extended into the present evaluation area.

The Roman road, Stane Street, runs between the two evaluation areas, coming to within about 250m of the Mickleham Downs site, and within about 500m of the Leatherhead Downs site.

2.2 Historical background

Both the evaluated sites lay within areas of former common pasture of Leatherhead and Mickleham Downs. These areas remained common land until the second half of the 19th century. Very little is known about the Mickleham Downs common pasture before this time, but there is documentary evidence for activity connected with stock pasturing on Leatherhead Downs

2.2.1 The Mickleham Downs site (Fig. 2)

Virtually nothing is known about the Mickleham Downs site before the 19th century. Although it served as common pasture, there are no surviving records comparable with those of Leatherhead. The evaluation area remained downland until it was taken into the estate of the Mackworth-Praeds in the later 19th century. They converted a small country house in Birch Copse into a more substantial mansion called Mickleham Downs from 1871. As at Cherkley Court, this house used much of the former common downland as an ornamental landscape. The remainder of the common on Mickleham Downs had been enclosed for this purpose by 1903, but it does not seem to have been done with an official Enclosure Act (Currie 2000a). However, there was much less planting undertaken in this instance than at Cherkley Court, the designed element being restricted to opening up views amongst existing trees that were already begin to encroach on the downs. The summit of the downs was used to exercise racehorses, and became known as 'The Gallops' (formerly

'Long Ride'). OS maps show the evaluation area gradually becoming grown over by trees during the period 1897-1935 (OS sheets XXV.NE, 2nd-4th eds).

The evaluation site fell outside of that part of Mickleham Downs donated to the National Trust by the Mackworth-Praeds in the 1930s. Today it stands just inside the Cherkley Court estate, although it is on the Mickleham side of the parish boundary. It is not known when it was transferred to Cherkley. At some time after the Second World War, it was converted to a conifer plantation.

2.2.2 The Leatherhead Downs site (Fig. 3)

The Leatherhead Downs site was part of the common down at the time of enclosure in 1865 (SRO QS 6/4/61). To the north, Leatherhead Common Field had extended south of the Headley Road, possibly encroaching onto the common pasture at the height of the medieval period. Much of the land on the SE edge of the common field either side of Stane Street became enclosures. It is uncertain if these were enclosures from the down from the very start or made out of former areas of common field. Evidence examined in Currie (2000a) suggests both types of enclosure evolved. For example, in 1349 part of a place called Poneshurst, which is thought to have been in the area of enclosure in the post-medieval period, was once consider part of Leatherhead Common Field. The document suggesting this is a grant by Simon son of Simon Payn to Agnes, formerly wife of Henry le Longe. This refers to 'a piece of my land in *Ledrede* common field at *Poneshurt* [*sic*] called *la Helmes*' (Blair 1984, no. 281). Other enclosures of note on post-medieval maps are Shepherd's Close and Sheep's Haugh (SRO 864/1/89-90), both close to Stane Street and the present Headley Road on the edge of the Downs.

In the medieval period there are references to an enclosure or place called *Sepehale*, 'sheep hall'. This name is suggestive that a 'sheepcote' or sheep shed may have existed near here on the Downs. Such features were an important part of the medieval agricultural economy, and they have been shown by Dyer (1995) to have frequently been large, well-made structures. It is possible land here was once on part of the common, but it can be clearly shown to have been enclosed later.

It can be seen from this that encroachment occurred both on to the Downs and into the common field. The enclosures so formed between the Downs and the common field can be seen on the tithe map and other late post-medieval maps (*cf.* Currie 2000a, vol 3). It is uncertain if encroachment advanced onto the evaluation site at the height of medieval assarting in the 12th and 13th centuries. The surviving evidence suggests that it did not, but it probably came close.

It is possible to locate approximately a number of places referred to in medieval documents. They include tithe map plot 50, to the SE of the roundabout on the Leatherhead by-pass, which was known as *Wollandesdene* (centred on TQ 1810 5530). This name occurs *c.* 1250-80 in a grant of land there to Reigate Priory (Blair 1981, nos 103-04). The tithe award names this plot Shepherds Close. The area on the north side of Headley Road and west of Stane Street was called *Redelande*. The tithe award subdivides this area and calls part of it

Eel Field. To the east of Stane Street Tyrrell's Wood was formerly Pains Grove, the lands to the south of it *Ponshurstesfeld* and *Shepehale*. The latter were called Sheep's Haugh in 1841. Most of these names were in the manor of Thorncroft. The rest of the area within the ASHLV study area was either nameless within the great common field or thought to be part of the manor of Minchin. There are other medieval names that are identifiable just outside the east edge of the ASHLV study area boundary. These include *Tibele*, *Cokele* and the *Aperdele* homestead, all later part of the Givon's Grove estate (field name information from Vardey 1988, 40; Harvey 1962; SRO 864/1/89-90).

There are references to the commoning of animals on the Downs. These seem to have been almost exclusively sheep. It would seem that Leatherhead parish restricted the Downs to sheep pasture, with cattle being kept on the clayey heath to the north of the town. It is not known when this arrangement came into force, but it would seem to have been the situation when the first surviving medieval documents are recorded in the early 14th century. The rental of John of Leatherhead, dated *c.* 1300, records *la Kingesdoun*, with pasture for 250 sheep, *Coledenne* with pasture for 150 sheep, and *le Brewer* with pasture for 500 sheep (Blair 1974, 224-27).

The above reference suggests that the pasturage on the downs was subdivided between the various manors of Leatherhead parish. This is confirmed by another document, that shows that these divisions not only clearly existed, but was applied to the 'men of Mickleham' who also had rights of pasture on Leatherhead Downs. In a rental of 1310 it is stated that Little Pachenesham manor's separate pasture areas (*de separali*) was the above-mentioned Kingsdown. Here it is stated that:

'The people of Mickleham must not common [their animals] on *la Kyngesdone* unless they make satisfaction to me [John of Leatherhead], to Maurice de la Grave and to William de Oxencrofte, for it is ours alone, and so I should have a third part of the fine which they render for the easement of that pasture' (Blair 1974, 228-29)

Mickleham tenants also had rights to pasture on Pachenesham Magna portion at *le Brewer* for 500 sheep (ibid, 232-33), and rights in the unspecified *Coledenne* for 150 sheep (ibid, 232-33). It seems therefore that the common down may not have always been the undivided area with common for all the tenants 'without stint' as Vardey (1988, 47) suggests for the post-medieval period. It is known that the northern cattle common of Leatherhead was divided amongst the individual manors. Thorncroft manor had its own separate common between the main part of Leatherhead Common and Ashted Common, which survived until quite recent times. The history of Thorncroft Common was recently assessed as part of the Ashted and Epsom Commons ASHLV proposal (Currie 1999).

This documents give hints that Leatherhead Downs may not have been the area of unmanaged downland in the medieval period that they seem to have become by the later post-medieval era. The information given above seems to indicate that there had been at least three subdivisions on the downs, plus the possibility of a 'sheep hall' or sheepecote near its NE corner. This might suggest that it is necessary to consider that these activities might have left traces on the Downs in the form of earthworks that were only obliterated after

enclosure in 1865. Therefore, it needs to be considered that sheep pasturing features might have contributed to the cropmarks seen on air photographs of the downs.

Following the enclosure of Leatherhead Down in 1865, the area was bought up by Alexander Dixon, an industrialist from the Midlands. He converted the area into a designed landscape to ornament his newly built mansion on the downs called Cherkley Court. Early large-scale OS maps from the early 1870s show that the downs had been laid out as parkland interspersed with ornamental clumps of trees. Many of these clumps still survive. In 1909 the estate was sold to the Lord Beaverbrook, the newspaper magnate (Haywood 1979, 79). The subdivision of this parkland, and the conversion of much of it to its present arable state seems to have occurred since the Second World War.

3.0 Strategy

Surrey Archaeological Society asked the present author to provide a strategy for the work, the subject of this report, in the form of a project design (Currie 2000b). A copy was sent prior to fieldwork commencing to the person responsible for the on-site supervision, Ms Judie English. A copy can be seen in the site archive at the Society's Headquarters at Castle Arch, Guildford, or in the County Sites & Monuments Record (SMR), County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey.

4.0 Results (Figs. 2-5)

For notes on the archive and drawings used for this report, please see Appendix 1.

4.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4)

This trench was excavated on the south edge of a large cleared area of former woodland on Mickleham Downs. It was 10m by 3m, with a 2.8m by 1m extension in the NW corner. The area had recently been scarified and planted with mixed grass seed. The trench was aligned to cut a faint earthen bank, previously interpreted as ploughed out field boundary, possibly belonging to a nearby field system identified by Frere and Hogg (1946). The trench was later extended on the discovery of postulated plough marks cutting into the underlying chalk.

The topsoil comprises a dark brown clay loam [context 100] immediately below the turf and defined as the top 0.1m of soil. It was followed by a similar soil [context 101] between the immediate topsoil and a layer of weathered chalk mixed with ploughsoil underlying [context 102]. Underlying this was a chalk layer [context 107] designated as undisturbed bedrock (given on the context sheet as 'natural'). The topsoil was extremely shallow. There was seldom more than 0.3m showing on the drawn sections between the topsoil and weathered chalk beneath. These layers made up the basic stratigraphy of this trench.

There were a small number of anomalies recorded within or underlying the subsoil. At the east end of the trench an area, 0.5m by 1.0m, comprising a number of pieces of large flint was recorded [context 103]. A narrow layer was recorded [context 104] as a 'stone layer on

-ve [negative] side of lynchet'. The section drawing shows this as being a maximum of 0.9m wide, and 0.1m deep on the west side dwindling to nothing on the east side. Layer 105 was described as a layer of stony soil with flint nodules 'below 103'. Its size was given as 1.2m by 1.0m. It was located in the SE corner of the trench on the drawing of the south facing section in the archive.

There were a number of features and hollows cutting into the weathered chalk. They could be divided into shallow hollows and narrow linear cuts. The latter were seldom more than 0.1m deep, and were divided into two approximate alignments. The most pronounced of these were aligned approximately E-W down the very slight slope in the ground at this location. Other similar linear cuts could be seen on an approximate N-S alignment, although the direction of these cuts was nowhere near as consistent as the others. Some could be more accurately described as aligned NE-SW.

Four hollows were given context numbers on site. These were 106, 108, 109, and 110. Number 106 seems to describe the 'pit' and its fill on a single context sheet. Numbers 108, 109, and 110 record the fills only, although the sheets clearly refer to the fill as being of 'holes'. There appear to be two, possibly three, further hollows on the site plan of this trench that were not numbered. One of these, on the north edge of the trench, contains information that may be of some importance. The site drawing states 'furrow goes into tree hole' indicating that a N-S linear cut or 'furrow' cuts the earlier hollow. This hollow was not given a number on site. It was numbered 111 for the cut and 112 for the fill during the post-excavation stage.

From the trench plan, it appears that the hollows 106, 108, 109, 110 all cut through the linear features. However, on discussion with the excavators, it was stated that the position concerning 106 was uncertain, and there is the possibility that the furrows may have cut across the fill of this hollow.

None of the linear cuts or furrows were given context numbers on site. For the purposes of the post-excavation analysis, this author gave them composite numbers for ease of reference. The N-S furrows were allocated the context number 113. The E-W linear cuts were allocated context number 114. The E-W furrows varied in width from less than 0.1m to almost 0.3m wide. The N-S furrows were on average slightly narrower varying from a few centimetres to about 0.3m. Many of the furrows were straight but there were a number that had a more curving aspect.

The greater majority of the features located in this trench were reburied unexcavated, and it will be possible to re-examine at least part of the evidence presented here.

4.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

This was a trench excavated into the SE corner of a moderate sized circular mound, about 20m diameter and over 1.5m high. The trench was 5m N-S by 2m E-W. The surface was much disturbed by burrowing animals, and the cover comprised mainly nettles. Excavation revealed the mound to be made of dumps of largely ash and other burnt wood debris

[contexts 200, 203]. Some large chunks of burnt wood were still *in situ*. The layers excavated had variable concentrations of ash, but, in general, appear to be of the same approximate period. Some modern debris was found within these dumps, including plastic bags. These ashy layers appeared to be dumped into a large, shallow hole cutting into the surrounding topsoil [context 201] and subsoils [contexts 202, 204-5]. There was some slight suggestion that the hole may have cut through the top 0.1m of chalk bedrock [context 206].

4.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

This trench, 12m by 2m, was excavated near the southern edge of a ploughed field that still contained the stubble from a recently taken crop. It was sited to try to cut across two concentric cropmarks seen on air photographs that were thought to be part of a possible double-ditched enclosure.

The ploughsoil was shallow [contexts 300, 302, 306], often being less than 0.3m deep. It was possible to see the linear marks of the presumably recent ploughing cutting into the chalk [context 301]. These were generally evenly spaced, and wider cuts than those seen in trench 1. Two larger cuts were identified within the chalk [contexts 307, 314].

The most easterly of these [context 307] did not appear to extend across the full width of the trench, but appeared to have a terminal in the trench. Beyond this point there was some tentative evidence of the alignment continuing as a shallow feature, only about 0.2m deep [context 302]. It was uncertain if this was a natural hollow or part of the larger cut.

The cut 307 was fringed on its east side by a modest concentration of large flints [context 304], with a lesser concentration [context 303] slightly further east. These immediately overlay the chalk. The lowest layer of the cut, which was up to 0.9m deep and up to 2.5m at its widest, was a thin layer of silty clay loam mixed with fine chalk rubble that formed across the entire profile of the cut [context 308]. This was less than 0.1m thick. It was overlain by a thick layer of loose chalk [context 305]. At the east end of the cut were two lenses of darker soil [context 309, 310].

Near the NE edge of the terminal of feature 307, a shallow hole was recorded [context 315]. This was roughly circular and about 0.3m wide. It contained a loamy fill mixed with crumbly chalk. It was no more than 0.1m deep as found.

About 4.3m to the west was a second cut [context 314]. This was possibly 3.4m at its greatest width. A very shallow drop in the chalk, by about 0.1m at each end might have represented an initial marking out cut. The main cut, however, was much deeper, but only about 1.1m wide. It was not fully excavated, soil only being removed to a depth of about 0.9m below the present ground surface. No other information was given in the archive.

4.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 5)

This trench was 7m by 1m located between trenches 1 and 2 on Mickleham Down. It was aligned to section a possible faint bank or lynchet seen in the field here. This was more

pronounced than that in the vicinity of trench 1, but no more than about 0.25-0.3m high. There was, on average, less than 0.35m of loamy soils overlying chalk. Topsoil was a dark brown clay loam [context 400]. This overlay a slightly more stony subsoil [context 401], followed by a thin layer of chalky clay loam immediately over the chalk itself [context 402]. The chalk in this trench was loose throughout suggesting much weathering [context 403]. This layer thickened slightly on the west side of a faint bank. A sondage cut into this found that the rubbly nature of the chalk continued to about a metre deep at the west end of the trench. Similar loose chalk was found at the east end of the trench. A narrow V-shaped lens in this loose chalk was seen. This was 0.5m wide at the top and almost pointed at the bottom [context 404]. This was thought to be a natural feature, probably root disturbance, but it is possible it may have been caused by a frost fracture.

4.5 Trench 5 (Fig. 5)

This trench was 7m by 1m and located a few metres to the north of trench 3 on the same alignment as conjectured ditch terminal 307.

As in trench 3 topsoil was a recently ploughed mid brown clay loam [context 500] about 0.3m deep. A very thin clay loam [context 501] lay between this and the underlying chalk bedrock [context 502]. There were further thin lenses of more stony soil lying above the chalk [contexts 506, 507]. Cut into the chalk was a U-shaped cut, extending to about 0.9m below the ground surface [context 505]. The lowest fill of this cut was a thin layer of chalk fragments mixed with pale brown silty soil [context 504]. This was barely 0.1m thick, and was overlay by the main fill of the cut, a deposit of chalk rubble with occasional flints [context 503]. Although reasonably compact, it was less compacted than surrounding chalk bedrock.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Discussion of the Mickleham Down trenches (trenches 1, 2 and 4)

The finding of possible plough furrows in trench 1 was of some interest, though the exact interpretation and dating of these features will remain open to debate. The author visited the site four days out of the seven that the excavation ran. There can be little doubt that narrow linear marks were found cutting into the chalk. Some of these were of consistent depth and width, and many were relatively straight. It would also seem that the majority of these features were created by a plough of some sort. It is possible that some of the shorter, less straight alignments may have been caused by root action, but, in general, an interpretation of the longer and straighter furrows as plough marks seems reasonable.

The problem with these postulated plough marks is not so much how they were caused, but what date they can be attributed to, and what was their relationship with the other archaeological stratigraphy and features on the site. The first problem is the depth of the plough marks. They are seldom more than 0.3-0.35m below the present ground surface. It is known that a large area of Mickleham Downs was ploughed during the Second World War. Frere and Hogg (1946) undertook fieldwork during this ploughing, witnessing it and noting

a potential field system associated with scatters of prehistoric and Romano-British pottery. It is not known if the area of trench 1 was included within this ploughing, but it is thought that there would have been little obstruction to cultivating that area in the 1940s, particularly as it is relatively flat. Since this ploughing the area was turned into a conifer plantation. This was severely damaged by the gales of 1987, and subsequently removed. It is quite common to form linear ridges during the preparatory works for conifer plantations, and there is a need to consider that a second phase of modern disturbance may have occurred on the site, followed by a third during the removal of the trees.

It is only reasonable to consider that both the linear features and the tree hollows may have been caused during this 20th-century activity. The variety in width of the furrows could be the result of how far into the underlying chalk they had cut. That is, they were difficult to recognise within the overlying topsoil, and, as the depth of the chalk varied slightly across the trench, the furrows might not have been recognised at the exact same level, thereby causing discrepancy in width. It is more likely that this is the cause of the discrepancy, rather than the possibility of more than one type of plough having been used. However, on the evidence available, the latter possibility needs to be considered.

The present author can not vouch for the plough mark reputedly cutting the tree hollow. It is shorter than most of the marks in the area, and could have been caused by root action. It would have been nice to show evidence for prehistoric tree clearance, as has been suggested at Rams Hill (Bradley and Ellison 1975, 48-51), but being unable to convince on this issue is not considered crucial to the discussion on the plough marks. The excavators have further suggested verbally (pers comm) that if the ploughing was modern it would not go downhill. The slope on this site is relatively slight, and it is not considered that this is a good argument in this case.

The important point about the plough marks is that they were associated with reasonable quantities of mainly prehistoric, with some Romano-British, pottery. No evidence for medieval or later pottery in the ploughsoil was seen. The evidence of Frere and Hogg (1946) shows that there must have been prehistoric activity of reasonable intensity on the top of the down here. It could be argued that perhaps there is a prehistoric site, but it was cut through by later ploughing. This is possible, but there is some evidence of cross-ploughing. This is generally considered to be a sign of prehistoric agriculture. When seen in the field, the marks in trench 1 do have some similarities to those shown on illustrations of prehistoric ard marks at Gwithian, Cornwall (Burgess & Miket 1976; Fowler 1981, plate VIIb), and under the South Street Long Barrow, Avebury, Wiltshire (Fowler 1981, fig. 2).

Further support is given to the possibility of some of these marks being caused by prehistoric ploughing is given by work carried out on Stane Street in 1977 by Rosamond Hanworth. Although some distance from the present site (2.4km), this seems to show plough marks existing under a possible alignment of Stane Street at TQ 1920 5624. The existence of these marks was published in Fasham and Hanworth (1978), but the exact details of the work can only be seen in the archive (copies of the drawings kindly provided by David Graham). These marks seem to be on an approximate E-W alignment, which roughly corresponds with the more convincing alignments recovered by this work.

Hanworth's work seems to show that plough marks of possible prehistoric date are to be found in the general vicinity, and helps support the contention that the marks found during this project could be prehistoric.

The most serious argument against these marks being caused by prehistoric ploughing is their shallow depth, and their lack of any sealing material between them and the overlying topsoil. However, many supposedly genuine prehistoric plough marks have been found at no greater depths. Despite some serious reservations about this evidence, there does seem that there may be a case to answer for these marks being caused by prehistoric ploughing. Therefore, this present work has located the presence of features of some potential interest. It is essential that the area is protected from further ground disturbance in the hope that future generations have the opportunity to examine these marks in better conditions, and with the benefit of hindsight showing them what they can expect.

The pottery found was mainly partly oxidised red-brown sherds containing moderate quantities of flint grits. Few rims and no decorated sherds were found to give any diagnostic features for accurate dating. The Frere and Hogg material (at Guildford Museum) was very similar, although it contained more of the sand tempered Romano-British sherds. These were present at Mickleham, but in smaller quantities than the flint-gritted sherds. Amongst the Frere and Hogg archive were small sherds of similar material collected by A Lowther around the same time and designated as being of Bronze Age date. These sherds are extremely small, and on this evidence it is not considered that a Bronze Age dating should be unconditionally accepted, particularly as there are similar, but cruder and larger, sherds in the Frere and Hogg material that were dated as Late Iron Age. The cruder pottery found from the present excavation contains nothing that can be firmly dated beyond the general late prehistoric period, of which some is probably of Iron Age date. There is possibly some sort of continuity into the Romano-British period on the Frere and Hogg sites, and this may exist on the present site also.

Trench 2 proved to be a rubbish mound created during the clearance of the recent plantation. Although it looked superficially barrow-like, it clearly demonstrates that the other mounds found in this field need to be treated with caution. This includes the mounds recorded by Poulton and O'Connell as barrows (1984). The ash and rubbish creating this mound seemed to have been dumped into a large shallow hole initially, probably caused by tree clearance.

Trench 4 proved to be disappointing. Again the cutting over a possible low lynchet or bank failed to find any clear evidence that the bank was man-made. The drop in the soil depths on the west side of the bank might be indicative of a slight negative lynchet, but this was not conclusive. It was interesting to note that no linear plough-like marks were found here cutting the chalk. This might be expected if the marks in trench 1 were modern. However, this might be a double-edged argument, and one might equally wonder why there were no marks if those in trench 1 were prehistoric. The underlying chalk was very friable, showing much evidence of weathering, probably through frost action and later conifer root activity. The area of this trench was clearly more disturbed than that of trench 1, as was evidenced by the unevenness of the ground and the more mixed vegetation there.

5.2 Discussion of the Leatherhead Downs trenches (trenches 3 & 5)

A substantial cut was found near the east end of this trench. It is thought that it might be on the line of one of the linear cropmarks seen on air photographs. The sample excavated was not sufficient to establish clearly what it was, and it has to be considered that it might have been part of a pit. However, trench 4 cut across another linear feature on the same alignment as feature 307. Based on this evidence, it might be concluded that 307 represented part of a linear feature such as a ditch, with evidence of a terminal within the trench. The shallow, narrower continuation of the feature to the north is confusing. It might be man-made, but if so, it can not readily be explained. It is easier to ignore this as either a man-made feature of unknown nature or a natural hollow of some sort, perhaps caused by frost fracturing or roots.

If feature 307 is a ditch, it would appear that the conjectured terminal might suggest an entrance to the possible enclosure shown on air photographs. A shallow hole of roughly circular dimensions was provisionally suggested by the excavator as the base of a possible post hole. The chalk was very close to the surface in this field, and therefore prone to disturbance by weathering, frost, roots and a host of other natural occurrences. The possibility of a natural hollow needs to be considered, but its position at the end of the postulated terminal could support the idea of an entrance to the enclosure.

The cut in trench 5 was similar in profile and size to feature 307 at its widest point. This feature may therefore be part of one of the ditches shown on the air photographs. Its position further supports the idea that an entrance was located in trench 3.

The second cut feature in trench 3 was enigmatic. It was not seen by the author, but the site records suggest it may be part of another ditch-like feature. It is not known if the short distance between the two ditches (4.3m) accurately reflects that on the air photographs, and judgement should be reserved on whether this represents the second outer ditch.

The discovery of a possible double-ditched enclosure here is puzzling. Double-ditched rectangular enclosures like the one shown on the air photographs here are rare. One has to consider the possibility that the air photographs do not show the full extent of the feature, and that it might not be rectangular. However, based on the assumption that what is seen is what is present, such enclosures are unusual. It is therefore reasonable that the initial impression gained by the Community Archaeology team was that the feature might have been a Roman camp (Alan Hall pers comm). This suggestion lost some favour when a systematic field scan in the winter of 1999-2000 failed to locate any serious evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation. The modest size of the conjectured ditches as excavated also argues against this interpretation for the time being.

The conjectured enclosure is on the edge of a well-recorded ancient field system, believed to be of prehistoric date, as the Roman Stane Street seems to cut across it on a different alignment. It does not seem to align with the cropmarks nearest the road, although it does have some affinities with cropmarks around it (AP interpretation map provided by John

Hampton, former RCHME). The alignments of the cropmarks nearer Stane Street approximately match those of the conjectured field system on Mickleham Downs, generally considered to be prehistoric (Frere & Hogg 1946), but also the alignment of medieval open field strips in Headley (Currie 2000). Those under investigation here might therefore seem to be unrelated to these groups.

It might be of some interest to note that earthworks have been recorded on Leatherhead Down prior to its enclosure in 1865. A minor work by the antiquary, Nicholas Salmon, *Antiquities of Surrey* (1736) records an earthwork on Leatherhead Down. There is little need to discuss the conclusions he draws from it, as they are not relevant to this discussion. Nevertheless, he describes an '...Earth-work which is seen on the Downs above Mickleham, pointing one way towards Leatherhead, the other way towards Walton by the end of Pebble Lane. This seems to have been a British or Saxon Limit for division of the country. And probably runs through some part of Walton, which may be defaced by ploughing.' (Salmon 1736, 95). The local historian, W P D Stebbing (1911, XLVII, no pagination), dismisses the argument put forward that Walton takes its name from this earthwork. He also has a low opinion of Salmon's work in general, calling it 'a small book of no great value, because largely based on Aubrey's work, whose unfounded statements he copies...'. It should be clear, nonetheless, that Stebbing is dismissing Salmon's interpretation, not the existence of the earthwork on the Downs between Mickleham and Leatherhead.

It is unlikely this is earthwork is part of the features here discussed, but it does show that visible earthworks may have existed on the downs in the first part of the 18th century. Blair's researches have also shown that Leatherhead Down was not simply unenclosed downland in the medieval period. A rental of c. 1300 records that the down was divided into three distinct areas for the purposes of pasturage. These are given as *la Kingesdoune*, *Coledenne*, and *le Brewer* (Blair 1974, 224-27). The documents seem to suggest that these divisions would have needed to have been marked out with some form of boundary. Medieval records also record a possible sheep cote in the names of fields (*Schepehale* - sheep hall) near where Stane Street crosses the Headley Road (Blair 1984, 206; Currie 2000). Such features were also often associated with earthworks enclosures, and were substantial enough to form their own earthworks (Dyer 1995). Medieval records therefore show that there were contemporary features on the downs that might have left earthwork traces.

The double-ditched enclosure here discussed could have been connected with prehistoric or Romano-British agricultural activity on the downs. It is even possible that the concentric appearance of the feature merely represents the superimposition of one similar feature over another, and the two cropmarks are not contemporary. There was no dating evidence from the fills of the features excavated, and field scanning found little evidence of settlement of any date in the area. Yet there are clearly cropmarks present, and this would suggest agricultural (arable and/or pastoral) activity based on a settlement that may be some distance away. Observations in the winter of 1999-2000 at Cherkley Court noted a ditch-like feature near the stables associated with late prehistoric pottery (probably Iron Age in date - pers obs).

Similarly, the earthworks may represent rectangular medieval stock enclosures. There are many such features in the south of England. Admittedly the date of most of these features is conjectural, but they can be seen on top of the downs on Banstead Heath (Prest & Parish 1950). These are clearly not double-ditched, but the general shape is the similar. There are also enclosures on Chobham Common, one of which is tripled-bank (Gardner 1927). They are all associated with large areas of common pasture. In the cases of Leatherhead Downs and Banstead Heath, both were reserved largely for sheep pasture. It is possible, therefore that these earthworks might have something to do with the period when the downs were used for this manner of husbandry. Although this type of earthwork is normally associated with the medieval period, there is no reason why it should not have been either earlier or later in date. Such uses would probably have left little dating evidence at any period.

6.0 Conclusions

The excavation at Mickleham Down failed to produce a definite date for the faint system of banks noted during the earlier landscape survey work for the ASHLV report. It had been suggested that these represented the remains of a prehistoric field system that had been ploughed damaged in the 1940s. It is possible that one of the apparent banks was a natural feature, while the second, larger bank might have been an early field boundary, though this remains purely an assumption on present evidence. A barrow-like mound overlying one of the postulated banks proved to be a modern rubbish mound thought to have been created during the clearance of a former conifer plantation on the site.

Despite these disappointments, reasonable quantities of largely undiagnostic late prehistoric pottery were recovered from trench 1. This may have been associated with evidence for cross plough marks cutting into the chalk bedrock. Although these were only 0.3m-0.35m below the surface, and ploughing had been undertaken nearby in the Second World War, it was not possible to state with certainty whether or not the plough marks were of recent origin. The evidence was not conclusive, but there was a presence of sufficient prehistoric pottery in the soil in this trench to argue that there had been contemporary activity in the area. With the absence of any later pottery, and the cross-ploughed nature of the linear marks, the possibility of these features being caused by prehistoric ploughing needs to be considered. Smaller quantities of Romano-British pottery might suggest continuing activity into that period.

The Leatherhead Downs trenches revealed a number of larger cuts into the chalk subsoil that might be interpreted as ditches. In trench 3, what has been interpreted as a ditch terminal was located, possibly suggesting a possible entrance to a ditched enclosure. The alignment of the ditches may coincide with what appears to be a double-ditched rectangular cropmark enclosure shown on air photographs. No dating evidence was found in the postulated ditch fills or anywhere else in the trenches excavated. Evidence from air photographs and documentary sources has been produced to show that there was probably both prehistoric and medieval activity on the downs here. There was not sufficient evidence, however, to make a pronouncement on the date of these conjectured ditches.

7.0 Finds

7.1 Worked flint

Three pieces of worked flint were located in context 101 in trench 1. Two pieces were crude waste flakes. A fourth showed sign of retouch indicating use as a tool, possibly a small scraper. None of the pieces were diagnostic enough to give an accurate date, although the crude flaking might suggest they were of the later prehistoric period (Young & Humphrey 1999).

7.2 Pottery

All the pottery came from trench 1 in topsoil or subsoil contexts. None came from the fill of features. The assemblage comprised 20 sherds of prehistoric flint or grog tempered fabric. There was only one small piece of a straight rim, but otherwise the assemblage was largely undiagnostic. The majority of the sherds can be dated broadly to an Iron Age date.

A further twelve sherds were of sand tempered fabric that was probably of Romano-British date. There were two rim sherds, one an everted rimmed jar, the other an overhanging rimmed bowl. Both are forms that occur throughout most of the Romano-British period, although the rim forms found are more likely of later 1st or 2nd century date.

Note: Munsell Colours refer to the exterior surface only

Context 101

7 sherds of dark brown or dull orange sand tempered fabric @ 20grms (one everted rim) (Munsell Colours 5 @ 2.5YR 4/2 to 4/4, others 5YR 5/6 & 5YR 6/4)

1 sherd of coarse flint tempered fabric @ 5grms (straight rim) (Munsell Colour 5YR 4/3)

Context 102

3 sherds grog tempered dark brown fabric @ 10grms (Munsell Colour range 2.5YR 4/2 to 4/4)

7 sherds of coarse flint, grog and possibly charcoal tempered ware @ 20grms (Munsell Colour range 2.5YR 4/2 to 4/4)

4 sherds of coarse flint tempered fabric @ 25grms (Munsell Colour range 2.5YR 4/2 to 4/4)

3 sherds of moderately fine flint tempered red brown fabric @ 10grms (Munsell Colour range 2.5YR 4/2 to 4/4)

5 sherds of sand tempered fabric @ 15grms (one flaring bowl rim, one slightly curved upright rim) (Munsell Colours 3 @ 10R 4/1, others 2.5YR 4/2 & 5YR 5/4)

Context 104

1 sherd of flint tempered ware @ 8grms (Munsell Colour 2.5YR 4/3)

Context 105

1 sherd of flint tempered ware @ 10grms (Munsell Colour 2.5YR 4/4)

7.3 Bone

Only two tiny fragments of undiagnostic bone @ 2 grms were found in context 102

8.0 Copyright

C K Currie (trading as CKC Archaeology) shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports or other project documents written by himself or his agents, under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* of 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in matters directly relating to the project as described in the project design.

9.0 Archive

Copies of the report and the site archive will be lodged with the Surrey Archaeological Society at Castle Arch, Guildford, Surrey, with further copies of the report sent to the Surrey County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and the National Monuments Record in Swindon, Wiltshire.

10.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are given to all those involved with this project. These include the officers of the Surrey Archaeological Society, who obtained funding for the project, and provided the equipment. Judie English obtained permissions to excavate from the Cherkley Court estate, and undertook the day-to-day supervision of the fieldwork. Alan Hall and Steve Dyer are thanked for providing four-wheel drive vehicles to transport people and equipment to the sites. The volunteers are thanked for their input. It would be unfair to list them individually in case some were inadvertently forgotten. Their core numbers came from the Mickleham Downs ASHLV assessment team, supplemented from other members of the Surrey Archaeological Society and members of the Puttenham ASHLV assessment team. Judie English provided the author with the archive for the site for the purposes of writing this report. David Graham provided copies of drawings from the archive to Rosamond Hanworth's 1997 excavation of Stane Street.

Comments on a draft of this report were provided by Tony Howe of the Archaeology Section of Surrey County Council (see Appendix 1), at the suggestion of the County Archaeologist, Dr David Bird. Comments were also given by David Graham and Audrey Monk of the Surrey Archaeological Society. All are thanked for their discussion of the results. David and Audrey Graham supplied details of the excavation of plough marks under Stane Street by Rosamond Hanworth, and provided copies of plans from the site archive.

Post-excavation analysis and the final text of the report were the responsibility of the present author.

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Appendix 1: notes on the archive & drawings used in this report

There were problems in the interpretation of certain parts of the archive. On the advice of the Surrey County Archaeologist, Dr David Bird, a second opinion was sought. The author handed the archive over to Tony Howe of the Archaeology Section of Surrey County Council for an objective appraisal. This was given in January 2001 in the form of a letter to the author, which is now deposited with the archive as an aid to future researchers.

For the purposes of this report, the main problems arose from trench 1. The conjectured plough furrows had not been given context numbers in the field. These were given a composite number for both the cuts and the fills in the post-excavation stage, but could not be given individual numbers because it was suspected that some of the furrows might have been caused by root action. In order to give numbers in post-excavation a value judgement would have to be made on each individual furrow as to whether it was caused by plough furrow or root action. It was not possible to do this based on the evidence of the archive.

The site drawings for trench 1 also presented problems. Firstly, the plough furrows were all drawn utilising the convention normally used if they had all been fully excavated. This is misleading. Apart from a few small sections across a small number of the furrows, the location of which was not shown on the archive drawing, none of the furrows were excavated, but were largely buried as found. Therefore figure 4 of this report shows the furrows drawn as unexcavated. Secondly, none of the levels given in any of the drawings for trench 1 or the section to trench 3 seemed to relate to the Temporary Bench Mark (TBM) in a way that was meaningful to the author. This was also noted in Tony Howe's letter. In the interests of consistency, therefore, levels are not shown on the trench drawings of this report. However, where levels relating to the site TBMs could be obtained they are recorded here. These are based on string lines to the sections for trenches 2, 4 and 5.

Trench 2, string line level as given in Fig 5 = 144.42m AOD

Trench 4, string line level as given in Fig. 5 = 144.54m AOD

Trench 5, string line level as given in Fig. 5 = 92.00m AOD

Archive list for Mickleham Downs excavations, summer 2000

This archive was not put together by a single person or organisation, and therefore does not present internal unity. The context sheets, finds sheets, photographs, and the drawings were put together by members of the Surrey Archaeological Society. The final report was written by C K Currie of CKC Archaeology, who put together the final archive. It was because the archive did not have internal unity that it was decided to keep it as it was presented for writing the report rather than alter the archive to the requirements of any single person or organisation. To alter the archive in post-excavation could be construed by later researchers as tampering, and so it is left as close to the original as possible.

The archive contains:

In black ring bound folder:

1. Context sheets, numbers 100-110, 200-206, 300-316, 400-404, 500-507
2. Pink finds recording sheets, total 12
3. Context control log; two sheets
4. Three sheets of figures relating to the allocation of Temporary Bench Marks

In pink cardboard folder:

5. Brown envelope containing six monochrome photographs and six colour prints, originally annotated by Judie English, with post-stick query on back of one colour print by Tony Howe of Surrey County Council.
6. One sheet of archaeological drawings by R Hanworth showing excavations across line of Stane Street in 1977, given to C K Currie by David Graham. Marked 'R Hanworth (BAR)' to indicate source (see bibliography in final report).
7. One copy of final report by C K Currie in bound black covers; 23 pages text, 5 figures.
8. Spare copies of drawings from final report, 10 sheets assorted A4/A3.
9. Spare copies of Figures 4 and 5 at original A0 size, 3 finished sheets, plus one draft sheet.
10. Correspondence concerning the project:
 - i. Letter from Audrey Monk, SAS Secretary, dated 7th December 2000, concerning archive.
 - ii. Letter from David Graham, Officer of the SAS, dated 15th December 2000, concerning archive.
 - iii. Letter from Audrey Monk, SAS Secretary, dated 17th December 2000, concerning archive and payment.
 - iv. Letter from Judie English, dated 28th December 2000, concerning archive.
 - v. Letter from Tony Howe, Archaeological Officer for Surrey County Council, dated 17th January 2001, concerning anomalies in the archive.
 - vi. Letter from Audrey Monk, SAS Secretary, dated 8th February 2001, concerning corrections to draft report.
 - vii. Letter from Audrey Monk, SAS Secretary, dated 2nd March 2001, concerning payment.
11. One copy of project design.
12. One copy of archive index.

In brown cardboard tube marked 'Mickleham Excavation Drawings':

13. Five permatrace sheets containing original excavation pencil drawings. These have not been inked in, and are left in their original condition.

In plastic Stewart box marked 'MDM 00 Mickleham Downs 2000' on top and side:

14. Assorted finds as described in (2).
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