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Later Medieval and Tudor

Introduction:

Key texts: Renn 1974; O'Connell 1977; Poulton (et al.) 1984; (et al.) 1988; 1998; 2005; (et al.) 2010; 2012; Turner 1987; 2001; 2004; Brandon and Short 1990; Cloake 1990; Blair 1991; Campbell et al. 1993; Gray 1998; 2001; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000; Sloane et al 2000; Vince 2000; Bannister and Wills 2001; Letters 2002; Thurley, 2004; Biddle 2005; Harris 2005; Bannister 2006; Seeley et al 2006; Miller and Saxby 2007; Blatherwick and Bluer 2009; Bowsher and Miller 2009; Divers et al 2009; Service 2010; Thompson and Birkbeck 2010; Dyson et al 2011; Bird 2013.

For this period, documentary sources are of greater importance in understanding the historic environment when used alongside information derived from archaeology and the landscape. The quantity of potentially recoverable archaeology is also relatively high, despite the losses incurred as a result of Surrey's large population growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Modern developments, especially in the older towns, frequently reveal archaeology of medieval interest. For major medieval monuments, some archaeological information was lost in older excavations such as a Waverley Abbey, but there have also been more recent excavations where more modern methods have added significantly to knowledge, such as at Merton Priory, Bermondsey Abbey, Woking Palace or the palace at Guildford Castle. Many medieval parish churches were substantially altered in the nineteenth century, but the study of earlier illustrations (in which Surrey is particularly fortunate) and surviving remains means that their development can usually be understood. Surrey has a considerable collection of medieval vernacular buildings for a county of its size, and understanding of their development has benefitted greatly from dendrochronological investigations, even though their pattern of survival is very uneven around the historic county. The modern pattern of rural settlement in the county can prove a deceptive guide to its medieval past, with the majority of nucleated villages only emerging more recently. Village studies and test pitting programmes are leading towards a more detailed understanding.

Discussion:

- Political and administrative geography

Guildford Castle was the centre of royal power, not just for Surrey but for Sussex as well (as the latter was divided among various great lords after the Conquest, and did not possess a royal castle). The other great castles of Surrey – Reigate and Bletchingley – were not the principal power bases for their families, initially the de Warenne earls of Surrey for the former (later the Earls of Arundel) and the de Clares for the latter, but were locally important, at least until the fourteenth century. By the later Middle Ages, no major secular lord was based in Surrey. Of religious institutions, the most important was Chertsey Abbey, which held about one eighth of the county in Domesday, concentrated in the north-west of the county. The Bishops of Winchester held the extensive manor of Farnham, including Farnham Castle, which fulfilled the role of a palace as much as a castle, at least after later medieval modifications. The bishops had other important houses at Southwark and Esher. Christchurch Priory Canterbury (i.e. the cathedral chapter) and the Archbishop of Canterbury were other important ecclesiastical holders of manors in Surrey, with archbishops' palaces at Croydon and Lambeth. Other early medieval castles, represented by mottes at e.g. Abinger and (possibly) Walton-on-the-Hill were probably of local relatively short-lived defensive importance rather than of political significance. Earthworks and moats at Thunderfield castle, Horley, and earthworks at Ockley may represent twelfth century short-lived defensive sites of the de Clares. Later castles, such as Betchworth or the Cobham family's at Starborough, were never more than locally important. Surrey had several Tudor royal palaces – Nonsuch, Oatlands, Richmond, Woking - principally used for recreational purposes. Nevertheless, it increased the presence of influential courtiers in the county and may have had some

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positive economic impact. Sutton Place, built for Sir Richard Weston, is Surrey's other major early sixteenth century house. The grandest surviving Elizabethan great house is Loseley, with Wimbledon House and Baynards lost.

Lordship could be important in influencing patterns of settlement development, for example towns such as Croydon, Farnham and Haslemere were quite tightly controlled by their ecclesiastical landlords. Chertsey Abbey laid out a number of planned villages in its manors, such as Egham and Great Bookham.

Parish boundaries often followed the pattern of Domesday manors, albeit with some divisions of the larger manors. Establishing parishes was largely complete by the later twelfth century, with some probable early large *parochiae* such as Kingston or Farnham still holding a number of surrounding village churches as subordinate chapels. The pattern of ecclesiastical control was complicated by the appropriation of parish churches by monasteries, either because the monastery was the initial founder of the church, as was the case with Chertsey Abbey's churches in north-west Surrey, or by later agreement of the bishops. The manorial geography of Surrey became more complicated through the course of the Middle Ages as many early manors were subdivided. The boundaries of medieval manors and parishes were often complex, with many detached portions, which can sometimes be difficult to reconstruct.

Key issues:

- Locating medieval parish and manorial boundaries, including field evidence.
 - Management of the major ecclesiastical estates in the county.
 - The impact of the frequent presence of the Tudor court in Surrey.
- Communications

The detail of the road network and how it developed are not well understood. The state of the roads and the extent to which they were passable at different seasons are also not well known. A number of the medieval bridges on the Wey between Farnham and Guildford survive. On the Lower Wey, the major causeways between Old Woking and Send, and between Pyrford and Ripley, were probably in existence by 1200 and may have been constructed around the time of the foundation of Newark Priory but may be earlier. These were clearly costly investments, as was the causeway on the Thames floodplain at Egham. Documentary, place-name and landscape evidence can help to locate other crossing points on rivers, which can serve as fixed points (together with known older routeways) in establishing a broader picture of the road network. The dating of when fords were replaced by fixed bridges is important in understanding how opportunities for travel may have developed. In the Weald, the north-south direction of roads and trackways is associated with historic patterns of movement of livestock. The extent to which this pattern survived through the medieval period and whether the use of the roads was predominantly seasonal is not well understood.

There is little evidence of river transport being important other than on the Thames, and even there documentary records indicate the difficulties caused by conflicting uses. Evidence regarding the Wey tends to suggest only local and down-river transport (of timber and building materials in particular). The Mole and the Wandle seem unlikely to have been suitable for much river traffic at any period.

Key issues:

- Development of the road system, and how it may have changed over time.
- Dates of causeways across flood plains.
- Dates of construction of first fixed bridges at key points.

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- Evidence for river transport.
- Settlement evidence

Surrey's medieval towns were small and relatively few for the size of the county. Only Guildford and Southwark can be identified as towns at the time of Domesday, and Southwark developed in a very particular way through the period as an appendage of London, with inns, grand houses and later theatres and places of entertainment. Clear medieval town foundations included Bletchingley, Croydon, Farnham, Haslemere, Kingston, and Reigate (and Staines, within the borders of the modern county), which experienced varying degrees of success. Leatherhead appears to have been a small town, but much about its form is not understood. Chertsey was probably a small town outside the abbey's gate. Dorking appears to have become urban by the fourteenth century. Whether Godalming was really a town before the sixteenth century is unclear.

There were also villages with markets. Shere has both documentary evidence and a market place. The form of Ripley suggests it was a possible centre. Ewell appears to have become a market village by the sixteenth century. When Woking achieved comparable status is not clear. Market charters were granted for various other places, but there is little evidence of a market in the form of the settlements. Gatton's borough charter of 1450 is not accompanied by any evidence of urban characteristics.

No Surrey town was defended by masonry walls. Parts of the town ditch have been excavated at Farnham. The course of much of the town ditches appears clear at Guildford and Staines, and there is evidence of the ditch at Southwark.

Domestic structures in towns were rarely of stone, but medieval stone undercrofts exist at Guildford, Reigate and Kingston) and only limited evidence for former undercrofts has been found in excavation (for example in Guildford and Reigate). Some timber-framed structures survive standing, although many can be disguised by later facades. The greatest numbers of survivors are in Bletchingley, Farnham, Godalming and Guildford, but the totals do not exceed those in the cores of some villages such as Charlwood or Oxted.

The Villages Study programme and some test pitting have been helpful in beginning to assemble a more detailed picture of village plans and development. It is likely that most of the nucleated villages were in the north of the county. Settlement elsewhere was probably much more dispersed, but more analysis, as well as archaeological and landscape evidence, is needed to clarify the detailed picture.

Although many moated sites are known, particularly in the south of the county, few have been examined and published. Few sites of significant rural houses have been excavated (with Hextalls near Bletchingley an important exception). Where buildings survive, the dendrochronology project has made great strides and has made it possible to build on the years of patient recording by the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey). It has also become possible to offer dates for some of the major developments in types of houses and their key features, e.g. the transition from hall houses to those which were fully floored, and establish dates for the transition. Accurate dating may also assist in linking construction to specific owners. Dendrochronology may however be less helpful where elm rather than oak was used, especially in the north of the county. Probate inventories can yield useful information on how different rooms in houses were used, and may assist in establishing what economic activities were associated with the houses.

Key issues:

- Detailed evidence on the foundation and development of Surrey's towns.
- Establishing the pattern of nucleation and dispersal in rural settlement across the county.
- Compiling an updated list of moated sites in the county.

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- The use of rooms in early houses, including study of attached or detached kitchens.
- The use and setting of early houses.

- Land use and environment

Determining what crops and livestock the land was used for is difficult throughout the Middle Ages. Domesday Book provides some information on relative amounts of ploughland and meadow, but (other than assessing woodland in terms of the number of pigs it can support) it does not allow for more detailed assessment of land use. Surviving manorial documents, mainly from the late thirteenth century onwards, provide evidence of specific produce, but these concern demesne land rather than the more general pattern of peasant agriculture. They have been used to study how London obtained its food supply, and the proximity of London is likely to have been a particular influence on agricultural output in parts of the county, especially the north-east. By the sixteenth century, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* contains tithing information for east Surrey (more detailed than anywhere else in England), but not for the rest of the county, which permits some assessment of the agricultural geography of that time. From the later sixteenth century probate inventories can be used to investigate the agricultural practice of some individual farms. Archaeological evidence could assist in supporting the outlines emerging from documentary sources, in particular from pollen or other environmental sources. It could also assist in discovering the extent to which more marginal lands may have been brought into cultivation in the period before the Black Death.

Surrey's medieval field systems have not received detailed recent attention. Earlier work based on *inquisitiones post mortem* or medieval fines had identified open fields in the north of the county, although not of the fully-fledged Midlands system. Work on enclosure awards and acts has supported this picture. Historic landscape characterisation in Surrey has so far mainly only presented a broad picture, with some examples that show fossilised medieval features, and some more detailed work in the western Weald, where parts of the landscape consist of assarted fields. Commons were particularly important in Surrey, with extensive areas of poor soils. Detailed knowledge of how they were used is lacking, although specific features, such as funnels and "gates", can be useful aids to understanding. Similar questions arise for greens, which in many ways can be seen as small commons. Knowledge of woodland has been helped by the dendrochronology project, which has shown that many oak woods were formally managed, at least by the fifteenth century, and that most timber was used close to where it was felled (with some houses quite widely separated and of different social classes using timbers cut from the same wood in the same year). Parks, which were initially enclosures for deer, appear to have been unevenly spread across the county, but it is not clear whether this reflects the actual pattern.

Evidence concerning animals is limited. Surrey has the first record of rabbits being kept on the mainland (at Guildford in 1241), although there is earlier archaeological evidence of keeping rabbits elsewhere and earlier documents referring to rabbits on Scilly, Lundy and the Isle of Wight. By the sixteenth century tithes were being paid on rabbits in a number of parishes in north-east Surrey. Sheep are documented on the Downs in the east of the county at various dates, and Waverley Abbey was known for the quality of its wool before the Black Death. Fishponds have been little studied in the county, with the partial exception of the Bishop of Winchester's ponds at Frensham.

There is evidence of water management work on the lower Wey, some of it at least probably at the behest of Newark Priory. Documents show that similar works were undertaken by Chertsey Abbey, around Chobham for instance. There may be other instances of water control features that have not so far been recognised.

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Key issues:

- What crops were grown and animals kept in different parts of the county.
 - The extent to which agricultural practice was influenced by the geology and water supplies.
 - The influence of London on agricultural practice in Surrey.
 - The location of medieval parks.
 - More detailed evidence for the medieval environment.
- Material culture and the economy

Although not among the richest counties in medieval England, taxation records would suggest that Surrey was not among the poorest either, especially by the sixteenth century, probably because of the advantages to be gained from supplying goods to the London economy.

Surrey had a number of significant industries. The glass industry of the Chiddingfold area was nationally important, even if its focus moved into Sussex by the later part of the period. Woollen cloth production grew up in the west of the county in the later Middle Ages, especially in Guildford, Godalming and Farnham (with a fulling mill at Guildford at least by the mid-thirteenth century. By the sixteenth century, much of the weaving appears to have been carried out in the surrounding villages, while the merchants remained based in the towns. The industry appears to have been in the early stages of decline by the end of the Tudor period. While locally important, the industry was never on the scale of the major cloth producing areas of England such as the Cotswolds and parts of East Anglia. Fullers earth was extracted mainly in the east of the county, around Godstone and Nutfield, and only to a lesser extent at Churt, but the majority of fulling mills seem to have been on the faster flowing streams in the south-west. There was also a smaller scale woollen cloth industry in the Wandle valley. Woodland industries are likely to have been important in much of the county, both for coppice wood and timber, but are usually archaeologically invisible.

There were several pottery industries, often supplying London but it has not always proved possible to date the pottery closely. Little is known about location and marketing areas of local potteries pre-dating the major industries. Floor tiles were also produced, but knowledge of the industry is limited. The Reigate stone industry was of national importance but dating quarries or mines to the medieval period with certainty is difficult. There appears to have been significant iron production in the Low Weald around Horley and Burstow in the late medieval period, with hints that this used a different technology to that being practised in iron processing in towns such as Reigate.

Key issues:

- Reasons for the location of the woollen cloth production in the west of the county.
 - Development of the glass industry over time.
 - Closer dating of pottery.
 - Location of principal medieval quarries.
 - Better understanding of the woodland industries.
- Belief and burial

The Church was central to all aspects of medieval life and provided the framework for medieval people's understanding of the world. The church building was often the most important structure in a village and would have been the focus for much communal activity. The parochial network was effectively complete by the later twelfth century, but some remoter areas had their own chapels (with parishioners often needing to attend the more distant parish church for baptism or burial). The major

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early churches often retained other churches founded within their original territory as subordinate chapels. The parish churches were supported by tithes and by their own glebe land (as well as by offerings and various payments), which in the better parts of the county could make a priest a comparatively wealthy person, but in remoter areas provided barely sufficient support.

Chertsey was Surrey's only pre-Conquest monastery, and was a major landholder in the county. The foundation of Waverley Abbey for the Cistercians probably exploited fairly marginal land, at least at first. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the great age for the foundation of monasteries, often with the at least partial aim of providing a prime burial location for the founder and for monks to pray for his or her soul. In the case of Surrey the major Cluniac abbey at Bermondsey and the Augustinian houses at Merton, Southwark, and Newark all had substantial endowments of land both in Surrey and elsewhere, as did the Augustinian St Thomas' Hospital. The smaller Augustinian foundations at Reigate and Tandridge obtained most of their income from Surrey. Surrey's one major late medieval monastery, the royal foundation for Carthusians at Sheen (second only to Merton Priory in the county for income at the Dissolution) received almost nothing from Surrey. Most monastic estates in Surrey were efficiently exploited through the later Middle Ages, although this may have been less true of more distant manorial lords such as Christ Church priory Canterbury that held significant lands in Surrey.

Archaeological studies of Bermondsey, Chertsey, Merton, Newark (in 1932) Southwark, Waverley (in 1905), Reigate, and the Dominican Friary at Guildford have been published, but those on Newark and Waverley are not of modern standards. Sheen and Tandridge (in 1885) have had document-based studies.

Surrey only had two friaries, at Guildford and Richmond, a very low number for an English county, and indicative of the smallness of its towns. Both were royal foundations under special circumstances. The Dominican site at Guildford has been excavated, but that of the Franciscan Observants at Richmond is not well understood.

Hardly any of Surrey's medieval parish churches display the signs of investment of lay wealth apparent in some counties. Over a quarter of Surrey's medieval churches have been lost to rebuilding or simply disappeared (the latter perhaps more likely with various chapels), and more have been subject to vigorous restoration, which in some cases has destroyed evidence that can only be partly compensated for by the existence of early illustrations.

The choice of sites for churches, which often stand at the centre of a community, can reveal much about the medieval understanding of the physical environment. Spring lines are a frequently favoured site. In the Downs of the east of the county, all the churches are on the plateau, usually located on areas of clay-with-flints (unlike the Sussex Downs, where they are in the valleys). In the Weald, they are often on small sandstone ridges rather than on the clay. Churches are often (but not always) collocated with manorial centres, but the reason for the relationship may vary. There has been no systematic study of the place of churches in the physical and human landscape in Surrey.

Chantries (chapels where prayers could hasten souls through purgatory) were favoured by those who could afford them, especially after the Black Death. Surrey appears to have had comparatively few at the time of their abolition, but there are other chapels attached to churches that may have fulfilled this function for a temporary period. Surrey had one major chantry college, of the Cobham family at Lingfield, and one lesser one in There may have been more chapels of religious guilds than have so far emerged from documentary evidence.

Hospitals were mostly intended to accommodate the sick and poor (to pray for them rather than to treat illness) and provide hospitality for poorer travellers. Most of Surrey's hospitals would have fallen into this category, with St Thomas' (lost under London Bridge Station) by far the largest. Early hospitals of this type were often Augustinian foundations and can be difficult to distinguish from

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small priories (the beginnings of Reigate and Tandridge priories appear to fall into this category, while Ripley church chancel may well be part of the hospital from which Newark Priory emerged). Another important category was leper hospitals, with Surrey's one known example on the fringes of Guildford.

Most burials were in parish churchyards, but these rarely present opportunities for excavation except when extensions are added to church buildings. In these cases, there may be opportunities for studying various pathologies. Surrey has some examples of where the levels of churchyards have been raised substantially by constant re-use.

Key issues:

- The development over time of monastic estates.
 - Study of the choice of church location.
 - The location of lost chapel sites.
 - The function and endowment of chapels in parish churches.
 - The role and development of Surrey's medieval hospitals.
- Changes through time

Although much of the rural landscape would not have changed immediately after the Norman Conquest, excepting any destruction by the Norman army, the almost complete change in major landholders and the appearance of castles would have been harbingers of change. In the following century and a half, new towns were founded as the economy became more commercialised, new monasteries appeared which, together with the castles, represented a scale of stone building not seen since the Romans, and the majority of parish churches were rebuilt in stone. Parks were created for the lords' deer. Rural settlement pushed into more marginal lands, especially in the Weald. Agricultural production almost certainly intensified. The growth of London would have placed greater demands on the produce of at least parts of the county.

Much of this pattern was greatly interrupted by the climatic downturn of the early fourteenth century and then, above all, by the Black Death and subsequent recurrences of the plague. Post-Black Death Surrey probably saw the abandonment of some marginal land. It was also a time when various industries, especially woollen cloth, appear to have developed on a more commercial basis. By Tudor times, one of Surrey's main roles appears to have been as hunting territory for the court.

Conclusions

The complexity of issues related to medieval Surrey is partly illuminated by the greater number of sources available than for earlier periods, often allowing more detailed questions to be addressed. National and local documentary sources, including those sources that have been exploited for some earlier research, clearly have the potential to yield new insights, although medieval documents often present serious problems of interpretation.

The publication of reports on earlier excavations (as well as some more recent ones) on major sites has been a great aid to understanding. Developments of knowledge with respect to the broader historic environment have been incremental. The dendrochronology project has been a particular success, with many ramifications for later medieval studies and beyond. In general, this is period for which the interests and approaches of practitioners are particularly diverse, and these need to be brought together to achieve the best understanding.

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