

Medieval Ewell and Cuddington

by C. F. TITFORD

No map reconstructed from medieval documents can have the accuracy of a modern map; it will inevitably be as much diagrammatic as cartographic. Nevertheless, a close approximation is possible provided the position and direction of the highways are traced with a reasonable degree of accuracy as for reconstruction purposes these constitute the 'frame' into which the fields and village tenements must be fitted. The two reconstructions previously published¹ purporting to present a picture of Ewell parish and village as they were in 1408, are both invalidated by the fact that they have been based on the assumption that the highways, lanes and boundaries of the area as shown on the Inclosure Map of 1802 were still at that late date substantially as they had been four centuries earlier. This is to ignore the many changes that had taken place between these dates and the radically different conditions that prevailed in the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the opening years of the fifteenth century Ewell was still a purely agricultural area; its inhabitants were still dependent for the satisfaction of most of their needs upon the products of their fields and live stock and the routine of their lives and basis of their holdings remained those of feudal days. We should therefore expect that a map of the area for that time would reflect the activities and needs of such a community. Although main highways would be used for such through traffic as existed, the main purpose they were required to serve was to enable the tenants to reach the more distant parts of the parish; in the case of Ewell, the pastoral area in the north and the woodland and downs in the south. Similarly with the lanes of the village; their main purpose was to provide quick and easy access to the arable land abutting on the tenements of the village; that they did so is shown on Fig. 2. On the other hand, by 1802 the position had changed radically. The village was no longer a self-sufficient and largely isolated unit. It had a local identity, but one related to a rapidly growing through traffic; and although many of its old roads still survived, that is not to say that their relative importance to one another or the nature of the traffic that used them remained as before. The change in the lanes is even more obvious. As shown on Fig. 3, their places had been taken by minor side turnings no longer designed to give access to the fields, but to afford links between main roads old and new. It will be apparent, therefore, how unrealistic must be the result of attempting to fit the features detailed in a fifteenth-century document into Ewell's road system as it was at the opening of the nineteenth century.

The presence of the river has necessarily influenced the pattern of the roads at all times, and a list of those of 1408 that survived to 1802 can be briefly reviewed. West Street (No. 1 on Fig. 2) remained much as it had

been except that in 1408 it ended some two hundred yards from the Epsom boundary to which it was extended by Calowe-strete running in a north-western direction. Similarly, Cheam Road can be taken as near enough representing South-strete (No. 2) although the original line of the latter had lain on the higher ground four or five yards to the east of the present road.² Church Street as far as the churchyard and Vicarage Lane represent Estrete (No. 3); but the stretch of road from the end of West Street to the Spring Hotel has been subject to so many changes that it can be said to represent Myddel-strete (No. 4) only in a limited sense. The road alongside the river (No. 5) was known in 1408 as the 'highway to Kingeston' up to the point where it reached the way to Worth Court; but beyond that point as Stete-grene only a part of which survived in 1802. Roberde-strete (No. 6) followed much the line of Chessington Road, but in 1408 could be reached from the eastern side of the river only across a ford. The only other road was that known as the 'highway to Walton-on-the-hill' or 'Walton Way' (see Fig. 1) represented now by Longdown Lane³; but its northern end in 1802 already terminated on Reigate Road at it does today. Of the medieval lanes in the village shown on Fig. 2 all had long since ceased to exist by 1802 with the sole exception of Osmondes-lane (now Ox Lane) and part of the 'lytel lane' (now one arm of Spring Street). Like all else, they can be traced only by reference to documentary evidence and here it must be emphasised that this cannot be done solely from the *Register*. Although the lanes are all named and the tenements between them fully listed, the acreages of the latter are not given, so there is little to indicate the position of the lanes. A survey compiled in 1577 by Thomas Taylor,⁴ the county surveyor, however, gives the acreages of the tenements occupying the areas between the lanes and thus enables the position of the latter to be traced. This additional survey provides also information concerning the abutments of some of the fields in the Southfield that have been left blank in the *Register*. For the rest, as new roads have been mistaken as survivals from the earlier period, a brief account of events that occasioned the changes must be considered.

The first major changes resulted from the building of Nonsuch in the sixteenth century and the formation of its Great and Little Parks. With the parish of Cuddington, the king acquired also well over two hundred acres of Ewell parish, the effect of which was to cut Ewell off from its traditional connections with Malden, Merton and Cheam. The boundary track to Malden was taken into the park and replaced by one alongside the park pale, but by 1802 that too was itself replaced by the modern Kingston Road to Tolworth. The 'highway to Merton' (now London Road) was extended westwards across Shortecroft and Cherche-furlong and then turned south along the western balk of the latter to join Estrete forming the present northward arm of Church Street. The rest of Estrete was taken into the Little Park together with that part of the Portweye that led to and crossed Cuddington to Cheam. The Portweye was a part of the highway that had for centuries been the connecting link between all the villages along the North Downs from Guildford to Croydon. When this part was closed to traffic, it was replaced by an extension of Osmondes-lane (Ox Lane) by a track round the Little Park. This

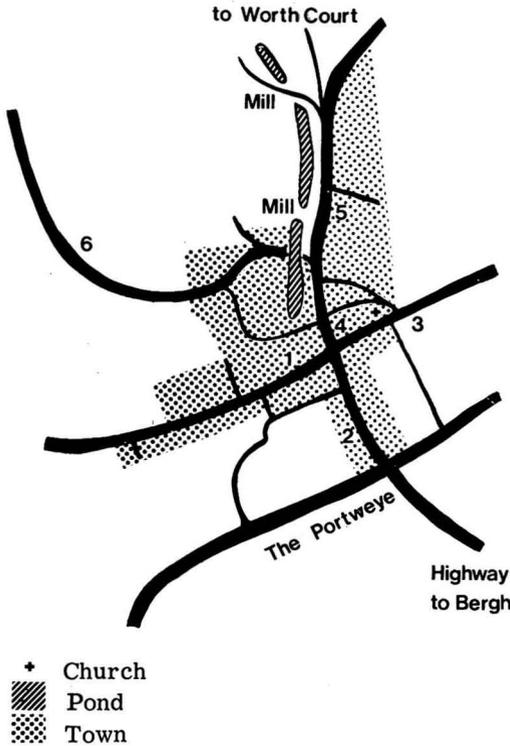


Fig. 2. Map of Ewell in the fifteenth century.

considerably increased the distance between Ewell and Cheam and affected the flow of traffic not only between those villages, but also between those east and west of them. One result was that what is today known as the Bridle Path was formed from near St Martin's Church in Epsom to Howell on the new track. It is this that has been mistaken for the highway to Walton. The other consequence of the change is that from this time on the Portweye began to fall into disuse ultimately to be abandoned leaving doubt as to its original course. To trace this, however, later events must be considered.

These were occasioned by the great economic and social changes that affected the whole country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These need not be detailed here beyond recalling the effects of enclosures at this time on rural communities and that they were marked by the great period of new road building. They were, however, given special significance for Ewell in that they coincided with the rise of Epsom as a popular health resort. This entirely changed the status of Ewell; from being the most important village in this part of Surrey, it was reduced to little more than a last place of call on the way from London to Epsom. London Road between the Parks had been reconstructed under an act of 1737 and with Church

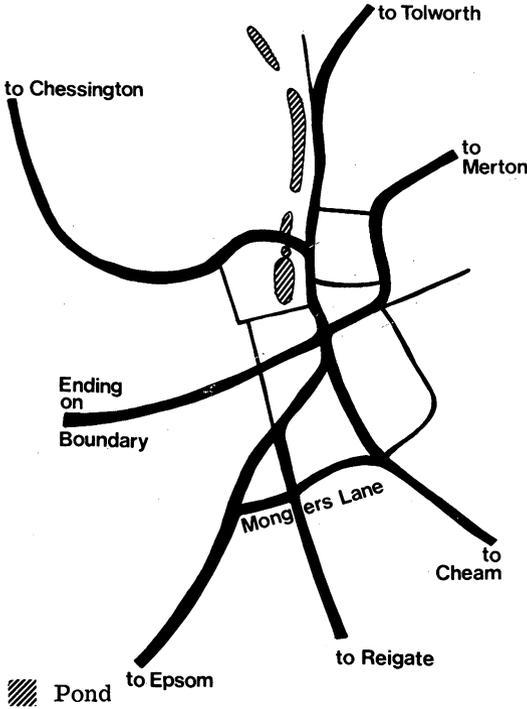


Fig. 3. Map of Ewell in the early nineteenth century.

Street brought traffic to the centre of the village. But Ewell's medieval roads that had adequately met all its local needs up to that time, were quite unsuited to provide a continuing link to Epsom. What is referred to by both the *Register* and Taylor as the 'highway from Ewell to Ebesham'⁵ was no more than a dirt track that wound its way up the steep hill to Tayleshed-croft and then turned abruptly south to end on the Portweye. The latter, indeed, was the only actual connection with Epsom village and was itself no more than a dirt track quite unsuited for the use of the light, comparatively fast moving horse drawn carriages and postchaises that were then coming into use; moreover it lay to the south of the village and could be reached only down the equally medieval South Street. Greenman Street (now the High Street) was constructed diagonally across Underhages. Later the modern Epsom Road was added and this and its continuation, East Street,⁶ cut across the medieval fields of both parishes, not however to the medieval village of Epsom round St Martin's Church, but to the new centre then being built to its north-west. It is this road to Epsom together with Monger's Lane that branches off from it that have been mistaken for the Portweye.

In support of this assumption, it is argued in the Introduction to the *Fitznells Cartulary* that the *Register* records two small pits in the south of Under-

haghes and another near the northern bound of Longfurlong the Portweye running between them after passing the end of South Street. As Monger's Lane today similarly runs between two pits, it is assumed that these are the earlier pits enlarged and the first two combined by later working. This argument does not stand investigation. Far from being further worked, of the three earlier pits only the smallest in Underhaghes survived to be recorded by Taylor in 1577. Further, in order to fit Underhaghes into the 1802 road system, it has been given 8 acres only; when given its correct acreage of $13\frac{3}{4}$ acres, its southern bound is seen to run right across the area now occupied by the southern of the two modern pits indicating such to have been the line of the Portweye between Underhaghes and Longfurlong.⁷ It next formed the boundary between Taylesheld and Woghfurlong, but the *Register* makes no further reference to it beyond this point. However, a Fitznells document, No. 270, states that at Weitcroft (Whatecroft of the *Register*) there was 'a akir at the ende upon the way to Ebsham' (the Portweye). This was at a point close to where the Portweye crossed the Epsom boundary (see Fig. 1). About three hundred yards of it still exist here and reach the boundary some hundred yards north of where it is reached by the modern Epsom Road.⁸

The origin of Monger's Lane is demonstrated by its usage. When under an act of 1755 Reigate Road was constructed from the western end of Greenman Street, it provided a direct route to Borough Heath and Reigate that took the place of the old highway to Bergh. The connection of South Street with the latter thus ceased to serve any useful purpose and it was diverted to join up with the road to Cheam that was also reconstructed under the 1755 act. The eastern part of Monger's Lane probably arose as a footpath round the pit as the latter was worked; but with the western part added, the two formed a short cut between Epsom Road and the road to Cheam to avoid the much longer route along Greenman Street and the modern village part of Cheam Road. With the building of the by-pass, the lane is now open to pedestrian traffic only.

These differences between the road patterns of 1408 and 1802 necessarily affect the placing on the map of all the furlongs of the Southfield as well as of the lanes and tenements of the village. Failure to recognise them has led to the mistaken identification of items on the 1802 map for those of the earlier period. Thus, the path between Spring Street and West Street has been mistaken for Carteres-lane that led from West Street to the arable part of Lymecroft; The Grove mistaken for Salemannes-path; and Mill Lane that was formed as a connection between the highway to Kingston and the extension of London Road has been mistaken for Teppes-lane. Because they could not be thus 'identified', the way to Cherlemannes-mede, Prestes-lane and Whytwelles-lane have been omitted altogether.⁹

Finally, some reference needs to be made to Ewell's boundaries. As regards the northern with Long Ditton, there are two Fitznell records of the late thirteenth century, Nos 59 and 112, that state that Schaldeford Mill, which abutted on the northern side of the track now in part Ruxley Lane,¹⁰ was in the parish of Long Ditton. Taylor records, however, that by 1577 the

boundary lay considerably farther north on both sides of the river (although still south of the boundary of today). The position of the boundary in 1408 is thus called in question. The *Register* makes no mention of the mill nor to any holdings north of Ruxley Lane; but then neither does it refer to holdings in the area immediately south of the lane to which there are references in Fitznell records.¹¹ It must be pointed out, however, that the *Register* is a survey of the *manor*, not the parish, of Ewell. Taylor's survey of 1577 is likewise of the manor. It is thus apparent that changes took place during the intervening century and a half, from which it can be concluded that it was during this period that the boundary was moved northwards. As further indicating this a rental of the 'Manor of Ewell recently part of the possession of the Prior of Merton',¹² which from internal evidence is not earlier than 1549, makes mention of no holdings north of Northcroft and Kingsmede.

No such doubt arises with regard to the southern boundary with Banstead. On the previous reconstructed maps this is shown as it was in 1802. Taylor's survey, however, indicates that as late as 1577 it still ran along a 'bottom or slade' (Yewtree Bottom) to Rose Bushes giving Ewell Downs an acreage of 240 acres. The 'highway from Kingston to Epsom' (now in part Chessington Road and Fairview Road) formed the western boundary down to the point where it terminated on the Portweye. South of this, a part of the boundary coincided with a part of the highway to Walton. Newbury Gardens preserves much of the line of the eastern boundary; but south of the Portweye it was marked by what is referred to in an early Cuddington document¹³ as the way from Cuddington to Reigate. The *Register* records only a short part of its northern end as the way from Cuddington to Ballards-pit. This latter was taken into the Little Park and Taylor names the highway that marked much of the boundary as 'the road leading from Banstead to Ewell town'. This was the Banstead Road of today and Taylor's description is accurate for his period, as at that time it terminated on the track round the Little Park which led via Ox Lane to Estrete.

CUDDINGTON

As far as the writer is aware, the first attempt to reconstruct a map of fifteenth-century Cuddington was a sketch map of his own published in the Nonsuch and Ewell Antiquarian Society *Bulletin* No. 6 in 1964. This was based on the evidence provided by the 'Inquisition taken at Cuddington' in 1422 and the list of Merton Priory holdings that follows it.¹⁴ These documents state the names and acreages of the 'pieces of land' and the direction in which they were related to one another. It is suggested, however, in the Introduction to the *Fitznells Cartulary* that they do not give a full list and thus do not enable a complete map to be constructed. As the map published with the cartulary shows no more than thirty-eight of the sixty-five pieces of land¹⁵ actually listed (together with three from some other source) it encourages an uncritical acceptance of the statement and makes a more careful investigation of the subject desirable.¹⁶

What is not included in the documents is a statement of the acreage of the Common of Sparfeld in the north, of the Downs in the south and of the scattered areas of waste land in the area between them. As regards the acreages of the first two items, these can be ascertained from other documents. The 'Survey of the Manor of Nonsuche' of 1538¹⁷ states that the area north of London Way to the Malden boundary consisted of 519 acres. Of this, the Inquisition and Priory holdings account for 172 acres leaving 347 acres for the Common itself. It records further that tenants were given rights of pasture on 140 acres of the Downs. This accounts for the area east of the Banstead Road; and there were an additional 80 acres or slightly more west of the road to the Ewell boundary. For the moment leaving aside the areas of waste land between the London Way and the northern end of the Downs, the figures given above add up to the following total:

Inquisition	604 acres
Priory Holdings	127
Sparfeld Common	347
Downs	220
	<hr/>
	1298 acres

Referring next to the 'Vewe and Survey of the Manor of Codyngton' of c. 1536,¹⁸ this describes the parish including the Common and the Downs in three different ways yielding slightly different totals; namely, 1300, 1310 and 1317 acres. More than a hundred years separate these documents, yet the difference between the areas accounted for amounts to no more than something between 2 and 19 acres. It would thus appear apparent that like the Inquisition this document likewise does not include the acreage of the waste land.¹⁹ A reasonable allowance for this waste land is a little over 200 acres. If this figure is added in both cases to keep them in parity, they can then be compared with those of the Fine of 1538²⁰ that states that the area acquired by Henry VIII totalled 1890 acres. From this must be deducted the 378 acres of Ewell and Malden, leaving a total of 1512 acres of Cuddington. We thus arrive at the following comparative figures:

Inquisition 1422	1498 acres
Vewe c. 1536	1500 or 1517
Fine 1538	1512

Seeing that some of the items of all the documents are 'by estimation' only and not exact, the differences between the totals arrived at from these entirely different sources can have little significance. On these grounds, we are fully justified in concluding that all the cultivated land is accounted for in the 1422 documents and that Fig. 1 gives a complete picture of Cuddington parish as it was in the early years of the fifteenth century when, with Ewell, it was still a medieval parish.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The first was included with Deedes' translation of the *Register or*

Memorial of Ewell (1408) published in 1913; the other was included in *Fitznells Cartulary*, Surrey R.S., XXVI (1968).

2. This has recently been confirmed when the wine store in Cheam Road was demolished. Although its modern frontage abutted on the modern road, its original frontage was found to have been on the opposite, eastern side. It was apparently the tenement of Thomas Codyngton described in Taylor's survey of 1577 as abutting on South Street on the east and on the highway from Ewell to Epsom on the south.
3. See *Register*, p. 72 and *Fitznell Cartulary*, Nos 48, 230, 232 and 234.
4. G.M.R. 10/158.
5. A short part of this highway can be traced on the 1802 map and *in situ* by the long side of Longhurst Garden and the boundary between Earl's Yard and the school playground. This was particularly obvious before the new buildings were erected on the site of the 'Lord Nelson'.
6. For East Street see the Epsom Tithe Map of 1842.
7. The southern of the modern pits (behind Pit House) was being worked at the end of the eighteenth century and provision for its continued working was provided for in the Inclosure Award.
8. Today it is joined up with a now little used nineteenth-century footpath that originally led from West Street to the Ewell Brick Field shown on the 1867 O.S. Map.
9. For the positions of these see the following; *Register*, p. 20 and Taylor, pp. 56 and 59; *Register*, pp. 6 and 15 respectively.
10. This track has been mistaken for the 'common way from Horton to Merton' referred to in Fitznells No. 10. The latter cannot now be traced but must have crossed the river further south, probably by the pack-horse bridge and then followed the bank of the tributary from Cuddington to the 'highway to Merton' (London Road).
11. There is no survey known on which to base a reconstruction of this area as it was in 1408. The earliest survey is that of Taylor in 1577 nearly three centuries later.
12. P.R.O. LR2/290.
13. P.R.O. 326/1168.
14. Deedes, attached to the *Register*.
15. Ten small pieces of land cannot easily be shown individually on the map. On Fig. 1, their acreage has been combined ($26\frac{1}{4}$ acres) in the area marked 'C' which also indicates their position approximately. Similarly four others are combined ($1\frac{1}{2}$ acres) at 'A' in the north. The acreages of Priory holdings in fields listed in the Inquisition are combined with those of the latter.

16. It is also stated in the Introduction that of the pieces of land listed 'in no case have we definite evidence of size or position'. As seen from Fig. 1 the pieces are separated into groups by waste land. Sufficient evidence is available to trace the position of these groups with reasonable accuracy and the relative position of the pieces within the groups is given. As regards sizes, the acreage is stated of every piece without exception.
17. G.M.R. 10/157.
18. P.R.O. E315/414.
19. As Cuddington lacked any wide areas of woodland such as those of Ewell, it is probable that this waste land near the village was used as turbarry, that is for cutting turf for fuel.
20. P.R.O. CP 25(2)/42/289/48.

Mr Titford had corrected the proofs of his article before his death in September 1973. The maps, however, were not completed for publication at that time. The Hon. Editor wishes to thank Mr B. R. Souter for redrawing the maps in Figs. 2 and 3 from Mr Titford's sketches. The map in Fig. 1 is published as Mr Titford left it.